

2025 National Business Trends



2025

# National Business Trends Survey



AAIM Employers' Association

aaimea.org  
314-968-3600



*The National Network for Local Workplace Solutions*

# 2025 National Business Trends

An Employer Associations of America (EAA) Sponsored Survey, coordinated by Cascade Employers Association in cooperation with employer associations nationwide.

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## Confidential Survey Report

This survey is provided with the understanding that the information will:

- remain strictly confidential
- be restricted to authorized personnel only
- not be used in collective bargaining or grievance proceedings
- protect, completely, organizational identity



## National surveys produced by the EAA include:

- National Business Trends Survey
- National Executive Compensation Survey
- National IT & Engineering Compensation Survey
- National Policies & Practices Survey
- National Benefits Survey
- National Sales Compensation Survey
- National Wage & Salary Survey

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# 2025 National Business Trends

## Co-Sponsoring Associations

This survey was made possible by the collaborative efforts of Employer Associations throughout the nation. We want to graciously thank all of these associations for their efforts in attracting participants and helping to make the 2025 National Business Trends Survey a great success.



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# 2025 National Business Trends

## Co-Sponsoring Associations (continued)

This survey was made possible by the collaborative efforts of Employer Associations throughout the nation. We want to graciously thank all of these associations for their efforts in attracting participants and helping to make the 2025 National Business Trends Survey a great success.



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# 2025 National Business Trends

## Introduction

### Report Overview

Each day employers are faced with the challenge of how to move their business forward. The 2025 National Business Trends Survey provides detailed information regarding how executives have responded in 2024 and how they are planning to respond in 2025 to the changing business climate. The reports include:

- Business Outlook
- Business Investment Plans
- Staffing Plans
- Recruitment/Retention Challenges
- Job Creation Challenges
- Business Improvement Measures
- Pay Strategies
- Business Challenges

### Report Formats

The 2025 National Business Trends Survey report is divided into seven sections; National Report, Regional Reports (Midwest, Northeast, Southern, & Western), individual State Reports, and individual Industry Reports. The National and Regional sections contain a Significant Trends Summary, a response Detail Report and Participant Demographics. The State and Industry Reports contain a response Detail Report and Participant Demographics only.

### Response Levels

The 2025 National Business Trends Survey includes **1,024** distinct participating organizations spread out over all 50 states, and Washington D.C. Many survey participants indicated they have business operations in multiple states.

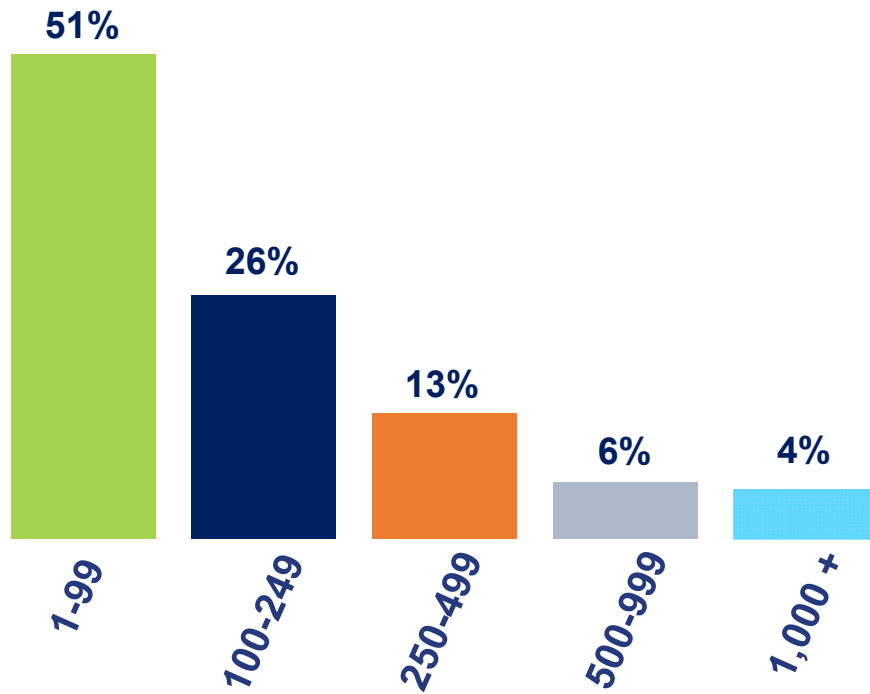
### Notes:

Participant responses may not total 100% in some instances due to rounding, the ability to select multiple responses and/or due to participant omissions.

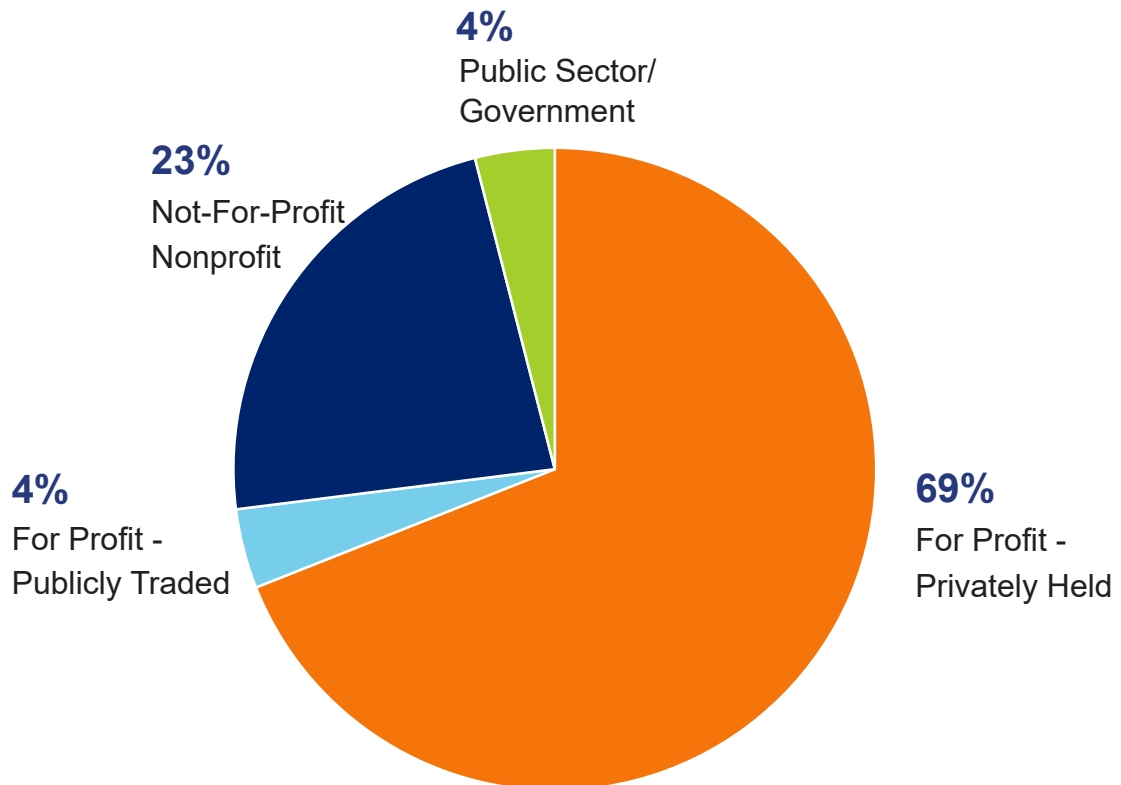
For states and industries where there were less than 10 survey responses, State and Industry Reports have not been included because the number of responses is not sufficient to assure reasonably valid statistics. In addition, despite minimum response rates, the data in some instances is limited. Users should therefore view such responses with discretion. The data may not be representative of overall market trends.

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Distribution by Company Size/Employment



## Participant Distribution by Profit Status



# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Distribution by Industry



29%

Manufacturing  
Durable Goods  
(useful life = 3+ yrs.)



11%

Manufacturing  
Non Durable Goods  
(consumed in less than life 3+ yrs.)



10%

Health Care and  
Social Assistance



8%

Professional,  
Scientific, &  
Technical Services



6%

Services (Except  
Public Administration)



6%

Financial &  
Insurance



5%

Wholesale Trade



4%

Construction



3%

Transportation /  
Warehousing



3%

Education  
Services



3%

Arts,  
Entertainment, &  
Recreation



2%

Public  
Administration



2%

Retail Trade



2%

Real Estate  
Rental & Leasing



2%

Utilities



1%

Agriculture,  
Forestry, Fishing &  
Hunting



1%

Information



1%

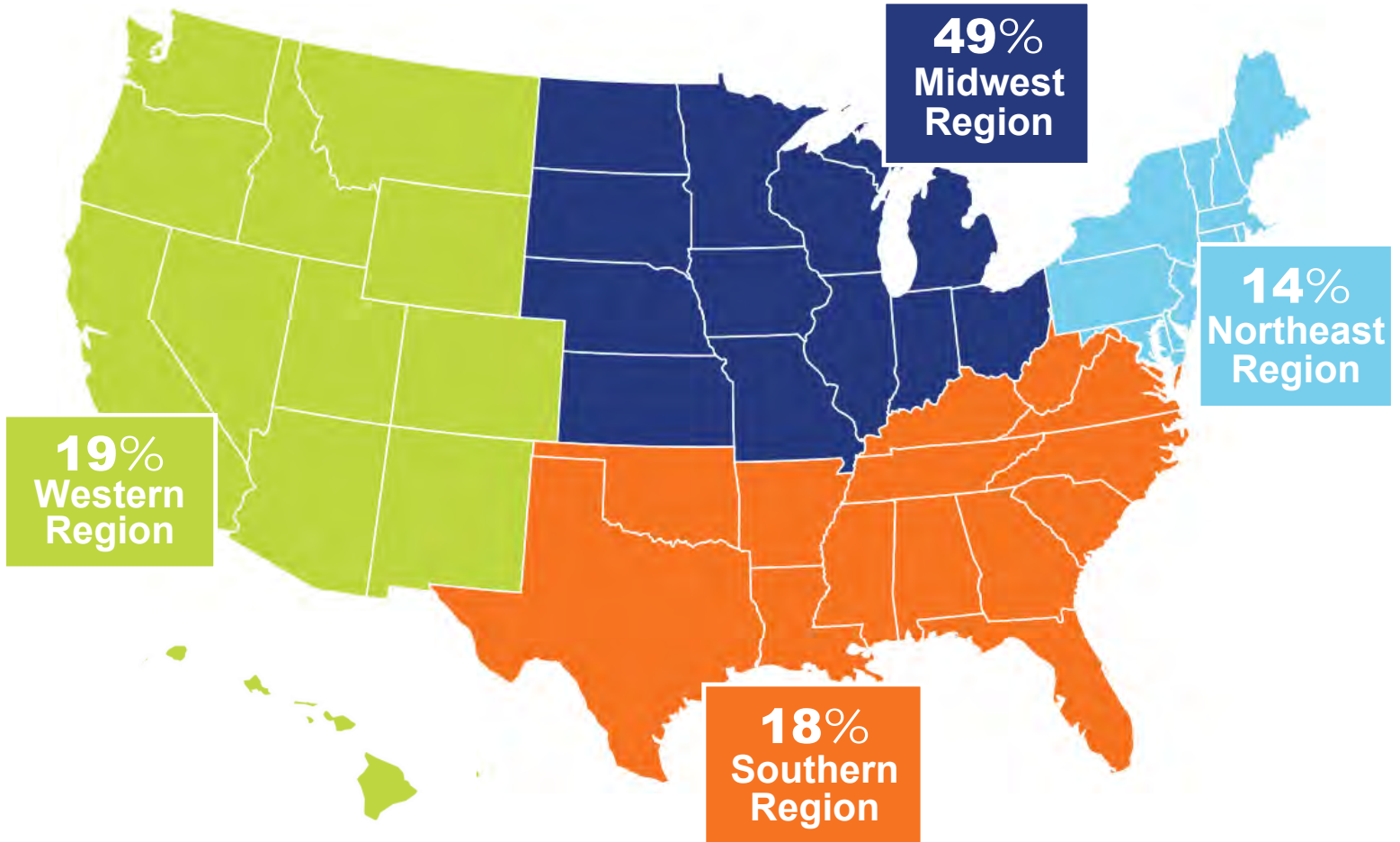
Accommodation  
and Food  
Services

Industries  
"Administrative and Support and Waste  
Management and Remediation Services,"  
"Mining," and  
"Management of Companies and  
Enterprises," have less than 1% of  
participants.



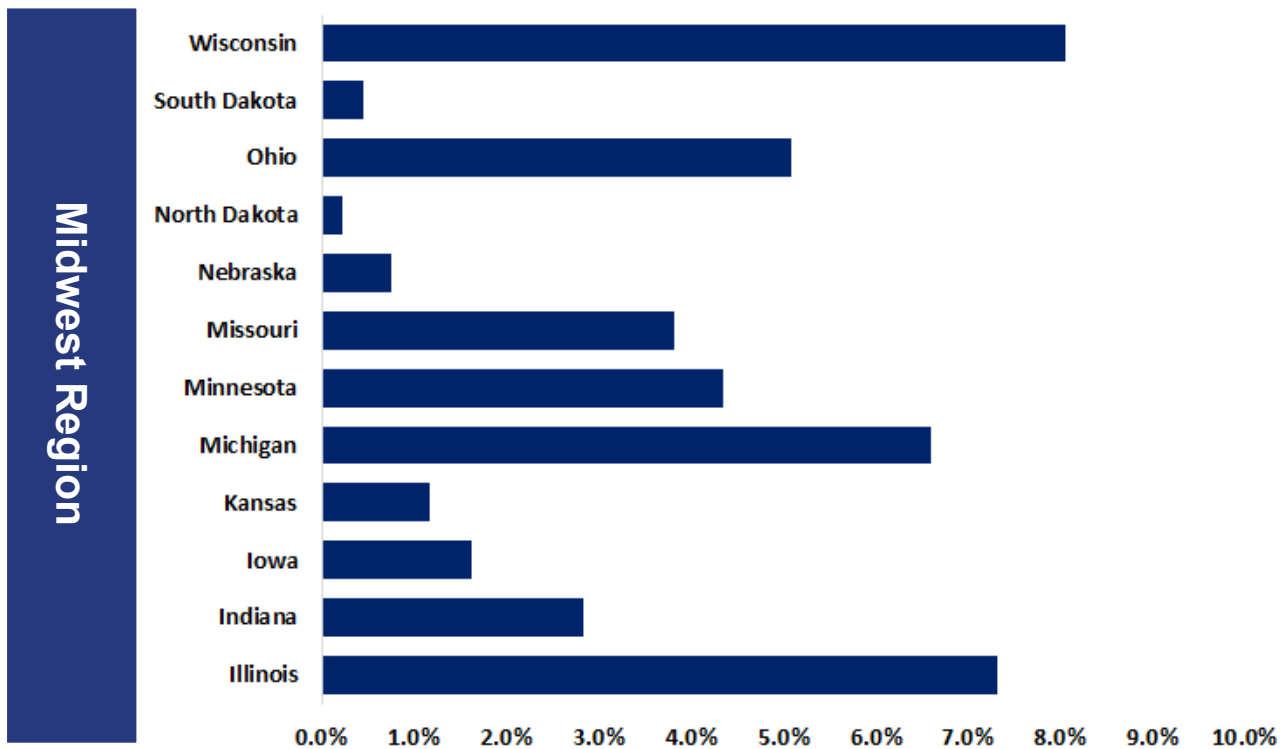
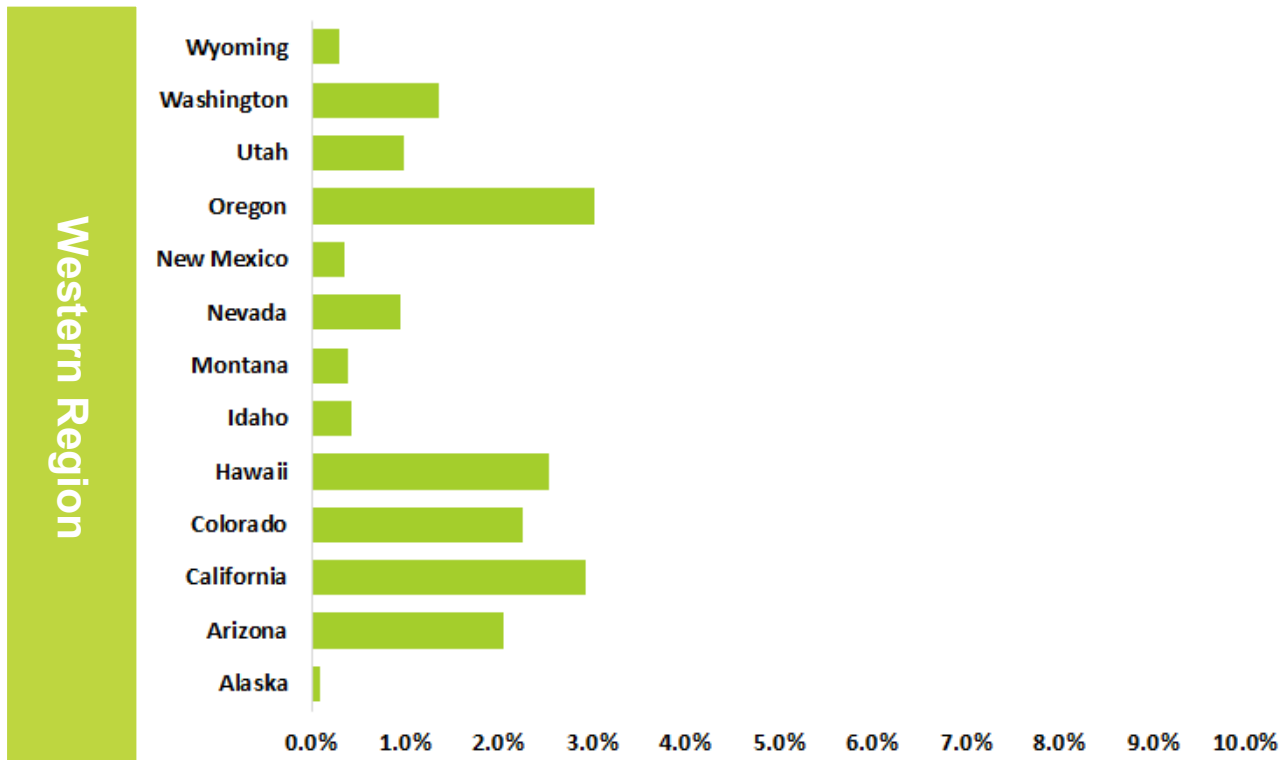
# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Distribution by Geographic Region



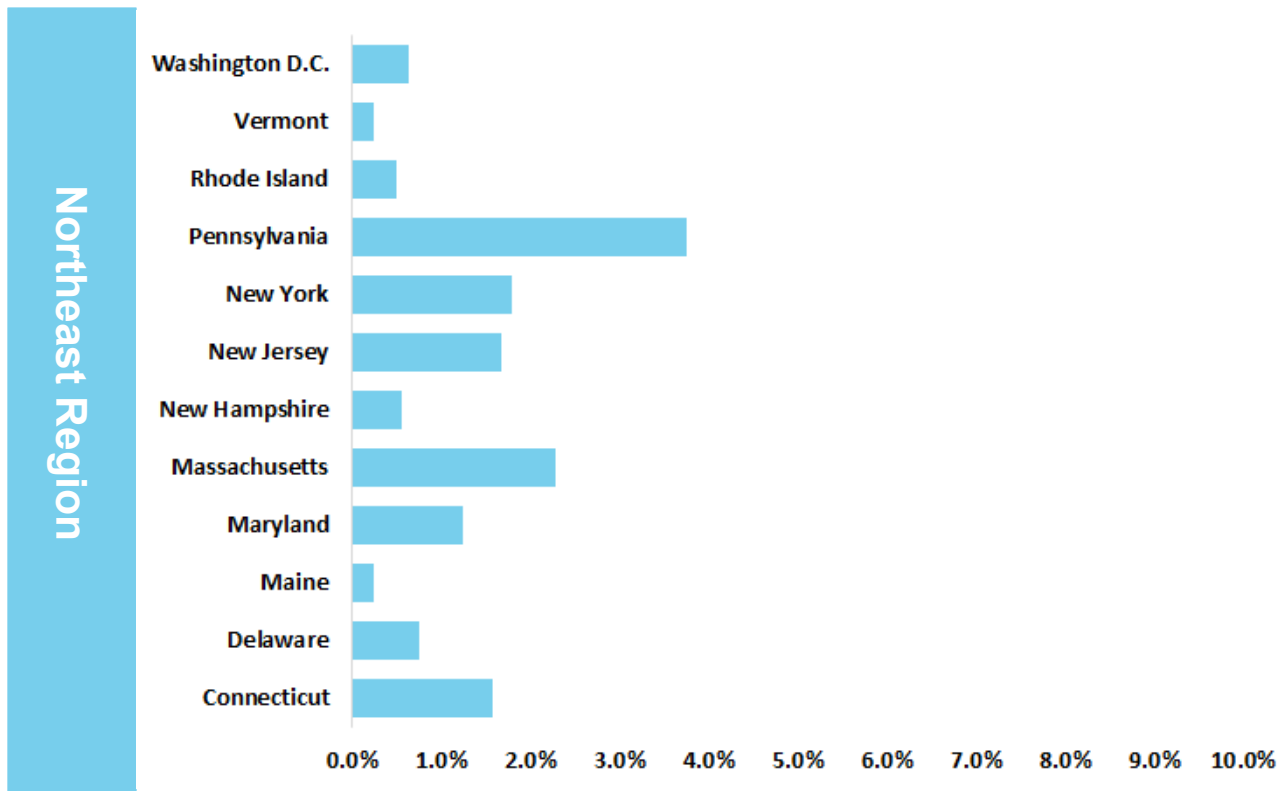
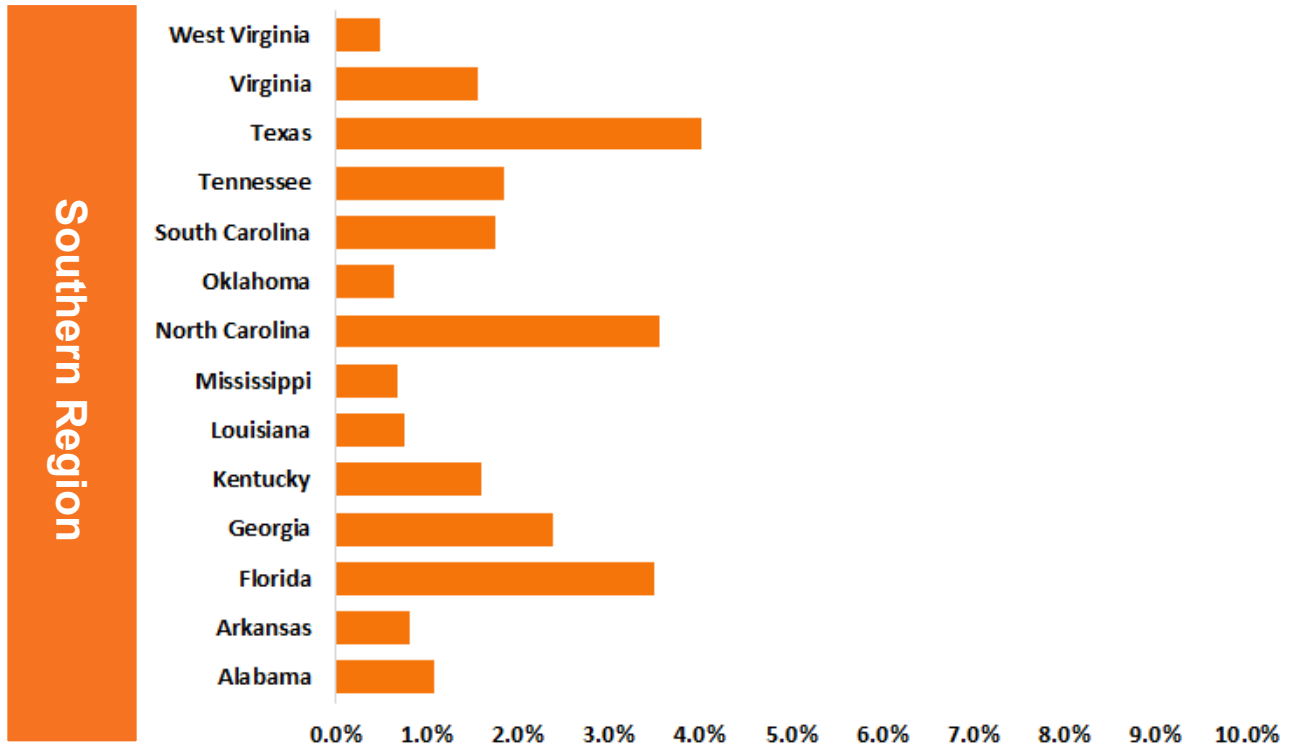
# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Distribution by State



# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Distribution by State



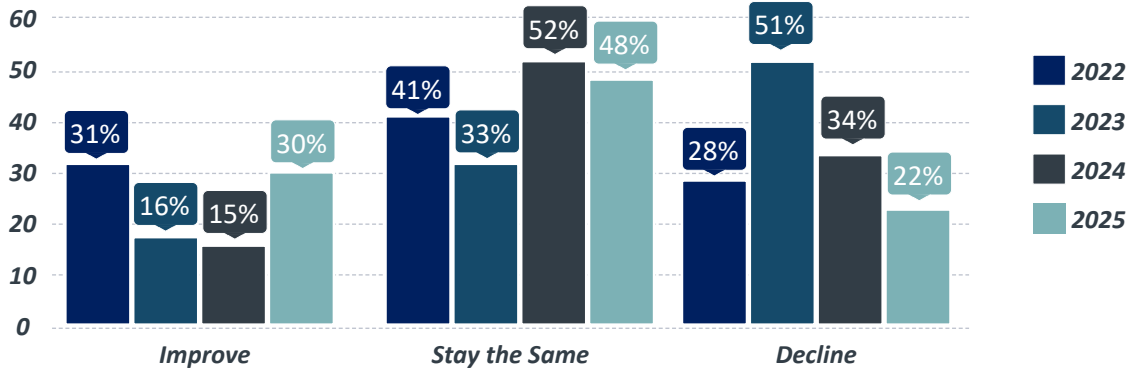
# 2025 National Business Trends

## Year-to-Year Comparisons

### U.S. Economy Outlook

Organizations are indicating that the optimism for the U.S. economy expressed in the previous year's study is likely to continue. Seventy-eight percent of organizations expect the economy will either improve or remain unchanged, up from 67% in 2024.

Overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months



### Challenges to Organizations

The top challenges to organizations within their industry have remained the same between 2022 and 2024. The top challenges were:



Talent Acquisition



Talent Retention



Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries

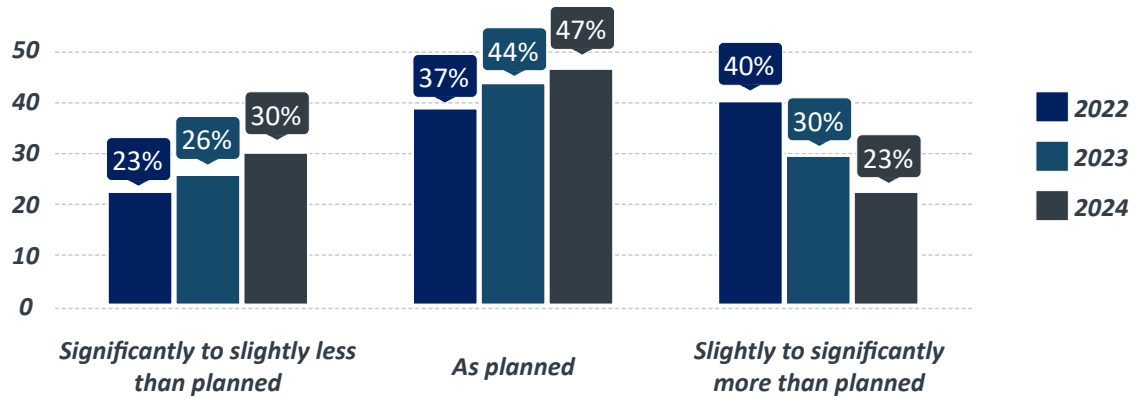
# 2025 National Business Trends

## Year-to-Year Comparisons

### Hiring Employees

Recruitment has remained a challenge for many organizations, regardless of the industry. According to 30% of respondents, they hired fewer people than they had anticipated.

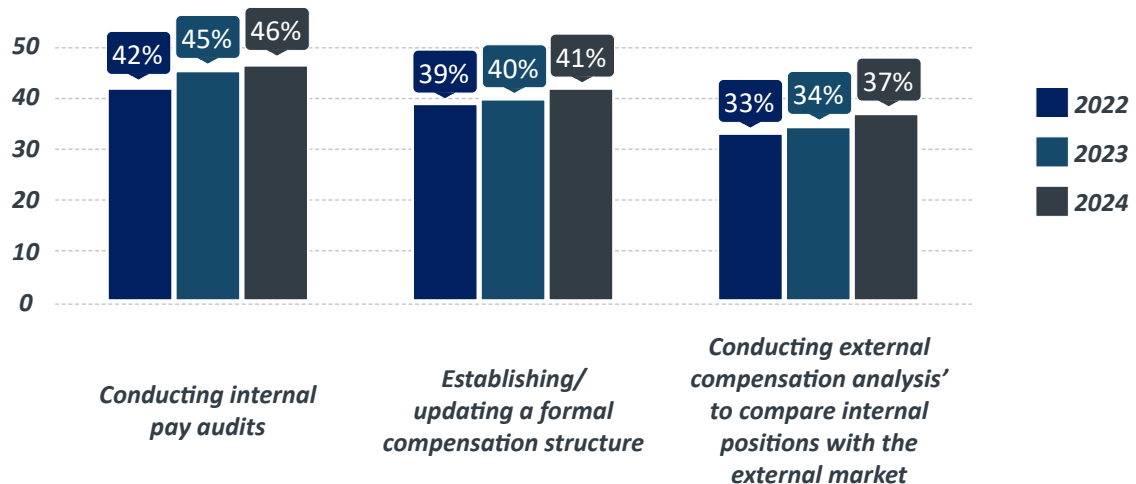
Organization Hiring as Originally Planned



### Pay Equity and Ensuring Compliance

Staying in compliance with local, state, and federal legislation has become more important in light of the recent emphasis on pay equity. According to 46% of respondents, conducting internal pay audits continues to be the most popular strategy.

Top 3 Ways Organizations are Ensuring Compliance with Pay Equity



# **Section One: National Report**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Significant Trends Summary – National Report

The following highlights reflect the National Business Trends Survey responses of 1,024 organizations. While our summary seems to indicate a fair amount of optimism toward the economy on the part of business executives for 2025, you may feel differently based on your review of the detailed national survey reports which follow.

**Notes:**

- a. All of the following percentages in this summary have been rounded to the nearest whole percent
  - b. The largest industry group represented in this survey is manufacturing (40%)
  - c. 73% of the responding organizations are for-profit and 69% are privately held
  - d. 77% of the survey participants operate with less than 250 employees
  - e. 49% of the responses are from the Midwest Region, representing the largest regional sampling.
1. Executives expect the overall outlook for the 2025 economy to improve (30%) or stay the same (48%) when compared to 2024. *(Survey Question #1)*
  2. When describing their business outlook for 2025, 82% of executives project flat to significant increases in sales/revenue. For 2024, 69% expect sales/revenue to be flat to significantly better compared to 2023. *(Survey Questions #2 & 3)*
  3. When executives were asked what they believe are the greatest challenges to their business in 2024, the top three responses were talent acquisition, talent retention, and ability to pay competitive wages/salaries. *(Survey Question #5)*
  4. Whereas 44% of the executives surveyed plan to maintain 2024 staffing levels in 2025, 48% of the respondents said they plan to hire regular staff in 2025. *(Survey Question #8)*
  5. When ask the primary reasons for their hiring plans, 88% of the respondents said they will be replacing staff due to voluntary turnover, and 75% said their hiring will be due to involuntary turnover. *(Survey Question #10)*
  6. Executives identified the following “serious” challenges for their businesses (listed in order of the top 5 long-term responses): *(Survey Question #4)*

**Note:** Short-term: within next year  
 Long-term: within next 5 years

	Short-Term % of Responses	Long-Term % of Responses
Cybersecurity	48%	54%
Talent Acquisition	43%	47%
Developing Future Leaders	34%	42%
Talent Retention	36%	41%
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	32%	38%

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7. Approximately 45% of executives report that skilled professional staff (non-manager) positions are the most challenging when it comes to recruitment. Approximately 31% of respondents also report that professional staff (non-managers) are the most challenging in terms of retention. *(Survey Question #12)*
8. When asked which strategies executives are using to overcome retention challenges, adjusting pay ranges upward, focusing on existing staff receiving additional training and development, and focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult were the top responses. *(Survey Question #13)*
9. 81% of the executives responding to the survey are planning to award wage/salary increases in 2025, and 90% have awarded actual increases during 2024. *(Survey Questions #24 & 25)*
10. Following are the top 5 measures that executives say they have been or are planning to continue to implement in 2024 and 2025 to strengthen business results (listed in order of the top 2025 responses). *(Survey Question #28)*

	<b>2024 % of Responses</b>	<b>2025 % of Responses</b>
Invest in new technology	41%	49%
Invest in equipment	39%	44%
Increase recruiting emphasis	25%	27%
Increase training budget	19%	26%
Invest in data security	23%	23%



# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 1024

Report Cut: National

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	13	1.27%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	7	0.68%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	12	1.17%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	27	2.64%
Construction	37	3.61%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	295	28.81%
Education Services	29	2.83%
Financial & Insurance	62	6.05%
Health Care & Social Assistance	106	10.35%
Information	15	1.46%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	3	0.29%
Mining	2	0.20%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	111	10.84%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	85	8.30%
Public Administration	24	2.34%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	16	1.56%
Retail Trade	22	2.15%
Services (Except Public Administration)	64	6.25%
Transportation & Warehousing	29	2.83%
Utilities	16	1.56%
Wholesale Trade	49	4.79%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	521	50.88%
100 to 249	270	26.37%
250 to 499	130	12.70%
500 to 999	58	5.66%
1,000 or more	45	4.39%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	702	68.55%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	43	4.20%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	237	23.14%
Public Sector/Government	42	4.10%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 1024

Report Cut: National

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	311	30.4%
Stay the same	489	47.8%
Decline	224	21.9%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	81	7.9%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	426	41.6%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	206	20.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	176	17.2%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	86	8.4%
Do not know	49	4.8%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	103	10.1%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	528	51.6%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	203	19.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	82	8.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	24	2.3%
Do not know	84	8.2%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	725	75.13%	647	67.26%
Mild	193	20.00%	228	23.70%
Serious	47	4.87%	87	9.04%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	190	19.29%	158	16.12%
Mild	563	57.16%	559	57.04%
Serious	232	23.55%	263	26.84%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	679	70.22%	603	62.62%
Mild	244	25.23%	281	29.18%
Serious	44	4.55%	79	8.20%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	360	36.96%	299	30.82%
Mild	502	51.54%	517	53.30%
Serious	112	11.50%	154	15.88%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 1024

Report Cut: National

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	273	27.97%	254	26.13%
Mild	472	48.36%	495	50.93%
Serious	231	23.67%	223	22.94%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	127	12.76%	84	8.49%
Mild	440	44.22%	437	44.19%
Serious	428	43.02%	468	47.32%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	149	15.04%	113	11.46%
Mild	484	48.84%	470	47.67%
Serious	358	36.13%	403	40.87%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	231	23.48%	186	19.04%
Mild	501	50.91%	450	46.06%
Serious	252	25.61%	341	34.90%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	155	15.67%	130	13.22%
Mild	513	51.87%	475	48.32%
Serious	321	32.46%	378	38.45%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	519	52.91%	482	49.49%
Mild	348	35.47%	358	36.76%
Serious	114	11.62%	134	13.76%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	502	51.59%	462	47.48%
Mild	372	38.23%	393	40.39%
Serious	99	10.17%	118	12.13%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	233	23.85%	210	21.83%
Mild	479	49.03%	451	46.88%
Serious	265	27.12%	301	31.29%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	255	26.32%	220	22.80%
Mild	483	49.85%	462	47.88%
Serious	231	23.84%	283	29.33%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	337	35.25%	318	33.19%
Mild	437	45.71%	418	43.63%
Serious	182	19.04%	222	23.17%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 1024

Report Cut: National

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	314	32.54%	289	30.10%
Mild	448	46.42%	428	44.58%
Serious	203	21.04%	243	25.31%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	247	25.39%	215	22.26%
Mild	530	54.47%	523	54.14%
Serious	196	20.14%	228	23.60%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	415	42.70%	403	41.68%
Mild	351	36.11%	358	37.06%
Serious	206	21.19%	206	21.33%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	626	63.88%	590	60.57%
Mild	288	29.39%	302	31.01%
Serious	66	6.73%	82	8.42%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	83	8.47%	88	9.03%
Mild	514	52.45%	528	54.21%
Serious	385	39.29%	361	37.06%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	188	19.18%	159	16.32%
Mild	550	56.12%	548	56.26%
Serious	244	24.90%	262	26.90%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	148	15.10%	121	12.42%
Mild	489	49.90%	434	44.56%
Serious	336	34.29%	412	42.30%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	85	8.67%	73	7.49%
Mild	419	42.76%	374	38.40%
Serious	473	48.27%	523	53.70%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	453	46.22%	428	43.94%
Mild	431	43.98%	440	45.17%
Serious	90	9.18%	102	10.47%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	369	37.65%	284	29.16%
Mild	493	50.31%	487	50.00%
Serious	112	11.43%	200	20.53%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	206	21.02%	205	21.05%
Mild	429	43.78%	458	47.02%
Serious	338	34.49%	303	31.11%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 1024

Report Cut: National

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	192	19.59%	167	17.15%
Mild	555	56.63%	513	52.67%
Serious	235	23.98%	298	30.60%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	253	25.82%	237	24.33%
Mild	570	58.16%	555	56.98%
Serious	115	11.73%	138	14.17%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	440	44.90%	436	44.76%
Mild	182	18.57%	175	17.97%
Serious	33	3.37%	39	4.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	21	7	9	86
Competition in general	128	55	62	556
Product obsolescence	12	9	19	73
Changing customer preferences	41	53	37	266
Customer's ability to afford	86	45	55	403
Talent acquisition	178	127	78	866
Talent retention	79	131	73	572
Ability to pay for benefits costs	18	51	55	211
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	81	109	101	562
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	3	8	15	40
Ability to maintain quality product/service	25	24	23	146
Cost of materials	69	83	62	435
Cost of equipment	9	25	28	105
Taxes	9	6	17	56
Cost of regulatory compliance	23	19	26	133
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	13	25	20	109
Employee safety	15	9	18	81
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	8	10	29
Inflation	47	43	49	276
Employee engagement	10	27	54	138
Developing future leaders	31	35	49	212
Cybersecurity	30	28	31	177
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	1	4	8	19
A.I. technology and platforms	6	15	17	65
Political uncertainty	32	17	34	164
Talent skills gap	17	25	33	134
Unknown challenges	4	10	13	45
Other	14	5	7	59

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 1024

Report Cut: National

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	78	7.62%
Slightly less than planned	224	21.88%
As planned	480	46.88%
Slightly more than planned	209	20.41%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	28	2.73%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	470	45.90%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	447	43.65%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	102	9.96%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	489	47.75%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	42	4.10%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	451	44.04%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	35	3.42%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	282	29.28%	170	18.24%
No	681	70.72%	762	81.76%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	697	69.91%	548	56.73%
No	300	30.09%	418	43.27%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	761	76.10%	641	65.88%
No	239	23.90%	332	34.12%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	112	29.09%	101	26.86%
No	273	70.91%	275	73.14%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	555	70.79%	516	67.36%
No	229	29.21%	250	32.64%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 1024

Report Cut: National

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	35	3.49%
Some due to this	607	60.58%
None due to this	360	35.93%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	7	0.71%
Some due to this	110	11.09%
None due to this	875	88.21%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	64	6.37%
Some due to this	824	81.99%
None due to this	117	11.64%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	29	2.91%
Some due to this	718	71.94%
None due to this	251	25.15%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	26	2.60%
Some due to this	636	63.66%
None due to this	337	33.73%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	6	0.61%
Some due to this	125	12.63%
None due to this	859	86.77%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 1024

Report Cut: National

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	43	4.24%	11	1.09%	23	2.27%
Somewhat dissatisfied	211	28.57%	147	14.53%	191	18.85%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	171	25.71%	194	19.17%	171	16.88%
Somewhat satisfied	451	35.71%	456	45.06%	445	43.93%
Very satisfied	138	8.57%	204	20.16%	183	18.07%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	332	32.42%	93	9.08%	82	8.01%
Middle managers	348	33.98%	133	12.99%	165	16.11%
Professional staff (non-managers)	458	44.73%	143	13.96%	320	31.25%
Skilled production workers	410	40.04%	118	11.52%	275	26.86%
Unskilled production workers	214	20.90%	109	10.64%	247	24.12%
Entry-level office workers	211	20.61%	86	8.40%	214	20.90%
Entry-level non-office workers	164	16.02%	71	6.93%	173	16.89%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	198	19.34%	47	4.59%	97	9.47%
Service workers	157	15.33%	61	5.96%	152	14.84%
Other	46	4.49%	16	1.56%	36	3.52%
None	56	5.47%	111	10.84%	86	8.40%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 1024

Report Cut: National

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	476	46.48%	480	46.88%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	226	22.07%	518	50.59%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	254	24.80%	618	60.35%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	458	44.73%	652	63.67%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	371	36.23%	69	6.74%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	458	44.73%	86	8.40%
Increasing starting salaries	641	62.60%	235	22.95%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	273	26.66%	288	28.13%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	124	12.11%	123	12.01%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	208	20.31%	100	9.77%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	110	10.74%	206	20.12%
Shortening the hiring process	286	27.93%	35	3.42%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	250	24.41%	87	8.50%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	371	36.23%	234	22.85%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	116	11.33%	169	16.50%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	434	42.38%	60	5.86%
Participating in job fairs	372	36.33%	45	4.39%
Building/increasing brand awareness	371	36.23%	212	20.70%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	112	10.94%	89	8.69%
Using formal candidate tracking system	338	33.01%	64	6.25%
Other	19	1.86%	13	1.27%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	276	26.95%
Team incentives	138	13.48%
Employee referral bonuses	563	54.98%
Year-end bonuses	395	38.57%
Spot bonuses	200	19.53%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	312	30.47%
Retention bonuses	148	14.45%
Commissions	158	15.43%
Project bonuses	63	6.15%
Profit sharing	181	17.68%
Hazard bonuses/pay	12	1.17%
Additional PTO	258	25.20%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 1024

Report Cut: National

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	182	17.77%
Language premiums	31	3.03%
Other*	23	2.25%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	563	54.98%
Resources to do their job effectively	139	13.57%
Mentoring opportunities	46	4.49%
Competitive/robust health benefits	372	36.33%
Opportunities to connect with others	44	4.30%
Driven by the mission of the organization	162	15.82%
Recognition and reward for good performance	286	27.93%
Ongoing training on new technologies	52	5.08%
Competitive pay	852	83.20%
Good work/life balance	765	74.71%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	132	12.89%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	347	33.89%
Current technology	8	0.78%
Remote work opportunities	142	13.87%
Hybrid work opportunities	196	19.14%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	39	3.81%
Regular full-time hours	114	11.13%
Strong organizational culture	242	23.63%
Challenging work	58	5.66%
Diverse workforce	13	1.27%
Vacation/paid time off	339	33.11%
Focus on employee safety	17	1.66%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	56	5.50%
No change	444	43.61%
More difficult	518	50.88%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 1024

Report Cut: National

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	35	6.76%
Lack of qualified candidates	426	82.24%
Lack of technical skills	205	39.58%
Lack of soft skills	112	21.62%
Lack of work experience	193	37.26%
Our organization's geographic location	85	16.41%
Market competition/high demand	227	43.82%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	294	56.76%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	15	2.90%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	87	16.80%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	53	10.23%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	133	25.68%
Other *	21	4.05%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	373	36.86%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	235	23.22%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	60	5.93%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	21	2.08%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	323	31.92%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	240	23.72%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	323	31.92%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	125	12.35%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	32	3.16%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	292	28.85%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	73	7.13%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	272	26.56%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	100	9.77%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	24	2.34%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	194	18.95%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	75	7.32%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	320	31.25%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 1024

Report Cut: National

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	467	45.61%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	225	21.97%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	419	40.92%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	160	15.63%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	62	6.05%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	377	36.82%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	57	5.57%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	103	10.06%
Creating/redefining policies	129	12.60%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	69	6.74%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	201	19.63%
N/A	162	15.82%
Other *	16	1.56%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	150	14.78%
No	666	65.62%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	199	19.61%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	419	41.16%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	103	10.12%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	420	41.26%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	76	7.47%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 1024

Report Cut: National

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	924	90.23%
Paid lump sum awards	80	7.81%
Paid variable/bonus awards	307	29.98%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	31	3.03%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	29	2.83%
Reduced wages/salaries	8	0.78%
Reduced hours worked	24	2.34%
Uncertain	45	4.39%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	833	81.35%
Paying lump sum awards	84	8.20%
Paying variable/bonus awards	311	30.37%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	24	2.34%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	31	3.03%
Reducing wages/salaries	4	0.39%
Reducing hours worked	14	1.37%
Uncertain	143	13.96%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	658	64.26%	473	46.19%
Increased standard wages	486	47.46%	391	38.18%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	497	48.54%	489	47.75%
Implemented or increased variable pay	83	8.11%	95	9.28%
Temporarily bumped pay	20	1.95%	4	0.39%
Other	10	0.98%	16	1.56%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	108	10.55%	109	10.64%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 1024

Report Cut: National

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	147	14.36%	138	13.48%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	138	13.48%	145	14.16%
Invest in new technology	419	40.92%	502	49.02%
Invest in equipment	403	39.36%	451	44.04%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	75	7.32%	89	8.69%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	70	6.84%	97	9.47%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	98	9.57%	131	12.79%
Increase training budget	195	19.04%	269	26.27%
Increase total rewards communication/education	139	13.57%	234	22.85%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	238	23.24%	239	23.34%
Increase recruiting emphasis	251	24.51%	273	26.66%
Pay above market rates	114	11.13%	121	11.82%
Enhance the benefits package	150	14.65%	224	21.88%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	188	18.36%	233	22.75%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	153	14.94%	215	21.00%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	102	9.96%	91	8.89%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	19	1.86%	22	2.15%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	45	4.39%	46	4.49%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	94	9.18%	157	15.33%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	73	7.13%	169	16.50%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	9	0.88%	15	1.46%
Hold off on investing in new technology	50	4.88%	47	4.59%
Hold off on investing in equipment	58	5.66%	51	4.98%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	7	0.68%	22	2.15%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	57	5.57%	65	6.35%
Reduce training budget	26	2.54%	29	2.83%
Limiting employee travel	132	12.89%	107	10.45%
Hiring freezes	86	8.40%	59	5.76%
Implementing furloughs	25	2.44%	8	0.78%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	105	10.25%	35	3.42%
Reduce benefits package	7	0.68%	12	1.17%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	19	1.86%	21	2.05%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	24	2.34%	43	4.20%
Freezing compensation increases	33	3.22%	33	3.22%
Outsourcing roles or functions	38	3.71%	55	5.37%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 1024

Report Cut: National

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	89	8.69%	53	5.18%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	363	35.45%	104	10.16%
Increasing presence on social media	589	57.52%	171	16.70%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	80	7.81%	32	3.13%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	236	23.05%	100	9.77%
Partnering with brand influencers	72	7.03%	38	3.71%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	201	19.63%	105	10.25%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	389	37.99%	148	14.45%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	232	22.66%	100	9.77%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 1024

Report Cut: National

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	485	47.36%	163	15.92%	22	2.15%
Website content production	395	38.57%	222	21.68%	58	5.66%
Marketing content production	361	35.25%	250	24.41%	83	8.11%
Other content production	406	39.65%	174	16.99%	53	5.18%
Digital personal assistant	476	46.48%	110	10.74%	22	2.15%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	425	41.50%	156	15.23%	47	4.59%
Customer relationship management	472	46.09%	132	12.89%	20	1.95%
Inventory management	468	45.70%	109	10.64%	15	1.46%
Product recommendations	498	48.63%	64	6.25%	9	0.88%
Accounting	486	47.46%	90	8.79%	22	2.15%
Supply chain operations	510	49.80%	63	6.15%	9	0.88%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	401	39.16%	213	20.80%	53	5.18%
Application and screening management	424	41.41%	165	16.11%	34	3.32%
Audience segmentation	500	48.83%	52	5.08%	3	0.29%
Process improvement	393	38.38%	195	19.04%	38	3.71%
Idea generation	338	33.01%	238	23.24%	86	8.40%
Process automation	383	37.40%	194	18.95%	42	4.10%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	430	41.99%	130	12.70%	38	3.71%



**Section Two:  
Western  
Region Report**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Significant Trends Summary – Western Region Report

The following highlights reflect the National Business Trends Survey responses of 292 organizations. While our summary seems to indicate a fair amount of optimism toward the economy on the part of business executives for 2025, you may feel differently based on your review of the detailed national survey reports which follow.

**Notes:**

- a. All of the following percentages in this summary have been rounded to the nearest whole percent
  - b. The largest industry group represented in this survey is manufacturing (26%)
  - c. 73% of the responding organizations are for-profit and 68% are privately held
  - d. 74% of the survey participants operate with less than 250 employees
1. Executives expect the overall outlook for the 2025 economy to improve (35%) or stay the same (48%) when compared to 2024. *(Survey Question #1)*
  2. When describing their business outlook for 2025, 83% of executives project flat to significant increases in sales/revenue. For 2024, 73% expect sales/revenue to be flat to significantly better compared to 2023. *(Survey Questions #2 & 3)*
  3. When executives were asked what they believe are the greatest challenges to their business in 2024, the top three responses were talent acquisition, talent retention, and ability to pay competitive wages/salaries. *(Survey Question #5)*
  4. Whereas 42% of the executives surveyed plan to maintain 2024 staffing levels in 2025, 51% of the respondents said they plan to hire permanent staff in 2025. *(Survey Question #8)*
  5. When ask the primary reasons for their hiring plans, 89% of the respondents said they will be replacing staff due to voluntary turnover, and 76% said their hiring will be due to involuntary turnover. *(Survey Question #10)*
  6. Executives identified the following “serious” challenges for their businesses (listed in order of the top 5 long-term responses): *(Survey Question #4)*

**Note:** Short-term: within next year  
 Long-term: within next 5 years

	Short-Term % of Responses	Long-Term % of Responses
Cybersecurity	49%	54%
Talent Acquisition	49%	51%
Talent Retention	39%	42%
Developing future leaders	34%	40%
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	33%	37%

## 2025 National Business Trends

7. Approximately 48% of executives report that skilled professional staff (non-managers) are the most challenging when it comes to recruitment. Approximately 35% of respondents also report that professional staff (non-managers) are the most challenging in terms of retention as well. *(Survey Question #12)*
8. When asked which strategies executives are using to overcome retention challenges, adjusting pay ranges upward, focusing on existing staff receiving additional training and development, and focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult were the top responses. *(Survey Question #13)*
9. 84% of the executives responding to the survey are planning to award wage/salary increases in 2025, and 91% have awarded actual increases during 2024. *(Survey Questions #24 & 25)*
10. Following are the top 5 measures that executives say they have been or are planning to continue to implement in 2024 and 2025 to strengthen business results (listed in order of the top 2025 responses). *(Survey Question #28)*

	<b>2024 % of Responses</b>	<b>2025 % of Responses</b>
Invest in new technology	42%	53%
Invest in equipment	35%	42%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	23%	28%
Increase recruiting emphasis	27%	27%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	26%	26%

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 292

Report Cut: Western

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	5	1.71%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4	1.37%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	7	2.40%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	6	2.05%
Construction	10	3.42%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	54	18.49%
Education Services	9	3.08%
Financial & Insurance	25	8.56%
Health Care & Social Assistance	36	12.33%
Information	8	2.74%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	2	0.68%
Mining	1	0.34%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	21	7.19%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	32	10.96%
Public Administration	2	0.68%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	6	2.05%
Retail Trade	7	2.40%
Services (Except Public Administration)	21	7.19%
Transportation & Warehousing	12	4.11%
Utilities	5	1.71%
Wholesale Trade	19	6.51%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	126	43.15%
100 to 249	91	31.16%
250 to 499	36	12.33%
500 to 999	18	6.16%
1,000 or more	21	7.19%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	200	68.49%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	12	4.11%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	74	25.34%
Public Sector/Government	6	2.05%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 292

Report Cut: Western

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	102	34.9%
Stay the same	140	47.9%
Decline	50	17.1%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	23	7.9%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	127	43.5%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	63	21.6%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	43	14.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	20	6.8%
Do not know	16	5.5%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	32	11.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	153	52.4%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	56	19.2%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	24	8.2%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	9	3.1%
Do not know	18	6.2%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	213	76.90%	190	68.84%
Mild	50	18.05%	59	21.38%
Serious	14	5.05%	27	9.78%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	56	19.65%	43	15.19%
Mild	155	54.39%	151	53.36%
Serious	74	25.96%	89	31.45%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	181	64.87%	160	57.76%
Mild	86	30.82%	89	32.13%
Serious	12	4.30%	28	10.11%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	107	37.94%	86	30.71%
Mild	137	48.58%	143	51.07%
Serious	38	13.48%	51	18.21%

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4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	81	28.72%	74	26.43%
Mild	134	47.52%	144	51.43%
Serious	67	23.76%	62	22.14%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	33	11.54%	21	7.37%
Mild	114	39.86%	120	42.11%
Serious	139	48.60%	144	50.53%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	42	14.63%	35	12.32%
Mild	134	46.69%	130	45.77%
Serious	111	38.68%	119	41.90%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	73	25.70%	56	19.79%
Mild	143	50.35%	135	47.70%
Serious	68	23.94%	92	32.51%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	51	17.83%	41	14.44%
Mild	141	49.30%	138	48.59%
Serious	94	32.87%	105	36.97%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	140	49.30%	129	45.42%
Mild	110	38.73%	111	39.08%
Serious	34	11.97%	44	15.49%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	144	51.43%	130	46.59%
Mild	103	36.79%	112	40.14%
Serious	33	11.79%	37	13.26%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	77	27.40%	70	25.36%
Mild	139	49.47%	131	47.46%
Serious	65	23.13%	75	27.17%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	81	29.03%	70	25.27%
Mild	138	49.46%	138	49.82%
Serious	60	21.51%	69	24.91%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	96	35.04%	92	33.33%
Mild	135	49.27%	127	46.01%
Serious	43	15.69%	57	20.65%

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4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	83	29.96%	76	27.64%
Mild	141	50.90%	133	48.36%
Serious	53	19.13%	66	24.00%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	60	21.28%	57	20.36%
Mild	162	57.45%	150	53.57%
Serious	60	21.28%	73	26.07%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	125	44.33%	124	44.60%
Mild	106	37.59%	105	37.50%
Serious	51	18.09%	49	17.50%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	163	57.60%	152	54.29%
Mild	98	34.63%	101	36.07%
Serious	22	7.77%	27	9.64%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	30	10.60%	27	9.64%
Mild	157	55.48%	162	57.86%
Serious	96	33.92%	91	32.50%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	58	20.49%	50	17.86%
Mild	152	53.71%	150	53.57%
Serious	72	25.44%	77	27.50%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	45	15.90%	34	12.14%
Mild	139	49.12%	131	46.79%
Serious	95	33.57%	113	40.36%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	25	8.83%	24	8.57%
Mild	114	40.28%	100	35.71%
Serious	140	49.47%	151	53.93%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	131	46.29%	124	44.29%
Mild	122	43.11%	121	43.21%
Serious	28	9.89%	32	11.43%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	99	34.98%	78	27.86%
Mild	141	49.82%	137	48.93%
Serious	41	14.49%	66	23.57%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	66	23.32%	59	21.07%
Mild	128	45.23%	141	50.36%
Serious	88	31.10%	78	27.86%

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4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	63	22.26%	53	18.93%
Mild	154	54.42%	142	50.71%
Serious	69	24.38%	89	31.79%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	72	25.44%	74	26.43%
Mild	163	57.60%	151	53.93%
Serious	37	13.07%	45	16.07%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	126	44.52%	126	45.00%
Mild	65	22.97%	61	21.79%
Serious	7	2.47%	9	3.21%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	5	2	2	21
Competition in general	45	9	18	171
Product obsolescence	5	4	4	27
Changing customer preferences	16	17	10	92
Customer's ability to afford	26	11	16	116
Talent acquisition	45	37	26	235
Talent retention	25	44	20	183
Ability to pay for benefits costs	4	13	22	60
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	28	39	24	186
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	2	4	4	18
Ability to maintain quality product/service	6	10	7	45
Cost of materials	15	18	12	93
Cost of equipment	1	3	5	14
Taxes	1	1	9	14
Cost of regulatory compliance	6	6	11	41
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	4	12	7	43
Employee safety	2	0	5	11
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	3	3	12
Inflation	10	11	11	63
Employee engagement	2	8	17	39
Developing future leaders	9	8	11	54
Cybersecurity	13	10	9	68
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	3	3
A.I. technology and platforms	4	6	7	31
Political uncertainty	5	4	7	30
Talent skills gap	3	5	12	31
Unknown challenges	0	3	6	12
Other	5	0	0	15



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6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	23	7.88%
Slightly less than planned	67	22.95%
As planned	128	43.84%
Slightly more than planned	63	21.58%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	10	3.42%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	146	50.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	114	39.04%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	30	10.27%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	148	50.68%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	9	3.08%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	124	42.47%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	9	3.08%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	90	32.37%	65	24.25%
No	188	67.63%	203	75.75%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	212	74.39%	176	63.77%
No	73	25.61%	100	36.23%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	226	79.58%	198	71.74%
No	58	20.42%	78	28.26%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	26	24.76%	29	27.36%
No	79	75.24%	77	72.64%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	145	67.13%	137	65.55%
No	71	32.87%	72	34.45%

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10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	11	3.87%
Some due to this	183	64.44%
None due to this	90	31.69%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	2	0.70%
Some due to this	34	11.97%
None due to this	248	87.32%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	19	6.57%
Some due to this	238	82.35%
None due to this	32	11.07%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	7	2.46%
Some due to this	205	71.93%
None due to this	73	25.61%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	7	2.44%
Some due to this	180	62.72%
None due to this	100	34.84%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	0.35%
Some due to this	41	14.54%
None due to this	240	85.11%

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11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	15	5.15%	2	0.69%	7	2.41%
Somewhat dissatisfied	61	28.57%	46	15.86%	68	23.45%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	47	25.71%	52	17.93%	50	17.24%
Somewhat satisfied	125	35.71%	133	45.86%	110	37.93%
Very satisfied	43	8.57%	57	19.66%	55	18.97%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	109	37.33%	31	10.62%	35	11.99%
Middle managers	119	40.75%	34	11.64%	62	21.23%
Professional staff (non-managers)	140	47.95%	43	14.73%	101	34.59%
Skilled production workers	102	34.93%	24	8.22%	70	23.97%
Unskilled production workers	50	17.12%	21	7.19%	67	22.95%
Entry-level office workers	75	25.68%	33	11.30%	72	24.66%
Entry-level non-office workers	59	20.21%	24	8.22%	57	19.52%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	58	19.86%	12	4.11%	29	9.93%
Service workers	52	17.81%	21	7.19%	53	18.15%
Other	15	5.14%	3	1.03%	14	4.79%
None	18	6.16%	37	12.67%	29	9.93%

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13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	143	48.97%	134	45.89%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	61	20.89%	160	54.79%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	74	25.34%	175	59.93%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	128	43.84%	194	66.44%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	132	45.21%	28	9.59%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	136	46.58%	24	8.22%
Increasing starting salaries	186	63.70%	71	24.32%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	76	26.03%	83	28.42%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	49	16.78%	46	15.75%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	57	19.52%	21	7.19%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	26	8.90%	53	18.15%
Shortening the hiring process	87	29.79%	8	2.74%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	93	31.85%	34	11.64%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	117	40.07%	80	27.40%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	36	12.33%	48	16.44%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	144	49.32%	14	4.79%
Participating in job fairs	114	39.04%	11	3.77%
Building/increasing brand awareness	109	37.33%	52	17.81%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	38	13.01%	30	10.27%
Using formal candidate tracking system	99	33.90%	16	5.48%
Other	7	2.40%	2	0.68%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	83	28.42%
Team incentives	35	11.99%
Employee referral bonuses	154	52.74%
Year-end bonuses	117	40.07%
Spot bonuses	62	21.23%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	93	31.85%
Retention bonuses	45	15.41%
Commissions	44	15.07%
Project bonuses	25	8.56%
Profit sharing	42	14.38%
Hazard bonuses/pay	5	1.71%
Additional PTO	72	24.66%

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14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	50	17.12%
Language premiums	12	4.11%
Other*	5	1.71%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	164	56.16%
Resources to do their job effectively	44	15.07%
Mentoring opportunities	14	4.79%
Competitive/robust health benefits	104	35.62%
Opportunities to connect with others	15	5.14%
Driven by the mission of the organization	54	18.49%
Recognition and reward for good performance	87	29.79%
Ongoing training on new technologies	17	5.82%
Competitive pay	234	80.14%
Good work/life balance	216	73.97%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	38	13.01%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	98	33.56%
Current technology	5	1.71%
Remote work opportunities	52	17.81%
Hybrid work opportunities	58	19.86%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	5	1.71%
Regular full-time hours	23	7.88%
Strong organizational culture	63	21.58%
Challenging work	18	6.16%
Diverse workforce	5	1.71%
Vacation/paid time off	82	28.08%
Focus on employee safety	3	1.03%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	13	4.48%
No change	124	42.76%
More difficult	153	52.76%

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17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	14	9.15%
Lack of qualified candidates	125	81.70%
Lack of technical skills	57	37.25%
Lack of soft skills	34	22.22%
Lack of work experience	59	38.56%
Our organization's geographic location	35	22.88%
Market competition/high demand	60	39.22%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	95	62.09%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	5	3.27%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	31	20.26%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	18	11.76%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	39	25.49%
Other *	6	3.92%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	88	30.34%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	97	33.45%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	30	10.34%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	11	3.79%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	64	22.07%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	62	21.38%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	108	37.24%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	50	17.24%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	7	2.41%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	62	21.38%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	28	9.59%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	86	29.45%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	27	9.25%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	12	4.11%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	73	25.00%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	19	6.51%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	65	22.26%

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<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	143	48.97%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	80	27.40%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	134	45.89%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	55	18.84%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	20	6.85%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	125	42.81%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	27	9.25%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	34	11.64%
Creating/redefining policies	44	15.07%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	30	10.27%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	65	22.26%
N/A	38	13.01%
Other *	7	2.40%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	22	7.61%
No	183	63.32%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	84	29.07%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	128	44.14%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	29	10.00%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	109	37.59%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	24	8.28%

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24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	266	91.10%
Paid lump sum awards	24	8.22%
Paid variable/bonus awards	94	32.19%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	10	3.42%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	6	2.05%
Reduced wages/salaries	1	0.34%
Reduced hours worked	7	2.40%
Uncertain	10	3.42%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	245	83.90%
Paying lump sum awards	28	9.59%
Paying variable/bonus awards	96	32.88%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	7	2.40%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	7	2.40%
Reducing wages/salaries	2	0.68%
Reducing hours worked	5	1.71%
Uncertain	30	10.27%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	182	62.33%	148	50.68%
Increased standard wages	126	43.15%	104	35.62%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	161	55.14%	146	50.00%
Implemented or increased variable pay	27	9.25%	33	11.30%
Temporarily bumped pay	10	3.42%	2	0.68%
Other	3	1.03%	7	2.40%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	29	9.93%	30	10.27%



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27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	44	15.07%	43	14.73%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	35	11.99%	29	9.93%
Invest in new technology	122	41.78%	155	53.08%
Invest in equipment	101	34.59%	124	42.47%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	21	7.19%	28	9.59%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	22	7.53%	35	11.99%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	27	9.25%	36	12.33%
Increase training budget	56	19.18%	74	25.34%
Increase total rewards communication/education	40	13.70%	75	25.68%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	77	26.37%	77	26.37%
Increase recruiting emphasis	79	27.05%	80	27.40%
Pay above market rates	37	12.67%	35	11.99%
Enhance the benefits package	38	13.01%	66	22.60%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	68	23.29%	83	28.42%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	52	17.81%	64	21.92%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	25	8.56%	20	6.85%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	8	2.74%	10	3.42%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	15	5.14%	15	5.14%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	34	11.64%	54	18.49%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	20	6.85%	46	15.75%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	3	1.03%	6	2.05%
Hold off on investing in new technology	14	4.79%	8	2.74%
Hold off on investing in equipment	17	5.82%	9	3.08%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	4	1.37%	9	3.08%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	19	6.51%	16	5.48%
Reduce training budget	9	3.08%	11	3.77%
Limiting employee travel	48	16.44%	33	11.30%
Hiring freezes	29	9.93%	15	5.14%
Implementing furloughs	8	2.74%	2	0.68%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	34	11.64%	11	3.77%
Reduce benefits package	4	1.37%	3	1.03%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	6	2.05%	5	1.71%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	8	2.74%	12	4.11%
Freezing compensation increases	8	2.74%	9	3.08%
Outsourcing roles or functions	10	3.42%	17	5.82%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 292

Report Cut: Western

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	39	13.36%	15	5.14%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	113	38.70%	29	9.93%
Increasing presence on social media	157	53.77%	38	13.01%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	26	8.90%	13	4.45%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	73	25.00%	23	7.88%
Partnering with brand influencers	22	7.53%	12	4.11%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	64	21.92%	24	8.22%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	111	38.01%	40	13.70%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	77	26.37%	29	9.93%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 292

Report Cut: Western

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	114	39.04%	55	18.84%	9	3.08%
Website content production	97	33.22%	54	18.49%	22	7.53%
Marketing content production	88	30.14%	67	22.95%	25	8.56%
Other content production	96	32.88%	48	16.44%	24	8.22%
Digital personal assistant	118	40.41%	31	10.62%	13	4.45%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	102	34.93%	52	17.81%	14	4.79%
Customer relationship management	110	37.67%	45	15.41%	9	3.08%
Inventory management	117	40.07%	29	9.93%	5	1.71%
Product recommendations	125	42.81%	23	7.88%	2	0.68%
Accounting	125	42.81%	26	8.90%	7	2.40%
Supply chain operations	130	44.52%	13	4.45%	3	1.03%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	103	35.27%	57	19.52%	20	6.85%
Application and screening management	103	35.27%	52	17.81%	11	3.77%
Audience segmentation	119	40.75%	18	6.16%	1	0.34%
Process improvement	97	33.22%	54	18.49%	14	4.79%
Idea generation	88	30.14%	60	20.55%	28	9.59%
Process automation	94	32.19%	53	18.15%	15	5.14%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	101	34.59%	44	15.07%	17	5.82%

**Section Three:  
Southern  
Region Report**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Significant Trends Summary – Southern Region Report

The following highlights reflect the National Business Trends Survey responses of 263 organizations. While our summary seems to indicate a fair amount of optimism toward the economy on the part of business executives for 2025, you may feel differently based on your review of the detailed national survey reports which follow.

**Notes:**

- a. All of the following percentages in this summary have been rounded to the nearest whole percent
  - b. The largest industry group represented in this survey is manufacturing (32%)
  - c. 83% of the responding organizations are for-profit and 76% are privately held
  - d. 67% of the survey participants operate with less than 250 employees
1. Executives expect the overall outlook for the 2025 economy to improve (34%) or stay the same (45%) when compared to 2024. *(Survey Question #1)*
  2. When describing their business outlook for 2025, 83% of executives project flat to significant increases in sales/revenue. For 2024, 70% expect sales/revenue to be flat to significantly better compared to 2023. *(Survey Questions #2 & 3)*
  3. When executives were asked what they believe are the greatest challenges to their business in 2024, the top three responses were talent acquisition, talent retention, and competition in general. *(Survey Question #5)*
  4. Whereas 41% of the executives surveyed plan to maintain 2024 staffing levels in 2025, 52% of the respondents said they plan to hire regular staff in 2025. *(Survey Question #8)*
  5. When ask the primary reasons for their hiring plans, 92% of the respondents said they will be replacing staff due to voluntary turnover, and 80% said their hiring will be due to involuntary turnover. *(Survey Question #10)*
  6. Executives identified the following “serious” challenges for their businesses (listed in order of the top 5 long-term responses): *(Survey Question #4)*

**Note:** Short-term: within next year  
 Long-term: within next 5 years

	Short-Term % of Responses	Long-Term % of Responses
Cybersecurity	57%	62%
Developing future leaders	36%	45%
Talent Acquisition	41%	43%
Talent Retention	38%	42%
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	29%	34%

## 2025 National Business Trends

7. Approximately 49% of executives report that skilled professional staff (non-managers) are the most challenging when it comes to recruitment. Approximately 37% of respondents also report that professional staff (non-managers) are the most challenging in terms of retention as well. *(Survey Question #12)*
8. When asked which strategies executives are using to overcome retention challenges, adjusting pay ranges upward, focusing on existing staff receiving additional training and development, and focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult were the top responses. *(Survey Question #13)*
9. 81% of the executives responding to the survey are planning to award wage/salary increases in 2025, and 90% have awarded actual increases during 2024. *(Survey Questions #24 & 25)*
10. Following are the top 5 measures that executives say they have been or are planning to continue to implement in 2024 and 2025 to strengthen business results (listed in order of the top 2025 responses). *(Survey Question #28)*

	<b>2024 % of Responses</b>	<b>2025 % of Responses</b>
Invest in new technology	50%	57%
Invest in equipment	39%	41%
Increase training budget	24%	31%
Increase total rewards communication/education	18%	31%
Increase recruiting emphasis	28%	30%

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 263

Report Cut: Southern

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	2	0.76%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	0.76%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	4	1.52%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	2	0.76%
Construction	11	4.18%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	68	25.86%
Education Services	6	2.28%
Financial & Insurance	20	7.60%
Health Care & Social Assistance	18	6.84%
Information	7	2.66%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	1	0.38%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	15	5.70%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	44	16.73%
Public Administration	4	1.52%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	6	2.28%
Services (Except Public Administration)	18	6.84%
Transportation & Warehousing	7	2.66%
Utilities	5	1.90%
Wholesale Trade	23	8.75%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	99	37.64%
100 to 249	76	28.90%
250 to 499	38	14.45%
500 to 999	26	9.89%
1,000 or more	24	9.13%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	200	76.05%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	19	7.22%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	40	15.21%
Public Sector/Government	4	1.52%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 263

Report Cut: Southern

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	89	33.8%
Stay the same	119	45.2%
Decline	55	20.9%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	28	10.6%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	113	43.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	43	16.3%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	42	16.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	25	9.5%
Do not know	12	4.6%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	35	13.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	131	49.8%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	51	19.4%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	15	5.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	5	1.9%
Do not know	26	9.9%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	183	73.79%	160	64.26%
Mild	54	21.77%	65	26.10%
Serious	11	4.44%	24	9.64%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	41	15.95%	31	12.11%
Mild	139	54.09%	141	55.08%
Serious	77	29.96%	84	32.81%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	174	69.05%	145	57.31%
Mild	67	26.59%	84	33.20%
Serious	11	4.37%	24	9.49%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	91	35.69%	70	27.45%
Mild	129	50.59%	134	52.55%
Serious	35	13.73%	51	20.00%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 263

Report Cut: Southern

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	70	27.45%	68	26.67%
Mild	120	47.06%	130	50.98%
Serious	65	25.49%	57	22.35%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	40	15.44%	24	9.27%
Mild	114	44.02%	124	47.88%
Serious	105	40.54%	111	42.86%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	41	15.83%	35	13.57%
Mild	119	45.95%	115	44.57%
Serious	99	38.22%	108	41.86%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	74	28.91%	56	22.05%
Mild	122	47.66%	115	45.28%
Serious	60	23.44%	83	32.68%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	44	17.12%	41	15.95%
Mild	138	53.70%	128	49.81%
Serious	75	29.18%	88	34.24%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	141	55.29%	130	50.98%
Mild	84	32.94%	88	34.51%
Serious	30	11.76%	37	14.51%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	136	53.75%	127	49.80%
Mild	93	36.76%	101	39.61%
Serious	24	9.49%	27	10.59%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	78	30.95%	71	28.17%
Mild	104	41.27%	106	42.06%
Serious	70	27.78%	75	29.76%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	80	31.50%	74	29.02%
Mild	117	46.06%	113	44.31%
Serious	57	22.44%	68	26.67%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	85	34.69%	79	31.85%
Mild	119	48.57%	119	47.98%
Serious	41	16.73%	50	20.16%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 263

Report Cut: Southern

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	84	33.47%	79	31.60%
Mild	114	45.42%	108	43.20%
Serious	53	21.12%	63	25.20%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	62	24.41%	56	22.22%
Mild	135	53.15%	135	53.57%
Serious	57	22.44%	61	24.21%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	115	46.00%	111	43.87%
Mild	83	33.20%	87	34.52%
Serious	52	20.80%	55	21.83%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	130	51.79%	127	50.60%
Mild	93	37.05%	92	36.65%
Serious	28	11.16%	32	12.75%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	25	9.96%	22	8.76%
Mild	136	54.18%	150	59.76%
Serious	95	37.85%	85	33.86%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	38	15.14%	31	12.35%
Mild	149	59.36%	149	59.36%
Serious	69	27.49%	74	29.48%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	41	16.33%	35	13.94%
Mild	120	47.81%	103	41.04%
Serious	90	35.86%	112	44.62%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	20	7.97%	16	6.37%
Mild	93	37.05%	84	33.47%
Serious	143	56.97%	156	62.15%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	122	48.61%	116	46.22%
Mild	106	42.23%	106	42.23%
Serious	25	9.96%	32	12.75%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	80	31.87%	63	25.10%
Mild	133	52.99%	119	47.41%
Serious	42	16.73%	75	29.88%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	51	20.32%	49	19.52%
Mild	125	49.80%	135	53.78%
Serious	79	31.47%	71	28.29%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 263

Report Cut: Southern

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	54	21.51%	49	19.52%
Mild	141	56.18%	133	52.99%
Serious	61	24.30%	76	30.28%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	76	30.28%	73	29.08%
Mild	142	56.57%	142	56.57%
Serious	29	11.55%	34	13.55%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	120	47.81%	121	48.21%
Mild	51	20.32%	50	19.92%
Serious	10	3.98%	11	4.38%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	4	3	1	19
Competition in general	42	11	27	175
Product obsolescence	4	2	6	22
Changing customer preferences	13	22	9	92
Customer's ability to afford	24	10	10	102
Talent acquisition	38	28	18	188
Talent retention	24	40	18	170
Ability to pay for benefits costs	6	9	16	52
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	12	24	32	116
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	2	0	3	9
Ability to maintain quality product/service	8	8	2	42
Cost of materials	16	26	12	112
Cost of equipment	2	6	4	22
Taxes	1	0	2	5
Cost of regulatory compliance	7	3	7	34
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	7	8	8	45
Employee safety	5	2	2	21
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	3	4	13
Inflation	6	13	12	56
Employee engagement	3	8	16	41
Developing future leaders	5	7	15	44
Cybersecurity	12	9	8	62
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	3	3
A.I. technology and platforms	4	7	5	31
Political uncertainty	8	6	7	43
Talent skills gap	4	5	7	29
Unknown challenges	0	0	4	4
Other	2	0	2	8

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 263

Report Cut: Southern

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	23	8.75%
Slightly less than planned	56	21.29%
As planned	100	38.02%
Slightly more than planned	73	27.76%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	10	3.80%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	134	50.95%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	96	36.50%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	31	11.79%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	136	51.71%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	11	4.18%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	107	40.68%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	8	3.04%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	92	36.36%	58	23.58%
No	161	63.64%	188	76.42%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	203	78.38%	174	68.77%
No	56	21.62%	79	31.23%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	217	83.46%	187	73.62%
No	43	16.54%	67	26.38%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	23	27.06%	21	25.30%
No	62	72.94%	62	74.70%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	138	72.63%	131	70.81%
No	52	27.37%	54	29.19%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 263

Report Cut: Southern

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	9	3.47%
Some due to this	188	72.59%
None due to this	62	23.94%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	1	0.39%
Some due to this	44	16.99%
None due to this	214	82.63%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	14	5.38%
Some due to this	225	86.54%
None due to this	21	8.08%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	8	3.08%
Some due to this	201	77.31%
None due to this	51	19.62%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	4	1.54%
Some due to this	167	64.48%
None due to this	88	33.98%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	4	1.56%
Some due to this	47	18.29%
None due to this	206	80.16%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 263

Report Cut: Southern

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	6	2.29%	3	1.15%	5	1.91%
Somewhat dissatisfied	51	24.21%	44	16.79%	59	22.52%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	43	16.91%	42	16.03%	44	16.79%
Somewhat satisfied	115	43.32%	121	46.18%	100	38.17%
Very satisfied	47	10.85%	52	19.85%	54	20.61%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	100	38.02%	31	11.79%	22	8.37%
Middle managers	100	38.02%	34	12.93%	47	17.87%
Professional staff (non-managers)	128	48.67%	41	15.59%	98	37.26%
Skilled production workers	89	33.84%	29	11.03%	73	27.76%
Unskilled production workers	40	15.21%	26	9.89%	60	22.81%
Entry-level office workers	54	20.53%	31	11.79%	69	26.24%
Entry-level non-office workers	35	13.31%	21	7.98%	52	19.77%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	57	21.67%	12	4.56%	28	10.65%
Service workers	36	13.69%	12	4.56%	34	12.93%
Other	17	6.46%	6	2.28%	11	4.18%
None	18	6.84%	31	11.79%	24	9.13%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 263

Report Cut: Southern

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	119	45.25%	118	44.87%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	48	18.25%	142	53.99%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	62	23.57%	166	63.12%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	114	43.35%	165	62.74%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	134	50.95%	30	11.41%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	131	49.81%	24	9.13%
Increasing starting salaries	162	61.60%	56	21.29%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	78	29.66%	87	33.08%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	55	20.91%	48	18.25%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	61	23.19%	28	10.65%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	24	9.13%	49	18.63%
Shortening the hiring process	82	31.18%	8	3.04%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	83	31.56%	33	12.55%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	115	43.73%	73	27.76%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	36	13.69%	51	19.39%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	124	47.15%	15	5.70%
Participating in job fairs	107	40.68%	11	4.18%
Building/increasing brand awareness	120	45.63%	62	23.57%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	37	14.07%	33	12.55%
Using formal candidate tracking system	105	39.92%	10	3.80%
Other	4	1.52%	1	0.38%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	86	32.70%
Team incentives	44	16.73%
Employee referral bonuses	155	58.94%
Year-end bonuses	116	44.11%
Spot bonuses	61	23.19%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	104	39.54%
Retention bonuses	40	15.21%
Commissions	65	24.71%
Project bonuses	21	7.98%
Profit sharing	43	16.35%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	66	25.10%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 263

Report Cut: Southern

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	45	17.11%
Language premiums	11	4.18%
Other*	3	1.14%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	135	51.33%
Resources to do their job effectively	32	12.17%
Mentoring opportunities	20	7.60%
Competitive/robust health benefits	84	31.94%
Opportunities to connect with others	10	3.80%
Driven by the mission of the organization	44	16.73%
Recognition and reward for good performance	72	27.38%
Ongoing training on new technologies	16	6.08%
Competitive pay	211	80.23%
Good work/life balance	202	76.81%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	30	11.41%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	97	36.88%
Current technology	4	1.52%
Remote work opportunities	57	21.67%
Hybrid work opportunities	66	25.10%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	5	1.90%
Regular full-time hours	18	6.84%
Strong organizational culture	70	26.62%
Challenging work	19	7.22%
Diverse workforce	4	1.52%
Vacation/paid time off	83	31.56%
Focus on employee safety	3	1.14%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	12	4.60%
No change	128	49.04%
More difficult	121	46.36%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 263

Report Cut: Southern

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	9	7.44%
Lack of qualified candidates	96	79.34%
Lack of technical skills	50	41.32%
Lack of soft skills	23	19.01%
Lack of work experience	37	30.58%
Our organization's geographic location	16	13.22%
Market competition/high demand	51	42.15%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	67	55.37%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	3	2.48%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	30	24.79%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	9	7.44%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	35	28.93%
Other *	3	2.48%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	88	33.72%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	98	37.55%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	38	14.56%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	10	3.83%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	27	10.34%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	46	17.62%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	115	44.06%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	47	18.01%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	8	3.07%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	45	17.24%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	27	10.27%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	89	33.84%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	22	8.37%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	11	4.18%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	55	20.91%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	23	8.75%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	54	20.53%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 263

Report Cut: Southern

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	133	50.57%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	59	22.43%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	113	42.97%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	44	16.73%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	21	7.98%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	96	36.50%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	27	10.27%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	31	11.79%
Creating/redefining policies	37	14.07%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	19	7.22%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	61	23.19%
N/A	32	12.17%
Other *	3	1.14%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	35	13.41%
No	193	73.95%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	33	12.64%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	109	41.60%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	26	9.92%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	112	42.75%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	15	5.73%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 263

Report Cut: Southern

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	236	89.73%
Paid lump sum awards	32	12.17%
Paid variable/bonus awards	101	38.40%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	13	4.94%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	9	3.42%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	6	2.28%
Uncertain	10	3.80%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	214	81.37%
Paying lump sum awards	28	10.65%
Paying variable/bonus awards	98	37.26%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	4	1.52%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	10	3.80%
Reducing wages/salaries	1	0.38%
Reducing hours worked	2	0.76%
Uncertain	38	14.45%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	164	62.36%	112	42.59%
Increased standard wages	109	41.44%	86	32.70%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	122	46.39%	125	47.53%
Implemented or increased variable pay	23	8.75%	29	11.03%
Temporarily bumped pay	4	1.52%	1	0.38%
Other	3	1.14%	3	1.14%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	26	9.89%	31	11.79%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 263

Report Cut: Southern

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	40	15.21%	34	12.93%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	37	14.07%	36	13.69%
Invest in new technology	131	49.81%	150	57.03%
Invest in equipment	102	38.78%	109	41.44%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	13	4.94%	22	8.37%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	23	8.75%	23	8.75%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	24	9.13%	32	12.17%
Increase training budget	62	23.57%	82	31.18%
Increase total rewards communication/education	48	18.25%	82	31.18%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	81	30.80%	78	29.66%
Increase recruiting emphasis	73	27.76%	79	30.04%
Pay above market rates	21	7.98%	24	9.13%
Enhance the benefits package	43	16.35%	62	23.57%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	60	22.81%	77	29.28%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	54	20.53%	76	28.90%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	32	12.17%	27	10.27%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	7	2.66%	11	4.18%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	14	5.32%	14	5.32%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	37	14.07%	60	22.81%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	22	8.37%	48	18.25%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	4	1.52%	3	1.14%
Hold off on investing in new technology	8	3.04%	7	2.66%
Hold off on investing in equipment	10	3.80%	10	3.80%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	3	1.14%	5	1.90%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	18	6.84%	18	6.84%
Reduce training budget	7	2.66%	11	4.18%
Limiting employee travel	45	17.11%	31	11.79%
Hiring freezes	33	12.55%	17	6.46%
Implementing furloughs	8	3.04%	2	0.76%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	35	13.31%	13	4.94%
Reduce benefits package	4	1.52%	4	1.52%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	5	1.90%	5	1.90%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	10	3.80%	15	5.70%
Freezing compensation increases	10	3.80%	8	3.04%
Outsourcing roles or functions	15	5.70%	19	7.22%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 263

Report Cut: Southern

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	28	10.65%	22	8.37%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	95	36.12%	26	9.89%
Increasing presence on social media	155	58.94%	47	17.87%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	26	9.89%	13	4.94%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	79	30.04%	29	11.03%
Partnering with brand influencers	20	7.60%	11	4.18%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	60	22.81%	26	9.89%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	117	44.49%	45	17.11%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	83	31.56%	30	11.41%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 263

Report Cut: Southern

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	104	39.54%	57	21.67%	4	1.52%
Website content production	82	31.18%	66	25.10%	15	5.70%
Marketing content production	65	24.71%	78	29.66%	28	10.65%
Other content production	73	27.76%	57	21.67%	16	6.08%
Digital personal assistant	100	38.02%	38	14.45%	9	3.42%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	80	30.42%	62	23.57%	12	4.56%
Customer relationship management	95	36.12%	52	19.77%	7	2.66%
Inventory management	101	38.40%	27	10.27%	5	1.90%
Product recommendations	104	39.54%	24	9.13%	3	1.14%
Accounting	104	39.54%	27	10.27%	8	3.04%
Supply chain operations	110	41.83%	19	7.22%	4	1.52%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	82	31.18%	70	26.62%	15	5.70%
Application and screening management	85	32.32%	52	19.77%	11	4.18%
Audience segmentation	102	38.78%	20	7.60%	1	0.38%
Process improvement	82	31.18%	53	20.15%	16	6.08%
Idea generation	67	25.48%	68	25.86%	21	7.98%
Process automation	75	28.52%	54	20.53%	17	6.46%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	85	32.32%	48	18.25%	14	5.32%

**Section Four:  
Northeast  
Region Report**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Significant Trends Summary – Northeastern Region Report

The following highlights reflect the National Business Trends Survey responses of 213 organizations. While our summary seems to indicate a fair amount of optimism toward the economy on the part of business executives for 2025, you may feel differently based on your review of the detailed national survey reports which follow.

**Notes:**

- a. All of the following percentages in this summary have been rounded to the nearest whole percent
  - b. The largest industry group represented in this survey is manufacturing (33%)
  - c. 76% of the responding organizations are for-profit and 72% are privately held
  - d. 75% of the survey participants operate with less than 250 employees
1. Executives expect the overall outlook for the 2025 economy to improve (31%) or stay the same (49%) when compared to 2024. *(Survey Question #1)*
  2. When describing their business outlook for 2025, 80% of executives project flat to significant increases in sales/revenue. For 2024, 66% expect sales/revenue to be flat to significantly better compared to 2023. *(Survey Questions #2 & 3)*
  3. When executives were asked what they believe are the greatest challenges to their business in 2024, the top three responses were talent acquisition, talent retention, and competition in general. *(Survey Question #5)*
  4. Whereas 45% of the executives surveyed plan to maintain 2024 staffing levels in 2025, 46% of the respondents said they plan to hire permanent staff in 2025. *(Survey Question #8)*
  5. When ask the primary reasons for their hiring plans, 89% of the respondents said they will be replacing staff due to voluntary turnover, and 79% said their hiring will be due to involuntary turnover. *(Survey Question #10)*
  6. Executives identified the following “serious” challenges for their businesses (listed in order of the top 5 long-term responses): *(Survey Question #4)*

**Note:** Short-term: within next year  
 Long-term: within next 5 years

	Short-Term % of Responses	Long-Term % of Responses
Cybersecurity	52%	51%
Developing future leaders	35%	47%
Talent Acquisition	37%	46%
Talent Retention	32%	40%
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	30%	38%



## 2025 National Business Trends

7. Approximately 46% of executives report that skilled professional staff (non-managers) are the most challenging when it comes to recruitment. Approximately 32% of respondents also report that professional staff (non-managers) are the most challenging in terms of retention as well. *(Survey Question #12)*
8. When asked which strategies executives are using to overcome retention challenges, adjusting pay ranges upward, focusing on existing staff receiving additional training and development, and focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult were the top responses. *(Survey Question #13)*
9. 85% of the executives responding to the survey are planning to award wage/salary increases in 2025, and 91% have awarded actual increases during 2024. *(Survey Questions #24 & 25)*
10. Following are the top 5 measures that executives say they have been or are planning to continue to implement in 2024 and 2025 to strengthen business results (listed in order of the top 2025 responses). *(Survey Question #28)*

	<b>2024 % of Responses</b>	<b>2025 % of Responses</b>
Invest in new technology	42%	54%
Invest in equipment	37%	41%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	31%	29%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	22%	28%
Increase training budget	20%	28%

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 213

Report Cut: Northeast

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	4	1.88%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	3	1.41%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	4	1.88%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	5	2.35%
Construction	7	3.29%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	45	21.13%
Education Services	11	5.16%
Financial & Insurance	13	6.10%
Health Care & Social Assistance	13	6.10%
Information	9	4.23%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	2	0.94%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	26	12.21%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	26	12.21%
Public Administration	3	1.41%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	2	0.94%
Retail Trade	9	4.23%
Services (Except Public Administration)	14	6.57%
Transportation & Warehousing	4	1.88%
Utilities	2	0.94%
Wholesale Trade	11	5.16%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	98	46.01%
100 to 249	62	29.11%
250 to 499	31	14.55%
500 to 999	10	4.69%
1,000 or more	12	5.63%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	153	71.83%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	10	4.69%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	50	23.47%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 213

Report Cut: Northeast

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	65	30.5%
Stay the same	105	49.3%
Decline	43	20.2%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	16	7.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	84	39.4%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	41	19.2%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	41	19.2%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	23	10.8%
Do not know	8	3.8%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	21	9.9%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	102	47.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	47	22.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	17	8.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	6	2.8%
Do not know	20	9.4%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	147	72.41%	130	64.36%
Mild	48	23.65%	49	24.26%
Serious	8	3.94%	23	11.39%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	34	16.19%	26	12.62%
Mild	124	59.05%	117	56.80%
Serious	52	24.76%	63	30.58%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	139	66.51%	115	55.29%
Mild	62	29.67%	75	36.06%
Serious	8	3.83%	18	8.65%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	68	32.54%	53	25.60%
Mild	112	53.59%	116	56.04%
Serious	29	13.88%	38	18.36%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 213

Report Cut: Northeast

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	63	30.43%	55	26.83%
Mild	94	45.41%	101	49.27%
Serious	50	24.15%	49	23.90%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	30	14.35%	23	11.11%
Mild	102	48.80%	89	43.00%
Serious	77	36.84%	95	45.89%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	35	16.83%	31	14.98%
Mild	107	51.44%	94	45.41%
Serious	66	31.73%	82	39.61%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	54	25.96%	43	20.87%
Mild	107	51.44%	91	44.17%
Serious	47	22.60%	72	34.95%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	34	16.27%	27	13.11%
Mild	112	53.59%	101	49.03%
Serious	63	30.14%	78	37.86%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	122	58.94%	115	55.56%
Mild	62	29.95%	64	30.92%
Serious	23	11.11%	28	13.53%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	107	51.44%	95	45.89%
Mild	84	40.38%	91	43.96%
Serious	17	8.17%	21	10.14%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	59	28.64%	50	24.88%
Mild	100	48.54%	100	49.75%
Serious	47	22.82%	51	25.37%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	69	33.66%	63	30.73%
Mild	94	45.85%	91	44.39%
Serious	42	20.49%	51	24.88%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	67	33.50%	66	33.00%
Mild	101	50.50%	94	47.00%
Serious	32	16.00%	40	20.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 213

Report Cut: Northeast

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	64	31.37%	59	29.06%
Mild	97	47.55%	93	45.81%
Serious	43	21.08%	51	25.12%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	48	23.19%	46	22.44%
Mild	109	52.66%	101	49.27%
Serious	50	24.15%	58	28.29%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	97	47.09%	93	45.81%
Mild	69	33.50%	68	33.17%
Serious	40	19.42%	42	20.49%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	110	52.88%	106	51.46%
Mild	80	38.46%	77	37.38%
Serious	18	8.65%	23	11.17%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	20	9.62%	24	11.65%
Mild	113	54.33%	113	54.85%
Serious	76	36.54%	70	33.98%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	36	17.31%	29	14.08%
Mild	113	54.33%	111	53.88%
Serious	59	28.37%	65	31.55%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	28	13.46%	23	11.17%
Mild	105	50.48%	84	40.78%
Serious	73	35.10%	97	47.09%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	14	6.73%	11	5.34%
Mild	84	40.38%	73	35.44%
Serious	108	51.92%	121	58.74%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	95	45.67%	91	44.17%
Mild	91	43.75%	88	42.72%
Serious	19	9.13%	26	12.62%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	65	31.25%	53	25.73%
Mild	111	53.37%	96	46.60%
Serious	33	15.87%	59	28.64%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	46	22.12%	47	22.82%
Mild	91	43.75%	98	47.57%
Serious	71	34.13%	62	30.10%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 213

Report Cut: Northeast

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	47	22.60%	39	18.93%
Mild	120	57.69%	112	54.37%
Serious	42	20.19%	57	27.67%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	55	26.44%	50	24.27%
Mild	121	58.17%	117	56.80%
Serious	27	12.98%	36	17.48%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	94	45.19%	92	44.66%
Mild	39	18.75%	34	16.50%
Serious	6	2.88%	11	5.34%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	5	2	0	19
Competition in general	27	6	16	109
Product obsolescence	3	3	9	24
Changing customer preferences	8	18	10	70
Customer's ability to afford	23	11	9	100
Talent acquisition	36	14	18	154
Talent retention	18	25	11	115
Ability to pay for benefits costs	4	6	11	35
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	15	17	16	95
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	2	3	10
Ability to maintain quality product/service	7	8	2	39
Cost of materials	11	19	11	82
Cost of equipment	1	8	3	22
Taxes	3	2	3	16
Cost of regulatory compliance	6	3	6	30
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	6	5	5	33
Employee safety	4	1	4	18
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	4	3	14
Inflation	7	10	14	55
Employee engagement	3	11	10	41
Developing future leaders	4	10	14	46
Cybersecurity	6	10	7	45
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	3	3
A.I. technology and platforms	3	2	2	15
Political uncertainty	4	5	11	33
Talent skills gap	2	7	6	26
Unknown challenges	1	1	2	7
Other	1	0	1	4

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 213

Report Cut: Northeast

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	18	8.45%
Slightly less than planned	48	22.54%
As planned	91	42.72%
Slightly more than planned	47	22.07%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	7	3.29%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	100	46.95%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	82	38.50%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	28	13.15%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	97	45.54%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	10	4.69%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	95	44.60%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	9	4.23%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	61	29.90%	35	17.86%
No	143	70.10%	161	82.14%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	151	73.30%	123	61.19%
No	55	26.70%	78	38.81%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	158	76.33%	133	66.17%
No	49	23.67%	68	33.83%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	23	28.40%	19	24.36%
No	58	71.60%	59	75.64%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	107	69.03%	97	64.24%
No	48	30.97%	54	35.76%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 213

Report Cut: Northeast

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	7	3.37%
Some due to this	138	66.35%
None due to this	63	30.29%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	1	0.49%
Some due to this	25	12.20%
None due to this	179	87.32%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	9	4.31%
Some due to this	176	84.21%
None due to this	24	11.48%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	10	4.85%
Some due to this	153	74.27%
None due to this	43	20.87%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	5	2.39%
Some due to this	124	59.33%
None due to this	80	38.28%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	0.49%
Some due to this	32	15.69%
None due to this	171	83.82%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 213

Report Cut: Northeast

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	6	2.87%	0	0.00%	7	3.35%
Somewhat dissatisfied	46	28.57%	29	13.88%	39	18.66%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	29	25.71%	30	14.35%	27	12.92%
Somewhat satisfied	99	35.71%	110	52.63%	92	44.02%
Very satisfied	29	8.57%	40	19.14%	44	21.05%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	66	30.99%	21	9.86%	17	7.98%
Middle managers	67	31.46%	28	13.15%	41	19.25%
Professional staff (non-managers)	97	45.54%	34	15.96%	68	31.92%
Skilled production workers	80	37.56%	23	10.80%	49	23.00%
Unskilled production workers	38	17.84%	18	8.45%	36	16.90%
Entry-level office workers	48	22.54%	19	8.92%	41	19.25%
Entry-level non-office workers	36	16.90%	12	5.63%	27	12.68%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	31	14.55%	7	3.29%	13	6.10%
Service workers	33	15.49%	9	4.23%	24	11.27%
Other	7	3.29%	1	0.47%	2	0.94%
None	9	4.23%	22	10.33%	20	9.39%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 213

Report Cut: Northeast

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	99	46.48%	94	44.13%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	41	19.25%	103	48.36%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	55	25.82%	123	57.75%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	96	45.07%	126	59.15%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	99	46.48%	21	9.86%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	96	45.07%	14	6.57%
Increasing starting salaries	141	66.20%	43	20.19%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	55	25.82%	57	26.76%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	42	19.72%	34	15.96%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	40	18.78%	22	10.33%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	21	9.86%	32	15.02%
Shortening the hiring process	54	25.35%	8	3.76%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	58	27.23%	27	12.68%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	79	37.09%	48	22.54%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	28	13.15%	32	15.02%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	94	44.13%	12	5.63%
Participating in job fairs	60	28.17%	4	1.88%
Building/increasing brand awareness	71	33.33%	47	22.07%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	27	12.68%	21	9.86%
Using formal candidate tracking system	72	33.80%	10	4.69%
Other	3	1.41%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	64	30.05%
Team incentives	31	14.55%
Employee referral bonuses	108	50.70%
Year-end bonuses	93	43.66%
Spot bonuses	47	22.07%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	71	33.33%
Retention bonuses	25	11.74%
Commissions	51	23.94%
Project bonuses	19	8.92%
Profit sharing	36	16.90%
Hazard bonuses/pay	2	0.94%
Additional PTO	55	25.82%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 213

Report Cut: Northeast

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	46	21.60%
Language premiums	9	4.23%
Other*	6	2.82%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	115	53.99%
Resources to do their job effectively	35	16.43%
Mentoring opportunities	16	7.51%
Competitive/robust health benefits	70	32.86%
Opportunities to connect with others	9	4.23%
Driven by the mission of the organization	34	15.96%
Recognition and reward for good performance	69	32.39%
Ongoing training on new technologies	11	5.16%
Competitive pay	164	77.00%
Good work/life balance	165	77.46%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	25	11.74%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	71	33.33%
Current technology	3	1.41%
Remote work opportunities	40	18.78%
Hybrid work opportunities	43	20.19%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	9	4.23%
Regular full-time hours	18	8.45%
Strong organizational culture	54	25.35%
Challenging work	15	7.04%
Diverse workforce	6	2.82%
Vacation/paid time off	56	26.29%
Focus on employee safety	1	0.47%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	10	4.74%
No change	100	47.39%
More difficult	101	47.87%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 213

Report Cut: Northeast

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	9	8.91%
Lack of qualified candidates	84	83.17%
Lack of technical skills	35	34.65%
Lack of soft skills	22	21.78%
Lack of work experience	33	32.67%
Our organization's geographic location	20	19.80%
Market competition/high demand	42	41.58%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	52	51.49%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	3	2.97%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	22	21.78%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	10	9.90%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	27	26.73%
Other *	5	4.95%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	66	31.88%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	59	28.50%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	24	11.59%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	11	5.31%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	47	22.71%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	39	18.84%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	69	33.33%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	38	18.36%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	12	5.80%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	49	23.67%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	14	6.57%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	62	29.11%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	18	8.45%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	8	3.76%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	46	21.60%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	15	7.04%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	56	26.29%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 213

Report Cut: Northeast

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	102	47.89%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	50	23.47%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	96	45.07%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	30	14.08%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	11	5.16%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	78	36.62%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	19	8.92%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	24	11.27%
Creating/redefining policies	27	12.68%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	15	7.04%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	40	18.78%
N/A	32	15.02%
Other *	1	0.47%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	21	10.05%
No	143	68.42%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	45	21.53%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	86	40.76%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	25	11.85%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	85	40.28%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	15	7.11%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 213

Report Cut: Northeast

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	194	91.08%
Paid lump sum awards	16	7.51%
Paid variable/bonus awards	70	32.86%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	10	4.69%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	4	1.88%
Reduced wages/salaries	2	0.94%
Reduced hours worked	2	0.94%
Uncertain	9	4.23%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	180	84.51%
Paying lump sum awards	14	6.57%
Paying variable/bonus awards	73	34.27%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	3	1.41%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	5	2.35%
Reducing wages/salaries	1	0.47%
Reducing hours worked	3	1.41%
Uncertain	28	13.15%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	127	59.62%	101	47.42%
Increased standard wages	93	43.66%	82	38.50%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	94	44.13%	100	46.95%
Implemented or increased variable pay	20	9.39%	23	10.80%
Temporarily bumped pay	5	2.35%	2	0.94%
Other	5	2.35%	3	1.41%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	22	10.33%	21	9.86%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 213

Report Cut: Northeast

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	25	11.74%	32	15.02%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	27	12.68%	35	16.43%
Invest in new technology	100	46.95%	116	54.46%
Invest in equipment	79	37.09%	87	40.85%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	13	6.10%	21	9.86%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	16	7.51%	22	10.33%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	20	9.39%	26	12.21%
Increase training budget	43	20.19%	60	28.17%
Increase total rewards communication/education	28	13.15%	51	23.94%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	65	30.52%	61	28.64%
Increase recruiting emphasis	48	22.54%	53	24.88%
Pay above market rates	16	7.51%	21	9.86%
Enhance the benefits package	31	14.55%	48	22.54%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	46	21.60%	60	28.17%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	37	17.37%	48	22.54%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	22	10.33%	20	9.39%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	8	3.76%	6	2.82%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	12	5.63%	12	5.63%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	27	12.68%	39	18.31%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	19	8.92%	38	17.84%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	3	1.41%	4	1.88%
Hold off on investing in new technology	13	6.10%	7	3.29%
Hold off on investing in equipment	12	5.63%	5	2.35%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	5	2.35%	4	1.88%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	11	5.16%	11	5.16%
Reduce training budget	8	3.76%	10	4.69%
Limiting employee travel	40	18.78%	28	13.15%
Hiring freezes	25	11.74%	18	8.45%
Implementing furloughs	8	3.76%	3	1.41%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	30	14.08%	11	5.16%
Reduce benefits package	1	0.47%	3	1.41%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	3	1.41%	6	2.82%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	8	3.76%	12	5.63%
Freezing compensation increases	4	1.88%	5	2.35%
Outsourcing roles or functions	9	4.23%	10	4.69%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 213

Report Cut: Northeast

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	21	9.86%	19	8.92%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	80	37.56%	23	10.80%
Increasing presence on social media	123	57.75%	39	18.31%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	20	9.39%	10	4.69%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	63	29.58%	25	11.74%
Partnering with brand influencers	12	5.63%	9	4.23%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	49	23.00%	29	13.62%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	80	37.56%	38	17.84%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	55	25.82%	26	12.21%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 213

Report Cut: Northeast

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	92	43.19%	44	20.66%	6	2.82%
Website content production	76	35.68%	47	22.07%	15	7.04%
Marketing content production	65	30.52%	58	27.23%	19	8.92%
Other content production	74	34.74%	38	17.84%	17	7.98%
Digital personal assistant	94	44.13%	24	11.27%	6	2.82%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	81	38.03%	38	17.84%	9	4.23%
Customer relationship management	91	42.72%	30	14.08%	6	2.82%
Inventory management	92	43.19%	18	8.45%	6	2.82%
Product recommendations	95	44.60%	12	5.63%	2	0.94%
Accounting	91	42.72%	21	9.86%	7	3.29%
Supply chain operations	99	46.48%	13	6.10%	1	0.47%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	83	38.97%	43	20.19%	13	6.10%
Application and screening management	83	38.97%	37	17.37%	9	4.23%
Audience segmentation	93	43.66%	12	5.63%	1	0.47%
Process improvement	75	35.21%	41	19.25%	11	5.16%
Idea generation	65	30.52%	51	23.94%	17	7.98%
Process automation	71	33.33%	42	19.72%	13	6.10%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	82	38.50%	33	15.49%	10	4.69%

**Section Five:  
Midwest  
Region Report**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Significant Trends Summary – Midwest Region Report

The following highlights reflect the National Business Trends Survey responses of 735 organizations. While our summary seems to indicate a fair amount of optimism toward the economy on the part of business executives for 2025, you may feel differently based on your review of the detailed national survey reports which follow.

**Notes:**

- a. All of the following percentages in this summary have been rounded to the nearest whole percent
  - b. The largest industry group represented in this survey is manufacturing (46%)
  - c. 77% of the responding organizations are for-profit and 72% are privately held
  - d. 75% of the survey participants operate with less than 250 employees
1. Executives expect the overall outlook for the 2025 economy to improve (31%) or stay the same (48%) when compared to 2024. *(Survey Question #1)*
  2. When describing their business outlook for 2025, 83% of executives project flat to significant increases in sales/revenue. For 2024, 70% expect sales/revenue to be flat to significantly better compared to 2023. *(Survey Questions #2 & 3)*
  3. When executives were asked what they believe are the greatest challenges to their business in 2024, the top three responses were talent acquisition, talent retention, and competition in general. *(Survey Question #5)*
  4. Whereas 44% of the executives surveyed plan to maintain 2024 staffing levels in 2025, 49% of the respondents said they plan to hire permanent staff in 2025. *(Survey Question #8)*
  5. When ask the primary reasons for their hiring plans, 89% of the respondents said they will be replacing staff due to voluntary turnover, and 77% said their hiring will be due to involuntary turnover. *(Survey Question #10)*
  6. Executives identified the following “serious” challenges for their businesses (listed in order of the top 5 long-term responses): *(Survey Question #4)*

**Note:** Short-term: within next year  
 Long-term: within next 5 years

	Short-Term % of Responses	Long-Term % of Responses
Cybersecurity	49%	53%
Talent Acquisition	40%	46%
Developing future leaders	33%	41%
Talent Retention	34%	39%
Inflation	41%	38%

## 2025 National Business Trends

7. Approximately 43% of executives report that skilled professional staff (non-managers) are the most challenging when it comes to recruitment. Approximately 31% of respondents also report that professional staff (non-managers) are the most challenging in terms of retention as well. *(Survey Question #12)*
8. When asked which strategies executives are using to overcome retention challenges, adjusting pay ranges upward, focusing on existing staff receiving additional training and development, and focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult were the top responses. *(Survey Question #13)*
9. 83% of the executives responding to the survey are planning to award wage/salary increases in 2025, and 92% have awarded actual increases during 2024. *(Survey Questions #24 & 25)*
10. Following are the top 5 measures that executives say they have been or are planning to continue to implement in 2024 and 2025 to strengthen business results (listed in order of the top 2025 responses). *(Survey Question #28)*

	<b>2024 % of Responses</b>	<b>2025 % of Responses</b>
Invest in new technology	41%	48%
Invest in equipment	41%	45%
Increase training budget	19%	27%
Increase recruiting emphasis	24%	26%
Increase total rewards communication/education	14%	24%

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 735

Report Cut: Midwest

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	2	0.27%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	6	0.82%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	8	1.09%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	15	2.04%
Construction	19	2.59%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	253	34.42%
Education Services	15	2.04%
Financial & Insurance	38	5.17%
Health Care & Social Assistance	57	7.76%
Information	11	1.50%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	1	0.14%
Mining	1	0.14%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	88	11.97%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	61	8.30%
Public Administration	17	2.31%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	8	1.09%
Retail Trade	14	1.90%
Services (Except Public Administration)	48	6.53%
Transportation & Warehousing	20	2.72%
Utilities	11	1.50%
Wholesale Trade	42	5.71%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	357	48.57%
100 to 249	195	26.53%
250 to 499	103	14.01%
500 to 999	46	6.26%
1,000 or more	34	4.63%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	530	72.11%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	33	4.49%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	139	18.91%
Public Sector/Government	33	4.49%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 735

Report Cut: Midwest

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	229	31.2%
Stay the same	352	47.9%
Decline	154	21.0%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	59	8.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	311	42.3%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	141	19.2%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	136	18.5%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	60	8.2%
Do not know	28	3.8%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	84	11.4%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	389	52.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	137	18.6%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	55	7.5%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	15	2.0%
Do not know	55	7.5%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	498	72.07%	437	63.52%
Mild	157	22.72%	185	26.89%
Serious	36	5.21%	66	9.59%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	129	18.35%	105	15.04%
Mild	406	57.75%	420	60.17%
Serious	168	23.90%	173	24.79%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	493	71.76%	429	62.72%
Mild	163	23.73%	203	29.68%
Serious	31	4.51%	52	7.60%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	258	37.23%	213	30.91%
Mild	360	51.95%	375	54.43%
Serious	75	10.82%	101	14.66%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 735

Report Cut: Midwest

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	192	27.63%	181	26.19%
Mild	353	50.79%	365	52.82%
Serious	150	21.58%	145	20.98%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	98	13.80%	64	9.07%
Mild	325	45.77%	320	45.33%
Serious	287	40.42%	322	45.61%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	110	15.51%	80	11.36%
Mild	358	50.49%	348	49.43%
Serious	241	33.99%	276	39.20%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	174	24.79%	138	19.88%
Mild	347	49.43%	317	45.68%
Serious	181	25.78%	239	34.44%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	114	16.17%	99	14.14%
Mild	379	53.76%	348	49.71%
Serious	212	30.07%	253	36.14%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	379	54.22%	349	50.36%
Mild	242	34.62%	255	36.80%
Serious	78	11.16%	89	12.84%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	380	54.68%	350	50.36%
Mild	255	36.69%	273	39.28%
Serious	60	8.63%	72	10.36%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	168	24.10%	150	21.93%
Mild	338	48.49%	324	47.37%
Serious	191	27.40%	210	30.70%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	180	26.09%	157	22.89%
Mild	345	50.00%	328	47.81%
Serious	165	23.91%	201	29.30%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	235	34.46%	222	32.50%
Mild	317	46.48%	304	44.51%
Serious	130	19.06%	157	22.99%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 735

Report Cut: Midwest

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	229	33.43%	207	30.44%
Mild	314	45.84%	307	45.15%
Serious	142	20.73%	166	24.41%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	186	26.69%	164	23.77%
Mild	378	54.23%	368	53.33%
Serious	133	19.08%	158	22.90%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	306	43.84%	300	43.10%
Mild	247	35.39%	252	36.52%
Serious	145	20.77%	144	20.87%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	456	65.24%	429	61.82%
Mild	195	27.90%	204	29.39%
Serious	48	6.87%	61	8.79%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	59	8.44%	61	8.79%
Mild	352	50.36%	373	53.75%
Serious	289	41.34%	264	38.04%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	139	19.89%	119	17.15%
Mild	392	56.08%	396	57.06%
Serious	171	24.46%	177	25.50%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	105	15.02%	85	12.25%
Mild	357	51.07%	324	46.69%
Serious	233	33.33%	282	40.63%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	55	7.87%	47	6.77%
Mild	307	43.92%	277	39.91%
Serious	339	48.50%	370	53.31%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	324	46.35%	305	43.95%
Mild	308	44.06%	318	45.82%
Serious	62	8.87%	69	9.94%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	269	38.48%	201	28.96%
Mild	351	50.21%	347	50.00%
Serious	72	10.30%	142	20.46%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	143	20.46%	147	21.18%
Mild	301	43.06%	319	45.97%
Serious	247	35.34%	221	31.84%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 735

Report Cut: Midwest

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	140	20.03%	124	17.87%
Mild	400	57.22%	370	53.31%
Serious	159	22.75%	203	29.25%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	188	26.90%	176	25.36%
Mild	405	57.94%	396	57.06%
Serious	71	10.16%	86	12.39%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	327	46.78%	323	46.54%
Mild	117	16.74%	115	16.57%
Serious	24	3.43%	27	3.89%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	17	7	7	72
Competition in general	90	44	44	402
Product obsolescence	10	9	14	62
Changing customer preferences	26	42	26	188
Customer's ability to afford	67	29	37	296
Talent acquisition	111	97	54	581
Talent retention	60	84	54	402
Ability to pay for benefits costs	14	40	42	164
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	49	61	73	342
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	3	5	11	30
Ability to maintain quality product/service	16	15	17	95
Cost of materials	56	65	46	344
Cost of equipment	8	17	20	78
Taxes	7	3	9	36
Cost of regulatory compliance	17	16	19	102
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	10	17	15	79
Employee safety	9	6	12	51
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	6	6	21
Inflation	34	28	36	194
Employee engagement	7	22	39	104
Developing future leaders	24	24	31	151
Cybersecurity	20	21	25	127
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	1	4	7	18
A.I. technology and platforms	5	12	12	51
Political uncertainty	28	12	20	128
Talent skills gap	13	17	24	97
Unknown challenges	4	7	10	36
Other	8	5	5	39

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 735

Report Cut: Midwest

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	51	6.94%
Slightly less than planned	163	22.18%
As planned	341	46.39%
Slightly more than planned	156	21.22%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	20	2.72%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	330	44.90%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	323	43.95%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	78	10.61%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	357	48.57%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	26	3.54%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	323	43.95%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	24	3.27%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	214	30.88%	119	17.63%
No	479	69.12%	556	82.37%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	517	72.21%	402	57.84%
No	199	27.79%	293	42.16%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	558	77.72%	463	66.05%
No	160	22.28%	238	33.95%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	84	30.11%	73	26.74%
No	195	69.89%	200	73.26%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	424	73.87%	395	70.16%
No	150	26.13%	168	29.84%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 735

Report Cut: Midwest

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	24	3.32%
Some due to this	454	62.88%
None due to this	244	33.80%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	4	0.56%
Some due to this	92	12.89%
None due to this	618	86.55%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	38	5.26%
Some due to this	601	83.24%
None due to this	83	11.50%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	17	2.36%
Some due to this	535	74.31%
None due to this	168	23.33%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	16	2.23%
Some due to this	484	67.32%
None due to this	219	30.46%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	4	0.56%
Some due to this	90	12.57%
None due to this	622	86.87%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 735

Report Cut: Midwest

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	25	3.43%	6	0.83%	17	2.34%
Somewhat dissatisfied	149	28.57%	105	14.44%	133	18.27%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	116	25.71%	137	18.84%	118	16.21%
Somewhat satisfied	329	35.71%	322	44.29%	326	44.78%
Very satisfied	109	8.57%	157	21.60%	134	18.41%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	245	33.33%	69	9.39%	51	6.94%
Middle managers	247	33.61%	99	13.47%	112	15.24%
Professional staff (non-managers)	315	42.86%	102	13.88%	228	31.02%
Skilled production workers	308	41.90%	88	11.97%	217	29.52%
Unskilled production workers	162	22.04%	85	11.56%	198	26.94%
Entry-level office workers	137	18.64%	58	7.89%	152	20.68%
Entry-level non-office workers	105	14.29%	46	6.26%	122	16.60%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	145	19.73%	37	5.03%	75	10.20%
Service workers	102	13.88%	39	5.31%	103	14.01%
Other	37	5.03%	13	1.77%	25	3.40%
None	40	5.44%	76	10.34%	54	7.35%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 735

Report Cut: Midwest

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	329	44.76%	333	45.31%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	158	21.50%	348	47.35%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	177	24.08%	433	58.91%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	330	44.90%	468	63.67%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	266	36.19%	50	6.80%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	338	45.99%	72	9.80%
Increasing starting salaries	460	62.59%	159	21.63%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	198	26.94%	207	28.16%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	90	12.24%	84	11.43%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	149	20.27%	72	9.80%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	81	11.02%	161	21.90%
Shortening the hiring process	204	27.76%	22	2.99%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	173	23.54%	63	8.57%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	274	37.28%	175	23.81%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	89	12.11%	124	16.87%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	315	42.86%	45	6.12%
Participating in job fairs	271	36.87%	36	4.90%
Building/increasing brand awareness	276	37.55%	161	21.90%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	80	10.88%	66	8.98%
Using formal candidate tracking system	264	35.92%	50	6.80%
Other	17	2.31%	12	1.63%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	204	27.76%
Team incentives	108	14.69%
Employee referral bonuses	437	59.46%
Year-end bonuses	285	38.78%
Spot bonuses	148	20.14%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	246	33.47%
Retention bonuses	103	14.01%
Commissions	129	17.55%
Project bonuses	44	5.99%
Profit sharing	139	18.91%
Hazard bonuses/pay	6	0.82%
Additional PTO	199	27.07%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 735

Report Cut: Midwest

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	123	16.73%
Language premiums	15	2.04%
Other*	17	2.31%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	412	56.05%
Resources to do their job effectively	92	12.52%
Mentoring opportunities	31	4.22%
Competitive/robust health benefits	279	37.96%
Opportunities to connect with others	34	4.63%
Driven by the mission of the organization	108	14.69%
Recognition and reward for good performance	202	27.48%
Ongoing training on new technologies	33	4.49%
Competitive pay	606	82.45%
Good work/life balance	550	74.83%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	87	11.84%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	250	34.01%
Current technology	5	0.68%
Remote work opportunities	107	14.56%
Hybrid work opportunities	149	20.27%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	29	3.95%
Regular full-time hours	79	10.75%
Strong organizational culture	165	22.45%
Challenging work	44	5.99%
Diverse workforce	10	1.36%
Vacation/paid time off	259	35.24%
Focus on employee safety	16	2.18%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	48	6.57%
No change	333	45.55%
More difficult	350	47.88%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 735

Report Cut: Midwest

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	23	6.57%
Lack of qualified candidates	294	84.00%
Lack of technical skills	151	43.14%
Lack of soft skills	73	20.86%
Lack of work experience	127	36.29%
Our organization's geographic location	53	15.14%
Market competition/high demand	153	43.71%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	194	55.43%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	9	2.57%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	52	14.86%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	35	10.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	84	24.00%
Other *	13	3.71%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	276	37.91%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	172	23.63%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	49	6.73%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	15	2.06%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	216	29.67%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	166	22.80%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	242	33.24%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	98	13.46%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	22	3.02%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	199	27.34%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	51	6.94%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	199	27.07%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	76	10.34%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	20	2.72%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	128	17.41%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	63	8.57%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	223	30.34%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 735

Report Cut: Midwest

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	341	46.39%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	158	21.50%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	296	40.27%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	117	15.92%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	42	5.71%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	280	38.10%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	36	4.90%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	72	9.80%
Creating/redefining policies	85	11.56%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	49	6.67%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	135	18.37%
N/A	117	15.92%
Other *	12	1.63%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	122	16.74%
No	497	68.18%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	110	15.09%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	301	41.18%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	67	9.17%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	311	42.54%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	52	7.11%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 735

Report Cut: Midwest

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	675	91.84%
Paid lump sum awards	60	8.16%
Paid variable/bonus awards	225	30.61%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	19	2.59%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	21	2.86%
Reduced wages/salaries	5	0.68%
Reduced hours worked	18	2.45%
Uncertain	25	3.40%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	606	82.45%
Paying lump sum awards	62	8.44%
Paying variable/bonus awards	229	31.16%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	17	2.31%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	23	3.13%
Reducing wages/salaries	3	0.41%
Reducing hours worked	9	1.22%
Uncertain	98	13.33%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	474	64.49%	327	44.49%
Increased standard wages	348	47.35%	272	37.01%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	353	48.03%	349	47.48%
Implemented or increased variable pay	53	7.21%	63	8.57%
Temporarily bumped pay	10	1.36%	2	0.27%
Other	6	0.82%	7	0.95%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	80	10.88%	79	10.75%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 735

Report Cut: Midwest

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	117	15.92%	104	14.15%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	105	14.29%	106	14.42%
Invest in new technology	302	41.09%	355	48.30%
Invest in equipment	300	40.82%	330	44.90%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	49	6.67%	57	7.76%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	52	7.07%	67	9.12%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	69	9.39%	101	13.74%
Increase training budget	138	18.78%	196	26.67%
Increase total rewards communication/education	106	14.42%	176	23.95%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	172	23.40%	170	23.13%
Increase recruiting emphasis	176	23.95%	194	26.39%
Pay above market rates	76	10.34%	77	10.48%
Enhance the benefits package	117	15.92%	167	22.72%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	136	18.50%	164	22.31%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	119	16.19%	160	21.77%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	80	10.88%	70	9.52%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	13	1.77%	16	2.18%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	32	4.35%	27	3.67%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	67	9.12%	108	14.69%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	60	8.16%	133	18.10%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	6	0.82%	9	1.22%
Hold off on investing in new technology	31	4.22%	32	4.35%
Hold off on investing in equipment	36	4.90%	38	5.17%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	4	0.54%	16	2.18%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	41	5.58%	53	7.21%
Reduce training budget	19	2.59%	19	2.59%
Limiting employee travel	101	13.74%	76	10.34%
Hiring freezes	68	9.25%	46	6.26%
Implementing furloughs	19	2.59%	7	0.95%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	85	11.56%	22	2.99%
Reduce benefits package	6	0.82%	11	1.50%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	14	1.90%	14	1.90%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	12	1.63%	26	3.54%
Freezing compensation increases	24	3.27%	23	3.13%
Outsourcing roles or functions	28	3.81%	39	5.31%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 735

Report Cut: Midwest

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	69	9.39%	39	5.31%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	275	37.41%	73	9.93%
Increasing presence on social media	447	60.82%	118	16.05%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	61	8.30%	23	3.13%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	183	24.90%	72	9.80%
Partnering with brand influencers	56	7.62%	26	3.54%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	151	20.54%	75	10.20%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	297	40.41%	101	13.74%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	185	25.17%	75	10.20%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 735

Report Cut: Midwest

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	352	47.89%	122	16.60%	17	2.31%
Website content production	287	39.05%	166	22.59%	46	6.26%
Marketing content production	259	35.24%	188	25.58%	62	8.44%
Other content production	295	40.14%	130	17.69%	39	5.31%
Digital personal assistant	345	46.94%	86	11.70%	14	1.90%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	304	41.36%	118	16.05%	41	5.58%
Customer relationship management	346	47.07%	94	12.79%	20	2.72%
Inventory management	337	45.85%	83	11.29%	12	1.63%
Product recommendations	359	48.84%	49	6.67%	8	1.09%
Accounting	359	48.84%	64	8.71%	16	2.18%
Supply chain operations	372	50.61%	49	6.67%	8	1.09%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	287	39.05%	169	22.99%	41	5.58%
Application and screening management	304	41.36%	131	17.82%	28	3.81%
Audience segmentation	366	49.80%	41	5.58%	3	0.41%
Process improvement	282	38.37%	143	19.46%	30	4.08%
Idea generation	242	32.93%	182	24.76%	61	8.30%
Process automation	279	37.96%	138	18.78%	33	4.49%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	312	42.45%	98	13.33%	30	4.08%

# Section Six: State Reports\*

\* The states listed below represent less than 10 respondents, therefore no state report is provided.

Alaska

Maine

North Dakota

Vermont

Wyoming

# **Alabama**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 33

Report Cut: Alabama

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	3.03%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1	3.03%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	2	6.06%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	5	15.15%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	3	9.09%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	1	3.03%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	4	12.12%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	6	18.18%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	3	9.09%
Services (Except Public Administration)	1	3.03%
Transportation & Warehousing	2	6.06%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	4	12.12%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	8	24.24%
100 to 249	9	27.27%
250 to 499	6	18.18%
500 to 999	3	9.09%
1,000 or more	7	21.21%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	28	84.85%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	2	6.06%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	3	9.09%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 33

Report Cut: Alabama

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	13	39.4%
Stay the same	15	45.5%
Decline	5	15.2%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	3.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	18	54.5%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	5	15.2%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	5	15.2%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	9.1%
Do not know	1	3.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	5	15.2%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	16	48.5%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	7	21.2%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	9.1%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	2	6.1%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	20	66.67%	19	63.33%
Mild	8	26.67%	7	23.33%
Serious	2	6.67%	4	13.33%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	5	15.63%	4	12.50%
Mild	18	56.25%	21	65.63%
Serious	9	28.13%	7	21.88%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	21	67.74%	19	61.29%
Mild	10	32.26%	10	32.26%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	6.45%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	12	37.50%	10	31.25%
Mild	16	50.00%	19	59.38%
Serious	4	12.50%	3	9.38%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 33

Report Cut: Alabama

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	10	32.26%	9	29.03%
Mild	16	51.61%	18	58.06%
Serious	5	16.13%	4	12.90%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	1	3.13%	1	3.13%
Mild	18	56.25%	14	43.75%
Serious	13	40.63%	17	53.13%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	2	6.25%	2	6.45%
Mild	14	43.75%	12	38.71%
Serious	16	50.00%	17	54.84%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	9	29.03%	7	22.58%
Mild	15	48.39%	12	38.71%
Serious	7	22.58%	12	38.71%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	4	12.50%	6	18.75%
Mild	19	59.38%	14	43.75%
Serious	9	28.13%	12	37.50%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	18	60.00%	17	54.84%
Mild	11	36.67%	12	38.71%
Serious	1	3.33%	2	6.45%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	18	58.06%	17	54.84%
Mild	9	29.03%	11	35.48%
Serious	4	12.90%	3	9.68%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	11	34.38%	10	32.26%
Mild	14	43.75%	16	51.61%
Serious	7	21.88%	5	16.13%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	10	31.25%	11	34.38%
Mild	15	46.88%	14	43.75%
Serious	7	21.88%	7	21.88%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	8	27.59%	8	26.67%
Mild	16	55.17%	15	50.00%
Serious	5	17.24%	7	23.33%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 33

Report Cut: Alabama

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	10	32.26%	8	25.81%
Mild	16	51.61%	16	51.61%
Serious	5	16.13%	7	22.58%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	7	22.58%	7	22.58%
Mild	16	51.61%	16	51.61%
Serious	8	25.81%	8	25.81%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	15	48.39%	15	48.39%
Mild	11	35.48%	12	38.71%
Serious	5	16.13%	4	12.90%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	12	40.00%	12	40.00%
Mild	14	46.67%	13	43.33%
Serious	4	13.33%	5	16.67%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	6	20.00%	4	13.33%
Mild	17	56.67%	19	63.33%
Serious	8	26.67%	8	26.67%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	2	6.67%	1	3.33%
Mild	19	63.33%	19	63.33%
Serious	10	33.33%	11	36.67%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	5	16.67%	4	13.33%
Mild	12	40.00%	11	36.67%
Serious	14	46.67%	16	53.33%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	1	3.33%
Mild	11	36.67%	10	33.33%
Serious	20	66.67%	20	66.67%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	13	43.33%	12	40.00%
Mild	15	50.00%	15	50.00%
Serious	2	6.67%	2	6.67%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	10	33.33%	6	20.00%
Mild	15	50.00%	14	46.67%
Serious	6	20.00%	11	36.67%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	9	30.00%	10	33.33%
Mild	17	56.67%	17	56.67%
Serious	5	16.67%	4	13.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 33

Report Cut: Alabama

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	5	16.67%	3	10.00%
Mild	16	53.33%	18	60.00%
Serious	11	36.67%	11	36.67%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	6	20.00%	7	23.33%
Mild	17	56.67%	16	53.33%
Serious	5	16.67%	6	20.00%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	14	46.67%	14	46.67%
Mild	4	13.33%	4	13.33%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	5	0	2	17
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	0	2	2	6
Customer's ability to afford	4	1	1	15
Talent acquisition	4	7	3	29
Talent retention	6	6	2	32
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	0	2	2
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	0	5	4	14
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	1	0	5
Cost of materials	2	2	2	12
Cost of equipment	1	0	0	3
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	2	0	1	7
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	1	0	2	5
Employee safety	0	0	1	1
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	1	0	5
Inflation	1	0	1	4
Employee engagement	0	2	3	7
Developing future leaders	0	2	3	7
Cybersecurity	1	1	1	6
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	2	0	1	7
Political uncertainty	1	1	0	5
Talent skills gap	0	1	1	3
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 33

Report Cut: Alabama

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	3	9.09%
Slightly less than planned	7	21.21%
As planned	11	33.33%
Slightly more than planned	9	27.27%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	2	6.06%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	18	54.55%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	10	30.30%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	3	9.09%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	22	66.67%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	10	30.30%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	3.03%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	12	38.71%	8	25.81%
No	19	61.29%	23	74.19%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	28	87.50%	26	81.25%
No	4	12.50%	6	18.75%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	25	78.13%	23	71.88%
No	7	21.88%	9	28.13%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	5	41.67%	4	33.33%
No	7	58.33%	8	66.67%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	20	83.33%	19	79.17%
No	4	16.67%	5	20.83%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 33

Report Cut: Alabama

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	1	3.13%
Some due to this	25	78.13%
None due to this	6	18.75%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	6	18.75%
None due to this	26	81.25%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	6.25%
Some due to this	28	87.50%
None due to this	2	6.25%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	6.25%
Some due to this	23	71.88%
None due to this	7	21.88%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	3.13%
Some due to this	23	71.88%
None due to this	8	25.00%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	6	18.75%
None due to this	26	81.25%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 33

Report Cut: Alabama

<b>11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?</b>	<b>Recruit</b>		<b>Onboard</b>		<b>Retain</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	1	3.13%	0	0.00%	1	3.13%
Somewhat dissatisfied	14	28.57%	3	9.38%	12	37.50%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	25.71%	6	18.75%	6	18.75%
Somewhat satisfied	7	35.71%	16	50.00%	9	28.13%
Very satisfied	6	8.57%	7	21.88%	4	12.50%

<b>12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?</b>	<b>Recruitment</b>		<b>Onboarding</b>		<b>Retention</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	13	39.39%	4	12.12%	4	12.12%
Middle managers	19	57.58%	4	12.12%	8	24.24%
Professional staff (non-managers)	20	60.61%	6	18.18%	14	42.42%
Skilled production workers	10	30.30%	2	6.06%	14	42.42%
Unskilled production workers	7	21.21%	2	6.06%	12	36.36%
Entry-level office workers	8	24.24%	2	6.06%	9	27.27%
Entry-level non-office workers	4	12.12%	0	0.00%	6	18.18%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	8	24.24%	1	3.03%	3	9.09%
Service workers	6	18.18%	1	3.03%	4	12.12%
Other	2	6.06%	1	3.03%	1	3.03%
None	2	6.06%	1	3.03%	1	3.03%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 33

Report Cut: Alabama

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	15	45.45%	10	30.30%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	3	9.09%	16	48.48%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	7	21.21%	17	51.52%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	20	60.61%	21	63.64%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	22	66.67%	3	9.09%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	20	60.61%	4	12.12%
Increasing starting salaries	28	84.85%	7	21.21%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	9	27.27%	9	27.27%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	11	33.33%	7	21.21%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	6	18.18%	3	9.09%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	2	6.06%	6	18.18%
Shortening the hiring process	10	30.30%	1	3.03%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	9	27.27%	6	18.18%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	14	42.42%	8	24.24%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	5	15.15%	1	3.03%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	17	51.52%	1	3.03%
Participating in job fairs	15	45.45%	1	3.03%
Building/increasing brand awareness	15	45.45%	5	15.15%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	4	12.12%	1	3.03%
Using formal candidate tracking system	14	42.42%	0	0.00%
Other	1	3.03%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	12	36.36%
Team incentives	5	15.15%
Employee referral bonuses	19	57.58%
Year-end bonuses	19	57.58%
Spot bonuses	8	24.24%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	15	45.45%
Retention bonuses	4	12.12%
Commissions	12	36.36%
Project bonuses	4	12.12%
Profit sharing	5	15.15%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	10	30.30%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 33

Report Cut: Alabama

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	4	12.12%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	21	63.64%
Resources to do their job effectively	3	9.09%
Mentoring opportunities	5	15.15%
Competitive/robust health benefits	7	21.21%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	3.03%
Driven by the mission of the organization	1	3.03%
Recognition and reward for good performance	13	39.39%
Ongoing training on new technologies	2	6.06%
Competitive pay	26	78.79%
Good work/life balance	25	75.76%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	3	9.09%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	13	39.39%
Current technology	1	3.03%
Remote work opportunities	6	18.18%
Hybrid work opportunities	9	27.27%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	0	0.00%
Strong organizational culture	7	21.21%
Challenging work	3	9.09%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	10	30.30%
Focus on employee safety	1	3.03%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	1	3.13%
No change	16	50.00%
More difficult	15	46.88%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 33

Report Cut: Alabama

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	1	6.67%
Lack of qualified candidates	14	93.33%
Lack of technical skills	9	60.00%
Lack of soft skills	1	6.67%
Lack of work experience	6	40.00%
Our organization's geographic location	4	26.67%
Market competition/high demand	8	53.33%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	7	46.67%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	3	20.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	0	0.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	2	13.33%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	10	31.25%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	12	37.50%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	8	25.00%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	2	6.25%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	4	12.50%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	16	50.00%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	6	18.75%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	6.25%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	4	12.50%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	1	3.03%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	15	45.45%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	3	9.09%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	2	6.06%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	12.12%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	12.12%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	6	18.18%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 33

Report Cut: Alabama

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	15	45.45%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	7	21.21%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	15	45.45%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	4	12.12%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	3	9.09%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	12	36.36%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	2	6.06%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	4	12.12%
Creating/redefining policies	3	9.09%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	5	15.15%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	6	18.18%
N/A	5	15.15%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	2	6.25%
No	27	84.38%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	3	9.38%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	13	40.63%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	3	9.38%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	12	37.50%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	4	12.50%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 33

Report Cut: Alabama

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	30	90.91%
Paid lump sum awards	0	0.00%
Paid variable/bonus awards	12	36.36%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	2	6.06%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	3.03%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	2	6.06%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	27	81.82%
Paying lump sum awards	0	0.00%
Paying variable/bonus awards	11	33.33%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	3.03%
Uncertain	5	15.15%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	23	69.70%	15	45.45%
Increased standard wages	19	57.58%	12	36.36%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	19	57.58%	13	39.39%
Implemented or increased variable pay	0	0.00%	2	6.06%
Temporarily bumped pay	2	6.06%	0	0.00%
Other	1	3.03%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	2	6.06%	4	12.12%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 33

Report Cut: Alabama

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	6	18.18%	6	18.18%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	4	12.12%	3	9.09%
Invest in new technology	17	51.52%	17	51.52%
Invest in equipment	13	39.39%	12	36.36%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	0	0.00%	1	3.03%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	3	9.09%	3	9.09%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	1	3.03%	2	6.06%
Increase training budget	12	36.36%	10	30.30%
Increase total rewards communication/education	8	24.24%	8	24.24%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	10	30.30%	9	27.27%
Increase recruiting emphasis	7	21.21%	7	21.21%
Pay above market rates	1	3.03%	2	6.06%
Enhance the benefits package	7	21.21%	9	27.27%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	6	18.18%	7	21.21%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	6	18.18%	9	27.27%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	2	6.06%	2	6.06%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	1	3.03%	1	3.03%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	3	9.09%	2	6.06%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	2	6.06%	5	15.15%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	4	12.12%	6	18.18%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	3.03%	2	6.06%
Hold off on investing in new technology	0	0.00%	1	3.03%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	1	3.03%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	3	9.09%	2	6.06%
Reduce training budget	1	3.03%	2	6.06%
Limiting employee travel	6	18.18%	4	12.12%
Hiring freezes	3	9.09%	1	3.03%
Implementing furloughs	3	9.09%	1	3.03%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	8	24.24%	2	6.06%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	3.03%	1	3.03%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	2	6.06%
Freezing compensation increases	1	3.03%	1	3.03%
Outsourcing roles or functions	4	12.12%	2	6.06%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 33

Report Cut: Alabama

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	6	18.18%	4	12.12%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	14	42.42%	1	3.03%
Increasing presence on social media	22	66.67%	6	18.18%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	4	12.12%	1	3.03%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	12	36.36%	2	6.06%
Partnering with brand influencers	2	6.06%	0	0.00%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	8	24.24%	5	15.15%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	16	48.48%	7	21.21%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	9	27.27%	6	18.18%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 33

Report Cut: Alabama

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	15	45.45%	6	18.18%	0	0.00%
Website content production	15	45.45%	6	18.18%	1	3.03%
Marketing content production	11	33.33%	10	30.30%	1	3.03%
Other content production	11	33.33%	7	21.21%	2	6.06%
Digital personal assistant	14	42.42%	4	12.12%	2	6.06%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	10	30.30%	10	30.30%	3	9.09%
Customer relationship management	12	36.36%	9	27.27%	3	9.09%
Inventory management	14	42.42%	3	9.09%	3	9.09%
Product recommendations	14	42.42%	3	9.09%	1	3.03%
Accounting	15	45.45%	2	6.06%	2	6.06%
Supply chain operations	12	36.36%	4	12.12%	2	6.06%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	14	42.42%	7	21.21%	2	6.06%
Application and screening management	11	33.33%	8	24.24%	3	9.09%
Audience segmentation	13	39.39%	2	6.06%	1	3.03%
Process improvement	12	36.36%	8	24.24%	3	9.09%
Idea generation	9	27.27%	9	27.27%	2	6.06%
Process automation	12	36.36%	7	21.21%	3	9.09%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	13	39.39%	6	18.18%	2	6.06%

# **Arizona**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 63

Report Cut: Arizona

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	3.17%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1	1.59%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	13	20.63%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	7	11.11%
Health Care & Social Assistance	3	4.76%
Information	3	4.76%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	5	7.94%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	11	17.46%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	3	4.76%
Services (Except Public Administration)	4	6.35%
Transportation & Warehousing	3	4.76%
Utilities	1	1.59%
Wholesale Trade	7	11.11%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	15	23.81%
100 to 249	21	33.33%
250 to 499	11	17.46%
500 to 999	6	9.52%
1,000 or more	10	15.87%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	50	79.37%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	5	7.94%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	8	12.70%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 63

Report Cut: Arizona

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	24	38.1%
Stay the same	31	49.2%
Decline	8	12.7%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	9	14.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	28	44.4%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	11	17.5%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	11	17.5%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	4.8%
Do not know	1	1.6%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	10	15.9%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	33	52.4%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	11	17.5%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	6.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	3.2%
Do not know	3	4.8%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	43	72.88%	37	62.71%
Mild	14	23.73%	18	30.51%
Serious	2	3.39%	4	6.78%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	8	12.90%	5	8.20%
Mild	37	59.68%	35	57.38%
Serious	17	27.42%	21	34.43%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	37	61.67%	26	43.33%
Mild	21	35.00%	27	45.00%
Serious	2	3.33%	7	11.67%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	21	34.43%	16	26.23%
Mild	33	54.10%	34	55.74%
Serious	7	11.48%	11	18.03%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 63

Report Cut: Arizona

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	16	26.23%	13	21.31%
Mild	33	54.10%	36	59.02%
Serious	12	19.67%	12	19.67%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	7	11.48%	7	11.48%
Mild	26	42.62%	26	42.62%
Serious	28	45.90%	28	45.90%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	8	12.90%	7	11.67%
Mild	30	48.39%	28	46.67%
Serious	24	38.71%	25	41.67%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	21	34.43%	16	26.23%
Mild	29	47.54%	28	45.90%
Serious	11	18.03%	17	27.87%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	12	20.00%	12	20.00%
Mild	34	56.67%	33	55.00%
Serious	14	23.33%	15	25.00%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	29	48.33%	27	44.26%
Mild	27	45.00%	28	45.90%
Serious	4	6.67%	6	9.84%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	36	60.00%	32	53.33%
Mild	16	26.67%	20	33.33%
Serious	8	13.33%	8	13.33%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	22	36.67%	18	30.51%
Mild	26	43.33%	26	44.07%
Serious	12	20.00%	15	25.42%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	19	31.67%	19	31.67%
Mild	26	43.33%	27	45.00%
Serious	15	25.00%	14	23.33%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	19	32.76%	18	30.51%
Mild	26	44.83%	27	45.76%
Serious	13	22.41%	14	23.73%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 63

Report Cut: Arizona

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	18	30.00%	16	26.67%
Mild	29	48.33%	31	51.67%
Serious	13	21.67%	13	21.67%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	11	18.03%	13	21.67%
Mild	36	59.02%	33	55.00%
Serious	14	22.95%	14	23.33%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	27	45.00%	27	45.00%
Mild	23	38.33%	23	38.33%
Serious	10	16.67%	10	16.67%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	22	36.67%	21	35.59%
Mild	29	48.33%	29	49.15%
Serious	9	15.00%	9	15.25%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	8	13.33%	6	10.17%
Mild	32	53.33%	36	61.02%
Serious	20	33.33%	18	30.51%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	8	13.33%	7	11.86%
Mild	33	55.00%	33	55.93%
Serious	20	33.33%	19	32.20%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	7	11.67%	7	11.86%
Mild	28	46.67%	29	49.15%
Serious	24	40.00%	24	40.68%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	3	5.00%	4	6.78%
Mild	26	43.33%	21	35.59%
Serious	32	53.33%	35	59.32%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	24	40.00%	22	37.29%
Mild	29	48.33%	29	49.15%
Serious	6	10.00%	8	13.56%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	17	28.33%	11	18.64%
Mild	31	51.67%	33	55.93%
Serious	13	21.67%	17	28.81%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	12	20.00%	11	18.64%
Mild	32	53.33%	32	54.24%
Serious	16	26.67%	17	28.81%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 63

Report Cut: Arizona

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	16	26.67%	16	27.12%
Mild	31	51.67%	29	49.15%
Serious	14	23.33%	16	27.12%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	16	26.67%	16	27.12%
Mild	36	60.00%	32	54.24%
Serious	6	10.00%	10	16.95%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	29	48.33%	30	50.85%
Mild	11	18.33%	10	16.95%
Serious	2	3.33%	2	3.39%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	1	0	1	4
Competition in general	11	2	4	41
Product obsolescence	1	1	0	5
Changing customer preferences	3	6	2	23
Customer's ability to afford	9	2	2	33
Talent acquisition	5	7	8	37
Talent retention	6	9	2	38
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	3	5	14
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	2	5	3	19
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	2	2	2	12
Ability to maintain quality product/service	3	2	0	13
Cost of materials	3	7	2	25
Cost of equipment	0	1	0	2
Taxes	0	0	2	2
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	1	5	10
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	4	2	10
Employee safety	1	0	0	3
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	2	1	5
Inflation	1	1	2	7
Employee engagement	1	1	4	9
Developing future leaders	4	1	4	18
Cybersecurity	3	1	2	13
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	2	0	1	7
Political uncertainty	1	2	2	9
Talent skills gap	0	1	3	5
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 63

Report Cut: Arizona

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	3	4.76%
Slightly less than planned	18	28.57%
As planned	19	30.16%
Slightly more than planned	19	30.16%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	3	4.76%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	33	52.38%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	20	31.75%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	8	12.70%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	32	50.79%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	1.59%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	29	46.03%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	1.59%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	25	40.32%	15	25.00%
No	37	59.68%	45	75.00%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	58	93.55%	53	88.33%
No	4	6.45%	7	11.67%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	55	88.71%	49	80.33%
No	7	11.29%	12	19.67%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	4	21.05%	4	21.05%
No	15	78.95%	15	78.95%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	32	72.73%	32	74.42%
No	12	27.27%	11	25.58%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 63

Report Cut: Arizona

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	56	90.32%
None due to this	6	9.68%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	11	17.74%
None due to this	51	82.26%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	1.61%
Some due to this	59	95.16%
None due to this	2	3.23%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	1.61%
Some due to this	54	87.10%
None due to this	7	11.29%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	1.61%
Some due to this	43	69.35%
None due to this	18	29.03%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	1.61%
Some due to this	17	27.42%
None due to this	44	70.97%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 63

Report Cut: Arizona

<b>11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?</b>	<b>Recruit</b>		<b>Onboard</b>		<b>Retain</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	2	3.23%	0	0.00%	1	1.61%
Somewhat dissatisfied	15	28.57%	9	14.52%	18	29.03%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7	25.71%	10	16.13%	9	14.52%
Somewhat satisfied	26	35.71%	34	54.84%	24	38.71%
Very satisfied	12	8.57%	9	14.52%	10	16.13%

<b>12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?</b>	<b>Recruitment</b>		<b>Onboarding</b>		<b>Retention</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	30	47.62%	10	15.87%	12	19.05%
Middle managers	32	50.79%	10	15.87%	19	30.16%
Professional staff (non-managers)	30	47.62%	8	12.70%	25	39.68%
Skilled production workers	20	31.75%	2	3.17%	16	25.40%
Unskilled production workers	12	19.05%	4	6.35%	15	23.81%
Entry-level office workers	16	25.40%	9	14.29%	21	33.33%
Entry-level non-office workers	8	12.70%	3	4.76%	14	22.22%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	15	23.81%	2	3.17%	7	11.11%
Service workers	6	9.52%	1	1.59%	5	7.94%
Other	4	6.35%	1	1.59%	2	3.17%
None	1	1.59%	6	9.52%	6	9.52%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 63

Report Cut: Arizona

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	33	52.38%	27	42.86%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	13	20.63%	29	46.03%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	16	25.40%	34	53.97%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	30	47.62%	43	68.25%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	36	57.14%	8	12.70%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	33	52.38%	8	12.70%
Increasing starting salaries	43	68.25%	11	17.46%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	22	34.92%	27	42.86%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	13	20.63%	8	12.70%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	11	17.46%	5	7.94%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	8	12.70%	15	23.81%
Shortening the hiring process	17	26.98%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	24	38.10%	13	20.63%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	34	53.97%	22	34.92%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	7	11.11%	11	17.46%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	34	53.97%	2	3.17%
Participating in job fairs	24	38.10%	1	1.59%
Building/increasing brand awareness	30	47.62%	12	19.05%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	13	20.63%	10	15.87%
Using formal candidate tracking system	24	38.10%	3	4.76%
Other	2	3.17%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	27	42.86%
Team incentives	9	14.29%
Employee referral bonuses	41	65.08%
Year-end bonuses	22	34.92%
Spot bonuses	17	26.98%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	34	53.97%
Retention bonuses	10	15.87%
Commissions	19	30.16%
Project bonuses	7	11.11%
Profit sharing	6	9.52%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	17	26.98%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 63

Report Cut: Arizona

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	9	14.29%
Language premiums	1	1.59%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	33	52.38%
Resources to do their job effectively	11	17.46%
Mentoring opportunities	6	9.52%
Competitive/robust health benefits	24	38.10%
Opportunities to connect with others	3	4.76%
Driven by the mission of the organization	12	19.05%
Recognition and reward for good performance	20	31.75%
Ongoing training on new technologies	1	1.59%
Competitive pay	47	74.60%
Good work/life balance	45	71.43%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	4	6.35%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	22	34.92%
Current technology	1	1.59%
Remote work opportunities	15	23.81%
Hybrid work opportunities	19	30.16%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	2	3.17%
Strong organizational culture	14	22.22%
Challenging work	3	4.76%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	17	26.98%
Focus on employee safety	1	1.59%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	4	6.45%
No change	30	48.39%
More difficult	28	45.16%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 63

Report Cut: Arizona

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	2	7.14%
Lack of qualified candidates	24	85.71%
Lack of technical skills	14	50.00%
Lack of soft skills	4	14.29%
Lack of work experience	8	28.57%
Our organization's geographic location	5	17.86%
Market competition/high demand	11	39.29%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	16	57.14%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	9	32.14%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	4	14.29%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	7	25.00%
Other *	2	7.14%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	18	29.03%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	33	53.23%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	9	14.52%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	3.23%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	0	0.00%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	9	14.52%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	28	45.16%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	21	33.87%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	1.61%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	3	4.84%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	4	6.35%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	25	39.68%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	8	12.70%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	6.35%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	17	26.98%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	6.35%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	5	7.94%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 63

Report Cut: Arizona

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	41	65.08%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	22	34.92%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	35	55.56%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	12	19.05%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	7	11.11%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	29	46.03%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	10	15.87%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	11	17.46%
Creating/redefining policies	8	12.70%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	10	15.87%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	16	25.40%
N/A	6	9.52%
Other *	2	3.17%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	5	8.20%
No	44	72.13%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	12	19.67%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	22	35.48%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	6	9.68%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	27	43.55%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	7	11.29%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 63

Report Cut: Arizona

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	60	95.24%
Paid lump sum awards	7	11.11%
Paid variable/bonus awards	24	38.10%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	1	1.59%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	2	3.17%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	3	4.76%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	55	87.30%
Paying lump sum awards	6	9.52%
Paying variable/bonus awards	25	39.68%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	1	1.59%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	1.59%
Uncertain	8	12.70%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	39	61.90%	30	47.62%
Increased standard wages	26	41.27%	19	30.16%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	38	60.32%	35	55.56%
Implemented or increased variable pay	8	12.70%	11	17.46%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	1.59%	1	1.59%
Other	2	3.17%	1	1.59%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	6	9.52%	7	11.11%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 63

Report Cut: Arizona

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	10	15.87%	11	17.46%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	10	15.87%	6	9.52%
Invest in new technology	35	55.56%	41	65.08%
Invest in equipment	29	46.03%	30	47.62%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	5	7.94%	5	7.94%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	7	11.11%	9	14.29%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	6	9.52%	9	14.29%
Increase training budget	19	30.16%	22	34.92%
Increase total rewards communication/education	12	19.05%	25	39.68%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	24	38.10%	22	34.92%
Increase recruiting emphasis	17	26.98%	14	22.22%
Pay above market rates	1	1.59%	2	3.17%
Enhance the benefits package	14	22.22%	16	25.40%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	16	25.40%	22	34.92%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	16	25.40%	22	34.92%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	10	15.87%	7	11.11%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	5	7.94%	2	3.17%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	5	7.94%	3	4.76%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	11	17.46%	17	26.98%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	5	7.94%	13	20.63%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	1.59%	1	1.59%
Hold off on investing in new technology	1	1.59%	1	1.59%
Hold off on investing in equipment	3	4.76%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	2	3.17%	3	4.76%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	4	6.35%	4	6.35%
Reduce training budget	4	6.35%	2	3.17%
Limiting employee travel	15	23.81%	7	11.11%
Hiring freezes	9	14.29%	3	4.76%
Implementing furloughs	1	1.59%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	12	19.05%	3	4.76%
Reduce benefits package	2	3.17%	1	1.59%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	1.59%	1	1.59%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	1.59%	4	6.35%
Freezing compensation increases	2	3.17%	2	3.17%
Outsourcing roles or functions	4	6.35%	3	4.76%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 63

Report Cut: Arizona

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	15	23.81%	5	7.94%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	25	39.68%	4	6.35%
Increasing presence on social media	43	68.25%	10	15.87%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	10	15.87%	5	7.94%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	26	41.27%	6	9.52%
Partnering with brand influencers	6	9.52%	3	4.76%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	20	31.75%	6	9.52%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	33	52.38%	9	14.29%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	25	39.68%	9	14.29%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 63

Report Cut: Arizona

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	19	30.16%	17	26.98%	3	4.76%
Website content production	20	31.75%	13	20.63%	7	11.11%
Marketing content production	13	20.63%	21	33.33%	7	11.11%
Other content production	16	25.40%	16	25.40%	7	11.11%
Digital personal assistant	22	34.92%	13	20.63%	3	4.76%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	15	23.81%	18	28.57%	3	4.76%
Customer relationship management	23	36.51%	12	19.05%	4	6.35%
Inventory management	24	38.10%	5	7.94%	2	3.17%
Product recommendations	25	39.68%	9	14.29%	0	0.00%
Accounting	27	42.86%	6	9.52%	2	3.17%
Supply chain operations	26	41.27%	7	11.11%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	17	26.98%	22	34.92%	5	7.94%
Application and screening management	15	23.81%	21	33.33%	4	6.35%
Audience segmentation	24	38.10%	5	7.94%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	16	25.40%	13	20.63%	5	7.94%
Idea generation	17	26.98%	17	26.98%	7	11.11%
Process automation	19	30.16%	14	22.22%	5	7.94%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	20	31.75%	13	20.63%	5	7.94%

# **Arkansas**



# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 25

Report Cut: Arkansas

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	4.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	5	20.00%
Education Services	1	4.00%
Financial & Insurance	4	16.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	2	8.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	1	4.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	4	16.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	2	8.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	1	4.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	2	8.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	2	8.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	4	16.00%
100 to 249	5	20.00%
250 to 499	5	20.00%
500 to 999	3	12.00%
1,000 or more	8	32.00%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	17	68.00%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	4	16.00%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	4	16.00%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 25

Report Cut: Arkansas

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	10	40.0%
Stay the same	9	36.0%
Decline	6	24.0%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	4.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	13	52.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	6	24.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	16.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	4.0%
Do not know	0	0.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	4.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	16	64.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	6	24.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	4.0%
Do not know	1	4.0%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	13	56.52%	14	60.87%
Mild	10	43.48%	7	30.43%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	8.70%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Mild	12	52.17%	12	52.17%
Serious	10	43.48%	10	43.48%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	19	82.61%	15	65.22%
Mild	4	17.39%	6	26.09%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	8.70%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	6	26.09%	4	17.39%
Mild	15	65.22%	16	69.57%
Serious	2	8.70%	3	13.04%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 25

Report Cut: Arkansas

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	3	13.04%	4	17.39%
Mild	16	69.57%	15	65.22%
Serious	4	17.39%	4	17.39%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	1	4.17%	2	8.33%
Mild	12	50.00%	9	37.50%
Serious	11	45.83%	13	54.17%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	3	12.50%	1	4.17%
Mild	8	33.33%	9	37.50%
Serious	13	54.17%	14	58.33%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	5	20.83%	5	20.83%
Mild	11	45.83%	10	41.67%
Serious	8	33.33%	9	37.50%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	5	20.83%	5	20.83%
Mild	11	45.83%	10	41.67%
Serious	8	33.33%	9	37.50%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	11	45.83%	11	45.83%
Mild	12	50.00%	12	50.00%
Serious	1	4.17%	1	4.17%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	10	43.48%	10	43.48%
Mild	9	39.13%	9	39.13%
Serious	4	17.39%	4	17.39%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	6	26.09%	6	27.27%
Mild	11	47.83%	10	45.45%
Serious	6	26.09%	6	27.27%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	5	21.74%	5	21.74%
Mild	11	47.83%	11	47.83%
Serious	7	30.43%	7	30.43%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	5	23.81%	5	22.73%
Mild	14	66.67%	14	63.64%
Serious	2	9.52%	3	13.64%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 25

Report Cut: Arkansas

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	8	34.78%	7	30.43%
Mild	10	43.48%	10	43.48%
Serious	5	21.74%	6	26.09%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	5	21.74%	5	21.74%
Mild	9	39.13%	10	43.48%
Serious	9	39.13%	8	34.78%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	6	26.09%	6	26.09%
Mild	11	47.83%	11	47.83%
Serious	6	26.09%	6	26.09%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	7	30.43%	7	30.43%
Mild	13	56.52%	14	60.87%
Serious	3	13.04%	2	8.70%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
Mild	9	39.13%	11	47.83%
Serious	13	56.52%	12	52.17%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	17	73.91%	16	69.57%
Serious	7	30.43%	8	34.78%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	4	17.39%	4	17.39%
Mild	10	43.48%	9	39.13%
Serious	9	39.13%	10	43.48%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
Mild	7	30.43%	8	34.78%
Serious	16	69.57%	16	69.57%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	10	43.48%	10	43.48%
Mild	12	52.17%	12	52.17%
Serious	2	8.70%	2	8.70%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	5	21.74%	3	13.04%
Mild	13	56.52%	11	47.83%
Serious	5	21.74%	9	39.13%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	4	17.39%	4	17.39%
Mild	11	47.83%	13	56.52%
Serious	8	34.78%	6	26.09%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 25

Report Cut: Arkansas

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	3	13.04%	3	13.04%
Mild	12	52.17%	11	47.83%
Serious	8	34.78%	9	39.13%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	4	17.39%	3	13.04%
Mild	12	52.17%	12	52.17%
Serious	6	26.09%	7	30.43%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	7	30.43%	6	26.09%
Mild	8	34.78%	8	34.78%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	4.35%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	4	2	1	17
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	2	0	2	8
Customer's ability to afford	2	1	2	10
Talent acquisition	2	2	2	12
Talent retention	4	4	1	21
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	0	2	2
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	0	2	2	6
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	2	0	7
Cost of materials	1	1	0	5
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	1	1
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	1	1	6
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	1	1	1	6
Employee safety	0	0	1	1
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	0	2
Inflation	1	1	0	5
Employee engagement	0	1	2	4
Developing future leaders	0	2	2	6
Cybersecurity	1	1	1	6
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	1	1	0	5
Political uncertainty	2	1	0	8
Talent skills gap	1	0	2	5
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 25

Report Cut: Arkansas

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	2	8.00%
Slightly less than planned	10	40.00%
As planned	8	32.00%
Slightly more than planned	2	8.00%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	2	8.00%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	12	48.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	8	32.00%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	4	16.00%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	14	56.00%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	10	40.00%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	4.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	10	43.48%	7	30.43%
No	13	56.52%	16	69.57%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	21	87.50%	19	79.17%
No	3	12.50%	5	20.83%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	21	87.50%	18	75.00%
No	3	12.50%	6	25.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	4	44.44%	4	44.44%
No	5	55.56%	5	55.56%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	12	70.59%	11	64.71%
No	5	29.41%	6	35.29%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 25

Report Cut: Arkansas

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	1	4.17%
Some due to this	20	83.33%
None due to this	3	12.50%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	9	37.50%
None due to this	15	62.50%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	4.17%
Some due to this	22	91.67%
None due to this	1	4.17%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	4.17%
Some due to this	19	79.17%
None due to this	4	16.67%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	4.17%
Some due to this	17	70.83%
None due to this	6	25.00%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	10	41.67%
None due to this	14	58.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 25

Report Cut: Arkansas

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	4.17%
Somewhat dissatisfied	7	28.57%	3	12.50%	6	25.00%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	25.71%	6	25.00%	7	29.17%
Somewhat satisfied	10	35.71%	13	54.17%	9	37.50%
Very satisfied	4	8.57%	2	8.33%	1	4.17%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	10	40.00%	2	8.00%	3	12.00%
Middle managers	10	40.00%	3	12.00%	6	24.00%
Professional staff (non-managers)	12	48.00%	4	16.00%	9	36.00%
Skilled production workers	4	16.00%	0	0.00%	11	44.00%
Unskilled production workers	3	12.00%	1	4.00%	10	40.00%
Entry-level office workers	4	16.00%	2	8.00%	12	48.00%
Entry-level non-office workers	4	16.00%	2	8.00%	9	36.00%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	5	20.00%	1	4.00%	1	4.00%
Service workers	5	20.00%	1	4.00%	5	20.00%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	4.00%
None	2	8.00%	1	4.00%	2	8.00%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 25

Report Cut: Arkansas

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	10	40.00%	9	36.00%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	5	20.00%	13	52.00%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	6	24.00%	12	48.00%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	11	44.00%	15	60.00%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	16	64.00%	1	4.00%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	13	52.00%	2	8.00%
Increasing starting salaries	18	72.00%	3	12.00%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	6	24.00%	7	28.00%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	3	12.00%	1	4.00%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	3	12.00%	1	4.00%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	4	16.00%	5	20.00%
Shortening the hiring process	5	20.00%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	2	8.00%	3	12.00%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	8	32.00%	7	28.00%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	6	24.00%	4	16.00%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	11	44.00%	0	0.00%
Participating in job fairs	13	52.00%	2	8.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	11	44.00%	5	20.00%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	4	16.00%	4	16.00%
Using formal candidate tracking system	11	44.00%	2	8.00%
Other	1	4.00%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	9	36.00%
Team incentives	3	12.00%
Employee referral bonuses	16	64.00%
Year-end bonuses	11	44.00%
Spot bonuses	9	36.00%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	16	64.00%
Retention bonuses	3	12.00%
Commissions	8	32.00%
Project bonuses	3	12.00%
Profit sharing	2	8.00%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	4	16.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 25

Report Cut: Arkansas

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	5	20.00%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	10	40.00%
Resources to do their job effectively	5	20.00%
Mentoring opportunities	3	12.00%
Competitive/robust health benefits	6	24.00%
Opportunities to connect with others	0	0.00%
Driven by the mission of the organization	2	8.00%
Recognition and reward for good performance	6	24.00%
Ongoing training on new technologies	2	8.00%
Competitive pay	22	88.00%
Good work/life balance	20	80.00%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	3	12.00%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	10	40.00%
Current technology	1	4.00%
Remote work opportunities	7	28.00%
Hybrid work opportunities	2	8.00%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	1	4.00%
Strong organizational culture	4	16.00%
Challenging work	4	16.00%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	7	28.00%
Focus on employee safety	1	4.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	1	4.17%
No change	13	54.17%
More difficult	10	41.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 25

Report Cut: Arkansas

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	0	0.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	9	90.00%
Lack of technical skills	5	50.00%
Lack of soft skills	2	20.00%
Lack of work experience	3	30.00%
Our organization's geographic location	1	10.00%
Market competition/high demand	6	60.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	7	70.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	3	30.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	2	20.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	2	20.00%
Other *	1	10.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	10	41.67%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	8	33.33%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	5	20.83%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	4.17%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	0	0.00%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	6	25.00%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	14	58.33%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	12.50%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	1	4.17%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	3	12.00%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	7	28.00%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	3	12.00%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	12.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	6	24.00%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	16.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	4	16.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 25

Report Cut: Arkansas

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	12	48.00%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	7	28.00%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	11	44.00%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	5	20.00%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	5	20.00%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	11	44.00%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	3	12.00%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	5	20.00%
Creating/redefining policies	2	8.00%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	3	12.00%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	3	12.00%
N/A	5	20.00%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	2	8.33%
No	21	87.50%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	1	4.17%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	11	45.83%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	1	4.17%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	11	45.83%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	1	4.17%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 25

Report Cut: Arkansas

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	24	96.00%
Paid lump sum awards	3	12.00%
Paid variable/bonus awards	10	40.00%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	1	4.00%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	4.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	1	4.00%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	19	76.00%
Paying lump sum awards	3	12.00%
Paying variable/bonus awards	9	36.00%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	4.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	1	4.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	4.00%
Uncertain	5	20.00%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	13	52.00%	12	48.00%
Increased standard wages	10	40.00%	11	44.00%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	12	48.00%	14	56.00%
Implemented or increased variable pay	1	4.00%	2	8.00%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	4.00%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	2	8.00%	1	4.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 25

Report Cut: Arkansas

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	4	16.00%	6	24.00%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	2	8.00%	2	8.00%
Invest in new technology	13	52.00%	15	60.00%
Invest in equipment	12	48.00%	12	48.00%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	0	0.00%	2	8.00%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	2	8.00%	0	0.00%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	2	8.00%	2	8.00%
Increase training budget	8	32.00%	8	32.00%
Increase total rewards communication/education	5	20.00%	6	24.00%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	8	32.00%	8	32.00%
Increase recruiting emphasis	7	28.00%	8	32.00%
Pay above market rates	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Enhance the benefits package	3	12.00%	6	24.00%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	8	32.00%	9	36.00%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	10	40.00%	8	32.00%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	2	8.00%	1	4.00%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	1	4.00%	1	4.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	1	4.00%	8	32.00%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	1	4.00%	6	24.00%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	1	4.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	0	0.00%	1	4.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	1	4.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	1	4.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	0	0.00%	1	4.00%
Reduce training budget	1	4.00%	2	8.00%
Limiting employee travel	8	32.00%	4	16.00%
Hiring freezes	5	20.00%	2	8.00%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	8	32.00%	2	8.00%
Reduce benefits package	1	4.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	4.00%	1	4.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	2	8.00%
Freezing compensation increases	1	4.00%	1	4.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	4	16.00%	3	12.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 25

Report Cut: Arkansas

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	5	20.00%	3	12.00%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	12	48.00%	2	8.00%
Increasing presence on social media	19	76.00%	4	16.00%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	1	4.00%	1	4.00%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	5	20.00%	2	8.00%
Partnering with brand influencers	2	8.00%	1	4.00%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	6	24.00%	2	8.00%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	12	48.00%	2	8.00%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	6	24.00%	2	8.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 25

Report Cut: Arkansas

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	4	16.00%	9	36.00%	0	0.00%
Website content production	5	20.00%	8	32.00%	1	4.00%
Marketing content production	5	20.00%	8	32.00%	3	12.00%
Other content production	6	24.00%	5	20.00%	2	8.00%
Digital personal assistant	6	24.00%	3	12.00%	1	4.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	2	8.00%	6	24.00%	3	12.00%
Customer relationship management	4	16.00%	7	28.00%	2	8.00%
Inventory management	4	16.00%	4	16.00%	1	4.00%
Product recommendations	5	20.00%	1	4.00%	0	0.00%
Accounting	6	24.00%	1	4.00%	1	4.00%
Supply chain operations	5	20.00%	4	16.00%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	4	16.00%	11	44.00%	2	8.00%
Application and screening management	3	12.00%	8	32.00%	2	8.00%
Audience segmentation	5	20.00%	1	4.00%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	4	16.00%	7	28.00%	1	4.00%
Idea generation	4	16.00%	7	28.00%	2	8.00%
Process automation	5	20.00%	5	20.00%	1	4.00%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	5	20.00%	5	20.00%	1	4.00%



# **California**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 90

Report Cut: California

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	1	1.11%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	1.11%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	3	3.33%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	1	1.11%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	25	27.78%
Education Services	2	2.22%
Financial & Insurance	8	8.89%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1	1.11%
Information	4	4.44%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	1	1.11%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	8	8.89%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	14	15.56%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	3	3.33%
Services (Except Public Administration)	5	5.56%
Transportation & Warehousing	1	1.11%
Utilities	2	2.22%
Wholesale Trade	10	11.11%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	25	27.78%
100 to 249	32	35.56%
250 to 499	12	13.33%
500 to 999	8	8.89%
1,000 or more	13	14.44%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	70	77.78%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	8	8.89%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	12	13.33%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 90

Report Cut: California

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	34	37.8%
Stay the same	46	51.1%
Decline	10	11.1%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	7	7.8%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	43	47.8%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	13	14.4%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	18	20.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	7	7.8%
Do not know	2	2.2%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	18	20.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	45	50.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	16	17.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	4.4%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	2.2%
Do not know	5	5.6%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	57	66.28%	50	58.82%
Mild	26	30.23%	21	24.71%
Serious	3	3.49%	14	16.47%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	14	15.91%	8	9.30%
Mild	48	54.55%	50	58.14%
Serious	26	29.55%	28	32.56%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	51	57.95%	39	45.35%
Mild	35	39.77%	40	46.51%
Serious	2	2.27%	7	8.14%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	33	37.08%	28	32.18%
Mild	40	44.94%	44	50.57%
Serious	16	17.98%	15	17.24%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 90

Report Cut: California

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	30	34.09%	25	29.07%
Mild	39	44.32%	44	51.16%
Serious	19	21.59%	17	19.77%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	12	13.64%	10	11.49%
Mild	41	46.59%	41	47.13%
Serious	35	39.77%	36	41.38%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	15	17.05%	15	17.24%
Mild	37	42.05%	39	44.83%
Serious	36	40.91%	33	37.93%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	31	35.23%	22	25.88%
Mild	42	47.73%	41	48.24%
Serious	15	17.05%	22	25.88%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	16	18.18%	16	18.60%
Mild	50	56.82%	44	51.16%
Serious	22	25.00%	26	30.23%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	54	62.07%	50	57.47%
Mild	23	26.44%	23	26.44%
Serious	10	11.49%	14	16.09%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	50	56.82%	48	55.17%
Mild	29	32.95%	29	33.33%
Serious	9	10.23%	10	11.49%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	26	29.89%	22	26.19%
Mild	40	45.98%	42	50.00%
Serious	21	24.14%	20	23.81%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	30	34.48%	28	32.18%
Mild	40	45.98%	40	45.98%
Serious	17	19.54%	19	21.84%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	30	35.29%	29	34.12%
Mild	51	60.00%	50	58.82%
Serious	4	4.71%	6	7.06%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 90

Report Cut: California

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	31	35.63%	30	35.29%
Mild	45	51.72%	42	49.41%
Serious	11	12.64%	13	15.29%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	20	22.47%	19	21.84%
Mild	48	53.93%	49	56.32%
Serious	21	23.60%	19	21.84%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	47	53.41%	47	54.02%
Mild	27	30.68%	26	29.89%
Serious	14	15.91%	14	16.09%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	41	46.59%	39	45.35%
Mild	38	43.18%	38	44.19%
Serious	9	10.23%	9	10.47%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	13	14.77%	10	11.63%
Mild	47	53.41%	54	62.79%
Serious	28	31.82%	23	26.74%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	18	20.45%	15	17.44%
Mild	48	54.55%	45	52.33%
Serious	23	26.14%	25	29.07%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	17	19.32%	12	13.95%
Mild	39	44.32%	41	47.67%
Serious	30	34.09%	33	38.37%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	5	5.68%	5	5.81%
Mild	36	40.91%	32	37.21%
Serious	47	53.41%	49	56.98%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	39	44.32%	35	40.70%
Mild	39	44.32%	41	47.67%
Serious	9	10.23%	10	11.63%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	29	32.95%	21	24.42%
Mild	45	51.14%	45	52.33%
Serious	15	17.05%	21	24.42%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	22	25.00%	22	25.58%
Mild	44	50.00%	45	52.33%
Serious	22	25.00%	19	22.09%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 90

Report Cut: California

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	25	28.41%	19	22.09%
Mild	50	56.82%	53	61.63%
Serious	14	15.91%	16	18.60%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	32	36.36%	32	37.21%
Mild	48	54.55%	45	52.33%
Serious	4	4.55%	7	8.14%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	51	57.95%	51	59.30%
Mild	12	13.64%	11	12.79%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	2	2	0	10
Competition in general	19	4	6	71
Product obsolescence	2	0	3	9
Changing customer preferences	5	7	3	32
Customer's ability to afford	8	4	6	38
Talent acquisition	6	11	8	48
Talent retention	9	12	6	57
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	2	6	13
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	3	7	9	32
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	0	1	4
Ability to maintain quality product/service	3	3	2	17
Cost of materials	5	6	4	31
Cost of equipment	0	2	1	5
Taxes	0	0	1	1
Cost of regulatory compliance	3	2	3	16
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	2	3	2	14
Employee safety	0	0	1	1
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	3	1	10
Inflation	2	3	2	14
Employee engagement	1	5	5	18
Developing future leaders	3	2	5	18
Cybersecurity	5	6	2	29
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	2	2
A.I. technology and platforms	3	2	3	16
Political uncertainty	2	1	1	9
Talent skills gap	2	1	3	11
Unknown challenges	0	0	2	2
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 90

Report Cut: California

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	8	8.89%
Slightly less than planned	25	27.78%
As planned	33	36.67%
Slightly more than planned	18	20.00%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	5	5.56%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	44	48.89%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	31	34.44%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	14	15.56%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	54	60.00%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	2	2.22%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	32	35.56%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	2.22%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	37	42.53%	27	32.14%
No	50	57.47%	57	67.86%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	71	81.61%	66	75.86%
No	16	18.39%	21	24.14%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	76	86.36%	70	79.55%
No	12	13.64%	18	20.45%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	12	35.29%	12	35.29%
No	22	64.71%	22	64.71%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	49	76.56%	47	74.60%
No	15	23.44%	16	25.40%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 90

Report Cut: California

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	3	3.41%
Some due to this	69	78.41%
None due to this	16	18.18%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	18	20.45%
None due to this	70	79.55%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	2.25%
Some due to this	79	88.76%
None due to this	8	8.99%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	1.14%
Some due to this	74	84.09%
None due to this	13	14.77%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	1.12%
Some due to this	68	76.40%
None due to this	20	22.47%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	1.15%
Some due to this	17	19.54%
None due to this	69	79.31%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 90

Report Cut: California

<b>11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?</b>	<b>Recruit</b>		<b>Onboard</b>		<b>Retain</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	2	2.25%	0	0.00%	3	3.37%
Somewhat dissatisfied	16	28.57%	16	17.98%	23	25.84%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	11	25.71%	12	13.48%	15	16.85%
Somewhat satisfied	41	35.71%	42	47.19%	29	32.58%
Very satisfied	19	8.57%	19	21.35%	19	21.35%

<b>12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?</b>	<b>Recruitment</b>		<b>Onboarding</b>		<b>Retention</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	37	41.11%	14	15.56%	10	11.11%
Middle managers	36	40.00%	16	17.78%	19	21.11%
Professional staff (non-managers)	45	50.00%	17	18.89%	33	36.67%
Skilled production workers	30	33.33%	6	6.67%	24	26.67%
Unskilled production workers	13	14.44%	3	3.33%	23	25.56%
Entry-level office workers	22	24.44%	11	12.22%	22	24.44%
Entry-level non-office workers	18	20.00%	6	6.67%	17	18.89%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	20	22.22%	7	7.78%	11	12.22%
Service workers	14	15.56%	4	4.44%	11	12.22%
Other	8	8.89%	1	1.11%	3	3.33%
None	5	5.56%	11	12.22%	8	8.89%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 90

Report Cut: California

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	35	38.89%	32	35.56%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	15	16.67%	42	46.67%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	17	18.89%	52	57.78%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	37	41.11%	59	65.56%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	53	58.89%	13	14.44%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	49	54.44%	9	10.00%
Increasing starting salaries	59	65.56%	17	18.89%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	22	24.44%	23	25.56%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	24	26.67%	19	21.11%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	17	18.89%	7	7.78%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	11	12.22%	17	18.89%
Shortening the hiring process	26	28.89%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	32	35.56%	15	16.67%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	42	46.67%	25	27.78%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	11	12.22%	12	13.33%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	45	50.00%	4	4.44%
Participating in job fairs	35	38.89%	4	4.44%
Building/increasing brand awareness	43	47.78%	17	18.89%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	16	17.78%	9	10.00%
Using formal candidate tracking system	44	48.89%	4	4.44%
Other	2	2.22%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	34	37.78%
Team incentives	12	13.33%
Employee referral bonuses	50	55.56%
Year-end bonuses	39	43.33%
Spot bonuses	22	24.44%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	36	40.00%
Retention bonuses	10	11.11%
Commissions	27	30.00%
Project bonuses	10	11.11%
Profit sharing	11	12.22%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	24	26.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 90

Report Cut: California

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	17	18.89%
Language premiums	2	2.22%
Other*	2	2.22%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	49	54.44%
Resources to do their job effectively	16	17.78%
Mentoring opportunities	5	5.56%
Competitive/robust health benefits	28	31.11%
Opportunities to connect with others	4	4.44%
Driven by the mission of the organization	20	22.22%
Recognition and reward for good performance	26	28.89%
Ongoing training on new technologies	7	7.78%
Competitive pay	66	73.33%
Good work/life balance	64	71.11%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	13	14.44%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	35	38.89%
Current technology	2	2.22%
Remote work opportunities	22	24.44%
Hybrid work opportunities	20	22.22%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	1	1.11%
Regular full-time hours	4	4.44%
Strong organizational culture	22	24.44%
Challenging work	5	5.56%
Diverse workforce	3	3.33%
Vacation/paid time off	21	23.33%
Focus on employee safety	2	2.22%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	3	3.41%
No change	47	53.41%
More difficult	38	43.18%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 90

Report Cut: California

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	5	13.16%
Lack of qualified candidates	31	81.58%
Lack of technical skills	16	42.11%
Lack of soft skills	11	28.95%
Lack of work experience	14	36.84%
Our organization's geographic location	6	15.79%
Market competition/high demand	18	47.37%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	24	63.16%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	1	2.63%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	10	26.32%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	2	5.26%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	11	28.95%
Other *	1	2.63%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	21	23.86%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	33	37.50%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	17	19.32%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	8	9.09%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	9	10.23%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	11	12.50%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	43	48.86%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	17	19.32%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	4	4.55%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	12	13.64%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	9	10.00%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	33	36.67%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	7	7.78%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	5.56%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	18	20.00%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	10	11.11%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	15	16.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 90

Report Cut: California

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	48	53.33%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	26	28.89%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	41	45.56%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	17	18.89%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	9	10.00%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	40	44.44%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	13	14.44%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	16	17.78%
Creating/redefining policies	10	11.11%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	11	12.22%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	23	25.56%
N/A	10	11.11%
Other *	1	1.11%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	9	10.23%
No	61	69.32%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	18	20.45%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	46	51.69%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	10	11.24%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	28	31.46%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	5	5.62%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 90

Report Cut: California

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	83	92.22%
Paid lump sum awards	9	10.00%
Paid variable/bonus awards	30	33.33%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	5	5.56%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	3	3.33%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	3	3.33%
Uncertain	2	2.22%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	82	91.11%
Paying lump sum awards	8	8.89%
Paying variable/bonus awards	33	36.67%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	2	2.22%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	2	2.22%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	1.11%
Uncertain	6	6.67%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	52	57.78%	42	46.67%
Increased standard wages	38	42.22%	29	32.22%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	45	50.00%	43	47.78%
Implemented or increased variable pay	8	8.89%	12	13.33%
Temporarily bumped pay	2	2.22%	1	1.11%
Other	1	1.11%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	8	8.89%	8	8.89%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 90

Report Cut: California

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	16	17.78%	17	18.89%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	11	12.22%	9	10.00%
Invest in new technology	45	50.00%	59	65.56%
Invest in equipment	35	38.89%	37	41.11%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	5	5.56%	9	10.00%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	5	5.56%	7	7.78%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	9	10.00%	13	14.44%
Increase training budget	18	20.00%	29	32.22%
Increase total rewards communication/education	16	17.78%	31	34.44%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	31	34.44%	28	31.11%
Increase recruiting emphasis	23	25.56%	28	31.11%
Pay above market rates	9	10.00%	10	11.11%
Enhance the benefits package	12	13.33%	25	27.78%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	21	23.33%	29	32.22%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	23	25.56%	28	31.11%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	12	13.33%	11	12.22%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	4	4.44%	7	7.78%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	4	4.44%	6	6.67%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	10	11.11%	15	16.67%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	10	11.11%	19	21.11%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	1.11%	1	1.11%
Hold off on investing in new technology	5	5.56%	1	1.11%
Hold off on investing in equipment	4	4.44%	2	2.22%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	2	2.22%	1	1.11%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	7	7.78%	7	7.78%
Reduce training budget	2	2.22%	4	4.44%
Limiting employee travel	23	25.56%	13	14.44%
Hiring freezes	14	15.56%	5	5.56%
Implementing furloughs	6	6.67%	2	2.22%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	17	18.89%	5	5.56%
Reduce benefits package	1	1.11%	1	1.11%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	1.11%	1	1.11%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	3	3.33%	4	4.44%
Freezing compensation increases	2	2.22%	2	2.22%
Outsourcing roles or functions	5	5.56%	6	6.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 90

Report Cut: California

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	14	15.56%	8	8.89%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	38	42.22%	10	11.11%
Increasing presence on social media	56	62.22%	15	16.67%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	12	13.33%	7	7.78%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	32	35.56%	13	14.44%
Partnering with brand influencers	8	8.89%	4	4.44%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	20	22.22%	12	13.33%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	38	42.22%	16	17.78%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	33	36.67%	13	14.44%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 90

Report Cut: California

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	37	41.11%	21	23.33%	2	2.22%
Website content production	27	30.00%	20	22.22%	7	7.78%
Marketing content production	23	25.56%	23	25.56%	10	11.11%
Other content production	25	27.78%	16	17.78%	11	12.22%
Digital personal assistant	38	42.22%	12	13.33%	1	1.11%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	27	30.00%	22	24.44%	5	5.56%
Customer relationship management	34	37.78%	16	17.78%	4	4.44%
Inventory management	35	38.89%	8	8.89%	2	2.22%
Product recommendations	35	38.89%	10	11.11%	1	1.11%
Accounting	36	40.00%	10	11.11%	2	2.22%
Supply chain operations	38	42.22%	4	4.44%	2	2.22%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	32	35.56%	24	26.67%	7	7.78%
Application and screening management	30	33.33%	21	23.33%	3	3.33%
Audience segmentation	34	37.78%	7	7.78%	1	1.11%
Process improvement	28	31.11%	15	16.67%	9	10.00%
Idea generation	24	26.67%	23	25.56%	9	10.00%
Process automation	23	25.56%	16	17.78%	9	10.00%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	32	35.56%	15	16.67%	3	3.33%

# **Colorado**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 69

Report Cut: Colorado

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	1.45%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2	2.90%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	1	1.45%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	13	18.84%
Education Services	1	1.45%
Financial & Insurance	6	8.70%
Health Care & Social Assistance	2	2.90%
Information	5	7.25%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	6	8.70%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	16	23.19%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	1	1.45%
Services (Except Public Administration)	7	10.14%
Transportation & Warehousing	1	1.45%
Utilities	1	1.45%
Wholesale Trade	6	8.70%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	23	33.33%
100 to 249	22	31.88%
250 to 499	10	14.49%
500 to 999	7	10.14%
1,000 or more	7	10.14%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	55	79.71%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	5	7.25%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	9	13.04%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 69

Report Cut: Colorado

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	25	36.2%
Stay the same	38	55.1%
Decline	6	8.7%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	7	10.1%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	35	50.7%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	12	17.4%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	9	13.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	4.3%
Do not know	3	4.3%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	12	17.4%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	38	55.1%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	7	10.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	5.8%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	1.4%
Do not know	7	10.1%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	49	74.24%	41	62.12%
Mild	15	22.73%	17	25.76%
Serious	2	3.03%	8	12.12%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	7	10.45%	2	3.08%
Mild	44	65.67%	47	72.31%
Serious	16	23.88%	16	24.62%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	40	60.61%	30	45.45%
Mild	24	36.36%	31	46.97%
Serious	2	3.03%	5	7.58%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	28	41.79%	22	33.33%
Mild	32	47.76%	36	54.55%
Serious	7	10.45%	8	12.12%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 69

Report Cut: Colorado

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	20	30.30%	18	27.69%
Mild	33	50.00%	33	50.77%
Serious	13	19.70%	14	21.54%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	14	20.90%	10	14.93%
Mild	25	37.31%	28	41.79%
Serious	28	41.79%	29	43.28%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	14	20.90%	14	20.59%
Mild	28	41.79%	28	41.18%
Serious	25	37.31%	26	38.24%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	18	26.87%	14	21.54%
Mild	37	55.22%	32	49.23%
Serious	12	17.91%	19	29.23%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	16	23.53%	13	19.40%
Mild	35	51.47%	34	50.75%
Serious	17	25.00%	20	29.85%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	33	49.25%	30	44.78%
Mild	26	38.81%	28	41.79%
Serious	8	11.94%	9	13.43%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	38	56.72%	36	53.73%
Mild	23	34.33%	24	35.82%
Serious	6	8.96%	7	10.45%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	27	40.30%	23	34.85%
Mild	32	47.76%	34	51.52%
Serious	8	11.94%	9	13.64%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	28	41.79%	23	34.33%
Mild	32	47.76%	34	50.75%
Serious	7	10.45%	10	14.93%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	22	34.38%	21	32.31%
Mild	38	59.38%	39	60.00%
Serious	4	6.25%	5	7.69%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 69

Report Cut: Colorado

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	23	35.38%	21	32.81%
Mild	33	50.77%	34	53.13%
Serious	9	13.85%	9	14.06%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	18	26.47%	18	26.87%
Mild	34	50.00%	30	44.78%
Serious	16	23.53%	19	28.36%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	42	62.69%	42	62.69%
Mild	18	26.87%	18	26.87%
Serious	7	10.45%	7	10.45%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	32	47.76%	33	50.00%
Mild	25	37.31%	26	39.39%
Serious	10	14.93%	7	10.61%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	10	14.93%	8	12.12%
Mild	35	52.24%	39	59.09%
Serious	22	32.84%	20	30.30%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	15	22.39%	14	21.21%
Mild	32	47.76%	34	51.52%
Serious	20	29.85%	18	27.27%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	11	16.42%	10	15.15%
Mild	34	50.75%	29	43.94%
Serious	22	32.84%	27	40.91%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	6	8.96%	6	9.09%
Mild	26	38.81%	21	31.82%
Serious	34	50.75%	40	60.61%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	34	50.75%	34	51.52%
Mild	23	34.33%	22	33.33%
Serious	10	14.93%	11	16.67%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	21	31.34%	20	30.30%
Mild	32	47.76%	29	43.94%
Serious	13	19.40%	19	28.79%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	13	19.40%	11	16.67%
Mild	37	55.22%	36	54.55%
Serious	17	25.37%	19	28.79%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 69

Report Cut: Colorado

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	17	25.37%	15	22.73%
Mild	39	58.21%	36	54.55%
Serious	11	16.42%	17	25.76%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	22	32.84%	23	34.85%
Mild	40	59.70%	35	53.03%
Serious	2	2.99%	6	9.09%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	36	53.73%	36	54.55%
Mild	9	13.43%	9	13.64%
Serious	2	2.99%	2	3.03%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	2	2	0	10
Competition in general	8	2	5	33
Product obsolescence	2	1	1	9
Changing customer preferences	4	5	3	25
Customer's ability to afford	8	2	2	30
Talent acquisition	7	10	8	49
Talent retention	6	11	2	42
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	3	5	11
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	4	2	6	22
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	1	2	7
Ability to maintain quality product/service	3	4	1	18
Cost of materials	3	5	0	19
Cost of equipment	0	1	1	3
Taxes	0	0	1	1
Cost of regulatory compliance	4	1	1	15
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	1	2	2	9
Employee safety	0	0	1	1
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	0	2
Inflation	1	3	4	13
Employee engagement	2	2	3	13
Developing future leaders	1	2	4	11
Cybersecurity	6	4	3	29
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	2	2
A.I. technology and platforms	3	2	2	15
Political uncertainty	1	0	3	6
Talent skills gap	0	1	3	5
Unknown challenges	0	0	2	2
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 69

Report Cut: Colorado

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	4	5.80%
Slightly less than planned	14	20.29%
As planned	30	43.48%
Slightly more than planned	18	26.09%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	2	2.90%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	34	49.28%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	27	39.13%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	7	10.14%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	41	59.42%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	1.45%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	27	39.13%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	26	38.81%	14	21.21%
No	41	61.19%	52	78.79%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	58	86.57%	46	70.77%
No	9	13.43%	19	29.23%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	53	80.30%	48	73.85%
No	13	19.70%	17	26.15%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	4	15.38%	4	15.38%
No	22	84.62%	22	84.62%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	32	66.67%	27	58.70%
No	16	33.33%	19	41.30%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 69

Report Cut: Colorado

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	3	4.48%
Some due to this	49	73.13%
None due to this	15	22.39%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	14	21.21%
None due to this	52	78.79%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	2.99%
Some due to this	59	88.06%
None due to this	6	8.96%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	2.99%
Some due to this	54	80.60%
None due to this	11	16.42%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	2	2.94%
Some due to this	45	66.18%
None due to this	21	30.88%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	1.52%
Some due to this	14	21.21%
None due to this	51	77.27%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 69

Report Cut: Colorado

<b>11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?</b>	<b>Recruit</b>		<b>Onboard</b>		<b>Retain</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	1	1.47%	0	0.00%	1	1.47%
Somewhat dissatisfied	11	28.57%	10	14.71%	16	23.53%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	25.71%	8	11.76%	9	13.24%
Somewhat satisfied	32	35.71%	35	51.47%	20	29.41%
Very satisfied	14	8.57%	15	22.06%	22	32.35%

<b>12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?</b>	<b>Recruitment</b>		<b>Onboarding</b>		<b>Retention</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	28	40.58%	10	14.49%	6	8.70%
Middle managers	26	37.68%	9	13.04%	14	20.29%
Professional staff (non-managers)	30	43.48%	10	14.49%	25	36.23%
Skilled production workers	23	33.33%	5	7.25%	16	23.19%
Unskilled production workers	9	13.04%	2	2.90%	13	18.84%
Entry-level office workers	13	18.84%	7	10.14%	18	26.09%
Entry-level non-office workers	7	10.14%	3	4.35%	12	17.39%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	11	15.94%	2	2.90%	5	7.25%
Service workers	7	10.14%	1	1.45%	8	11.59%
Other	6	8.70%	0	0.00%	2	2.90%
None	3	4.35%	6	8.70%	6	8.70%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 69

Report Cut: Colorado

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	26	37.68%	22	31.88%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	11	15.94%	26	37.68%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	14	20.29%	34	49.28%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	30	43.48%	40	57.97%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	38	55.07%	9	13.04%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	29	42.03%	9	13.04%
Increasing starting salaries	45	65.22%	11	15.94%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	17	24.64%	20	28.99%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	22	31.88%	13	18.84%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	11	15.94%	5	7.25%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	4	5.80%	12	17.39%
Shortening the hiring process	12	17.39%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	18	26.09%	9	13.04%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	33	47.83%	21	30.43%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	10	14.49%	8	11.59%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	30	43.48%	3	4.35%
Participating in job fairs	19	27.54%	2	2.90%
Building/increasing brand awareness	27	39.13%	13	18.84%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	13	18.84%	9	13.04%
Using formal candidate tracking system	27	39.13%	5	7.25%
Other	2	2.90%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	27	39.13%
Team incentives	13	18.84%
Employee referral bonuses	38	55.07%
Year-end bonuses	29	42.03%
Spot bonuses	22	31.88%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	29	42.03%
Retention bonuses	8	11.59%
Commissions	19	27.54%
Project bonuses	5	7.25%
Profit sharing	9	13.04%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	22	31.88%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 69

Report Cut: Colorado

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	11	15.94%
Language premiums	1	1.45%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	40	57.97%
Resources to do their job effectively	8	11.59%
Mentoring opportunities	3	4.35%
Competitive/robust health benefits	24	34.78%
Opportunities to connect with others	5	7.25%
Driven by the mission of the organization	14	20.29%
Recognition and reward for good performance	17	24.64%
Ongoing training on new technologies	2	2.90%
Competitive pay	53	76.81%
Good work/life balance	46	66.67%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	11	15.94%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	23	33.33%
Current technology	2	2.90%
Remote work opportunities	25	36.23%
Hybrid work opportunities	14	20.29%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	2	2.90%
Regular full-time hours	2	2.90%
Strong organizational culture	13	18.84%
Challenging work	6	8.70%
Diverse workforce	2	2.90%
Vacation/paid time off	15	21.74%
Focus on employee safety	1	1.45%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	4	5.88%
No change	37	54.41%
More difficult	27	39.71%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 69

Report Cut: Colorado

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	4	14.81%
Lack of qualified candidates	22	81.48%
Lack of technical skills	12	44.44%
Lack of soft skills	5	18.52%
Lack of work experience	9	33.33%
Our organization's geographic location	4	14.81%
Market competition/high demand	7	25.93%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	13	48.15%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	6	22.22%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	4	14.81%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	3	11.11%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	14	20.59%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	28	41.18%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	17	25.00%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	3	4.41%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	6	8.82%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	9	13.24%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	28	41.18%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	19	27.94%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	2.94%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	10	14.71%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	6	8.70%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	23	33.33%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	4	5.80%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	5.80%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	18	26.09%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	6	8.70%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	12	17.39%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 69

Report Cut: Colorado

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	36	52.17%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	15	21.74%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	32	46.38%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	9	13.04%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	5	7.25%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	27	39.13%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	10	14.49%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	11	15.94%
Creating/redefining policies	9	13.04%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	6	8.70%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	16	23.19%
N/A	7	10.14%
Other *	1	1.45%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	6	9.09%
No	48	72.73%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	12	18.18%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	30	44.78%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	7	10.45%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	27	40.30%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	3	4.48%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 69

Report Cut: Colorado

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	66	95.65%
Paid lump sum awards	7	10.14%
Paid variable/bonus awards	27	39.13%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	3	4.35%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	2	2.90%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	1	1.45%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	63	91.30%
Paying lump sum awards	8	11.59%
Paying variable/bonus awards	29	42.03%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	1	1.45%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	1.45%
Uncertain	4	5.80%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	38	55.07%	32	46.38%
Increased standard wages	21	30.43%	18	26.09%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	30	43.48%	33	47.83%
Implemented or increased variable pay	4	5.80%	9	13.04%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	1.45%	1	1.45%
Other	1	1.45%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	11	15.94%	11	15.94%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 69

Report Cut: Colorado

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	12	17.39%	14	20.29%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	8	11.59%	8	11.59%
Invest in new technology	28	40.58%	35	50.72%
Invest in equipment	23	33.33%	26	37.68%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	2	2.90%	5	7.25%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	4	5.80%	5	7.25%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	5	7.25%	6	8.70%
Increase training budget	15	21.74%	19	27.54%
Increase total rewards communication/education	11	15.94%	22	31.88%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	22	31.88%	22	31.88%
Increase recruiting emphasis	18	26.09%	17	24.64%
Pay above market rates	2	2.90%	3	4.35%
Enhance the benefits package	6	8.70%	16	23.19%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	18	26.09%	23	33.33%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	13	18.84%	17	24.64%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	6	8.70%	5	7.25%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	3	4.35%	5	7.25%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	3	4.35%	3	4.35%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	10	14.49%	16	23.19%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	8	11.59%	13	18.84%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	2	2.90%	2	2.90%
Hold off on investing in new technology	1	1.45%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	1	1.45%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	2	2.90%	1	1.45%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	4	5.80%	1	1.45%
Reduce training budget	1	1.45%	1	1.45%
Limiting employee travel	10	14.49%	6	8.70%
Hiring freezes	7	10.14%	2	2.90%
Implementing furloughs	2	2.90%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	10	14.49%	1	1.45%
Reduce benefits package	1	1.45%	1	1.45%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	1.45%	1	1.45%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	1.45%	2	2.90%
Freezing compensation increases	2	2.90%	1	1.45%
Outsourcing roles or functions	4	5.80%	4	5.80%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 69

Report Cut: Colorado

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	9	13.04%	7	10.14%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	29	42.03%	6	8.70%
Increasing presence on social media	40	57.97%	11	15.94%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	8	11.59%	3	4.35%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	25	36.23%	6	8.70%
Partnering with brand influencers	5	7.25%	1	1.45%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	14	20.29%	5	7.25%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	27	39.13%	10	14.49%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	27	39.13%	7	10.14%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 69

Report Cut: Colorado

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	24	34.78%	14	20.29%	4	5.80%
Website content production	20	28.99%	12	17.39%	7	10.14%
Marketing content production	16	23.19%	16	23.19%	7	10.14%
Other content production	17	24.64%	10	14.49%	9	13.04%
Digital personal assistant	25	36.23%	12	17.39%	1	1.45%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	18	26.09%	18	26.09%	5	7.25%
Customer relationship management	25	36.23%	12	17.39%	5	7.25%
Inventory management	22	31.88%	7	10.14%	2	2.90%
Product recommendations	26	37.68%	4	5.80%	0	0.00%
Accounting	26	37.68%	6	8.70%	3	4.35%
Supply chain operations	27	39.13%	3	4.35%	2	2.90%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	22	31.88%	13	18.84%	8	11.59%
Application and screening management	20	28.99%	15	21.74%	4	5.80%
Audience segmentation	26	37.68%	2	2.90%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	19	27.54%	11	15.94%	6	8.70%
Idea generation	15	21.74%	17	24.64%	7	10.14%
Process automation	18	26.09%	11	15.94%	6	8.70%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	22	31.88%	12	17.39%	5	7.25%

# **Connecticut**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Connecticut

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	4.17%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	1	2.08%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	13	27.08%
Education Services	3	6.25%
Financial & Insurance	2	4.17%
Health Care & Social Assistance	3	6.25%
Information	2	4.17%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	2	4.17%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	9	18.75%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	1	2.08%
Retail Trade	2	4.17%
Services (Except Public Administration)	4	8.33%
Transportation & Warehousing	1	2.08%
Utilities	1	2.08%
Wholesale Trade	2	4.17%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	16	33.33%
100 to 249	15	31.25%
250 to 499	10	20.83%
500 to 999	0	0.00%
1,000 or more	7	14.58%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	35	72.92%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	6	12.50%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	7	14.58%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Connecticut

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	17	35.4%
Stay the same	23	47.9%
Decline	8	16.7%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	6	12.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	22	45.8%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	8	16.7%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	7	14.6%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	6.3%
Do not know	2	4.2%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	4	8.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	28	58.3%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	8	16.7%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	8.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	4	8.3%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	31	65.96%	25	53.19%
Mild	16	34.04%	15	31.91%
Serious	0	0.00%	7	14.89%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	4	8.51%	4	8.70%
Mild	27	57.45%	21	45.65%
Serious	16	34.04%	21	45.65%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	36	76.60%	28	59.57%
Mild	9	19.15%	16	34.04%
Serious	2	4.26%	3	6.38%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	13	28.26%	9	19.57%
Mild	24	52.17%	29	63.04%
Serious	9	19.57%	8	17.39%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Connecticut

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	13	28.26%	11	23.91%
Mild	19	41.30%	22	47.83%
Serious	14	30.43%	13	28.26%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	4	8.51%	2	4.26%
Mild	22	46.81%	18	38.30%
Serious	21	44.68%	27	57.45%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	7	15.22%	5	11.11%
Mild	22	47.83%	20	44.44%
Serious	17	36.96%	20	44.44%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	8	17.02%	7	14.89%
Mild	24	51.06%	19	40.43%
Serious	15	31.91%	21	44.68%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	5	10.64%	2	4.26%
Mild	25	53.19%	27	57.45%
Serious	17	36.17%	18	38.30%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	22	47.83%	22	46.81%
Mild	15	32.61%	15	31.91%
Serious	9	19.57%	10	21.28%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	25	53.19%	22	46.81%
Mild	17	36.17%	19	40.43%
Serious	5	10.64%	6	12.77%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	13	28.26%	12	26.67%
Mild	20	43.48%	17	37.78%
Serious	13	28.26%	16	35.56%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	15	31.91%	12	25.53%
Mild	18	38.30%	17	36.17%
Serious	14	29.79%	18	38.30%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	12	27.27%	10	22.22%
Mild	21	47.73%	23	51.11%
Serious	11	25.00%	12	26.67%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Connecticut

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	7	15.56%	4	8.89%
Mild	26	57.78%	29	64.44%
Serious	12	26.67%	12	26.67%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	15	31.91%	14	29.79%
Mild	20	42.55%	20	42.55%
Serious	12	25.53%	13	27.66%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	23	50.00%	24	52.17%
Mild	16	34.78%	14	29.79%
Serious	7	15.22%	8	17.02%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	21	44.68%	20	43.48%
Mild	20	42.55%	21	45.65%
Serious	6	12.77%	5	10.87%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	6	12.77%	4	8.70%
Mild	19	40.43%	22	47.83%
Serious	22	46.81%	21	45.65%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	10	21.28%	7	15.22%
Mild	21	44.68%	21	45.65%
Serious	16	34.04%	17	36.96%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	7	14.89%	3	6.52%
Mild	21	44.68%	19	41.30%
Serious	19	40.43%	24	52.17%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	4	8.51%	3	6.52%
Mild	15	31.91%	11	23.91%
Serious	27	57.45%	32	69.57%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	18	38.30%	16	34.78%
Mild	22	46.81%	22	47.83%
Serious	6	12.77%	9	19.57%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	17	36.17%	14	30.43%
Mild	24	51.06%	20	43.48%
Serious	6	12.77%	13	28.26%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	11	23.40%	10	21.74%
Mild	18	38.30%	19	41.30%
Serious	18	38.30%	18	39.13%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Connecticut

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	12	25.53%	8	17.39%
Mild	24	51.06%	24	52.17%
Serious	11	23.40%	15	32.61%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	13	27.66%	13	28.26%
Mild	30	63.83%	25	54.35%
Serious	3	6.38%	8	17.39%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	20	42.55%	20	43.48%
Mild	8	17.02%	8	17.39%
Serious	2	4.26%	2	4.35%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	3	2	6	19
Product obsolescence	2	1	1	9
Changing customer preferences	3	1	4	15
Customer's ability to afford	6	1	1	21
Talent acquisition	8	4	5	37
Talent retention	8	8	0	40
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	4	1	9
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	5	1	5	22
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	1	1
Ability to maintain quality product/service	2	3	1	13
Cost of materials	2	7	1	21
Cost of equipment	0	2	1	5
Taxes	0	0	2	2
Cost of regulatory compliance	2	1	0	8
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	1	0	0	3
Employee safety	0	0	1	1
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	0	2
Inflation	3	2	1	14
Employee engagement	0	3	2	8
Developing future leaders	0	2	6	10
Cybersecurity	1	0	3	6
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	0	0
Political uncertainty	0	0	3	3
Talent skills gap	0	3	0	6
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Connecticut

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	3	6.25%
Slightly less than planned	17	35.42%
As planned	16	33.33%
Slightly more than planned	10	20.83%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	1	2.08%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	26	54.17%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	16	33.33%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	5	10.42%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	26	54.17%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	3	6.25%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	18	37.50%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	2.08%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	17	36.17%	6	13.04%
No	30	63.83%	40	86.96%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	36	76.60%	30	65.22%
No	11	23.40%	16	34.78%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	38	80.85%	33	73.33%
No	9	19.15%	12	26.67%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	7	38.89%	5	27.78%
No	11	61.11%	13	72.22%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	22	66.67%	18	56.25%
No	11	33.33%	14	43.75%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Connecticut

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	1	2.17%
Some due to this	31	67.39%
None due to this	14	30.43%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	6	13.04%
None due to this	40	86.96%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	4.26%
Some due to this	42	89.36%
None due to this	3	6.38%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	4.26%
Some due to this	39	82.98%
None due to this	6	12.77%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	25	53.19%
None due to this	22	46.81%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	5	10.64%
None due to this	42	89.36%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Connecticut

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	1	2.13%	0	0.00%	1	2.13%
Somewhat dissatisfied	9	28.57%	3	6.38%	10	21.28%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	25.71%	5	10.64%	7	14.89%
Somewhat satisfied	24	35.71%	31	65.96%	19	40.43%
Very satisfied	10	8.57%	8	17.02%	10	21.28%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	12	25.00%	7	14.58%	7	14.58%
Middle managers	10	20.83%	4	8.33%	13	27.08%
Professional staff (non-managers)	21	43.75%	5	10.42%	20	41.67%
Skilled production workers	18	37.50%	2	4.17%	7	14.58%
Unskilled production workers	10	20.83%	4	8.33%	5	10.42%
Entry-level office workers	11	22.92%	4	8.33%	9	18.75%
Entry-level non-office workers	6	12.50%	1	2.08%	3	6.25%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	8	16.67%	1	2.08%	2	4.17%
Service workers	7	14.58%	1	2.08%	5	10.42%
Other	2	4.17%	0	0.00%	1	2.08%
None	5	10.42%	7	14.58%	5	10.42%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Connecticut

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	24	50.00%	16	33.33%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	8	16.67%	21	43.75%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	14	29.17%	30	62.50%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	24	50.00%	33	68.75%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	22	45.83%	4	8.33%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	22	45.83%	3	6.25%
Increasing starting salaries	31	64.58%	8	16.67%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	12	25.00%	13	27.08%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	13	27.08%	11	22.92%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	9	18.75%	6	12.50%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	4	8.33%	11	22.92%
Shortening the hiring process	16	33.33%	2	4.17%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	19	39.58%	7	14.58%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	21	43.75%	12	25.00%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	10	20.83%	9	18.75%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	25	52.08%	3	6.25%
Participating in job fairs	18	37.50%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	14	29.17%	9	18.75%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	5	10.42%	3	6.25%
Using formal candidate tracking system	15	31.25%	2	4.17%
Other	2	4.17%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	15	31.25%
Team incentives	7	14.58%
Employee referral bonuses	27	56.25%
Year-end bonuses	19	39.58%
Spot bonuses	13	27.08%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	20	41.67%
Retention bonuses	6	12.50%
Commissions	12	25.00%
Project bonuses	6	12.50%
Profit sharing	8	16.67%
Hazard bonuses/pay	1	2.08%
Additional PTO	17	35.42%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Connecticut

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	6	12.50%
Language premiums	4	8.33%
Other*	2	4.17%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	25	52.08%
Resources to do their job effectively	5	10.42%
Mentoring opportunities	2	4.17%
Competitive/robust health benefits	17	35.42%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	2.08%
Driven by the mission of the organization	9	18.75%
Recognition and reward for good performance	14	29.17%
Ongoing training on new technologies	1	2.08%
Competitive pay	36	75.00%
Good work/life balance	38	79.17%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	4	8.33%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	21	43.75%
Current technology	1	2.08%
Remote work opportunities	12	25.00%
Hybrid work opportunities	3	6.25%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	2	4.17%
Regular full-time hours	1	2.08%
Strong organizational culture	16	33.33%
Challenging work	5	10.42%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	14	29.17%
Focus on employee safety	1	2.08%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	2	4.26%
No change	25	53.19%
More difficult	20	42.55%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Connecticut

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	4	20.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	15	75.00%
Lack of technical skills	11	55.00%
Lack of soft skills	5	25.00%
Lack of work experience	5	25.00%
Our organization's geographic location	2	10.00%
Market competition/high demand	8	40.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	13	65.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	1	5.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	1	5.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	2	10.00%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	9	19.15%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	19	40.43%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	10	21.28%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	2.13%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	8	17.02%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	8	17.02%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	20	42.55%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	9	19.15%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	4.26%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	8	17.02%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	4	8.33%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	15	31.25%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	7	14.58%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	2.08%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	12	25.00%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	10.42%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	7	14.58%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Connecticut

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	23	47.92%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	15	31.25%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	28	58.33%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	7	14.58%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	6	12.50%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	19	39.58%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	4	8.33%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	8	16.67%
Creating/redefining policies	8	16.67%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	4	8.33%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	9	18.75%
N/A	4	8.33%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	0	0.00%
No	34	72.34%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	13	27.66%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	24	51.06%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	2	4.26%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	20	42.55%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	1	2.13%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Connecticut

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	42	87.50%
Paid lump sum awards	2	4.17%
Paid variable/bonus awards	17	35.42%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	3	6.25%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	2	4.17%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	2	4.17%
Uncertain	1	2.08%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	41	85.42%
Paying lump sum awards	2	4.17%
Paying variable/bonus awards	18	37.50%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	2	4.17%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	5	10.42%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	28	58.33%	24	50.00%
Increased standard wages	17	35.42%	18	37.50%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	23	47.92%	25	52.08%
Implemented or increased variable pay	3	6.25%	5	10.42%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	2.08%	0	0.00%
Other	2	4.17%	1	2.08%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	4	8.33%	2	4.17%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Connecticut

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	7	14.58%	11	22.92%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	6	12.50%	9	18.75%
Invest in new technology	19	39.58%	23	47.92%
Invest in equipment	16	33.33%	16	33.33%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	1	2.08%	6	12.50%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	4	8.33%	7	14.58%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	5	10.42%	2	4.17%
Increase training budget	11	22.92%	12	25.00%
Increase total rewards communication/education	7	14.58%	11	22.92%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	15	31.25%	14	29.17%
Increase recruiting emphasis	14	29.17%	14	29.17%
Pay above market rates	3	6.25%	4	8.33%
Enhance the benefits package	6	12.50%	10	20.83%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	13	27.08%	17	35.42%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	11	22.92%	12	25.00%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	6	12.50%	5	10.42%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	1	2.08%	2	4.17%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	4	8.33%	2	4.17%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	4	8.33%	3	6.25%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	3	6.25%	7	14.58%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	2.08%	2	4.17%
Hold off on investing in new technology	3	6.25%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	2	4.17%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	2.08%	1	2.08%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	3	6.25%	2	4.17%
Reduce training budget	1	2.08%	1	2.08%
Limiting employee travel	13	27.08%	9	18.75%
Hiring freezes	6	12.50%	4	8.33%
Implementing furloughs	1	2.08%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	9	18.75%	2	4.17%
Reduce benefits package	1	2.08%	1	2.08%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	2.08%	1	2.08%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	2	4.17%	3	6.25%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Connecticut

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	7	14.58%	4	8.33%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	19	39.58%	7	14.58%
Increasing presence on social media	28	58.33%	10	20.83%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	5	10.42%	0	0.00%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	12	25.00%	4	8.33%
Partnering with brand influencers	4	8.33%	1	2.08%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	14	29.17%	7	14.58%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	15	31.25%	8	16.67%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	12	25.00%	3	6.25%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Connecticut

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	20	41.67%	8	16.67%	2	4.17%
Website content production	20	41.67%	4	8.33%	5	10.42%
Marketing content production	17	35.42%	6	12.50%	4	8.33%
Other content production	17	35.42%	4	8.33%	5	10.42%
Digital personal assistant	20	41.67%	7	14.58%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	16	33.33%	7	14.58%	3	6.25%
Customer relationship management	19	39.58%	4	8.33%	3	6.25%
Inventory management	19	39.58%	3	6.25%	2	4.17%
Product recommendations	21	43.75%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Accounting	20	41.67%	4	8.33%	2	4.17%
Supply chain operations	22	45.83%	1	2.08%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	18	37.50%	8	16.67%	4	8.33%
Application and screening management	17	35.42%	9	18.75%	2	4.17%
Audience segmentation	18	37.50%	3	6.25%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	14	29.17%	6	12.50%	4	8.33%
Idea generation	14	29.17%	6	12.50%	5	10.42%
Process automation	15	31.25%	6	12.50%	4	8.33%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	17	35.42%	6	12.50%	4	8.33%

# **Delaware**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Delaware

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	4.35%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	2	8.70%
Construction	1	4.35%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	3	13.04%
Education Services	1	4.35%
Financial & Insurance	2	8.70%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1	4.35%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	1	4.35%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	2	8.70%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	2	8.70%
Services (Except Public Administration)	5	21.74%
Transportation & Warehousing	1	4.35%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	1	4.35%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	8	34.78%
100 to 249	7	30.43%
250 to 499	1	4.35%
500 to 999	1	4.35%
1,000 or more	6	26.09%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	14	60.87%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	3	13.04%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	6	26.09%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Delaware

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	11	47.8%
Stay the same	8	34.8%
Decline	4	17.4%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	11	47.8%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	5	21.7%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	5	21.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	8.7%
Do not know	0	0.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	4.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	13	56.5%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	6	26.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	4.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	8.7%
Do not know	0	0.0%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	15	68.18%	15	68.18%
Mild	7	31.82%	6	27.27%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	4.55%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	4	18.18%	3	13.64%
Mild	12	54.55%	13	59.09%
Serious	6	27.27%	6	27.27%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	15	68.18%	10	45.45%
Mild	7	31.82%	9	40.91%
Serious	0	0.00%	3	13.64%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	5	22.73%	2	9.09%
Mild	11	50.00%	14	63.64%
Serious	6	27.27%	6	27.27%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Delaware

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	5	22.73%	4	18.18%
Mild	11	50.00%	12	54.55%
Serious	6	27.27%	6	27.27%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	1	4.55%	0	0.00%
Mild	14	63.64%	11	50.00%
Serious	7	31.82%	11	50.00%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	3	13.64%	3	13.64%
Mild	10	45.45%	7	31.82%
Serious	9	40.91%	12	54.55%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	3	13.64%	3	13.64%
Mild	14	63.64%	10	45.45%
Serious	5	22.73%	9	40.91%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	2	9.52%	3	14.29%
Mild	10	47.62%	8	38.10%
Serious	9	42.86%	10	47.62%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	12	54.55%	12	54.55%
Mild	6	27.27%	5	22.73%
Serious	4	18.18%	5	22.73%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	9	40.91%	8	36.36%
Mild	12	54.55%	11	50.00%
Serious	1	4.55%	3	13.64%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	6	28.57%	5	26.32%
Mild	12	57.14%	11	57.89%
Serious	3	14.29%	3	15.79%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	7	33.33%	5	22.73%
Mild	10	47.62%	12	54.55%
Serious	4	19.05%	5	22.73%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	4	20.00%	4	19.05%
Mild	13	65.00%	15	71.43%
Serious	3	15.00%	2	9.52%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Delaware

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	4	18.18%	5	22.73%
Mild	16	72.73%	15	68.18%
Serious	2	9.09%	2	9.09%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	2	9.09%	2	9.09%
Mild	12	54.55%	15	68.18%
Serious	8	36.36%	5	22.73%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	9	40.91%	9	40.91%
Mild	10	45.45%	9	40.91%
Serious	3	13.64%	4	18.18%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	10	45.45%	10	45.45%
Mild	8	36.36%	9	40.91%
Serious	4	18.18%	3	13.64%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	1	4.55%	0	0.00%
Mild	13	59.09%	12	54.55%
Serious	8	36.36%	10	45.45%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	3	13.64%	3	13.64%
Mild	12	54.55%	9	40.91%
Serious	7	31.82%	9	40.91%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	2	9.09%	1	4.55%
Mild	11	50.00%	10	45.45%
Serious	8	36.36%	10	45.45%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	6	27.27%	5	22.73%
Serious	16	72.73%	17	77.27%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	8	36.36%	7	31.82%
Mild	9	40.91%	9	40.91%
Serious	5	22.73%	6	27.27%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	7	31.82%	3	13.64%
Mild	10	45.45%	12	54.55%
Serious	5	22.73%	7	31.82%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	3	13.64%	4	18.18%
Mild	10	45.45%	10	45.45%
Serious	9	40.91%	8	36.36%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Delaware

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	5	22.73%	2	9.09%
Mild	11	50.00%	14	63.64%
Serious	6	27.27%	6	27.27%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	7	31.82%	7	31.82%
Mild	13	59.09%	10	45.45%
Serious	1	4.55%	4	18.18%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	13	59.09%	13	59.09%
Mild	2	9.09%	1	4.55%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	4.55%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	1	1	1	6
Product obsolescence	0	0	1	1
Changing customer preferences	2	1	3	11
Customer's ability to afford	3	1	1	12
Talent acquisition	2	2	1	11
Talent retention	2	4	1	15
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	0	1	1
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	3	1	3	14
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	2	1	0	8
Cost of materials	1	2	1	8
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	0	0	3
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	0	0	0
Employee safety	2	0	0	6
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	1	3
Inflation	0	0	1	1
Employee engagement	1	1	1	6
Developing future leaders	0	2	3	7
Cybersecurity	0	2	2	6
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	1	1	0	5
Political uncertainty	0	2	0	4
Talent skills gap	1	0	0	3
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Delaware

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	1	4.35%
Slightly less than planned	7	30.43%
As planned	10	43.48%
Slightly more than planned	3	13.04%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	1	4.35%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	11	47.83%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	7	30.43%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	4	17.39%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	9	39.13%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	4.35%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	12	52.17%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	4.35%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	5	23.81%	4	19.05%
No	16	76.19%	17	80.95%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	16	76.19%	17	77.27%
No	5	23.81%	5	22.73%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	20	90.91%	15	68.18%
No	2	9.09%	7	31.82%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	4	44.44%	4	44.44%
No	5	55.56%	5	55.56%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	11	68.75%	10	62.50%
No	5	31.25%	6	37.50%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Delaware

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	18	85.71%
None due to this	3	14.29%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	3	14.29%
None due to this	18	85.71%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	21	95.45%
None due to this	1	4.55%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	16	76.19%
None due to this	5	23.81%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	13	59.09%
None due to this	9	40.91%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	4.76%
Some due to this	4	19.05%
None due to this	16	76.19%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Delaware

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	3	28.57%	1	4.55%	3	13.64%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	25.71%	3	13.64%	6	27.27%
Somewhat satisfied	13	35.71%	15	68.18%	10	45.45%
Very satisfied	5	8.57%	3	13.64%	3	13.64%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	8	34.78%	3	13.04%	1	4.35%
Middle managers	7	30.43%	2	8.70%	8	34.78%
Professional staff (non-managers)	9	39.13%	3	13.04%	8	34.78%
Skilled production workers	6	26.09%	1	4.35%	6	26.09%
Unskilled production workers	2	8.70%	0	0.00%	4	17.39%
Entry-level office workers	1	4.35%	1	4.35%	3	13.04%
Entry-level non-office workers	2	8.70%	0	0.00%	3	13.04%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	0	0.00%	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
Service workers	3	13.04%	0	0.00%	3	13.04%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	4.35%
None	2	8.70%	2	8.70%	1	4.35%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Delaware

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	8	34.78%	8	34.78%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	4	17.39%	10	43.48%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	6	26.09%	14	60.87%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	9	39.13%	14	60.87%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	15	65.22%	2	8.70%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	12	52.17%	0	0.00%
Increasing starting salaries	13	56.52%	4	17.39%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	5	21.74%	5	21.74%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	6	26.09%	4	17.39%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	7	30.43%	3	13.04%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	4	17.39%	6	26.09%
Shortening the hiring process	7	30.43%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	7	30.43%	3	13.04%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	13	56.52%	3	13.04%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	4	17.39%	3	13.04%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	9	39.13%	1	4.35%
Participating in job fairs	10	43.48%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	10	43.48%	5	21.74%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	2	8.70%	2	8.70%
Using formal candidate tracking system	9	39.13%	1	4.35%
Other	1	4.35%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	7	30.43%
Team incentives	1	4.35%
Employee referral bonuses	12	52.17%
Year-end bonuses	9	39.13%
Spot bonuses	6	26.09%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	8	34.78%
Retention bonuses	0	0.00%
Commissions	6	26.09%
Project bonuses	2	8.70%
Profit sharing	2	8.70%
Hazard bonuses/pay	1	4.35%
Additional PTO	3	13.04%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Delaware

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	4	17.39%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	1	4.35%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	13	56.52%
Resources to do their job effectively	4	17.39%
Mentoring opportunities	2	8.70%
Competitive/robust health benefits	6	26.09%
Opportunities to connect with others	0	0.00%
Driven by the mission of the organization	2	8.70%
Recognition and reward for good performance	6	26.09%
Ongoing training on new technologies	2	8.70%
Competitive pay	16	69.57%
Good work/life balance	20	86.96%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	4	17.39%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	9	39.13%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	6	26.09%
Hybrid work opportunities	4	17.39%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	0	0.00%
Strong organizational culture	10	43.48%
Challenging work	0	0.00%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	3	13.04%
Focus on employee safety	1	4.35%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	0	0.00%
No change	13	59.09%
More difficult	9	40.91%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Delaware

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	2	22.22%
Lack of qualified candidates	7	77.78%
Lack of technical skills	1	11.11%
Lack of soft skills	2	22.22%
Lack of work experience	2	22.22%
Our organization's geographic location	2	22.22%
Market competition/high demand	2	22.22%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	7	77.78%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	2	22.22%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	0	0.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	4	44.44%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	9.52%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	8	38.10%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	19.05%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	19.05%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	3	14.29%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	14.29%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	5	23.81%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	7	33.33%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	6	28.57%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	3	13.04%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	6	26.09%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	2	8.70%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	4.35%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	13.04%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	13.04%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	4	17.39%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Delaware

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	15	65.22%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	6	26.09%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	10	43.48%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	3	13.04%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	5	21.74%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	8	34.78%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	4	17.39%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	4	17.39%
Creating/redefining policies	4	17.39%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	3	13.04%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	4	17.39%
N/A	2	8.70%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	2	9.09%
No	15	68.18%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	5	22.73%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	6	27.27%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	6	27.27%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	10	45.45%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	0	0.00%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Delaware

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	22	95.65%
Paid lump sum awards	3	13.04%
Paid variable/bonus awards	5	21.74%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	2	8.70%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	1	4.35%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	21	91.30%
Paying lump sum awards	1	4.35%
Paying variable/bonus awards	7	30.43%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	4.35%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	2	8.70%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	11	47.83%	10	43.48%
Increased standard wages	8	34.78%	8	34.78%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	15	65.22%	14	60.87%
Implemented or increased variable pay	3	13.04%	2	8.70%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	2	8.70%	2	8.70%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Delaware

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	2	8.70%	5	21.74%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	3	13.04%	2	8.70%
Invest in new technology	13	56.52%	14	60.87%
Invest in equipment	6	26.09%	8	34.78%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	2	8.70%	6	26.09%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	3	13.04%	2	8.70%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	2	8.70%	1	4.35%
Increase training budget	6	26.09%	9	39.13%
Increase total rewards communication/education	7	30.43%	8	34.78%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	11	47.83%	9	39.13%
Increase recruiting emphasis	5	21.74%	7	30.43%
Pay above market rates	3	13.04%	3	13.04%
Enhance the benefits package	4	17.39%	4	17.39%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	4	17.39%	8	34.78%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	6	26.09%	7	30.43%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	2	8.70%	2	8.70%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	1	4.35%	2	8.70%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	2	8.70%	2	8.70%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	1	4.35%	4	17.39%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	1	4.35%
Hold off on investing in new technology	2	8.70%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	2	8.70%	2	8.70%
Reduce training budget	2	8.70%	1	4.35%
Limiting employee travel	7	30.43%	3	13.04%
Hiring freezes	3	13.04%	2	8.70%
Implementing furloughs	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	5	21.74%	3	13.04%
Reduce benefits package	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Freezing compensation increases	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Outsourcing roles or functions	4	17.39%	6	26.09%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Delaware

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	4	17.39%	1	4.35%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	10	43.48%	5	21.74%
Increasing presence on social media	15	65.22%	5	21.74%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	4	17.39%	2	8.70%
Partnering with brand influencers	2	8.70%	0	0.00%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	7	30.43%	2	8.70%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	8	34.78%	4	17.39%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	8	34.78%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Delaware

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	7	30.43%	4	17.39%	0	0.00%
Website content production	6	26.09%	3	13.04%	2	8.70%
Marketing content production	6	26.09%	3	13.04%	2	8.70%
Other content production	7	30.43%	2	8.70%	2	8.70%
Digital personal assistant	5	21.74%	5	21.74%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	5	21.74%	6	26.09%	1	4.35%
Customer relationship management	9	39.13%	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Inventory management	7	30.43%	3	13.04%	1	4.35%
Product recommendations	8	34.78%	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
Accounting	7	30.43%	3	13.04%	2	8.70%
Supply chain operations	8	34.78%	2	8.70%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	8	34.78%	5	21.74%	1	4.35%
Application and screening management	7	30.43%	4	17.39%	1	4.35%
Audience segmentation	7	30.43%	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	6	26.09%	4	17.39%	2	8.70%
Idea generation	5	21.74%	5	21.74%	1	4.35%
Process automation	6	26.09%	5	21.74%	2	8.70%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	8	34.78%	0	0.00%	1	4.35%

# Florida

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 107

Report Cut: Florida

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	2	1.87%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	1.87%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	3	2.80%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	2	1.87%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	12	11.21%
Education Services	3	2.80%
Financial & Insurance	12	11.21%
Health Care & Social Assistance	7	6.54%
Information	4	3.74%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	7	6.54%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	23	21.50%
Public Administration	2	1.87%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	4	3.74%
Services (Except Public Administration)	9	8.41%
Transportation & Warehousing	4	3.74%
Utilities	1	0.93%
Wholesale Trade	10	9.35%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	35	32.71%
100 to 249	38	35.51%
250 to 499	14	13.08%
500 to 999	10	9.35%
1,000 or more	10	9.35%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	77	71.96%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	6	5.61%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	22	20.56%
Public Sector/Government	2	1.87%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 107

Report Cut: Florida

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	37	34.6%
Stay the same	54	50.5%
Decline	16	15.0%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	11	10.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	48	44.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	15	14.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	19	17.8%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	8	7.5%
Do not know	6	5.6%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	17	15.9%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	55	51.4%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	18	16.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	3.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	1.9%
Do not know	11	10.3%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	83	83.84%	73	73.00%
Mild	15	15.15%	21	21.00%
Serious	1	1.01%	6	6.00%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	18	17.14%	13	12.50%
Mild	54	51.43%	53	50.96%
Serious	33	31.43%	38	36.54%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	67	65.05%	57	55.34%
Mild	32	31.07%	36	34.95%
Serious	4	3.88%	10	9.71%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	34	33.01%	26	25.24%
Mild	53	51.46%	57	55.34%
Serious	16	15.53%	20	19.42%

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4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	26	25.24%	23	22.33%
Mild	50	48.54%	55	53.40%
Serious	27	26.21%	25	24.27%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	24	23.08%	16	15.38%
Mild	40	38.46%	43	41.35%
Serious	40	38.46%	45	43.27%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	20	19.23%	15	14.42%
Mild	46	44.23%	43	41.35%
Serious	38	36.54%	46	44.23%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	30	28.85%	22	21.57%
Mild	47	45.19%	43	42.16%
Serious	27	25.96%	37	36.27%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	13	12.62%	14	13.59%
Mild	59	57.28%	53	51.46%
Serious	31	30.10%	36	34.95%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	55	53.40%	48	46.15%
Mild	32	31.07%	35	33.65%
Serious	16	15.53%	21	20.19%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	56	54.37%	51	49.04%
Mild	35	33.98%	39	37.50%
Serious	12	11.65%	14	13.46%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	41	40.20%	36	35.64%
Mild	37	36.27%	38	37.62%
Serious	24	23.53%	27	26.73%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	32	31.68%	30	29.13%
Mild	49	48.51%	46	44.66%
Serious	20	19.80%	27	26.21%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	37	37.76%	35	35.00%
Mild	49	50.00%	48	48.00%
Serious	12	12.24%	17	17.00%



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4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	37	37.37%	34	34.34%
Mild	44	44.44%	44	44.44%
Serious	18	18.18%	21	21.21%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	23	22.55%	25	24.75%
Mild	48	47.06%	47	46.53%
Serious	31	30.39%	29	28.71%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	49	48.04%	48	46.60%
Mild	34	33.33%	36	35.64%
Serious	19	18.63%	19	18.81%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	52	52.00%	52	52.00%
Mild	36	36.00%	35	35.00%
Serious	12	12.00%	13	13.00%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	17	17.00%	15	15.00%
Mild	50	50.00%	58	58.00%
Serious	36	36.00%	31	31.00%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	18	18.00%	13	13.00%
Mild	53	53.00%	59	59.00%
Serious	31	31.00%	29	29.00%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	13	13.00%	11	11.00%
Mild	59	59.00%	46	46.00%
Serious	30	30.00%	46	46.00%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	7	7.00%	6	6.00%
Mild	39	39.00%	35	35.00%
Serious	58	58.00%	63	63.00%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	43	43.00%	39	39.00%
Mild	50	50.00%	48	48.00%
Serious	9	9.00%	15	15.00%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	32	32.00%	27	27.00%
Mild	50	50.00%	43	43.00%
Serious	21	21.00%	34	34.00%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	26	26.00%	23	23.00%
Mild	47	47.00%	53	53.00%
Serious	30	30.00%	28	28.00%

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4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	25	25.00%	23	23.00%
Mild	61	61.00%	61	61.00%
Serious	16	16.00%	19	19.00%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	35	35.00%	33	33.00%
Mild	54	54.00%	54	54.00%
Serious	8	8.00%	12	12.00%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	50	50.00%	51	51.00%
Mild	21	21.00%	21	21.00%
Serious	3	3.00%	3	3.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	1	1	0	5
Competition in general	20	1	14	76
Product obsolescence	3	0	2	11
Changing customer preferences	6	9	3	39
Customer's ability to afford	10	4	3	41
Talent acquisition	10	11	9	61
Talent retention	10	16	8	70
Ability to pay for benefits costs	4	5	9	31
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	8	11	10	56
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	2	0	2	8
Ability to maintain quality product/service	4	4	2	22
Cost of materials	4	8	2	30
Cost of equipment	0	3	0	6
Taxes	0	0	1	1
Cost of regulatory compliance	3	0	4	13
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	3	5	5	24
Employee safety	0	1	0	2
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	2	0	7
Inflation	1	6	2	17
Employee engagement	1	2	4	11
Developing future leaders	3	3	6	21
Cybersecurity	4	4	4	24
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	2	2
A.I. technology and platforms	4	2	2	18
Political uncertainty	2	3	2	14
Talent skills gap	0	3	4	10
Unknown challenges	0	0	3	3
Other	0	0	1	1

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6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	10	9.35%
Slightly less than planned	24	22.43%
As planned	42	39.25%
Slightly more than planned	25	23.36%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	5	4.67%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	55	51.40%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	38	35.51%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	12	11.21%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	56	52.34%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	7	6.54%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	42	39.25%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	1.87%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	37	35.24%	27	25.96%
No	68	64.76%	77	74.04%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	83	78.30%	75	72.12%
No	23	21.70%	29	27.88%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	88	83.02%	78	74.29%
No	18	16.98%	27	25.71%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	7	20.00%	6	17.65%
No	28	80.00%	28	82.35%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	45	64.29%	41	60.29%
No	25	35.71%	27	39.71%

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10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	7	6.73%
Some due to this	75	72.12%
None due to this	22	21.15%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	22	20.75%
None due to this	84	79.25%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	6	5.71%
Some due to this	89	84.76%
None due to this	10	9.52%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	4	3.77%
Some due to this	80	75.47%
None due to this	22	20.75%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	3	2.86%
Some due to this	58	55.24%
None due to this	44	41.90%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	3	2.86%
Some due to this	19	18.10%
None due to this	83	79.05%

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11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	2	1.89%	2	1.89%	2	1.89%
Somewhat dissatisfied	17	28.57%	19	17.92%	27	25.47%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	17	25.71%	11	10.38%	13	12.26%
Somewhat satisfied	45	35.71%	49	46.23%	42	39.62%
Very satisfied	25	8.57%	25	23.58%	22	20.75%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	41	38.32%	13	12.15%	7	6.54%
Middle managers	41	38.32%	10	9.35%	19	17.76%
Professional staff (non-managers)	52	48.60%	16	14.95%	45	42.06%
Skilled production workers	25	23.36%	9	8.41%	21	19.63%
Unskilled production workers	9	8.41%	5	4.67%	16	14.95%
Entry-level office workers	22	20.56%	12	11.21%	29	27.10%
Entry-level non-office workers	16	14.95%	7	6.54%	18	16.82%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	21	19.63%	5	4.67%	7	6.54%
Service workers	13	12.15%	3	2.80%	9	8.41%
Other	9	8.41%	1	0.93%	3	2.80%
None	9	8.41%	15	14.02%	12	11.21%

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13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	44	41.12%	48	44.86%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	14	13.08%	50	46.73%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	24	22.43%	64	59.81%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	38	35.51%	64	59.81%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	59	55.14%	14	13.08%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	55	51.40%	8	7.48%
Increasing starting salaries	65	60.75%	22	20.56%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	34	31.78%	41	38.32%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	32	29.91%	25	23.36%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	19	17.76%	7	6.54%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	9	8.41%	18	16.82%
Shortening the hiring process	30	28.04%	3	2.80%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	42	39.25%	18	16.82%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	45	42.06%	31	28.97%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	15	14.02%	16	14.95%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	45	42.06%	6	5.61%
Participating in job fairs	38	35.51%	3	2.80%
Building/increasing brand awareness	44	41.12%	19	17.76%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	16	14.95%	19	17.76%
Using formal candidate tracking system	46	42.99%	7	6.54%
Other	3	2.80%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	36	33.64%
Team incentives	17	15.89%
Employee referral bonuses	64	59.81%
Year-end bonuses	50	46.73%
Spot bonuses	28	26.17%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	40	37.38%
Retention bonuses	14	13.08%
Commissions	24	22.43%
Project bonuses	9	8.41%
Profit sharing	10	9.35%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	27	25.23%

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14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	17	15.89%
Language premiums	7	6.54%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	56	52.34%
Resources to do their job effectively	14	13.08%
Mentoring opportunities	11	10.28%
Competitive/robust health benefits	35	32.71%
Opportunities to connect with others	4	3.74%
Driven by the mission of the organization	21	19.63%
Recognition and reward for good performance	27	25.23%
Ongoing training on new technologies	6	5.61%
Competitive pay	80	74.77%
Good work/life balance	77	71.96%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	16	14.95%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	32	29.91%
Current technology	2	1.87%
Remote work opportunities	29	27.10%
Hybrid work opportunities	26	24.30%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	3	2.80%
Regular full-time hours	8	7.48%
Strong organizational culture	30	28.04%
Challenging work	7	6.54%
Diverse workforce	2	1.87%
Vacation/paid time off	29	27.10%
Focus on employee safety	3	2.80%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	3	2.86%
No change	64	60.95%
More difficult	38	36.19%

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17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	4	10.53%
Lack of qualified candidates	30	78.95%
Lack of technical skills	14	36.84%
Lack of soft skills	8	21.05%
Lack of work experience	9	23.68%
Our organization's geographic location	4	10.53%
Market competition/high demand	13	34.21%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	26	68.42%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	2	5.26%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	10	26.32%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	6	15.79%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	11	28.95%
Other *	2	5.26%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	21	20.00%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	47	44.76%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	20	19.05%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	6	5.71%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	11	10.48%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	16	15.24%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	38	36.19%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	25	23.81%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	4	3.81%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	22	20.95%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	8	7.48%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	37	34.58%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	6	5.61%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	6	5.61%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	20	18.69%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	8	7.48%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	24	22.43%



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<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	50	46.73%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	26	24.30%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	48	44.86%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	17	15.89%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	10	9.35%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	40	37.38%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	12	11.21%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	19	17.76%
Creating/redefining policies	24	22.43%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	8	7.48%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	29	27.10%
N/A	14	13.08%
Other *	1	0.93%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	11	10.48%
No	77	73.33%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	17	16.19%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	41	38.68%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	11	10.38%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	46	43.40%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	8	7.55%

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24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	95	88.79%
Paid lump sum awards	13	12.15%
Paid variable/bonus awards	39	36.45%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	7	6.54%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	4	3.74%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	2	1.87%
Uncertain	5	4.67%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	91	85.05%
Paying lump sum awards	10	9.35%
Paying variable/bonus awards	40	37.38%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	3	2.80%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	4	3.74%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	14	13.08%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	57	53.27%	45	42.06%
Increased standard wages	36	33.64%	31	28.97%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	44	41.12%	48	44.86%
Implemented or increased variable pay	12	11.21%	17	15.89%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	0.93%	1	0.93%
Other	1	0.93%	1	0.93%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	11	10.28%	10	9.35%

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27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	16	14.95%	19	17.76%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	16	14.95%	11	10.28%
Invest in new technology	56	52.34%	59	55.14%
Invest in equipment	35	32.71%	36	33.64%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	7	6.54%	9	8.41%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	7	6.54%	4	3.74%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	7	6.54%	9	8.41%
Increase training budget	21	19.63%	35	32.71%
Increase total rewards communication/education	17	15.89%	31	28.97%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	34	31.78%	32	29.91%
Increase recruiting emphasis	22	20.56%	25	23.36%
Pay above market rates	6	5.61%	8	7.48%
Enhance the benefits package	15	14.02%	25	23.36%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	27	25.23%	36	33.64%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	20	18.69%	34	31.78%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	13	12.15%	13	12.15%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	5	4.67%	6	5.61%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	6	5.61%	5	4.67%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	20	18.69%	30	28.04%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	8	7.48%	21	19.63%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	2	1.87%	2	1.87%
Hold off on investing in new technology	4	3.74%	1	0.93%
Hold off on investing in equipment	4	3.74%	1	0.93%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	0.93%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	7	6.54%	3	2.80%
Reduce training budget	6	5.61%	4	3.74%
Limiting employee travel	19	17.76%	9	8.41%
Hiring freezes	9	8.41%	5	4.67%
Implementing furloughs	2	1.87%	1	0.93%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	13	12.15%	4	3.74%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	2	1.87%	2	1.87%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	6	5.61%	9	8.41%
Freezing compensation increases	3	2.80%	3	2.80%
Outsourcing roles or functions	5	4.67%	7	6.54%

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29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	17	15.89%	7	6.54%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	40	37.38%	6	5.61%
Increasing presence on social media	61	57.01%	14	13.08%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	12	11.21%	6	5.61%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	36	33.64%	11	10.28%
Partnering with brand influencers	8	7.48%	4	3.74%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	23	21.50%	10	9.35%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	44	41.12%	14	13.08%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	36	33.64%	11	10.28%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 107

Report Cut: Florida

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	47	43.93%	21	19.63%	2	1.87%
Website content production	41	38.32%	22	20.56%	6	5.61%
Marketing content production	29	27.10%	30	28.04%	10	9.35%
Other content production	36	33.64%	19	17.76%	7	6.54%
Digital personal assistant	44	41.12%	17	15.89%	4	3.74%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	38	35.51%	23	21.50%	2	1.87%
Customer relationship management	44	41.12%	17	15.89%	3	2.80%
Inventory management	42	39.25%	9	8.41%	2	1.87%
Product recommendations	45	42.06%	10	9.35%	1	0.93%
Accounting	48	44.86%	10	9.35%	3	2.80%
Supply chain operations	48	44.86%	6	5.61%	1	0.93%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	41	38.32%	23	21.50%	6	5.61%
Application and screening management	38	35.51%	22	20.56%	4	3.74%
Audience segmentation	44	41.12%	6	5.61%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	35	32.71%	18	16.82%	9	8.41%
Idea generation	32	29.91%	23	21.50%	10	9.35%
Process automation	35	32.71%	19	17.76%	7	6.54%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	40	37.38%	20	18.69%	5	4.67%

# **Georgia**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 73

Report Cut: Georgia

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	2.74%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1	1.37%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	1	1.37%
Construction	2	2.74%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	19	26.03%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	2	2.74%
Health Care & Social Assistance	3	4.11%
Information	4	5.48%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	5	6.85%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	12	16.44%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	3	4.11%
Services (Except Public Administration)	5	6.85%
Transportation & Warehousing	4	5.48%
Utilities	1	1.37%
Wholesale Trade	9	12.33%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	19	26.03%
100 to 249	26	35.62%
250 to 499	12	16.44%
500 to 999	7	9.59%
1,000 or more	9	12.33%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	58	79.45%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	3	4.11%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	12	16.44%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 73

Report Cut: Georgia

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	22	30.1%
Stay the same	37	50.7%
Decline	14	19.2%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	8	11.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	31	42.5%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	14	19.2%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	14	19.2%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	5	6.8%
Do not know	1	1.4%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	15	20.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	32	43.8%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	14	19.2%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	5	6.8%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	2.7%
Do not know	5	6.8%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	43	64.18%	37	55.22%
Mild	20	29.85%	22	32.84%
Serious	4	5.97%	8	11.94%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	8	11.27%	4	5.80%
Mild	37	52.11%	39	56.52%
Serious	26	36.62%	26	37.68%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	50	71.43%	40	57.14%
Mild	17	24.29%	26	37.14%
Serious	3	4.29%	4	5.71%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	23	32.86%	17	24.64%
Mild	32	45.71%	37	53.62%
Serious	15	21.43%	15	21.74%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 73

Report Cut: Georgia

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	23	32.39%	21	30.00%
Mild	30	42.25%	34	48.57%
Serious	18	25.35%	15	21.43%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	7	9.86%	4	5.71%
Mild	29	40.85%	29	41.43%
Serious	35	49.30%	37	52.86%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	6	8.33%	6	8.45%
Mild	39	54.17%	33	46.48%
Serious	27	37.50%	32	45.07%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	21	29.58%	18	26.09%
Mild	37	52.11%	30	43.48%
Serious	13	18.31%	21	30.43%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	13	18.06%	13	18.31%
Mild	39	54.17%	35	49.30%
Serious	20	27.78%	23	32.39%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	38	54.29%	35	49.30%
Mild	23	32.86%	25	35.21%
Serious	9	12.86%	11	15.49%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	38	54.29%	35	50.00%
Mild	25	35.71%	28	40.00%
Serious	7	10.00%	7	10.00%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	23	33.33%	18	26.87%
Mild	28	40.58%	28	41.79%
Serious	18	26.09%	21	31.34%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	18	26.09%	18	25.71%
Mild	36	52.17%	30	42.86%
Serious	15	21.74%	22	31.43%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	20	29.41%	19	27.54%
Mild	38	55.88%	37	53.62%
Serious	10	14.71%	13	18.84%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 73

Report Cut: Georgia

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	19	27.54%	16	23.53%
Mild	34	49.28%	35	51.47%
Serious	16	23.19%	17	25.00%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	12	16.90%	13	18.57%
Mild	41	57.75%	42	60.00%
Serious	18	25.35%	15	21.43%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	33	47.14%	33	47.14%
Mild	24	34.29%	24	34.29%
Serious	13	18.57%	13	18.57%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	30	43.48%	29	42.65%
Mild	26	37.68%	26	38.24%
Serious	13	18.84%	13	19.12%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	11	15.94%	9	13.24%
Mild	35	50.72%	42	61.76%
Serious	24	34.78%	19	27.94%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	11	15.94%	6	8.82%
Mild	38	55.07%	42	61.76%
Serious	21	30.43%	20	29.41%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	8	11.59%	5	7.35%
Mild	37	53.62%	35	51.47%
Serious	24	34.78%	28	41.18%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	2	2.90%	2	2.94%
Mild	32	46.38%	28	41.18%
Serious	36	52.17%	40	58.82%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	31	44.93%	29	42.65%
Mild	27	39.13%	28	41.18%
Serious	10	14.49%	11	16.18%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	21	30.43%	17	25.00%
Mild	34	49.28%	31	45.59%
Serious	15	21.74%	23	33.82%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	15	21.74%	16	23.53%
Mild	32	46.38%	35	51.47%
Serious	23	33.33%	19	27.94%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 73

Report Cut: Georgia

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	13	18.84%	10	14.71%
Mild	37	53.62%	38	55.88%
Serious	20	28.99%	22	32.35%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	21	30.43%	20	29.41%
Mild	39	56.52%	37	54.41%
Serious	6	8.70%	10	14.71%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	35	50.72%	34	50.00%
Mild	13	18.84%	13	19.12%
Serious	1	1.45%	2	2.94%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	1	0	0	3
Competition in general	20	0	5	65
Product obsolescence	1	0	2	5
Changing customer preferences	4	8	1	29
Customer's ability to afford	6	3	1	25
Talent acquisition	9	13	8	61
Talent retention	10	9	8	56
Ability to pay for benefits costs	2	1	3	11
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	2	8	6	28
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	0	1	4
Ability to maintain quality product/service	2	3	1	13
Cost of materials	2	6	4	22
Cost of equipment	1	1	1	6
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	2	1	0	8
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	2	3	4	16
Employee safety	0	0	1	1
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	2	0	4
Inflation	0	2	5	9
Employee engagement	1	4	4	15
Developing future leaders	0	2	6	10
Cybersecurity	2	2	2	12
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	1	2	1	8
Political uncertainty	3	0	3	12
Talent skills gap	0	2	3	7
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 73

Report Cut: Georgia

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	6	8.22%
Slightly less than planned	20	27.40%
As planned	25	34.25%
Slightly more than planned	18	24.66%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	3	4.11%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	36	49.32%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	26	35.62%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	9	12.33%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	41	56.16%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	2	2.74%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	27	36.99%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	3	4.11%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	25	35.71%	15	22.06%
No	45	64.29%	53	77.94%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	61	85.92%	52	74.29%
No	10	14.08%	18	25.71%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	62	87.32%	53	76.81%
No	9	12.68%	16	23.19%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	8	30.77%	7	26.92%
No	18	69.23%	19	73.08%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	43	82.69%	42	82.35%
No	9	17.31%	9	17.65%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 73

Report Cut: Georgia

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	1	1.39%
Some due to this	52	72.22%
None due to this	19	26.39%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	14	19.72%
None due to this	57	80.28%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	2.78%
Some due to this	65	90.28%
None due to this	5	6.94%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	2.82%
Some due to this	59	83.10%
None due to this	10	14.08%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	48	66.67%
None due to this	24	33.33%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	1.41%
Some due to this	16	22.54%
None due to this	54	76.06%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 73

Report Cut: Georgia

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	2.78%
Somewhat dissatisfied	20	24.21%	11	15.28%	24	33.33%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	16.91%	11	15.28%	11	15.28%
Somewhat satisfied	29	43.32%	37	51.39%	24	33.33%
Very satisfied	13	10.85%	13	18.06%	11	15.28%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	29	39.73%	9	12.33%	8	10.96%
Middle managers	32	43.84%	8	10.96%	16	21.92%
Professional staff (non-managers)	36	49.32%	10	13.70%	23	31.51%
Skilled production workers	28	38.36%	7	9.59%	22	30.14%
Unskilled production workers	15	20.55%	11	15.07%	21	28.77%
Entry-level office workers	17	23.29%	6	8.22%	19	26.03%
Entry-level non-office workers	14	19.18%	7	9.59%	14	19.18%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	13	17.81%	2	2.74%	4	5.48%
Service workers	12	16.44%	2	2.74%	7	9.59%
Other	4	5.48%	1	1.37%	1	1.37%
None	3	4.11%	5	6.85%	4	5.48%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 73

Report Cut: Georgia

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	35	47.95%	31	42.47%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	11	15.07%	35	47.95%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	14	19.18%	43	58.90%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	34	46.58%	49	67.12%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	39	53.42%	11	15.07%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	39	53.42%	9	12.33%
Increasing starting salaries	54	73.97%	18	24.66%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	19	26.03%	21	28.77%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	18	24.66%	14	19.18%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	15	20.55%	4	5.48%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	6	8.22%	13	17.81%
Shortening the hiring process	17	23.29%	1	1.37%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	21	28.77%	10	13.70%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	35	47.95%	20	27.40%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	9	12.33%	12	16.44%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	34	46.58%	4	5.48%
Participating in job fairs	33	45.21%	3	4.11%
Building/increasing brand awareness	35	47.95%	16	21.92%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	10	13.70%	7	9.59%
Using formal candidate tracking system	32	43.84%	3	4.11%
Other	2	2.74%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Individual incentives	30	41.10%
Team incentives	6	8.22%
Employee referral bonuses	46	63.01%
Year-end bonuses	32	43.84%
Spot bonuses	21	28.77%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	27	36.99%
Retention bonuses	8	10.96%
Commissions	22	30.14%
Project bonuses	8	10.96%
Profit sharing	12	16.44%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	16	21.92%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 73

Report Cut: Georgia

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	16	21.92%
Language premiums	1	1.37%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	38	52.05%
Resources to do their job effectively	10	13.70%
Mentoring opportunities	4	5.48%
Competitive/robust health benefits	26	35.62%
Opportunities to connect with others	3	4.11%
Driven by the mission of the organization	8	10.96%
Recognition and reward for good performance	21	28.77%
Ongoing training on new technologies	5	6.85%
Competitive pay	58	79.45%
Good work/life balance	56	76.71%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	6	8.22%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	26	35.62%
Current technology	1	1.37%
Remote work opportunities	19	26.03%
Hybrid work opportunities	18	24.66%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	3	4.11%
Strong organizational culture	18	24.66%
Challenging work	6	8.22%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	24	32.88%
Focus on employee safety	2	2.74%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	4	5.56%
No change	35	48.61%
More difficult	33	45.83%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 73

Report Cut: Georgia

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	2	6.06%
Lack of qualified candidates	27	81.82%
Lack of technical skills	18	54.55%
Lack of soft skills	6	18.18%
Lack of work experience	11	33.33%
Our organization's geographic location	6	18.18%
Market competition/high demand	10	30.30%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	19	57.58%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	1	3.03%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	6	18.18%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	3	9.09%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	9	27.27%
Other *	1	3.03%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	19	26.39%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	32	44.44%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	12	16.67%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	5.56%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	5	6.94%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	8	11.11%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	35	48.61%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	12	16.67%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	1.39%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	15	20.83%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	6	8.22%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	24	32.88%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	5	6.85%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	6	8.22%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	15	20.55%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	7	9.59%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	16	21.92%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 73

Report Cut: Georgia

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	41	56.16%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	19	26.03%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	33	45.21%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	11	15.07%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	5	6.85%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	29	39.73%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	5	6.85%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	13	17.81%
Creating/redefining policies	10	13.70%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	8	10.96%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	13	17.81%
N/A	9	12.33%
Other *	1	1.37%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	7	9.86%
No	59	83.10%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	5	7.04%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	28	38.89%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	4	5.56%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	35	48.61%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	5	6.94%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 73

Report Cut: Georgia

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	70	95.89%
Paid lump sum awards	9	12.33%
Paid variable/bonus awards	29	39.73%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	4	5.48%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	2	2.74%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	3	4.11%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	64	87.67%
Paying lump sum awards	6	8.22%
Paying variable/bonus awards	30	41.10%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	1.37%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	2	2.74%
Reducing wages/salaries	1	1.37%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	6	8.22%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	44	60.27%	30	41.10%
Increased standard wages	22	30.14%	18	24.66%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	33	45.21%	36	49.32%
Implemented or increased variable pay	9	12.33%	8	10.96%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	1.37%	1	1.37%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	5	6.85%	4	5.48%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 73

Report Cut: Georgia

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	11	15.07%	11	15.07%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	12	16.44%	9	12.33%
Invest in new technology	37	50.68%	44	60.27%
Invest in equipment	30	41.10%	33	45.21%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	5	6.85%	6	8.22%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	7	9.59%	6	8.22%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	6	8.22%	10	13.70%
Increase training budget	15	20.55%	26	35.62%
Increase total rewards communication/education	15	20.55%	23	31.51%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	18	24.66%	18	24.66%
Increase recruiting emphasis	18	24.66%	24	32.88%
Pay above market rates	4	5.48%	7	9.59%
Enhance the benefits package	12	16.44%	13	17.81%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	18	24.66%	24	32.88%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	13	17.81%	20	27.40%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	10	13.70%	8	10.96%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	2	2.74%	2	2.74%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	6	8.22%	7	9.59%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	7	9.59%	13	17.81%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	6	8.22%	12	16.44%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	2	2.74%	2	2.74%
Hold off on investing in new technology	3	4.11%	2	2.74%
Hold off on investing in equipment	2	2.74%	2	2.74%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	2	2.74%	1	1.37%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	8	10.96%	6	8.22%
Reduce training budget	2	2.74%	5	6.85%
Limiting employee travel	13	17.81%	11	15.07%
Hiring freezes	8	10.96%	5	6.85%
Implementing furloughs	4	5.48%	2	2.74%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	14	19.18%	4	5.48%
Reduce benefits package	2	2.74%	2	2.74%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	3	4.11%	3	4.11%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	3	4.11%	4	5.48%
Freezing compensation increases	2	2.74%	4	5.48%
Outsourcing roles or functions	3	4.11%	2	2.74%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 73

Report Cut: Georgia

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	10	13.70%	7	9.59%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	31	42.47%	10	13.70%
Increasing presence on social media	43	58.90%	13	17.81%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	6	8.22%	2	2.74%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	25	34.25%	10	13.70%
Partnering with brand influencers	4	5.48%	1	1.37%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	20	27.40%	10	13.70%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	30	41.10%	12	16.44%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	26	35.62%	11	15.07%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 73

Report Cut: Georgia

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	23	31.51%	12	16.44%	2	2.74%
Website content production	23	31.51%	13	17.81%	5	6.85%
Marketing content production	17	23.29%	19	26.03%	9	12.33%
Other content production	20	27.40%	13	17.81%	4	5.48%
Digital personal assistant	26	35.62%	9	12.33%	3	4.11%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	20	27.40%	13	17.81%	4	5.48%
Customer relationship management	20	27.40%	16	21.92%	4	5.48%
Inventory management	21	28.77%	8	10.96%	3	4.11%
Product recommendations	24	32.88%	6	8.22%	1	1.37%
Accounting	25	34.25%	6	8.22%	3	4.11%
Supply chain operations	25	34.25%	3	4.11%	2	2.74%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	18	24.66%	21	28.77%	4	5.48%
Application and screening management	18	24.66%	16	21.92%	3	4.11%
Audience segmentation	22	30.14%	4	5.48%	1	1.37%
Process improvement	20	27.40%	9	12.33%	6	8.22%
Idea generation	16	21.92%	17	23.29%	7	9.59%
Process automation	19	26.03%	9	12.33%	6	8.22%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	19	26.03%	9	12.33%	6	8.22%

# **Hawaii**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 78

Report Cut: Hawaii

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	4	5.13%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	1.28%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	4	5.13%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	6	7.69%
Construction	4	5.13%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	5	6.41%
Financial & Insurance	13	16.67%
Health Care & Social Assistance	15	19.23%
Information	1	1.28%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	1	1.28%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	1	1.28%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	4	5.13%
Public Administration	2	2.56%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	2	2.56%
Retail Trade	1	1.28%
Services (Except Public Administration)	6	7.69%
Transportation & Warehousing	3	3.85%
Utilities	2	2.56%
Wholesale Trade	3	3.85%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	37	47.44%
100 to 249	23	29.49%
250 to 499	8	10.26%
500 to 999	3	3.85%
1,000 or more	7	8.97%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	36	46.15%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	2	2.56%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	37	47.44%
Public Sector/Government	3	3.85%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 78

Report Cut: Hawaii

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	26	33.3%
Stay the same	37	47.4%
Decline	15	19.2%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	2.6%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	39	50.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	18	23.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	8	10.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	5.1%
Do not know	7	9.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	3	3.8%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	47	60.3%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	14	17.9%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	6	7.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	2.6%
Do not know	6	7.7%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	65	89.04%	59	80.82%
Mild	6	8.22%	10	13.70%
Serious	2	2.74%	4	5.48%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	12	16.00%	11	14.67%
Mild	42	56.00%	34	45.33%
Serious	21	28.00%	30	40.00%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	47	63.51%	45	60.81%
Mild	22	29.73%	17	22.97%
Serious	5	6.76%	12	16.22%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	29	39.19%	23	31.08%
Mild	32	43.24%	34	45.95%
Serious	13	17.57%	17	22.97%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 78

Report Cut: Hawaii

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	22	29.33%	19	25.33%
Mild	35	46.67%	38	50.67%
Serious	18	24.00%	18	24.00%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	5	6.49%	4	5.19%
Mild	27	35.06%	29	37.66%
Serious	45	58.44%	44	57.14%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	7	9.09%	5	6.41%
Mild	35	45.45%	39	50.00%
Serious	35	45.45%	34	43.59%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	20	26.32%	16	21.05%
Mild	34	44.74%	32	42.11%
Serious	22	28.95%	28	36.84%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	10	12.82%	6	7.69%
Mild	38	48.72%	42	53.85%
Serious	30	38.46%	30	38.46%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	28	36.84%	27	35.53%
Mild	34	44.74%	31	40.79%
Serious	14	18.42%	18	23.68%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	27	36.49%	25	33.78%
Mild	37	50.00%	34	45.95%
Serious	10	13.51%	15	20.27%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	20	26.67%	17	22.67%
Mild	33	44.00%	33	44.00%
Serious	22	29.33%	25	33.33%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	19	25.33%	15	20.00%
Mild	38	50.67%	38	50.67%
Serious	18	24.00%	22	29.33%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	27	36.49%	24	32.43%
Mild	32	43.24%	33	44.59%
Serious	15	20.27%	17	22.97%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 78

Report Cut: Hawaii

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	19	25.68%	17	22.97%
Mild	40	54.05%	37	50.00%
Serious	15	20.27%	20	27.03%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	16	21.92%	14	18.92%
Mild	41	56.16%	41	55.41%
Serious	16	21.92%	19	25.68%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	21	27.63%	21	28.38%
Mild	38	50.00%	35	47.30%
Serious	17	22.37%	18	24.32%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	49	64.47%	46	61.33%
Mild	23	30.26%	23	30.67%
Serious	4	5.26%	6	8.00%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	7	9.21%	6	8.00%
Mild	48	63.16%	43	57.33%
Serious	20	26.32%	24	32.00%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	16	21.05%	13	17.33%
Mild	46	60.53%	43	57.33%
Serious	12	15.79%	16	21.33%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	13	17.11%	9	12.00%
Mild	34	44.74%	35	46.67%
Serious	28	36.84%	31	41.33%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	9	11.84%	8	10.67%
Mild	23	30.26%	22	29.33%
Serious	42	55.26%	43	57.33%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	41	53.95%	39	52.00%
Mild	28	36.84%	28	37.33%
Serious	7	9.21%	6	8.00%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	27	35.53%	19	25.33%
Mild	36	47.37%	39	52.00%
Serious	12	15.79%	17	22.67%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	22	28.95%	18	24.00%
Mild	35	46.05%	38	50.67%
Serious	19	25.00%	17	22.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 78

Report Cut: Hawaii

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	16	21.05%	14	18.67%
Mild	37	48.68%	37	49.33%
Serious	24	31.58%	24	32.00%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	15	19.74%	15	20.00%
Mild	48	63.16%	47	62.67%
Serious	9	11.84%	10	13.33%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	24	31.58%	24	32.00%
Mild	23	30.26%	22	29.33%
Serious	3	3.95%	4	5.33%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	12	0	8	44
Product obsolescence	1	0	0	3
Changing customer preferences	4	3	4	22
Customer's ability to afford	4	4	3	23
Talent acquisition	21	14	5	96
Talent retention	7	12	7	52
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	2	3	7
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	8	15	7	61
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	0	1	4
Ability to maintain quality product/service	0	3	1	7
Cost of materials	5	3	2	23
Cost of equipment	0	2	1	5
Taxes	0	0	4	4
Cost of regulatory compliance	0	0	6	6
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	2	5	3	19
Employee safety	1	0	2	5
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	0	2
Inflation	2	1	2	10
Employee engagement	0	2	2	6
Developing future leaders	1	2	2	9
Cybersecurity	4	1	3	17
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	3	1	7
Political uncertainty	0	1	2	4
Talent skills gap	1	2	4	11
Unknown challenges	0	2	5	9
Other	4	0	0	12

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 78

Report Cut: Hawaii

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	5	6.41%
Slightly less than planned	17	21.79%
As planned	39	50.00%
Slightly more than planned	14	17.95%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	3	3.85%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	40	51.28%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	36	46.15%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	2.56%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	47	60.25%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	3	3.85%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	27	34.62%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	1.28%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	20	27.40%	17	25.37%
No	53	72.60%	50	74.63%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	51	66.23%	44	60.27%
No	26	33.77%	29	39.73%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	54	71.05%	50	68.49%
No	22	28.95%	23	31.51%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	11	32.35%	12	36.36%
No	23	67.65%	21	63.64%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	28	51.85%	30	57.69%
No	26	48.15%	22	42.31%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 78

Report Cut: Hawaii

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	2	2.70%
Some due to this	41	55.41%
None due to this	31	41.89%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	1	1.33%
Some due to this	6	8.00%
None due to this	68	90.67%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	11	14.29%
Some due to this	59	76.62%
None due to this	7	9.09%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	3	4.05%
Some due to this	43	58.11%
None due to this	28	37.84%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	3	4.00%
Some due to this	46	61.33%
None due to this	26	34.67%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	7	9.59%
None due to this	66	90.41%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 78

Report Cut: Hawaii

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	6	7.69%	1	1.30%	2	2.60%
Somewhat dissatisfied	19	24.21%	11	14.29%	16	20.78%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	15	16.91%	16	20.78%	18	23.38%
Somewhat satisfied	33	43.32%	37	48.05%	30	38.96%
Very satisfied	5	10.85%	12	15.58%	11	14.29%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	27	34.62%	6	7.69%	12	15.38%
Middle managers	38	48.72%	8	10.26%	16	20.51%
Professional staff (non-managers)	43	55.13%	8	10.26%	27	34.62%
Skilled production workers	28	35.90%	3	3.85%	14	17.95%
Unskilled production workers	17	21.79%	5	6.41%	15	19.23%
Entry-level office workers	33	42.31%	8	10.26%	21	26.92%
Entry-level non-office workers	27	34.62%	8	10.26%	18	23.08%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	17	21.79%	2	2.56%	7	8.97%
Service workers	19	24.36%	8	10.26%	15	19.23%
Other	5	6.41%	0	0.00%	6	7.69%
None	5	6.41%	13	16.67%	8	10.26%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 78

Report Cut: Hawaii

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	41	52.56%	41	52.56%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	24	30.77%	52	66.67%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	24	30.77%	48	61.54%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	38	48.72%	52	66.67%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	27	34.62%	5	6.41%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	41	52.56%	5	6.41%
Increasing starting salaries	53	67.95%	24	30.77%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	21	26.92%	21	26.92%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	11	14.10%	14	17.95%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	16	20.51%	5	6.41%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	10	12.82%	16	20.51%
Shortening the hiring process	28	35.90%	4	5.13%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	28	35.90%	9	11.54%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	31	39.74%	16	20.51%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	11	14.10%	10	12.82%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	40	51.28%	2	2.56%
Participating in job fairs	37	47.44%	3	3.85%
Building/increasing brand awareness	27	34.62%	7	8.97%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	11	14.10%	7	8.97%
Using formal candidate tracking system	24	30.77%	5	6.41%
Other	3	3.85%	1	1.28%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	22	28.21%
Team incentives	4	5.13%
Employee referral bonuses	39	50.00%
Year-end bonuses	28	35.90%
Spot bonuses	12	15.38%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	20	25.64%
Retention bonuses	11	14.10%
Commissions	4	5.13%
Project bonuses	7	8.97%
Profit sharing	7	8.97%
Hazard bonuses/pay	2	2.56%
Additional PTO	11	14.10%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 78

Report Cut: Hawaii

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	17	21.79%
Language premiums	3	3.85%
Other*	1	1.28%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	46	58.97%
Resources to do their job effectively	16	20.51%
Mentoring opportunities	3	3.85%
Competitive/robust health benefits	25	32.05%
Opportunities to connect with others	3	3.85%
Driven by the mission of the organization	13	16.67%
Recognition and reward for good performance	23	29.49%
Ongoing training on new technologies	3	3.85%
Competitive pay	67	85.90%
Good work/life balance	55	70.51%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	15	19.23%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	25	32.05%
Current technology	1	1.28%
Remote work opportunities	11	14.10%
Hybrid work opportunities	12	15.38%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	1	1.28%
Regular full-time hours	8	10.26%
Strong organizational culture	16	20.51%
Challenging work	4	5.13%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	25	32.05%
Focus on employee safety	0	0.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	1	1.28%
No change	25	32.05%
More difficult	52	66.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 78

Report Cut: Hawaii

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	5	9.62%
Lack of qualified candidates	40	76.92%
Lack of technical skills	17	32.69%
Lack of soft skills	12	23.08%
Lack of work experience	20	38.46%
Our organization's geographic location	12	23.08%
Market competition/high demand	26	50.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	35	67.31%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	3	5.77%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	9	17.31%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	6	11.54%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	12	23.08%
Other *	2	3.85%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	25	32.05%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	19	24.36%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	5.13%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	2.56%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	28	35.90%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	29	37.18%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	19	24.36%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	5	6.41%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	2.56%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	23	29.49%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	7	8.97%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	19	24.36%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	6	7.69%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	1.28%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	23	29.49%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	3.85%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	23	29.49%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 78

Report Cut: Hawaii

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	32	41.03%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	18	23.08%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	28	35.90%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	11	14.10%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	4	5.13%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	31	39.74%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	6	7.69%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	11	14.10%
Creating/redefining policies	11	14.10%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	7	8.97%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	12	15.38%
N/A	13	16.67%
Other *	2	2.56%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	5	6.41%
No	41	52.56%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	32	41.03%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	34	43.59%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	7	8.97%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	27	34.62%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	10	12.82%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 78

Report Cut: Hawaii

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	68	87.18%
Paid lump sum awards	6	7.69%
Paid variable/bonus awards	25	32.05%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	3	3.85%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	2	2.56%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	4	5.13%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	61	78.21%
Paying lump sum awards	6	7.69%
Paying variable/bonus awards	26	33.33%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	1.28%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	1	1.28%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	1.28%
Uncertain	11	14.10%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	46	58.97%	41	52.56%
Increased standard wages	31	39.74%	25	32.05%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	41	52.56%	36	46.15%
Implemented or increased variable pay	10	12.82%	6	7.69%
Temporarily bumped pay	7	8.97%	1	1.28%
Other	2	2.56%	6	7.69%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	9	11.54%	8	10.26%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 78

Report Cut: Hawaii

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	4	5.13%	3	3.85%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	3	3.85%	5	6.41%
Invest in new technology	28	35.90%	40	51.28%
Invest in equipment	29	37.18%	35	44.87%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	7	8.97%	9	11.54%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	4	5.13%	6	7.69%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	8	10.26%	8	10.26%
Increase training budget	13	16.67%	15	19.23%
Increase total rewards communication/education	9	11.54%	15	19.23%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	18	23.08%	20	25.64%
Increase recruiting emphasis	26	33.33%	22	28.21%
Pay above market rates	11	14.10%	12	15.38%
Enhance the benefits package	7	8.97%	13	16.67%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	17	21.79%	22	28.21%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	13	16.67%	17	21.79%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	5	6.41%	4	5.13%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	1	1.28%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	3	3.85%	5	6.41%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	7	8.97%	15	19.23%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	2	2.56%	5	6.41%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	1	1.28%
Hold off on investing in new technology	6	7.69%	1	1.28%
Hold off on investing in equipment	5	6.41%	1	1.28%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	3	3.85%	3	3.85%
Reduce training budget	1	1.28%	2	2.56%
Limiting employee travel	6	7.69%	6	7.69%
Hiring freezes	1	1.28%	0	0.00%
Implementing furloughs	1	1.28%	1	1.28%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	1	1.28%	2	2.56%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	2	2.56%	2	2.56%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	4	5.13%	6	7.69%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	3	3.85%	5	6.41%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 78

Report Cut: Hawaii

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	7	8.97%	2	2.56%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	26	33.33%	7	8.97%
Increasing presence on social media	35	44.87%	5	6.41%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	4	5.13%	3	3.85%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	15	19.23%	4	5.13%
Partnering with brand influencers	3	3.85%	3	3.85%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	15	19.23%	3	3.85%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	24	30.77%	6	7.69%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	15	19.23%	5	6.41%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 78

Report Cut: Hawaii

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	24	30.77%	15	19.23%	2	2.56%
Website content production	21	26.92%	16	20.51%	4	5.13%
Marketing content production	21	26.92%	16	20.51%	4	5.13%
Other content production	23	29.49%	10	12.82%	7	8.97%
Digital personal assistant	28	35.90%	9	11.54%	4	5.13%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	27	34.62%	11	14.10%	3	3.85%
Customer relationship management	22	28.21%	16	20.51%	1	1.28%
Inventory management	27	34.62%	12	15.38%	1	1.28%
Product recommendations	29	37.18%	8	10.26%	0	0.00%
Accounting	26	33.33%	11	14.10%	1	1.28%
Supply chain operations	29	37.18%	5	6.41%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	24	30.77%	16	20.51%	4	5.13%
Application and screening management	24	30.77%	13	16.67%	2	2.56%
Audience segmentation	27	34.62%	6	7.69%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	21	26.92%	19	24.36%	3	3.85%
Idea generation	20	25.64%	10	12.82%	11	14.10%
Process automation	21	26.92%	16	20.51%	4	5.13%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	21	26.92%	14	17.95%	5	6.41%

# **Idaho**



# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Idaho

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	1	7.69%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1	7.69%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	1	7.69%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	1	7.69%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	2	15.38%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	1	7.69%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	2	15.38%
Transportation & Warehousing	1	7.69%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	3	23.08%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	3	23.08%
100 to 249	4	30.77%
250 to 499	0	0.00%
500 to 999	3	23.08%
1,000 or more	3	23.08%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	9	69.23%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	1	7.69%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	3	23.08%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Idaho

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	3	23.1%
Stay the same	7	53.8%
Decline	3	23.1%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	15.4%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	6	46.2%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	3	23.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	15.4%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	0	0.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	7	53.8%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	5	38.5%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	1	7.7%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	9	69.23%	8	61.54%
Mild	4	30.77%	4	30.77%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	7.69%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	7	58.33%	6	46.15%
Serious	5	41.67%	7	53.85%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	10	76.92%	8	61.54%
Mild	3	23.08%	5	38.46%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	4	30.77%	3	23.08%
Mild	8	61.54%	8	61.54%
Serious	1	7.69%	2	15.38%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Idaho

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	3	23.08%	3	23.08%
Mild	6	46.15%	8	61.54%
Serious	4	30.77%	2	15.38%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
Mild	9	69.23%	9	69.23%
Serious	3	23.08%	4	30.77%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	2	16.67%	1	7.69%
Mild	4	33.33%	7	53.85%
Serious	6	50.00%	5	38.46%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	3	23.08%	1	8.33%
Mild	5	38.46%	5	41.67%
Serious	5	38.46%	6	50.00%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	1	7.69%	2	15.38%
Mild	8	61.54%	7	53.85%
Serious	4	30.77%	4	30.77%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	4	30.77%	4	30.77%
Mild	9	69.23%	7	53.85%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	15.38%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	8	61.54%	8	61.54%
Mild	3	23.08%	3	23.08%
Serious	2	15.38%	2	15.38%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	3	23.08%	3	23.08%
Mild	7	53.85%	8	61.54%
Serious	3	23.08%	2	15.38%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	4	30.77%	4	30.77%
Mild	6	46.15%	7	53.85%
Serious	3	23.08%	2	15.38%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	3	27.27%	3	27.27%
Mild	5	45.45%	6	54.55%
Serious	3	27.27%	2	18.18%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Idaho

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	3	23.08%	3	23.08%
Mild	6	46.15%	5	38.46%
Serious	4	30.77%	5	38.46%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	3	23.08%	3	23.08%
Mild	7	53.85%	5	38.46%
Serious	3	23.08%	5	38.46%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	2	15.38%	2	15.38%
Mild	9	69.23%	9	69.23%
Serious	2	15.38%	2	15.38%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	7	53.85%	7	53.85%
Mild	4	30.77%	5	38.46%
Serious	2	15.38%	1	7.69%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	2	15.38%	1	7.69%
Mild	5	38.46%	5	38.46%
Serious	6	46.15%	7	53.85%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	4	30.77%	3	23.08%
Mild	8	61.54%	8	61.54%
Serious	1	7.69%	2	15.38%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	2	15.38%	1	7.69%
Mild	6	46.15%	6	46.15%
Serious	5	38.46%	6	46.15%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	6	46.15%	7	53.85%
Serious	7	53.85%	6	46.15%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	5	38.46%	5	38.46%
Mild	6	46.15%	6	46.15%
Serious	2	15.38%	2	15.38%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	6	46.15%	3	23.08%
Mild	5	38.46%	8	61.54%
Serious	2	15.38%	2	15.38%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	3	23.08%	3	23.08%
Mild	6	46.15%	7	53.85%
Serious	4	30.77%	3	23.08%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Idaho

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	4	30.77%	2	15.38%
Mild	5	38.46%	7	53.85%
Serious	4	30.77%	4	30.77%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	5	38.46%	4	30.77%
Mild	6	46.15%	7	53.85%
Serious	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	6	46.15%	6	46.15%
Mild	2	15.38%	2	15.38%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	1	0	2
Competition in general	2	0	0	6
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	1	0	0	3
Customer's ability to afford	3	1	1	12
Talent acquisition	2	0	1	7
Talent retention	1	1	1	6
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	1	0	2
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	0	2	0	4
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	1	1
Ability to maintain quality product/service	0	0	1	1
Cost of materials	1	1	0	5
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	2	0	1	7
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	0	0	0
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	0	2
Inflation	0	1	0	2
Employee engagement	0	0	2	2
Developing future leaders	0	1	0	2
Cybersecurity	1	2	1	8
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	0	0
Political uncertainty	0	0	2	2
Talent skills gap	0	1	2	4
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Idaho

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	2	15.38%
Slightly less than planned	3	23.08%
As planned	5	38.46%
Slightly more than planned	3	23.08%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	4	30.77%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	6	46.15%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	3	23.08%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	8	61.54%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	5	38.46%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	6	46.15%	4	30.77%
No	7	53.85%	9	69.23%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	13	100.00%	11	84.62%
No	0	0.00%	2	15.38%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	12	92.31%	10	76.92%
No	1	7.69%	3	23.08%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	1	33.33%	2	50.00%
No	2	66.67%	2	50.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	8	80.00%	7	70.00%
No	2	20.00%	3	30.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Idaho

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	11	84.62%
None due to this	2	15.38%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	2	15.38%
None due to this	11	84.62%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	13	100.00%
None due to this	0	0.00%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	13	100.00%
None due to this	0	0.00%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	10	76.92%
None due to this	3	23.08%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	5	38.46%
None due to this	8	61.54%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Idaho

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	1	24.21%	1	7.69%	2	15.38%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	16.91%	1	7.69%	2	15.38%
Somewhat satisfied	7	43.32%	7	53.85%	7	53.85%
Very satisfied	4	10.85%	4	30.77%	2	15.38%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	5	38.46%	2	15.38%	1	7.69%
Middle managers	4	30.77%	1	7.69%	3	23.08%
Professional staff (non-managers)	8	61.54%	2	15.38%	1	7.69%
Skilled production workers	6	46.15%	1	7.69%	4	30.77%
Unskilled production workers	2	15.38%	0	0.00%	3	23.08%
Entry-level office workers	1	7.69%	1	7.69%	4	30.77%
Entry-level non-office workers	1	7.69%	0	0.00%	2	15.38%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	1	7.69%	0	0.00%	1	7.69%
Service workers	4	30.77%	2	15.38%	4	30.77%
Other	2	15.38%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None	1	7.69%	0	0.00%	1	7.69%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Idaho

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	7	53.85%	4	30.77%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	3	23.08%	4	30.77%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	4	30.77%	5	38.46%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	7	53.85%	7	53.85%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	8	61.54%	1	7.69%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	6	46.15%	1	7.69%
Increasing starting salaries	11	84.62%	1	7.69%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	5	38.46%	3	23.08%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	3	23.08%	1	7.69%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	2	15.38%	0	0.00%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	4	30.77%	1	7.69%
Shortening the hiring process	2	15.38%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	3	23.08%	0	0.00%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	5	38.46%	1	7.69%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	2	15.38%	1	7.69%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	5	38.46%	0	0.00%
Participating in job fairs	6	46.15%	1	7.69%
Building/increasing brand awareness	5	38.46%	1	7.69%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	3	23.08%	1	7.69%
Using formal candidate tracking system	4	30.77%	1	7.69%
Other	1	7.69%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	6	46.15%
Team incentives	1	7.69%
Employee referral bonuses	9	69.23%
Year-end bonuses	5	38.46%
Spot bonuses	2	15.38%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	7	53.85%
Retention bonuses	2	15.38%
Commissions	3	23.08%
Project bonuses	2	15.38%
Profit sharing	2	15.38%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	4	30.77%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Idaho

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	4	30.77%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	6	46.15%
Resources to do their job effectively	1	7.69%
Mentoring opportunities	1	7.69%
Competitive/robust health benefits	6	46.15%
Opportunities to connect with others	0	0.00%
Driven by the mission of the organization	2	15.38%
Recognition and reward for good performance	6	46.15%
Ongoing training on new technologies	1	7.69%
Competitive pay	9	69.23%
Good work/life balance	7	53.85%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	1	7.69%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	6	46.15%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	2	15.38%
Hybrid work opportunities	2	15.38%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	0	0.00%
Strong organizational culture	4	30.77%
Challenging work	3	23.08%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	2	15.38%
Focus on employee safety	1	7.69%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	1	7.69%
No change	6	46.15%
More difficult	6	46.15%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Idaho

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	0	0.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	6	100.00%
Lack of technical skills	2	33.33%
Lack of soft skills	2	33.33%
Lack of work experience	3	50.00%
Our organization's geographic location	2	33.33%
Market competition/high demand	3	50.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	3	50.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	3	50.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	0	0.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	1	16.67%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	5	38.46%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	30.77%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	15.38%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	2	15.38%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	23.08%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	5	38.46%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	23.08%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	2	15.38%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	1	7.69%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	5	38.46%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	1	7.69%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	38.46%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	2	15.38%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	1	7.69%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Idaho

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	9	69.23%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	4	30.77%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	8	61.54%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	2	15.38%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	2	15.38%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	8	61.54%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	3	23.08%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	4	30.77%
Creating/redefining policies	2	15.38%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	3	23.08%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	7	53.85%
N/A	1	7.69%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	0	0.00%
No	9	69.23%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	4	30.77%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	5	38.46%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	1	7.69%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	6	46.15%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	1	7.69%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Idaho

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	12	92.31%
Paid lump sum awards	1	7.69%
Paid variable/bonus awards	4	30.77%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	1	7.69%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	7.69%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	1	7.69%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	12	92.31%
Paying lump sum awards	1	7.69%
Paying variable/bonus awards	5	38.46%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	7.69%
Uncertain	1	7.69%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	9	69.23%	10	76.92%
Increased standard wages	5	38.46%	5	38.46%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	8	61.54%	7	53.85%
Implemented or increased variable pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	1	7.69%	2	15.38%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Idaho

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	4	30.77%	3	23.08%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	4	30.77%	1	7.69%
Invest in new technology	7	53.85%	10	76.92%
Invest in equipment	7	53.85%	6	46.15%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
Increase training budget	4	30.77%	3	23.08%
Increase total rewards communication/education	1	7.69%	4	30.77%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	5	38.46%	6	46.15%
Increase recruiting emphasis	4	30.77%	3	23.08%
Pay above market rates	2	15.38%	3	23.08%
Enhance the benefits package	0	0.00%	3	23.08%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	5	38.46%	6	46.15%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	1	7.69%	2	15.38%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	0	0.00%	2	15.38%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	2	15.38%	4	30.77%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
Hold off on investing in new technology	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
Reduce training budget	0	0.00%	1	7.69%
Limiting employee travel	3	23.08%	3	23.08%
Hiring freezes	3	23.08%	1	7.69%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	4	30.77%	0	0.00%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Freezing compensation increases	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	1	7.69%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Idaho

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	4	30.77%	1	7.69%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	8	61.54%	0	0.00%
Increasing presence on social media	9	69.23%	0	0.00%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	2	15.38%	0	0.00%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	5	38.46%	1	7.69%
Partnering with brand influencers	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	4	30.77%	0	0.00%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	6	46.15%	0	0.00%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	6	46.15%	1	7.69%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Idaho

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	4	30.77%	3	23.08%	1	7.69%
Website content production	4	30.77%	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
Marketing content production	4	30.77%	1	7.69%	2	15.38%
Other content production	4	30.77%	1	7.69%	3	23.08%
Digital personal assistant	4	30.77%	2	15.38%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	3	23.08%	2	15.38%	1	7.69%
Customer relationship management	4	30.77%	2	15.38%	2	15.38%
Inventory management	4	30.77%	0	0.00%	1	7.69%
Product recommendations	4	30.77%	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
Accounting	4	30.77%	0	0.00%	1	7.69%
Supply chain operations	4	30.77%	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	4	30.77%	3	23.08%	4	30.77%
Application and screening management	3	23.08%	3	23.08%	3	23.08%
Audience segmentation	4	30.77%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	4	30.77%	0	0.00%	1	7.69%
Idea generation	3	23.08%	3	23.08%	3	23.08%
Process automation	4	30.77%	0	0.00%	1	7.69%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	4	30.77%	3	23.08%	2	15.38%



# **Illinois**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 224

Report Cut: Illinois

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	3	1.34%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	6	2.68%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	3	1.34%
Construction	2	0.89%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	50	22.32%
Education Services	6	2.68%
Financial & Insurance	12	5.36%
Health Care & Social Assistance	22	9.82%
Information	9	4.02%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	1	0.45%
Mining	1	0.45%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	17	7.59%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	30	13.39%
Public Administration	10	4.46%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	2	0.89%
Retail Trade	4	1.79%
Services (Except Public Administration)	15	6.70%
Transportation & Warehousing	8	3.57%
Utilities	3	1.34%
Wholesale Trade	20	8.93%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	98	43.75%
100 to 249	58	25.89%
250 to 499	37	16.52%
500 to 999	13	5.80%
1,000 or more	18	8.04%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	150	66.96%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	7	3.13%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	49	21.88%
Public Sector/Government	18	8.04%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 224

Report Cut: Illinois

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	81	36.2%
Stay the same	106	47.3%
Decline	37	16.5%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	15	6.7%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	103	46.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	42	18.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	40	17.9%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	14	6.3%
Do not know	10	4.5%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	21	9.4%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	121	54.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	45	20.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	11	4.9%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	5	2.2%
Do not know	21	9.4%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	162	76.06%	142	67.62%
Mild	44	20.66%	50	23.81%
Serious	7	3.29%	18	8.57%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	53	24.31%	44	20.47%
Mild	111	50.92%	114	53.02%
Serious	54	24.77%	57	26.51%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	162	75.35%	136	63.85%
Mild	46	21.40%	62	29.11%
Serious	7	3.26%	15	7.04%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	86	39.63%	67	31.16%
Mild	106	48.85%	116	53.95%
Serious	25	11.52%	32	14.88%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 224

Report Cut: Illinois

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	66	30.56%	57	26.64%
Mild	111	51.39%	120	56.07%
Serious	39	18.06%	37	17.29%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	29	13.30%	23	10.65%
Mild	101	46.33%	94	43.52%
Serious	88	40.37%	99	45.83%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	34	15.38%	29	13.24%
Mild	110	49.77%	103	47.03%
Serious	77	34.84%	87	39.73%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	59	26.82%	47	21.76%
Mild	111	50.45%	96	44.44%
Serious	50	22.73%	73	33.80%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	44	20.00%	39	18.06%
Mild	107	48.64%	96	44.44%
Serious	69	31.36%	81	37.50%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	111	51.15%	102	47.00%
Mild	74	34.10%	76	35.02%
Serious	32	14.75%	39	17.97%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	131	60.65%	125	58.14%
Mild	68	31.48%	73	33.95%
Serious	17	7.87%	17	7.91%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	63	29.30%	52	24.64%
Mild	98	45.58%	103	48.82%
Serious	54	25.12%	56	26.54%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	67	31.16%	58	26.98%
Mild	97	45.12%	98	45.58%
Serious	51	23.72%	59	27.44%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	79	37.26%	76	35.85%
Mild	102	48.11%	98	46.23%
Serious	31	14.62%	38	17.92%

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Number of Respondents = 224

Report Cut: Illinois

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	76	35.68%	71	33.49%
Mild	97	45.54%	95	44.81%
Serious	40	18.78%	46	21.70%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	60	27.52%	52	24.41%
Mild	116	53.21%	113	53.05%
Serious	42	19.27%	48	22.54%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	97	44.70%	93	43.26%
Mild	65	29.95%	69	32.39%
Serious	55	25.35%	53	24.88%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	122	56.22%	119	55.35%
Mild	77	35.48%	72	33.49%
Serious	18	8.29%	24	11.16%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	20	9.22%	15	6.98%
Mild	108	49.77%	126	58.60%
Serious	89	41.01%	75	34.88%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	40	18.43%	35	16.28%
Mild	119	54.84%	120	55.81%
Serious	58	26.73%	58	26.98%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	32	14.75%	26	12.09%
Mild	108	49.77%	98	45.58%
Serious	73	33.64%	87	40.47%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	15	6.91%	13	6.05%
Mild	94	43.32%	82	38.14%
Serious	111	51.15%	123	57.21%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	97	44.70%	94	43.72%
Mild	93	42.86%	92	42.79%
Serious	28	12.90%	31	14.42%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	80	36.87%	55	25.58%
Mild	102	47.00%	102	47.44%
Serious	35	16.13%	60	27.91%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	51	23.50%	49	22.79%
Mild	97	44.70%	101	46.98%
Serious	68	31.34%	63	29.30%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 224

Report Cut: Illinois

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	47	21.66%	46	21.40%
Mild	128	58.99%	120	55.81%
Serious	41	18.89%	51	23.72%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	64	29.49%	61	28.37%
Mild	121	55.76%	118	54.88%
Serious	23	10.60%	28	13.02%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	111	51.15%	109	50.70%
Mild	31	14.29%	31	14.42%
Serious	9	4.15%	10	4.65%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	5	3	0	21
Competition in general	28	9	13	115
Product obsolescence	4	2	4	20
Changing customer preferences	7	15	7	58
Customer's ability to afford	19	4	9	74
Talent acquisition	34	32	16	182
Talent retention	22	26	20	138
Ability to pay for benefits costs	3	15	16	55
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	19	21	23	122
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	2	1	5	13
Ability to maintain quality product/service	4	10	4	36
Cost of materials	12	16	11	79
Cost of equipment	2	4	7	21
Taxes	1	1	2	7
Cost of regulatory compliance	7	3	5	32
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	6	4	6	32
Employee safety	2	3	5	17
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	3	0	9
Inflation	9	7	12	53
Employee engagement	4	6	16	40
Developing future leaders	6	8	5	39
Cybersecurity	6	10	8	46
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	3	1	7
A.I. technology and platforms	2	5	7	23
Political uncertainty	8	2	5	33
Talent skills gap	5	3	7	28
Unknown challenges	0	1	4	6
Other	0	1	0	2

## 2025 National Business Trends

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6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	14	6.25%
Slightly less than planned	44	19.64%
As planned	109	48.66%
Slightly more than planned	48	21.43%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	8	3.57%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	101	45.09%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	101	45.09%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	21	9.38%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	119	53.12%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	6	2.68%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	96	42.86%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	3	1.34%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	59	27.83%	47	23.15%
No	153	72.17%	156	76.85%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	162	73.97%	142	66.36%
No	57	26.03%	72	33.64%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	177	81.57%	156	73.93%
No	40	18.43%	55	26.07%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	26	31.71%	23	29.11%
No	56	68.29%	56	70.89%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	106	65.84%	98	62.82%
No	55	34.16%	58	37.18%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 224

Report Cut: Illinois

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	7	3.21%
Some due to this	145	66.51%
None due to this	66	30.28%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	1	0.46%
Some due to this	35	16.20%
None due to this	180	83.33%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	12	5.48%
Some due to this	181	82.65%
None due to this	26	11.87%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	5	2.28%
Some due to this	160	73.06%
None due to this	54	24.66%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	4	1.82%
Some due to this	149	67.73%
None due to this	67	30.45%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	2	0.92%
Some due to this	33	15.14%
None due to this	183	83.94%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 224

Report Cut: Illinois

<b>11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?</b>	<b>Recruit</b>		<b>Onboard</b>		<b>Retain</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	10	4.50%	1	0.45%	3	1.35%
Somewhat dissatisfied	41	24.21%	35	15.77%	43	19.37%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	33	16.91%	32	14.41%	32	14.41%
Somewhat satisfied	92	43.32%	96	43.24%	94	42.34%
Very satisfied	46	10.85%	58	26.13%	50	22.52%

<b>12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?</b>	<b>Recruitment</b>		<b>Onboarding</b>		<b>Retention</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	82	36.61%	21	9.38%	16	7.14%
Middle managers	88	39.29%	28	12.50%	39	17.41%
Professional staff (non-managers)	109	48.66%	31	13.84%	77	34.38%
Skilled production workers	75	33.48%	22	9.82%	57	25.45%
Unskilled production workers	34	15.18%	17	7.59%	47	20.98%
Entry-level office workers	40	17.86%	22	9.82%	55	24.55%
Entry-level non-office workers	36	16.07%	11	4.91%	44	19.64%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	50	22.32%	9	4.02%	22	9.82%
Service workers	34	15.18%	7	3.13%	32	14.29%
Other	14	6.25%	5	2.23%	9	4.02%
None	11	4.91%	22	9.82%	16	7.14%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 224

Report Cut: Illinois

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	92	41.07%	91	40.63%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	41	18.30%	88	39.29%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	56	25.00%	120	53.57%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	95	42.41%	138	61.61%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	93	41.52%	18	8.04%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	105	46.88%	21	9.38%
Increasing starting salaries	135	60.27%	41	18.30%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	62	27.68%	62	27.68%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	33	14.73%	34	15.18%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	41	18.30%	19	8.48%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	27	12.05%	49	21.88%
Shortening the hiring process	52	23.21%	5	2.23%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	59	26.34%	17	7.59%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	79	35.27%	51	22.77%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	31	13.84%	34	15.18%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	88	39.29%	14	6.25%
Participating in job fairs	78	34.82%	13	5.80%
Building/increasing brand awareness	86	38.39%	50	22.32%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	25	11.16%	28	12.50%
Using formal candidate tracking system	86	38.39%	13	5.80%
Other	5	2.23%	3	1.34%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	61	27.23%
Team incentives	37	16.52%
Employee referral bonuses	129	57.59%
Year-end bonuses	83	37.05%
Spot bonuses	45	20.09%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	77	34.38%
Retention bonuses	30	13.39%
Commissions	45	20.09%
Project bonuses	18	8.04%
Profit sharing	32	14.29%
Hazard bonuses/pay	2	0.89%
Additional PTO	53	23.66%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 224

Report Cut: Illinois

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	45	20.09%
Language premiums	6	2.68%
Other*	6	2.68%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	125	55.80%
Resources to do their job effectively	34	15.18%
Mentoring opportunities	10	4.46%
Competitive/robust health benefits	82	36.61%
Opportunities to connect with others	12	5.36%
Driven by the mission of the organization	47	20.98%
Recognition and reward for good performance	54	24.11%
Ongoing training on new technologies	10	4.46%
Competitive pay	178	79.46%
Good work/life balance	166	74.11%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	27	12.05%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	67	29.91%
Current technology	2	0.89%
Remote work opportunities	44	19.64%
Hybrid work opportunities	54	24.11%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	8	3.57%
Regular full-time hours	24	10.71%
Strong organizational culture	39	17.41%
Challenging work	12	5.36%
Diverse workforce	7	3.13%
Vacation/paid time off	72	32.14%
Focus on employee safety	6	2.68%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	14	6.28%
No change	113	50.67%
More difficult	96	43.05%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 224

Report Cut: Illinois

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	9	9.38%
Lack of qualified candidates	81	84.38%
Lack of technical skills	37	38.54%
Lack of soft skills	17	17.71%
Lack of work experience	32	33.33%
Our organization's geographic location	14	14.58%
Market competition/high demand	37	38.54%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	58	60.42%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	4	4.17%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	16	16.67%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	14	14.58%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	21	21.88%
Other *	4	4.17%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	64	28.83%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	66	29.73%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	30	13.51%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	8	3.60%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	54	24.32%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	38	17.12%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	85	38.29%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	36	16.22%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	8	3.60%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	54	24.32%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	19	8.48%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	71	31.70%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	24	10.71%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	9	4.02%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	43	19.20%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	18	8.04%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	59	26.34%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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Report Cut: Illinois

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	100	44.64%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	55	24.55%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	95	42.41%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	37	16.52%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	17	7.59%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	82	36.61%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	15	6.70%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	26	11.61%
Creating/redefining policies	29	12.95%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	18	8.04%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	45	20.09%
N/A	28	12.50%
Other *	2	0.89%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	14	6.33%
No	145	65.61%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	62	28.05%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	95	42.79%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	27	12.16%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	86	38.74%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	14	6.31%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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Report Cut: Illinois

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	210	93.75%
Paid lump sum awards	27	12.05%
Paid variable/bonus awards	71	31.70%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	5	2.23%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	6	2.68%
Reduced wages/salaries	1	0.45%
Reduced hours worked	3	1.34%
Uncertain	5	2.23%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	192	85.71%
Paying lump sum awards	22	9.82%
Paying variable/bonus awards	75	33.48%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	2	0.89%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	4	1.79%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	0.45%
Uncertain	28	12.50%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	141	62.95%	111	49.55%
Increased standard wages	104	46.43%	91	40.63%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	104	46.43%	96	42.86%
Implemented or increased variable pay	16	7.14%	21	9.38%
Temporarily bumped pay	4	1.79%	2	0.89%
Other	2	0.89%	2	0.89%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	21	9.38%	17	7.59%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	36	16.07%	30	13.39%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	36	16.07%	22	9.82%
Invest in new technology	97	43.30%	108	48.21%
Invest in equipment	77	34.38%	86	38.39%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	13	5.80%	16	7.14%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	16	7.14%	19	8.48%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	16	7.14%	27	12.05%
Increase training budget	46	20.54%	62	27.68%
Increase total rewards communication/education	28	12.50%	60	26.79%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	55	24.55%	55	24.55%
Increase recruiting emphasis	54	24.11%	60	26.79%
Pay above market rates	22	9.82%	23	10.27%
Enhance the benefits package	36	16.07%	48	21.43%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	43	19.20%	57	25.45%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	37	16.52%	44	19.64%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	26	11.61%	21	9.38%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	7	3.13%	7	3.13%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	11	4.91%	8	3.57%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	24	10.71%	36	16.07%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	19	8.48%	36	16.07%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	3	1.34%	3	1.34%
Hold off on investing in new technology	8	3.57%	7	3.13%
Hold off on investing in equipment	6	2.68%	10	4.46%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	4	1.79%	5	2.23%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	11	4.91%	15	6.70%
Reduce training budget	6	2.68%	7	3.13%
Limiting employee travel	32	14.29%	21	9.38%
Hiring freezes	18	8.04%	9	4.02%
Implementing furloughs	8	3.57%	2	0.89%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	26	11.61%	4	1.79%
Reduce benefits package	2	0.89%	4	1.79%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	4	1.79%	4	1.79%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	3	1.34%	7	3.13%
Freezing compensation increases	5	2.23%	6	2.68%
Outsourcing roles or functions	8	3.57%	6	2.68%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	27	12.05%	18	8.04%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	89	39.73%	19	8.48%
Increasing presence on social media	147	65.63%	31	13.84%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	31	13.84%	10	4.46%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	68	30.36%	22	9.82%
Partnering with brand influencers	17	7.59%	8	3.57%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	53	23.66%	26	11.61%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	98	43.75%	28	12.50%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	64	28.57%	23	10.27%



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30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	80	35.71%	45	20.09%	9	4.02%
Website content production	75	33.48%	50	22.32%	18	8.04%
Marketing content production	69	30.80%	53	23.66%	23	10.27%
Other content production	75	33.48%	35	15.63%	13	5.80%
Digital personal assistant	87	38.84%	27	12.05%	4	1.79%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	77	34.38%	35	15.63%	10	4.46%
Customer relationship management	81	36.16%	34	15.18%	9	4.02%
Inventory management	83	37.05%	22	9.82%	3	1.34%
Product recommendations	86	38.39%	12	5.36%	4	1.79%
Accounting	83	37.05%	25	11.16%	6	2.68%
Supply chain operations	92	41.07%	11	4.91%	2	0.89%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	68	30.36%	53	23.66%	12	5.36%
Application and screening management	75	33.48%	37	16.52%	8	3.57%
Audience segmentation	88	39.29%	12	5.36%	2	0.89%
Process improvement	75	33.48%	32	14.29%	8	3.57%
Idea generation	59	26.34%	48	21.43%	19	8.48%
Process automation	71	31.70%	33	14.73%	10	4.46%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	74	33.04%	33	14.73%	11	4.91%

# **Indiana**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 87

Report Cut: Indiana

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	2.30%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2	2.30%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	1	1.15%
Construction	2	2.30%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	19	21.84%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	7	8.05%
Health Care & Social Assistance	3	3.45%
Information	2	2.30%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	6	6.90%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	13	14.94%
Public Administration	1	1.15%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	2	2.30%
Services (Except Public Administration)	12	13.79%
Transportation & Warehousing	2	2.30%
Utilities	2	2.30%
Wholesale Trade	11	12.64%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	23	26.44%
100 to 249	23	26.44%
250 to 499	22	25.29%
500 to 999	10	11.49%
1,000 or more	9	10.34%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	71	81.61%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	2	2.30%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	13	14.94%
Public Sector/Government	1	1.15%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 87

Report Cut: Indiana

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	25	28.7%
Stay the same	46	52.9%
Decline	16	18.4%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	9	10.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	39	44.8%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	12	13.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	18	20.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	7	8.0%
Do not know	2	2.3%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	10	11.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	51	58.6%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	16	18.4%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	3.4%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	1.1%
Do not know	6	6.9%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	65	76.47%	58	68.24%
Mild	17	20.00%	20	23.53%
Serious	3	3.53%	7	8.24%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	11	12.79%	7	8.14%
Mild	53	61.63%	55	63.95%
Serious	22	25.58%	24	27.91%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	62	72.94%	46	54.12%
Mild	21	24.71%	35	41.18%
Serious	2	2.35%	4	4.71%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	26	30.23%	20	23.26%
Mild	51	59.30%	54	62.79%
Serious	9	10.47%	12	13.95%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 87

Report Cut: Indiana

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	28	32.94%	24	28.24%
Mild	35	41.18%	43	50.59%
Serious	22	25.88%	18	21.18%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	9	10.34%	7	8.05%
Mild	42	48.28%	38	43.68%
Serious	36	41.38%	42	48.28%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	7	8.05%	6	6.98%
Mild	47	54.02%	40	46.51%
Serious	33	37.93%	40	46.51%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	24	27.59%	17	19.77%
Mild	39	44.83%	37	43.02%
Serious	24	27.59%	32	37.21%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	23	26.74%	16	18.60%
Mild	36	41.86%	40	46.51%
Serious	27	31.40%	30	34.88%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	44	51.16%	40	47.06%
Mild	31	36.05%	34	40.00%
Serious	11	12.79%	11	12.94%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	48	55.81%	41	47.67%
Mild	32	37.21%	38	44.19%
Serious	6	6.98%	7	8.14%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	29	34.12%	28	33.73%
Mild	36	42.35%	36	43.37%
Serious	20	23.53%	19	22.89%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	28	32.94%	24	27.91%
Mild	39	45.88%	40	46.51%
Serious	18	21.18%	22	25.58%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	32	38.55%	28	33.33%
Mild	38	45.78%	41	48.81%
Serious	13	15.66%	15	17.86%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 87

Report Cut: Indiana

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	24	27.91%	25	29.07%
Mild	44	51.16%	40	46.51%
Serious	18	20.93%	21	24.42%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	22	25.58%	19	22.89%
Mild	44	51.16%	44	53.01%
Serious	20	23.26%	20	24.10%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	36	42.35%	35	40.70%
Mild	28	32.94%	30	36.14%
Serious	21	24.71%	21	25.30%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	45	52.33%	44	51.16%
Mild	32	37.21%	31	36.05%
Serious	9	10.47%	11	12.79%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	11	12.79%	11	12.79%
Mild	43	50.00%	46	53.49%
Serious	33	38.37%	30	34.88%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	12	13.95%	8	9.30%
Mild	51	59.30%	50	58.14%
Serious	23	26.74%	26	30.23%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	9	10.47%	5	5.81%
Mild	44	51.16%	41	47.67%
Serious	32	37.21%	40	46.51%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	6	6.98%	5	5.81%
Mild	28	32.56%	28	32.56%
Serious	53	61.63%	53	61.63%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	38	44.19%	36	41.86%
Mild	40	46.51%	38	44.19%
Serious	8	9.30%	11	12.79%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	34	39.53%	25	29.07%
Mild	44	51.16%	39	45.35%
Serious	8	9.30%	22	25.58%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	20	23.26%	20	23.26%
Mild	36	41.86%	43	50.00%
Serious	30	34.88%	23	26.74%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 87

Report Cut: Indiana

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	22	25.58%	16	18.60%
Mild	49	56.98%	48	55.81%
Serious	15	17.44%	22	25.58%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	28	32.56%	25	29.07%
Mild	48	55.81%	51	59.30%
Serious	8	9.30%	9	10.47%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	41	47.67%	40	46.51%
Mild	17	19.77%	17	19.77%
Serious	5	5.81%	6	6.98%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	2	0	0	6
Competition in general	11	3	10	49
Product obsolescence	0	1	3	5
Changing customer preferences	2	7	2	22
Customer's ability to afford	8	5	3	37
Talent acquisition	11	12	7	64
Talent retention	13	14	10	77
Ability to pay for benefits costs	6	4	4	30
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	5	7	11	40
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	1	2	4
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	4	1	12
Cost of materials	4	7	4	30
Cost of equipment	1	0	1	4
Taxes	0	1	0	2
Cost of regulatory compliance	2	1	4	12
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	2	3	2	14
Employee safety	2	0	1	7
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	2	1	5
Inflation	2	1	5	13
Employee engagement	0	3	5	11
Developing future leaders	2	3	2	14
Cybersecurity	3	2	4	17
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	1	1	0	5
Political uncertainty	3	1	0	11
Talent skills gap	2	1	1	9
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	1	0	0	3

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 87

Report Cut: Indiana

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	6	6.90%
Slightly less than planned	19	21.84%
As planned	31	35.63%
Slightly more than planned	28	32.18%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	3	3.45%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	41	47.13%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	34	39.08%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	11	12.64%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	49	56.32%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	34	39.08%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	4	4.60%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	27	32.14%	18	21.95%
No	57	67.86%	64	78.05%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	76	87.36%	64	76.19%
No	11	12.64%	20	23.81%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	77	88.51%	65	76.47%
No	10	11.49%	20	23.53%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	9	32.14%	7	25.00%
No	19	67.86%	21	75.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	52	77.61%	51	78.46%
No	15	22.39%	14	21.54%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 87

Report Cut: Indiana

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	3	3.49%
Some due to this	63	73.26%
None due to this	20	23.26%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	1	1.16%
Some due to this	19	22.09%
None due to this	66	76.74%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	5	5.81%
Some due to this	77	89.53%
None due to this	4	4.65%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	3	3.49%
Some due to this	70	81.40%
None due to this	13	15.12%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	2	2.30%
Some due to this	62	71.26%
None due to this	23	26.44%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	1.16%
Some due to this	19	22.09%
None due to this	66	76.74%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 87

Report Cut: Indiana

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	3	3.45%	0	0.00%	4	4.60%
Somewhat dissatisfied	16	24.21%	7	8.05%	18	20.69%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8	16.91%	16	18.39%	13	14.94%
Somewhat satisfied	42	43.32%	42	48.28%	36	41.38%
Very satisfied	18	10.85%	22	25.29%	16	18.39%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	32	36.78%	9	10.34%	9	10.34%
Middle managers	33	37.93%	9	10.34%	15	17.24%
Professional staff (non-managers)	41	47.13%	6	6.90%	30	34.48%
Skilled production workers	29	33.33%	6	6.90%	29	33.33%
Unskilled production workers	13	14.94%	6	6.90%	25	28.74%
Entry-level office workers	16	18.39%	6	6.90%	30	34.48%
Entry-level non-office workers	14	16.09%	1	1.15%	21	24.14%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	20	22.99%	2	2.30%	8	9.20%
Service workers	16	18.39%	4	4.60%	13	14.94%
Other	7	8.05%	1	1.15%	3	3.45%
None	4	4.60%	8	9.20%	6	6.90%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 87

Report Cut: Indiana

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	40	45.98%	34	39.08%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	11	12.64%	38	43.68%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	17	19.54%	52	59.77%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	43	49.43%	61	70.11%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	41	47.13%	5	5.75%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	45	51.72%	13	14.94%
Increasing starting salaries	62	71.26%	18	20.69%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	26	29.89%	26	29.89%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	18	20.69%	19	21.84%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	14	16.09%	9	10.34%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	6	6.90%	17	19.54%
Shortening the hiring process	24	27.59%	3	3.45%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	27	31.03%	13	14.94%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	37	42.53%	26	29.89%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	13	14.94%	19	21.84%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	44	50.57%	3	3.45%
Participating in job fairs	44	50.57%	3	3.45%
Building/increasing brand awareness	37	42.53%	25	28.74%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	13	14.94%	10	11.49%
Using formal candidate tracking system	41	47.13%	5	5.75%
Other	3	3.45%	1	1.15%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	28	32.18%
Team incentives	14	16.09%
Employee referral bonuses	60	68.97%
Year-end bonuses	36	41.38%
Spot bonuses	22	25.29%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	41	47.13%
Retention bonuses	6	6.90%
Commissions	25	28.74%
Project bonuses	8	9.20%
Profit sharing	11	12.64%
Hazard bonuses/pay	1	1.15%
Additional PTO	26	29.89%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 87

Report Cut: Indiana

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	18	20.69%
Language premiums	3	3.45%
Other*	1	1.15%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	49	56.32%
Resources to do their job effectively	15	17.24%
Mentoring opportunities	4	4.60%
Competitive/robust health benefits	27	31.03%
Opportunities to connect with others	3	3.45%
Driven by the mission of the organization	10	11.49%
Recognition and reward for good performance	28	32.18%
Ongoing training on new technologies	3	3.45%
Competitive pay	74	85.06%
Good work/life balance	69	79.31%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	10	11.49%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	29	33.33%
Current technology	1	1.15%
Remote work opportunities	20	22.99%
Hybrid work opportunities	20	22.99%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	2	2.30%
Regular full-time hours	7	8.05%
Strong organizational culture	12	13.79%
Challenging work	7	8.05%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	30	34.48%
Focus on employee safety	1	1.15%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	4	4.60%
No change	43	49.43%
More difficult	40	45.98%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 87

Report Cut: Indiana

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	4	10.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	33	82.50%
Lack of technical skills	17	42.50%
Lack of soft skills	6	15.00%
Lack of work experience	6	15.00%
Our organization's geographic location	5	12.50%
Market competition/high demand	20	50.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	21	52.50%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	2	5.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	8	20.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	4	10.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	8	20.00%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	30	34.48%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	32	36.78%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	13	14.94%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	3	3.45%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	9	10.34%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	18	20.69%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	40	45.98%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	15	17.24%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	13	14.94%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	8	9.20%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	30	34.48%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	14	16.09%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	3.45%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	19	21.84%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	10	11.49%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	15	17.24%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 87

Report Cut: Indiana

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	49	56.32%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	22	25.29%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	40	45.98%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	10	11.49%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	5	5.75%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	36	41.38%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	5	5.75%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	11	12.64%
Creating/redefining policies	13	14.94%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	7	8.05%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	16	18.39%
N/A	9	10.34%
Other *	1	1.15%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	12	13.95%
No	63	73.26%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	11	12.79%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	39	44.83%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	4	4.60%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	36	41.38%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	8	9.20%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 87

Report Cut: Indiana

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	84	96.55%
Paid lump sum awards	9	10.34%
Paid variable/bonus awards	30	34.48%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	2	2.30%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	1.15%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	1	1.15%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	77	88.51%
Paying lump sum awards	9	10.34%
Paying variable/bonus awards	30	34.48%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	1.15%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	2	2.30%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	6	6.90%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	60	68.97%	48	55.17%
Increased standard wages	41	47.13%	34	39.08%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	46	52.87%	45	51.72%
Implemented or increased variable pay	10	11.49%	11	12.64%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	1.15%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	5	5.75%	4	4.60%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 87

Report Cut: Indiana

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	13	14.94%	13	14.94%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	9	10.34%	3	3.45%
Invest in new technology	43	49.43%	46	52.87%
Invest in equipment	35	40.23%	35	40.23%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	3	3.45%	3	3.45%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	8	9.20%	9	10.34%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	9	10.34%	14	16.09%
Increase training budget	18	20.69%	24	27.59%
Increase total rewards communication/education	15	17.24%	25	28.74%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	32	36.78%	28	32.18%
Increase recruiting emphasis	25	28.74%	24	27.59%
Pay above market rates	6	6.90%	7	8.05%
Enhance the benefits package	15	17.24%	25	28.74%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	23	26.44%	28	32.18%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	18	20.69%	23	26.44%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	13	14.94%	10	11.49%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	5	5.75%	3	3.45%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	7	8.05%	5	5.75%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	13	14.94%	22	25.29%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	5	5.75%	13	14.94%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	2	2.30%	1	1.15%
Hold off on investing in new technology	3	3.45%	2	2.30%
Hold off on investing in equipment	4	4.60%	3	3.45%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	2	2.30%	2	2.30%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	8	9.20%	5	5.75%
Reduce training budget	3	3.45%	4	4.60%
Limiting employee travel	17	19.54%	7	8.05%
Hiring freezes	14	16.09%	7	8.05%
Implementing furloughs	4	4.60%	2	2.30%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	15	17.24%	5	5.75%
Reduce benefits package	1	1.15%	1	1.15%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	3	3.45%	2	2.30%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	3	3.45%	5	5.75%
Freezing compensation increases	2	2.30%	4	4.60%
Outsourcing roles or functions	3	3.45%	2	2.30%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 87

Report Cut: Indiana

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	11	12.64%	10	11.49%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	41	47.13%	6	6.90%
Increasing presence on social media	54	62.07%	9	10.34%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	12	13.79%	7	8.05%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	30	34.48%	7	8.05%
Partnering with brand influencers	6	6.90%	3	3.45%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	27	31.03%	7	8.05%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	42	48.28%	10	11.49%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	37	42.53%	10	11.49%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 87

Report Cut: Indiana

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	34	39.08%	20	22.99%	3	3.45%
Website content production	30	34.48%	22	25.29%	4	4.60%
Marketing content production	25	28.74%	26	29.89%	8	9.20%
Other content production	29	33.33%	19	21.84%	8	9.20%
Digital personal assistant	39	44.83%	12	13.79%	3	3.45%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	29	33.33%	22	25.29%	7	8.05%
Customer relationship management	35	40.23%	12	13.79%	7	8.05%
Inventory management	34	39.08%	12	13.79%	3	3.45%
Product recommendations	35	40.23%	11	12.64%	1	1.15%
Accounting	38	43.68%	9	10.34%	4	4.60%
Supply chain operations	41	47.13%	5	5.75%	2	2.30%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	25	28.74%	27	31.03%	8	9.20%
Application and screening management	26	29.89%	23	26.44%	8	9.20%
Audience segmentation	39	44.83%	6	6.90%	1	1.15%
Process improvement	27	31.03%	18	20.69%	8	9.20%
Idea generation	21	24.14%	25	28.74%	11	12.64%
Process automation	25	28.74%	17	19.54%	10	11.49%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	30	34.48%	16	18.39%	6	6.90%

# 2025 National Business Trends

**Iowa**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 50

Report Cut: Iowa

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	4.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	5	10.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	1	2.00%
Construction	1	2.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	12	24.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	2	4.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	3	6.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	3	6.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	7	14.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	5	10.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	4	8.00%
Utilities	2	4.00%
Wholesale Trade	3	6.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	11	22.00%
100 to 249	15	30.00%
250 to 499	13	26.00%
500 to 999	1	2.00%
1,000 or more	10	20.00%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	41	82.00%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	2	4.00%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	5	10.00%
Public Sector/Government	2	4.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 50

Report Cut: Iowa

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	20	40.0%
Stay the same	20	40.0%
Decline	10	20.0%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	5	10.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	22	44.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	11	22.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	11	22.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	2.0%
Do not know	0	0.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	7	14.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	31	62.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	8	16.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	6.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	2.0%
Do not know	0	0.0%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	36	75.00%	32	66.67%
Mild	12	25.00%	12	25.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	4	8.33%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	8	16.33%	5	10.20%
Mild	29	59.18%	31	63.27%
Serious	12	24.49%	13	26.53%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	34	69.39%	29	59.18%
Mild	14	28.57%	18	36.73%
Serious	1	2.04%	2	4.08%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	19	38.78%	12	24.49%
Mild	27	55.10%	30	61.22%
Serious	3	6.12%	7	14.29%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 50

Report Cut: Iowa

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	14	28.57%	14	28.57%
Mild	24	48.98%	22	44.90%
Serious	11	22.45%	13	26.53%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	6	12.24%	7	14.29%
Mild	25	51.02%	18	36.73%
Serious	18	36.73%	24	48.98%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	9	18.75%	7	14.29%
Mild	27	56.25%	25	51.02%
Serious	12	25.00%	17	34.69%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	19	38.78%	12	25.00%
Mild	25	51.02%	22	45.83%
Serious	5	10.20%	14	29.17%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	9	18.37%	9	18.37%
Mild	37	75.51%	33	67.35%
Serious	3	6.12%	7	14.29%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	27	55.10%	24	48.98%
Mild	20	40.82%	22	44.90%
Serious	2	4.08%	3	6.12%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	29	59.18%	27	55.10%
Mild	18	36.73%	19	38.78%
Serious	2	4.08%	3	6.12%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	16	33.33%	12	25.53%
Mild	22	45.83%	25	53.19%
Serious	10	20.83%	10	21.28%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	14	29.17%	14	29.17%
Mild	24	50.00%	20	41.67%
Serious	10	20.83%	14	29.17%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	16	35.56%	15	32.61%
Mild	26	57.78%	27	58.70%
Serious	3	6.67%	4	8.70%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 50

Report Cut: Iowa

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	15	31.25%	15	31.25%
Mild	26	54.17%	23	47.92%
Serious	7	14.58%	10	20.83%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	17	35.42%	16	34.04%
Mild	22	45.83%	23	48.94%
Serious	9	18.75%	8	17.02%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	25	51.02%	23	46.94%
Mild	17	34.69%	20	42.55%
Serious	7	14.29%	6	12.77%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	28	58.33%	24	50.00%
Mild	17	35.42%	19	39.58%
Serious	3	6.25%	5	10.42%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	7	14.58%	6	12.50%
Mild	27	56.25%	29	60.42%
Serious	15	31.25%	14	29.17%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	13	27.08%	11	22.92%
Mild	23	47.92%	25	52.08%
Serious	12	25.00%	11	22.92%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	10	20.83%	7	14.58%
Mild	23	47.92%	23	47.92%
Serious	16	33.33%	18	37.50%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	5	10.42%	4	8.33%
Mild	22	45.83%	22	45.83%
Serious	22	45.83%	23	47.92%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	25	52.08%	23	47.92%
Mild	20	41.67%	21	43.75%
Serious	4	8.33%	5	10.42%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	17	35.42%	14	29.17%
Mild	24	50.00%	26	54.17%
Serious	7	14.58%	8	16.67%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	9	18.75%	10	20.83%
Mild	27	56.25%	27	56.25%
Serious	13	27.08%	12	25.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 50

Report Cut: Iowa

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	10	20.83%	8	16.67%
Mild	35	72.92%	32	66.67%
Serious	4	8.33%	9	18.75%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	17	35.42%	15	31.25%
Mild	27	56.25%	27	56.25%
Serious	2	4.17%	5	10.42%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	25	52.08%	24	50.00%
Mild	5	10.42%	5	10.42%
Serious	2	4.17%	3	6.25%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	1	1	0	5
Competition in general	5	4	3	26
Product obsolescence	0	0	1	1
Changing customer preferences	2	4	2	16
Customer's ability to afford	8	1	3	29
Talent acquisition	8	7	4	42
Talent retention	5	6	5	32
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	0	3	3
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	0	3	3	9
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	0	0	3
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	1	0	5
Cost of materials	3	2	2	15
Cost of equipment	0	1	0	2
Taxes	0	0	1	1
Cost of regulatory compliance	3	1	1	12
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	1	0	2	5
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	2	0	4
Inflation	1	1	3	8
Employee engagement	3	1	4	15
Developing future leaders	1	4	4	15
Cybersecurity	3	6	2	23
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	0	0
Political uncertainty	1	2	1	8
Talent skills gap	1	0	2	5
Unknown challenges	0	1	1	3
Other	0	0	0	0



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 50

Report Cut: Iowa

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	2	4.00%
Slightly less than planned	15	30.00%
As planned	15	30.00%
Slightly more than planned	16	32.00%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	2	4.00%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	27	54.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	16	32.00%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	7	14.00%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	27	54.00%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	2.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	21	42.00%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	2.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	15	30.61%	9	18.75%
No	34	69.39%	39	81.25%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	42	85.71%	39	81.25%
No	7	14.29%	9	18.75%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	44	89.80%	39	82.98%
No	5	10.20%	8	17.02%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	7	31.82%	8	36.36%
No	15	68.18%	14	63.64%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	32	82.05%	29	76.32%
No	7	17.95%	9	23.68%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 50

Report Cut: Iowa

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	37	75.51%
None due to this	12	24.49%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	10	20.41%
None due to this	39	79.59%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	4.08%
Some due to this	47	95.92%
None due to this	0	0.00%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	4.08%
Some due to this	42	85.71%
None due to this	5	10.20%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	2.04%
Some due to this	40	81.63%
None due to this	8	16.33%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	2.04%
Some due to this	5	10.20%
None due to this	43	87.76%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 50

Report Cut: Iowa

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	2	4.08%	0	0.00%	1	2.04%
Somewhat dissatisfied	8	24.21%	6	12.24%	9	18.37%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	16.91%	7	14.29%	9	18.37%
Somewhat satisfied	26	43.32%	27	55.10%	22	44.90%
Very satisfied	10	10.85%	9	18.37%	8	16.33%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	21	42.00%	8	16.00%	4	8.00%
Middle managers	21	42.00%	6	12.00%	11	22.00%
Professional staff (non-managers)	26	52.00%	9	18.00%	16	32.00%
Skilled production workers	24	48.00%	4	8.00%	21	42.00%
Unskilled production workers	8	16.00%	1	2.00%	15	30.00%
Entry-level office workers	6	12.00%	4	8.00%	15	30.00%
Entry-level non-office workers	7	14.00%	1	2.00%	11	22.00%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	13	26.00%	2	4.00%	7	14.00%
Service workers	9	18.00%	1	2.00%	11	22.00%
Other	2	4.00%	1	2.00%	2	4.00%
None	6	12.00%	7	14.00%	2	4.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 50

Report Cut: Iowa

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	20	40.00%	23	46.00%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	9	18.00%	15	30.00%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	12	24.00%	28	56.00%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	27	54.00%	29	58.00%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	29	58.00%	8	16.00%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	26	52.00%	4	8.00%
Increasing starting salaries	37	74.00%	7	14.00%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	14	28.00%	15	30.00%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	11	22.00%	8	16.00%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	9	18.00%	4	8.00%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	6	12.00%	10	20.00%
Shortening the hiring process	15	30.00%	1	2.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	18	36.00%	6	12.00%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	25	50.00%	14	28.00%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	10	20.00%	10	20.00%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	28	56.00%	1	2.00%
Participating in job fairs	25	50.00%	4	8.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	25	50.00%	15	30.00%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	7	14.00%	6	12.00%
Using formal candidate tracking system	27	54.00%	5	10.00%
Other	2	4.00%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	16	32.00%
Team incentives	5	10.00%
Employee referral bonuses	33	66.00%
Year-end bonuses	22	44.00%
Spot bonuses	11	22.00%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	24	48.00%
Retention bonuses	4	8.00%
Commissions	15	30.00%
Project bonuses	7	14.00%
Profit sharing	6	12.00%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	13	26.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 50

Report Cut: Iowa

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	11	22.00%
Language premiums	1	2.00%
Other*	1	2.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	26	52.00%
Resources to do their job effectively	10	20.00%
Mentoring opportunities	4	8.00%
Competitive/robust health benefits	11	22.00%
Opportunities to connect with others	2	4.00%
Driven by the mission of the organization	9	18.00%
Recognition and reward for good performance	22	44.00%
Ongoing training on new technologies	3	6.00%
Competitive pay	39	78.00%
Good work/life balance	38	76.00%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	8	16.00%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	21	42.00%
Current technology	1	2.00%
Remote work opportunities	9	18.00%
Hybrid work opportunities	8	16.00%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	3	6.00%
Regular full-time hours	4	8.00%
Strong organizational culture	11	22.00%
Challenging work	5	10.00%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	13	26.00%
Focus on employee safety	2	4.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	2	4.00%
No change	21	42.00%
More difficult	27	54.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 50

Report Cut: Iowa

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	3	11.11%
Lack of qualified candidates	22	81.48%
Lack of technical skills	10	37.04%
Lack of soft skills	4	14.81%
Lack of work experience	8	29.63%
Our organization's geographic location	7	25.93%
Market competition/high demand	13	48.15%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	9	33.33%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	2	7.41%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	2	7.41%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	4	14.81%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	20	40.82%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	13	26.53%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	5	10.20%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	4.08%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	9	18.37%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	12	24.49%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	14	28.57%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	8	16.33%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	16	32.65%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	2	4.00%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	14	28.00%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	5	10.00%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	7	14.00%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	8.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	19	38.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 50

Report Cut: Iowa

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	32	64.00%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	12	24.00%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	17	34.00%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	8	16.00%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	4	8.00%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	17	34.00%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	4	8.00%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	7	14.00%
Creating/redefining policies	10	20.00%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	3	6.00%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	11	22.00%
N/A	6	12.00%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	9	18.00%
No	36	72.00%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	5	10.00%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	22	44.00%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	6	12.00%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	19	38.00%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	3	6.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 50

Report Cut: Iowa

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	49	98.00%
Paid lump sum awards	9	18.00%
Paid variable/bonus awards	18	36.00%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	1	2.00%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	1	2.00%
Uncertain	1	2.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	45	90.00%
Paying lump sum awards	8	16.00%
Paying variable/bonus awards	19	38.00%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	6	12.00%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	33	66.00%	24	48.00%
Increased standard wages	20	40.00%	16	32.00%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	25	50.00%	26	52.00%
Implemented or increased variable pay	4	8.00%	8	16.00%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	2.00%	1	2.00%
Other	1	2.00%	1	2.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	5	10.00%	3	6.00%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 50

Report Cut: Iowa

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	10	20.00%	10	20.00%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	7	14.00%	4	8.00%
Invest in new technology	26	52.00%	25	50.00%
Invest in equipment	24	48.00%	22	44.00%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	2	4.00%	3	6.00%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	3	6.00%	3	6.00%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	4	8.00%	8	16.00%
Increase training budget	13	26.00%	15	30.00%
Increase total rewards communication/education	7	14.00%	12	24.00%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	15	30.00%	14	28.00%
Increase recruiting emphasis	17	34.00%	18	36.00%
Pay above market rates	5	10.00%	5	10.00%
Enhance the benefits package	5	10.00%	14	28.00%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	15	30.00%	20	40.00%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	9	18.00%	10	20.00%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	4	8.00%	2	4.00%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	3	6.00%	2	4.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	3	6.00%	4	8.00%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	5	10.00%	9	18.00%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	5	10.00%	11	22.00%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	2	4.00%	1	2.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	1	2.00%	2	4.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	1	2.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	2	4.00%	3	6.00%
Reduce training budget	1	2.00%	1	2.00%
Limiting employee travel	8	16.00%	6	12.00%
Hiring freezes	2	4.00%	1	2.00%
Implementing furloughs	2	4.00%	1	2.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	9	18.00%	2	4.00%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	2.00%	1	2.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	2.00%	1	2.00%
Freezing compensation increases	1	2.00%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	2	4.00%	2	4.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 50

Report Cut: Iowa

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	10	20.00%	4	8.00%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	20	40.00%	6	12.00%
Increasing presence on social media	32	64.00%	5	10.00%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	4	8.00%	1	2.00%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	15	30.00%	3	6.00%
Partnering with brand influencers	5	10.00%	1	2.00%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	12	24.00%	6	12.00%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	23	46.00%	7	14.00%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	12	24.00%	4	8.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 50

Report Cut: Iowa

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	18	36.00%	11	22.00%	1	2.00%
Website content production	17	34.00%	5	10.00%	6	12.00%
Marketing content production	15	30.00%	8	16.00%	6	12.00%
Other content production	15	30.00%	8	16.00%	5	10.00%
Digital personal assistant	20	40.00%	5	10.00%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	14	28.00%	10	20.00%	2	4.00%
Customer relationship management	18	36.00%	7	14.00%	1	2.00%
Inventory management	17	34.00%	5	10.00%	1	2.00%
Product recommendations	18	36.00%	3	6.00%	0	0.00%
Accounting	18	36.00%	5	10.00%	2	4.00%
Supply chain operations	20	40.00%	2	4.00%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	14	28.00%	13	26.00%	4	8.00%
Application and screening management	13	26.00%	12	24.00%	2	4.00%
Audience segmentation	19	38.00%	2	4.00%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	15	30.00%	8	16.00%	4	8.00%
Idea generation	12	24.00%	10	20.00%	6	12.00%
Process automation	15	30.00%	8	16.00%	4	8.00%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	15	30.00%	10	20.00%	4	8.00%

# **Kansas**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 36

Report Cut: Kansas

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	5.56%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1	2.78%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	5	13.89%
Education Services	1	2.78%
Financial & Insurance	1	2.78%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1	2.78%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	4	11.11%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	6	16.67%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	3	8.33%
Services (Except Public Administration)	2	5.56%
Transportation & Warehousing	3	8.33%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	7	19.44%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	4	11.11%
100 to 249	15	41.67%
250 to 499	9	25.00%
500 to 999	1	2.78%
1,000 or more	7	19.44%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	31	86.11%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	1	2.78%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	4	11.11%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 36

Report Cut: Kansas

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	14	38.9%
Stay the same	15	41.7%
Decline	7	19.4%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	4	11.1%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	21	58.3%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	3	8.3%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	6	16.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	5.6%
Do not know	0	0.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	5	13.9%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	24	66.7%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	3	8.3%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	2.8%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	2.8%
Do not know	2	5.6%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	25	75.76%	22	66.67%
Mild	6	18.18%	8	24.24%
Serious	2	6.06%	3	9.09%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	5	14.29%	4	11.76%
Mild	19	54.29%	20	58.82%
Serious	11	31.43%	10	29.41%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	20	58.82%	15	44.12%
Mild	13	38.24%	15	44.12%
Serious	1	2.94%	4	11.76%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	10	30.30%	8	24.24%
Mild	16	48.48%	16	48.48%
Serious	7	21.21%	9	27.27%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 36

Report Cut: Kansas

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	7	20.00%	9	25.71%
Mild	17	48.57%	13	37.14%
Serious	11	31.43%	13	37.14%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	1	2.86%	2	5.71%
Mild	18	51.43%	15	42.86%
Serious	16	45.71%	18	51.43%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	2	5.71%	4	11.76%
Mild	17	48.57%	13	38.24%
Serious	16	45.71%	17	50.00%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	9	25.71%	5	14.29%
Mild	17	48.57%	21	60.00%
Serious	9	25.71%	9	25.71%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	5	14.29%	4	11.43%
Mild	19	54.29%	18	51.43%
Serious	11	31.43%	13	37.14%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	15	44.12%	13	37.14%
Mild	14	41.18%	16	45.71%
Serious	5	14.71%	6	17.14%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	18	52.94%	17	50.00%
Mild	13	38.24%	14	41.18%
Serious	3	8.82%	3	8.82%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	12	35.29%	9	27.27%
Mild	13	38.24%	14	42.42%
Serious	9	26.47%	10	30.30%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	8	23.53%	8	23.53%
Mild	17	50.00%	15	44.12%
Serious	9	26.47%	11	32.35%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	12	38.71%	12	37.50%
Mild	18	58.06%	19	59.38%
Serious	1	3.23%	1	3.13%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 36

Report Cut: Kansas

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	13	39.39%	12	36.36%
Mild	14	42.42%	15	45.45%
Serious	6	18.18%	6	18.18%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	9	26.47%	9	26.47%
Mild	16	47.06%	17	50.00%
Serious	9	26.47%	8	23.53%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	18	52.94%	17	50.00%
Mild	9	26.47%	10	29.41%
Serious	7	20.59%	7	20.59%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	12	35.29%	11	33.33%
Mild	16	47.06%	14	42.42%
Serious	6	17.65%	8	24.24%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	5	14.71%	3	9.09%
Mild	14	41.18%	16	48.48%
Serious	15	44.12%	15	45.45%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	4	11.76%	2	6.06%
Mild	16	47.06%	18	54.55%
Serious	14	41.18%	13	39.39%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	6	17.65%	5	15.15%
Mild	17	50.00%	15	45.45%
Serious	11	32.35%	14	42.42%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	1	2.94%	1	3.03%
Mild	14	41.18%	13	39.39%
Serious	20	58.82%	21	63.64%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	18	52.94%	16	48.48%
Mild	12	35.29%	14	42.42%
Serious	4	11.76%	4	12.12%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	13	38.24%	11	33.33%
Mild	15	44.12%	15	45.45%
Serious	6	17.65%	8	24.24%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	11	32.35%	11	33.33%
Mild	13	38.24%	15	45.45%
Serious	10	29.41%	8	24.24%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 36

Report Cut: Kansas

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	8	23.53%	6	18.18%
Mild	20	58.82%	20	60.61%
Serious	6	17.65%	7	21.21%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	13	38.24%	11	33.33%
Mild	18	52.94%	19	57.58%
Serious	1	2.94%	3	9.09%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	21	61.76%	20	60.61%
Mild	5	14.71%	5	15.15%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	3.03%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	2	0	0	6
Competition in general	1	2	4	11
Product obsolescence	0	0	1	1
Changing customer preferences	3	3	0	15
Customer's ability to afford	3	0	1	10
Talent acquisition	3	5	4	23
Talent retention	10	3	2	38
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	3	2	11
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	2	5	2	18
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	0	0	3
Ability to maintain quality product/service	2	2	0	10
Cost of materials	3	2	1	14
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	0	0	3
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	0	0	0
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	2	0	4
Inflation	0	2	4	8
Employee engagement	0	1	2	4
Developing future leaders	1	1	4	9
Cybersecurity	0	2	3	7
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	1	1
Political uncertainty	1	0	0	3
Talent skills gap	0	1	3	5
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 36

Report Cut: Kansas

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	3	8.33%
Slightly less than planned	14	38.89%
As planned	10	27.78%
Slightly more than planned	7	19.44%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	1	2.78%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	21	58.33%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	10	27.78%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	4	11.11%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	21	58.33%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	14	38.89%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	2.78%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	12	35.29%	13	38.24%
No	22	64.71%	21	61.76%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	30	85.71%	29	85.29%
No	5	14.29%	5	14.71%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	31	88.57%	29	82.86%
No	4	11.43%	6	17.14%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	2	18.18%	2	18.18%
No	9	81.82%	9	81.82%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	20	76.92%	19	73.08%
No	6	23.08%	7	26.92%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 36

Report Cut: Kansas

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	27	77.14%
None due to this	8	22.86%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	10	28.57%
None due to this	25	71.43%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	35	100.00%
None due to this	0	0.00%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	32	91.43%
None due to this	3	8.57%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	25	71.43%
None due to this	10	28.57%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	11	31.43%
None due to this	24	68.57%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 36

Report Cut: Kansas

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	10	24.21%	4	11.43%	12	34.29%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	16.91%	9	25.71%	8	22.86%
Somewhat satisfied	15	43.32%	14	40.00%	10	28.57%
Very satisfied	7	10.85%	8	22.86%	5	14.29%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	15	41.67%	4	11.11%	5	13.89%
Middle managers	13	36.11%	6	16.67%	9	25.00%
Professional staff (non-managers)	16	44.44%	5	13.89%	15	41.67%
Skilled production workers	11	30.56%	2	5.56%	11	30.56%
Unskilled production workers	5	13.89%	5	13.89%	10	27.78%
Entry-level office workers	7	19.44%	4	11.11%	13	36.11%
Entry-level non-office workers	6	16.67%	2	5.56%	10	27.78%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	11	30.56%	1	2.78%	3	8.33%
Service workers	4	11.11%	0	0.00%	3	8.33%
Other	1	2.78%	0	0.00%	1	2.78%
None	3	8.33%	1	2.78%	2	5.56%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 36

Report Cut: Kansas

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	18	50.00%	13	36.11%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	3	8.33%	13	36.11%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	10	27.78%	16	44.44%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	17	47.22%	22	61.11%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	17	47.22%	4	11.11%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	21	58.33%	2	5.56%
Increasing starting salaries	21	58.33%	7	19.44%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	7	19.44%	11	30.56%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	5	13.89%	3	8.33%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	4	11.11%	1	2.78%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	3	8.33%	7	19.44%
Shortening the hiring process	7	19.44%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	9	25.00%	3	8.33%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	14	38.89%	9	25.00%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	4	11.11%	5	13.89%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	19	52.78%	1	2.78%
Participating in job fairs	21	58.33%	1	2.78%
Building/increasing brand awareness	14	38.89%	6	16.67%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	5	13.89%	1	2.78%
Using formal candidate tracking system	14	38.89%	2	5.56%
Other	1	2.78%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	13	36.11%
Team incentives	4	11.11%
Employee referral bonuses	28	77.78%
Year-end bonuses	16	44.44%
Spot bonuses	8	22.22%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	16	44.44%
Retention bonuses	8	22.22%
Commissions	13	36.11%
Project bonuses	4	11.11%
Profit sharing	3	8.33%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	9	25.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 36

Report Cut: Kansas

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	10	27.78%
Language premiums	4	11.11%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	20	55.56%
Resources to do their job effectively	6	16.67%
Mentoring opportunities	3	8.33%
Competitive/robust health benefits	14	38.89%
Opportunities to connect with others	0	0.00%
Driven by the mission of the organization	3	8.33%
Recognition and reward for good performance	11	30.56%
Ongoing training on new technologies	4	11.11%
Competitive pay	32	88.89%
Good work/life balance	25	69.44%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	1	2.78%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	11	30.56%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	5	13.89%
Hybrid work opportunities	8	22.22%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	3	8.33%
Strong organizational culture	10	27.78%
Challenging work	3	8.33%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	11	30.56%
Focus on employee safety	1	2.78%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	1	2.86%
No change	17	48.57%
More difficult	17	48.57%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 36

Report Cut: Kansas

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	0	0.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	15	88.24%
Lack of technical skills	6	35.29%
Lack of soft skills	3	17.65%
Lack of work experience	5	29.41%
Our organization's geographic location	5	29.41%
Market competition/high demand	4	23.53%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	11	64.71%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	1	5.88%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	4	23.53%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	2	11.76%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	4	23.53%
Other *	1	5.88%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	9	25.71%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	19	54.29%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	11.43%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	3	8.57%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	10	28.57%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	17	48.57%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	4	11.43%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	2.86%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	3	8.57%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	5	13.89%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	12	33.33%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	6	16.67%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	7	19.44%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	13.89%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	6	16.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 36

Report Cut: Kansas

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	16	44.44%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	7	19.44%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	13	36.11%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	7	19.44%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	4	11.11%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	12	33.33%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	3	8.33%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	3	8.33%
Creating/redefining policies	6	16.67%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	2	5.56%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	11	30.56%
N/A	6	16.67%
Other *	1	2.78%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	2	5.71%
No	27	77.14%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	6	17.14%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	16	45.71%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	3	8.57%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	13	37.14%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	3	8.57%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 36

Report Cut: Kansas

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	34	94.44%
Paid lump sum awards	3	8.33%
Paid variable/bonus awards	13	36.11%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	2.78%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	3	8.33%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	31	86.11%
Paying lump sum awards	3	8.33%
Paying variable/bonus awards	13	36.11%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	4	11.11%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	24	66.67%	19	52.78%
Increased standard wages	14	38.89%	12	33.33%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	15	41.67%	15	41.67%
Implemented or increased variable pay	1	2.78%	4	11.11%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	2.78%	1	2.78%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	2	5.56%	3	8.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 36

Report Cut: Kansas

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	8	22.22%	6	16.67%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	2	5.56%	2	5.56%
Invest in new technology	21	58.33%	22	61.11%
Invest in equipment	16	44.44%	15	41.67%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	1	2.78%	2	5.56%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	2	5.56%	3	8.33%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	4	11.11%	2	5.56%
Increase training budget	10	27.78%	12	33.33%
Increase total rewards communication/education	6	16.67%	12	33.33%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	8	22.22%	7	19.44%
Increase recruiting emphasis	7	19.44%	6	16.67%
Pay above market rates	1	2.78%	1	2.78%
Enhance the benefits package	4	11.11%	9	25.00%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	12	33.33%	12	33.33%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	9	25.00%	12	33.33%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	3	8.33%	3	8.33%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	1	2.78%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	3	8.33%	3	8.33%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	3	8.33%	7	19.44%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	4	11.11%	7	19.44%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	1	2.78%
Hold off on investing in new technology	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	2.78%	1	2.78%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	2	5.56%	1	2.78%
Reduce training budget	1	2.78%	2	5.56%
Limiting employee travel	6	16.67%	4	11.11%
Hiring freezes	1	2.78%	2	5.56%
Implementing furloughs	2	5.56%	2	5.56%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	9	25.00%	3	8.33%
Reduce benefits package	1	2.78%	1	2.78%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	3	8.33%	4	11.11%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	2.78%	1	2.78%
Freezing compensation increases	1	2.78%	1	2.78%
Outsourcing roles or functions	2	5.56%	2	5.56%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 36

Report Cut: Kansas

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	4	11.11%	3	8.33%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	17	47.22%	6	16.67%
Increasing presence on social media	26	72.22%	6	16.67%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	4	11.11%	3	8.33%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	17	47.22%	4	11.11%
Partnering with brand influencers	4	11.11%	1	2.78%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	10	27.78%	3	8.33%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	15	41.67%	4	11.11%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	13	36.11%	4	11.11%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 36

Report Cut: Kansas

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	10	27.78%	7	19.44%	1	2.78%
Website content production	11	30.56%	8	22.22%	2	5.56%
Marketing content production	10	27.78%	7	19.44%	4	11.11%
Other content production	12	33.33%	5	13.89%	1	2.78%
Digital personal assistant	15	41.67%	2	5.56%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	10	27.78%	6	16.67%	3	8.33%
Customer relationship management	11	30.56%	8	22.22%	1	2.78%
Inventory management	12	33.33%	5	13.89%	1	2.78%
Product recommendations	11	30.56%	5	13.89%	0	0.00%
Accounting	13	36.11%	2	5.56%	1	2.78%
Supply chain operations	14	38.89%	2	5.56%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	11	30.56%	10	27.78%	2	5.56%
Application and screening management	11	30.56%	6	16.67%	1	2.78%
Audience segmentation	13	36.11%	2	5.56%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	12	33.33%	3	8.33%	1	2.78%
Idea generation	9	25.00%	7	19.44%	2	5.56%
Process automation	10	27.78%	4	11.11%	2	5.56%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	10	27.78%	6	16.67%	2	5.56%

# **Kentucky**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Kentucky

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	2.04%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	2	4.08%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	15	30.61%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	5	10.20%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1	2.04%
Information	3	6.12%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	3	6.12%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	7	14.29%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	2	4.08%
Services (Except Public Administration)	6	12.24%
Transportation & Warehousing	1	2.04%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	3	6.12%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	15	30.61%
100 to 249	16	32.65%
250 to 499	8	16.33%
500 to 999	5	10.20%
1,000 or more	5	10.20%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	39	79.59%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	4	8.16%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	6	12.24%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Kentucky

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	18	36.7%
Stay the same	25	51.0%
Decline	6	12.2%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	3	6.1%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	21	42.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	6	12.2%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	13	26.5%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	6.1%
Do not know	3	6.1%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	7	14.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	27	55.1%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	6	12.2%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	4.1%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	4.1%
Do not know	5	10.2%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	33	71.74%	32	69.57%
Mild	11	23.91%	9	19.57%
Serious	2	4.35%	5	10.87%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	9	18.75%	6	12.77%
Mild	25	52.08%	27	57.45%
Serious	14	29.17%	14	29.79%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	37	78.72%	29	63.04%
Mild	9	19.15%	16	34.78%
Serious	1	2.13%	1	2.17%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	17	35.42%	13	27.66%
Mild	28	58.33%	30	63.83%
Serious	3	6.25%	4	8.51%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Kentucky

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	16	34.04%	15	32.61%
Mild	21	44.68%	25	54.35%
Serious	10	21.28%	6	13.04%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	6	12.50%	4	8.33%
Mild	23	47.92%	26	54.17%
Serious	19	39.58%	18	37.50%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	6	12.50%	6	12.77%
Mild	24	50.00%	23	48.94%
Serious	18	37.50%	18	38.30%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	12	25.53%	7	15.22%
Mild	23	48.94%	25	54.35%
Serious	12	25.53%	14	30.43%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	12	25.00%	10	21.28%
Mild	26	54.17%	24	51.06%
Serious	10	20.83%	13	27.66%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	28	59.57%	28	60.87%
Mild	17	36.17%	15	32.61%
Serious	2	4.26%	3	6.52%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	27	57.45%	22	46.81%
Mild	14	29.79%	19	40.43%
Serious	6	12.77%	6	12.77%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	19	39.58%	18	38.30%
Mild	20	41.67%	18	38.30%
Serious	9	18.75%	11	23.40%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	19	39.58%	17	35.42%
Mild	22	45.83%	20	41.67%
Serious	7	14.58%	11	22.92%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	17	37.78%	17	36.96%
Mild	25	55.56%	25	54.35%
Serious	3	6.67%	4	8.70%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Kentucky

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	19	41.30%	20	43.48%
Mild	21	45.65%	20	43.48%
Serious	6	13.04%	6	13.04%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	17	36.17%	12	26.67%
Mild	20	42.55%	21	46.67%
Serious	10	21.28%	12	26.67%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	23	48.94%	22	46.81%
Mild	17	36.17%	18	40.00%
Serious	7	14.89%	7	15.56%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	18	38.30%	19	40.43%
Mild	26	55.32%	23	48.94%
Serious	3	6.38%	5	10.64%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	6	12.77%	6	12.77%
Mild	22	46.81%	22	46.81%
Serious	19	40.43%	19	40.43%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	7	14.89%	3	6.38%
Mild	28	59.57%	30	63.83%
Serious	12	25.53%	13	27.66%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	5	10.64%	3	6.38%
Mild	31	65.96%	28	59.57%
Serious	10	21.28%	15	31.91%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	4	8.51%	3	6.38%
Mild	18	38.30%	18	38.30%
Serious	24	51.06%	26	55.32%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	26	55.32%	24	51.06%
Mild	18	38.30%	20	42.55%
Serious	3	6.38%	3	6.38%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	19	40.43%	13	27.66%
Mild	24	51.06%	23	48.94%
Serious	4	8.51%	11	23.40%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	11	23.40%	12	25.53%
Mild	21	44.68%	24	51.06%
Serious	15	31.91%	11	23.40%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Kentucky

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	12	25.53%	9	19.15%
Mild	30	63.83%	28	59.57%
Serious	6	12.77%	11	23.40%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	18	38.30%	16	34.04%
Mild	26	55.32%	27	57.45%
Serious	1	2.13%	2	4.26%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	28	59.57%	28	59.57%
Mild	8	17.02%	8	17.02%
Serious	1	2.13%	1	2.13%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	1	0	0	3
Competition in general	9	1	4	33
Product obsolescence	1	0	1	4
Changing customer preferences	3	3	2	17
Customer's ability to afford	4	3	1	19
Talent acquisition	5	9	2	35
Talent retention	4	6	3	27
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	3	1	10
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	0	2	10	14
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	1	1
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	3	1	10
Cost of materials	3	1	2	13
Cost of equipment	1	1	0	5
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	0	2	5
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	3	3	2	17
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	1	0	5
Inflation	1	5	1	14
Employee engagement	1	3	2	11
Developing future leaders	1	1	3	8
Cybersecurity	2	3	4	16
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	2	0	2	8
Political uncertainty	2	0	1	7
Talent skills gap	0	0	1	1
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	1	0	0	3

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Kentucky

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	1	2.04%
Slightly less than planned	13	26.53%
As planned	21	42.86%
Slightly more than planned	12	24.49%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	1	2.04%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	22	44.90%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	19	38.78%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	7	14.29%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	32	65.31%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	15	30.61%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	4.08%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	15	31.25%	8	17.78%
No	33	68.75%	37	82.22%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	40	83.33%	37	78.72%
No	8	16.67%	10	21.28%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	43	89.58%	40	83.33%
No	5	10.42%	8	16.67%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	4	25.00%	4	25.00%
No	12	75.00%	12	75.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	25	69.44%	24	68.57%
No	11	30.56%	11	31.43%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Kentucky

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	2	4.17%
Some due to this	41	85.42%
None due to this	5	10.42%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	1	2.08%
Some due to this	9	18.75%
None due to this	38	79.17%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	2.08%
Some due to this	42	87.50%
None due to this	5	10.42%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	4.17%
Some due to this	37	77.08%
None due to this	9	18.75%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	31	64.58%
None due to this	17	35.42%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	2	4.17%
Some due to this	9	18.75%
None due to this	37	77.08%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Kentucky

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	2	4.17%	0	0.00%	1	2.08%
Somewhat dissatisfied	6	24.21%	4	8.33%	6	12.50%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8	16.91%	8	16.67%	11	22.92%
Somewhat satisfied	21	43.32%	23	47.92%	18	37.50%
Very satisfied	11	10.85%	13	27.08%	12	25.00%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	19	38.78%	6	12.24%	3	6.12%
Middle managers	20	40.82%	7	14.29%	8	16.33%
Professional staff (non-managers)	25	51.02%	6	12.24%	19	38.78%
Skilled production workers	15	30.61%	4	8.16%	13	26.53%
Unskilled production workers	7	14.29%	5	10.20%	12	24.49%
Entry-level office workers	11	22.45%	5	10.20%	19	38.78%
Entry-level non-office workers	10	20.41%	2	4.08%	9	18.37%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	10	20.41%	2	4.08%	3	6.12%
Service workers	4	8.16%	2	4.08%	3	6.12%
Other	2	4.08%	1	2.04%	0	0.00%
None	2	4.08%	3	6.12%	2	4.08%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Kentucky

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	22	44.90%	18	36.73%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	6	12.24%	22	44.90%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	5	10.20%	27	55.10%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	21	42.86%	31	63.27%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	22	44.90%	5	10.20%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	23	46.94%	5	10.20%
Increasing starting salaries	34	69.39%	7	14.29%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	15	30.61%	18	36.73%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	10	20.41%	9	18.37%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	10	20.41%	3	6.12%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	5	10.20%	9	18.37%
Shortening the hiring process	10	20.41%	1	2.04%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	15	30.61%	3	6.12%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	22	44.90%	10	20.41%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	6	12.24%	4	8.16%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	25	51.02%	3	6.12%
Participating in job fairs	21	42.86%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	23	46.94%	15	30.61%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	7	14.29%	7	14.29%
Using formal candidate tracking system	19	38.78%	2	4.08%
Other	2	4.08%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	14	28.57%
Team incentives	11	22.45%
Employee referral bonuses	32	65.31%
Year-end bonuses	21	42.86%
Spot bonuses	8	16.33%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	25	51.02%
Retention bonuses	2	4.08%
Commissions	17	34.69%
Project bonuses	2	4.08%
Profit sharing	5	10.20%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	17	34.69%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Kentucky

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	8	16.33%
Language premiums	1	2.04%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	26	53.06%
Resources to do their job effectively	6	12.24%
Mentoring opportunities	2	4.08%
Competitive/robust health benefits	10	20.41%
Opportunities to connect with others	4	8.16%
Driven by the mission of the organization	9	18.37%
Recognition and reward for good performance	17	34.69%
Ongoing training on new technologies	3	6.12%
Competitive pay	37	75.51%
Good work/life balance	41	83.67%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	2	4.08%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	13	26.53%
Current technology	1	2.04%
Remote work opportunities	8	16.33%
Hybrid work opportunities	14	28.57%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	1	2.04%
Regular full-time hours	1	2.04%
Strong organizational culture	16	32.65%
Challenging work	6	12.24%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	10	20.41%
Focus on employee safety	2	4.08%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	4	8.33%
No change	27	56.25%
More difficult	17	35.42%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Kentucky

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	0	0.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	16	94.12%
Lack of technical skills	10	58.82%
Lack of soft skills	4	23.53%
Lack of work experience	5	29.41%
Our organization's geographic location	1	5.88%
Market competition/high demand	9	52.94%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	7	41.18%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	3	17.65%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	1	5.88%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	7	41.18%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	17	35.42%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	18	37.50%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	10	20.83%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	2.08%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	2	4.17%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	8	16.67%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	25	52.08%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	11	22.92%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	2.08%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	3	6.25%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	2	4.08%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	18	36.73%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	6	12.24%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	8.16%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	12	24.49%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	7	14.29%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	6	12.24%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Kentucky

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	25	51.02%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	9	18.37%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	24	48.98%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	7	14.29%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	7	14.29%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	17	34.69%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	6	12.24%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	4	8.16%
Creating/redefining policies	7	14.29%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	3	6.12%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	8	16.33%
N/A	6	12.24%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	7	14.89%
No	33	70.21%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	7	14.89%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	19	39.58%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	4	8.33%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	23	47.92%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	2	4.17%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Kentucky

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	44	89.80%
Paid lump sum awards	5	10.20%
Paid variable/bonus awards	13	26.53%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	4	8.16%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	1	2.04%
Uncertain	2	4.08%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	39	79.59%
Paying lump sum awards	6	12.24%
Paying variable/bonus awards	17	34.69%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	2.04%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	2	4.08%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	7	14.29%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	27	55.10%	22	44.90%
Increased standard wages	21	42.86%	17	34.69%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	23	46.94%	24	48.98%
Implemented or increased variable pay	3	6.12%	7	14.29%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	2.04%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	3	6.12%	4	8.16%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Kentucky

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	12	24.49%	6	12.24%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	4	8.16%	3	6.12%
Invest in new technology	19	38.78%	24	48.98%
Invest in equipment	16	32.65%	14	28.57%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	2	4.08%	1	2.04%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	4	8.16%	4	8.16%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	5	10.20%	7	14.29%
Increase training budget	9	18.37%	12	24.49%
Increase total rewards communication/education	5	10.20%	10	20.41%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	7	14.29%	8	16.33%
Increase recruiting emphasis	11	22.45%	10	20.41%
Pay above market rates	3	6.12%	3	6.12%
Enhance the benefits package	7	14.29%	17	34.69%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	10	20.41%	13	26.53%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	11	22.45%	10	20.41%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	7	14.29%	3	6.12%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	2	4.08%	1	2.04%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	2	4.08%	1	2.04%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	3	6.12%	8	16.33%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	5	10.20%	11	22.45%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	2.04%	1	2.04%
Hold off on investing in new technology	1	2.04%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	1	2.04%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	2.04%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	5	10.20%	2	4.08%
Reduce training budget	1	2.04%	2	4.08%
Limiting employee travel	8	16.33%	3	6.12%
Hiring freezes	9	18.37%	3	6.12%
Implementing furloughs	1	2.04%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	8	16.33%	3	6.12%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	1	2.04%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	2.04%	3	6.12%
Freezing compensation increases	1	2.04%	1	2.04%
Outsourcing roles or functions	2	4.08%	2	4.08%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Kentucky

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	7	14.29%	4	8.16%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	19	38.78%	4	8.16%
Increasing presence on social media	34	69.39%	6	12.24%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	7	14.29%	1	2.04%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	17	34.69%	5	10.20%
Partnering with brand influencers	4	8.16%	2	4.08%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	14	28.57%	5	10.20%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	24	48.98%	6	12.24%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	16	32.65%	6	12.24%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Kentucky

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	21	42.86%	8	16.33%	2	4.08%
Website content production	15	30.61%	12	24.49%	3	6.12%
Marketing content production	13	26.53%	15	30.61%	3	6.12%
Other content production	17	34.69%	9	18.37%	4	8.16%
Digital personal assistant	20	40.82%	6	12.24%	1	2.04%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	18	36.73%	9	18.37%	3	6.12%
Customer relationship management	21	42.86%	5	10.20%	3	6.12%
Inventory management	21	42.86%	3	6.12%	3	6.12%
Product recommendations	21	42.86%	3	6.12%	1	2.04%
Accounting	20	40.82%	4	8.16%	3	6.12%
Supply chain operations	22	44.90%	4	8.16%	1	2.04%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	15	30.61%	13	26.53%	3	6.12%
Application and screening management	17	34.69%	9	18.37%	3	6.12%
Audience segmentation	21	42.86%	3	6.12%	1	2.04%
Process improvement	15	30.61%	9	18.37%	4	8.16%
Idea generation	12	24.49%	16	32.65%	3	6.12%
Process automation	13	26.53%	11	22.45%	4	8.16%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	15	30.61%	11	22.45%	3	6.12%

# **Louisiana**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Louisiana

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	4.35%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2	8.70%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	1	4.35%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	2	8.70%
Education Services	2	8.70%
Financial & Insurance	1	4.35%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	1	4.35%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	4	17.39%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	3	13.04%
Transportation & Warehousing	2	8.70%
Utilities	1	4.35%
Wholesale Trade	3	13.04%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	6	26.09%
100 to 249	7	30.43%
250 to 499	5	21.74%
500 to 999	1	4.35%
1,000 or more	4	17.39%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	18	78.26%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	2	8.70%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	3	13.04%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Louisiana

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	8	34.8%
Stay the same	11	47.8%
Decline	4	17.4%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	8.7%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	8	34.8%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	4	17.4%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	17.4%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	17.4%
Do not know	1	4.3%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	8.7%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	14	60.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	4	17.4%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	4.3%
Do not know	2	8.7%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	14	66.67%	13	61.90%
Mild	5	23.81%	5	23.81%
Serious	2	9.52%	3	14.29%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	5	21.74%	3	13.04%
Mild	10	43.48%	15	65.22%
Serious	8	34.78%	5	21.74%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	19	90.48%	16	76.19%
Mild	2	9.52%	5	23.81%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	15	65.22%	12	52.17%
Mild	6	26.09%	10	43.48%
Serious	2	8.70%	1	4.35%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Louisiana

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	8	36.36%	8	36.36%
Mild	10	45.45%	11	50.00%
Serious	4	18.18%	3	13.64%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	6	26.09%	3	13.04%
Mild	8	34.78%	12	52.17%
Serious	9	39.13%	8	34.78%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	5	22.73%	5	21.74%
Mild	7	31.82%	9	39.13%
Serious	10	45.45%	9	39.13%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	6	27.27%	5	23.81%
Mild	13	59.09%	10	47.62%
Serious	3	13.64%	6	28.57%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	5	21.74%	6	26.09%
Mild	16	69.57%	15	65.22%
Serious	2	8.70%	2	8.70%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	15	68.18%	14	63.64%
Mild	6	27.27%	7	31.82%
Serious	1	4.55%	1	4.55%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	18	81.82%	18	81.82%
Mild	3	13.64%	4	18.18%
Serious	1	4.55%	0	0.00%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	9	39.13%	7	31.82%
Mild	12	52.17%	13	59.09%
Serious	2	8.70%	2	9.09%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	7	30.43%	6	26.09%
Mild	14	60.87%	13	56.52%
Serious	2	8.70%	4	17.39%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	12	63.16%	11	55.00%
Mild	5	26.32%	6	30.00%
Serious	2	10.53%	3	15.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Louisiana

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	10	45.45%	11	50.00%
Mild	7	31.82%	7	31.82%
Serious	5	22.73%	4	18.18%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	8	36.36%	8	36.36%
Mild	10	45.45%	11	50.00%
Serious	4	18.18%	3	13.64%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	12	54.55%	12	54.55%
Mild	7	31.82%	8	36.36%
Serious	3	13.64%	2	9.09%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	10	47.62%	11	52.38%
Mild	9	42.86%	9	42.86%
Serious	2	9.52%	1	4.76%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	3	14.29%	2	9.52%
Mild	10	47.62%	12	57.14%
Serious	9	42.86%	8	38.10%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	4	19.05%	4	19.05%
Mild	14	66.67%	14	66.67%
Serious	4	19.05%	4	19.05%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	5	23.81%	4	19.05%
Mild	9	42.86%	9	42.86%
Serious	8	38.10%	9	42.86%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	2	9.52%	3	14.29%
Mild	11	52.38%	9	42.86%
Serious	9	42.86%	10	47.62%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	12	57.14%	11	52.38%
Mild	6	28.57%	6	28.57%
Serious	4	19.05%	5	23.81%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	11	52.38%	7	33.33%
Mild	10	47.62%	13	61.90%
Serious	1	4.76%	2	9.52%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	7	33.33%	7	33.33%
Mild	9	42.86%	7	33.33%
Serious	6	28.57%	8	38.10%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Louisiana

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	5	23.81%	5	23.81%
Mild	11	52.38%	13	61.90%
Serious	6	28.57%	5	23.81%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	8	38.10%	8	38.10%
Mild	11	52.38%	11	52.38%
Serious	1	4.76%	1	4.76%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	12	57.14%	12	57.14%
Mild	4	19.05%	4	19.05%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	1	0	2
Competition in general	4	2	3	19
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	0	1	2	4
Customer's ability to afford	2	0	0	6
Talent acquisition	2	3	2	14
Talent retention	4	3	0	18
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	0	0	0
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	0	2	2	6
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	0	0	3
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	2	0	7
Cost of materials	1	1	0	5
Cost of equipment	1	1	1	6
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	3	0	0	9
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	0	1	1
Employee safety	0	0	1	1
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	1	1	6
Inflation	1	2	1	8
Employee engagement	1	0	1	4
Developing future leaders	0	2	2	6
Cybersecurity	1	1	1	6
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	0	1	0	2
Political uncertainty	0	0	1	1
Talent skills gap	0	0	1	1
Unknown challenges	0	0	2	2
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Louisiana

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	2	8.70%
Slightly less than planned	6	26.09%
As planned	12	52.17%
Slightly more than planned	3	13.04%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	11	47.83%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	7	30.43%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	5	21.74%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	9	39.12%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	4.35%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	11	47.83%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	8.70%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	7	31.82%	5	22.73%
No	15	68.18%	17	77.27%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	17	73.91%	16	69.57%
No	6	26.09%	7	30.43%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	17	73.91%	17	73.91%
No	6	26.09%	6	26.09%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	3	37.50%	3	37.50%
No	5	62.50%	5	62.50%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	16	88.89%	15	83.33%
No	2	11.11%	3	16.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Louisiana

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	1	4.35%
Some due to this	18	78.26%
None due to this	4	17.39%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	6	26.09%
None due to this	17	73.91%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	21	91.30%
None due to this	2	8.70%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	21	91.30%
None due to this	2	8.70%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	13	56.52%
None due to this	10	43.48%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	7	30.43%
None due to this	16	69.57%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Louisiana

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	3	13.04%	0	0.00%	3	13.04%
Somewhat dissatisfied	8	24.21%	4	17.39%	5	21.74%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	16.91%	6	26.09%	3	13.04%
Somewhat satisfied	5	43.32%	8	34.78%	7	30.43%
Very satisfied	4	10.85%	5	21.74%	5	21.74%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	6	26.09%	2	8.70%	2	8.70%
Middle managers	8	34.78%	1	4.35%	5	21.74%
Professional staff (non-managers)	9	39.13%	2	8.70%	8	34.78%
Skilled production workers	11	47.83%	3	13.04%	6	26.09%
Unskilled production workers	9	39.13%	2	8.70%	5	21.74%
Entry-level office workers	4	17.39%	2	8.70%	4	17.39%
Entry-level non-office workers	3	13.04%	1	4.35%	4	17.39%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	2	8.70%	1	4.35%	3	13.04%
Service workers	6	26.09%	1	4.35%	5	21.74%
Other	1	4.35%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None	5	21.74%	4	17.39%	4	17.39%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Louisiana

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	6	26.09%	6	26.09%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	3	13.04%	8	34.78%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	3	13.04%	8	34.78%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	14	60.87%	13	56.52%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	11	47.83%	2	8.70%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	11	47.83%	1	4.35%
Increasing starting salaries	14	60.87%	2	8.70%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	6	26.09%	5	21.74%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	4	17.39%	1	4.35%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	4	17.39%	0	0.00%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	3	13.04%	3	13.04%
Shortening the hiring process	7	30.43%	1	4.35%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	6	26.09%	2	8.70%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	9	39.13%	4	17.39%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	3	13.04%	1	4.35%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	15	65.22%	1	4.35%
Participating in job fairs	10	43.48%	1	4.35%
Building/increasing brand awareness	10	43.48%	5	21.74%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	5	21.74%	3	13.04%
Using formal candidate tracking system	5	21.74%	0	0.00%
Other	1	4.35%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	9	39.13%
Team incentives	4	17.39%
Employee referral bonuses	12	52.17%
Year-end bonuses	12	52.17%
Spot bonuses	5	21.74%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	11	47.83%
Retention bonuses	1	4.35%
Commissions	6	26.09%
Project bonuses	2	8.70%
Profit sharing	5	21.74%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	6	26.09%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Louisiana

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	3	13.04%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	1	4.35%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	13	56.52%
Resources to do their job effectively	3	13.04%
Mentoring opportunities	2	8.70%
Competitive/robust health benefits	10	43.48%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	4.35%
Driven by the mission of the organization	4	17.39%
Recognition and reward for good performance	8	34.78%
Ongoing training on new technologies	1	4.35%
Competitive pay	17	73.91%
Good work/life balance	16	69.57%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	2	8.70%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	10	43.48%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	3	13.04%
Hybrid work opportunities	6	26.09%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	0	0.00%
Strong organizational culture	6	26.09%
Challenging work	1	4.35%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	10	43.48%
Focus on employee safety	1	4.35%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	2	8.70%
No change	9	39.13%
More difficult	12	52.17%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Louisiana

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	2	16.67%
Lack of qualified candidates	11	91.67%
Lack of technical skills	6	50.00%
Lack of soft skills	1	8.33%
Lack of work experience	4	33.33%
Our organization's geographic location	0	0.00%
Market competition/high demand	5	41.67%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	8	66.67%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	2	16.67%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	1	8.33%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	1	8.33%
Other *	1	8.33%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	12	52.17%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	6	26.09%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	17.39%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	4.35%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	0	0.00%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	8	34.78%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	9	39.13%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	13.04%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	4.35%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	2	8.70%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	1	4.35%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	11	47.83%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	1	4.35%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	4.35%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	17.39%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	7	30.43%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	4	17.39%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Louisiana

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	12	52.17%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	8	34.78%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	11	47.83%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	6	26.09%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	4	17.39%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	11	47.83%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	1	4.35%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	4	17.39%
Creating/redefining policies	3	13.04%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	2	8.70%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	5	21.74%
N/A	3	13.04%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	2	8.70%
No	21	91.30%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	0	0.00%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	10	43.48%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	3	13.04%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	7	30.43%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	3	13.04%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Louisiana

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	18	78.26%
Paid lump sum awards	1	4.35%
Paid variable/bonus awards	9	39.13%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	1	4.35%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	2	8.70%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	1	4.35%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	20	86.96%
Paying lump sum awards	2	8.70%
Paying variable/bonus awards	9	39.13%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	1	4.35%
Reducing hours worked	1	4.35%
Uncertain	2	8.70%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	13	56.52%	12	52.17%
Increased standard wages	9	39.13%	10	43.48%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	12	52.17%	13	56.52%
Implemented or increased variable pay	0	0.00%	1	4.35%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Other	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	1	4.35%	1	4.35%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Louisiana

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	2	8.70%	3	13.04%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	2	8.70%	4	17.39%
Invest in new technology	10	43.48%	11	47.83%
Invest in equipment	9	39.13%	8	34.78%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	0	0.00%	2	8.70%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	1	4.35%	3	13.04%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	2	8.70%	1	4.35%
Increase training budget	4	17.39%	8	34.78%
Increase total rewards communication/education	2	8.70%	3	13.04%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	5	21.74%	4	17.39%
Increase recruiting emphasis	6	26.09%	5	21.74%
Pay above market rates	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Enhance the benefits package	0	0.00%	4	17.39%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	4	17.39%	7	30.43%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	4	17.39%	7	30.43%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	1	4.35%	2	8.70%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	1	4.35%	2	8.70%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	2	8.70%	5	21.74%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	2	8.70%	5	21.74%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	1	4.35%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	2	8.70%	2	8.70%
Reduce training budget	1	4.35%	2	8.70%
Limiting employee travel	4	17.39%	3	13.04%
Hiring freezes	3	13.04%	3	13.04%
Implementing furloughs	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	4	17.39%	0	0.00%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Freezing compensation increases	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Outsourcing roles or functions	1	4.35%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Louisiana

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	3	13.04%	1	4.35%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	9	39.13%	1	4.35%
Increasing presence on social media	16	69.57%	5	21.74%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	5	21.74%	3	13.04%
Partnering with brand influencers	2	8.70%	1	4.35%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	7	30.43%	5	21.74%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	13	56.52%	7	30.43%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	5	21.74%	1	4.35%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Louisiana

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	8	34.78%	5	21.74%	0	0.00%
Website content production	8	34.78%	1	4.35%	3	13.04%
Marketing content production	7	30.43%	3	13.04%	3	13.04%
Other content production	8	34.78%	0	0.00%	3	13.04%
Digital personal assistant	9	39.13%	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	7	30.43%	3	13.04%	1	4.35%
Customer relationship management	8	34.78%	4	17.39%	1	4.35%
Inventory management	7	30.43%	1	4.35%	2	8.70%
Product recommendations	9	39.13%	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
Accounting	8	34.78%	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Supply chain operations	7	30.43%	2	8.70%	1	4.35%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	8	34.78%	2	8.70%	1	4.35%
Application and screening management	7	30.43%	2	8.70%	2	8.70%
Audience segmentation	7	30.43%	2	8.70%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	7	30.43%	3	13.04%	1	4.35%
Idea generation	8	34.78%	3	13.04%	1	4.35%
Process automation	8	34.78%	2	8.70%	1	4.35%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	8	34.78%	3	13.04%	2	8.70%

# **Maryland**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 38

Report Cut: Maryland

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	2.63%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	1	2.63%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	4	10.53%
Education Services	2	5.26%
Financial & Insurance	4	10.53%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1	2.63%
Information	1	2.63%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	4	10.53%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	6	15.79%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	2	5.26%
Services (Except Public Administration)	7	18.42%
Transportation & Warehousing	2	5.26%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	3	7.89%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	12	31.58%
100 to 249	13	34.21%
250 to 499	8	21.05%
500 to 999	0	0.00%
1,000 or more	5	13.16%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	27	71.05%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	2	5.26%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	9	23.68%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 38

Report Cut: Maryland

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	16	42.1%
Stay the same	19	50.0%
Decline	3	7.9%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	2.6%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	22	57.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	8	21.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	5	13.2%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	2	5.3%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	7	18.4%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	18	47.4%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	8	21.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	5.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	2.6%
Do not know	2	5.3%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	27	75.00%	25	69.44%
Mild	8	22.22%	7	19.44%
Serious	1	2.78%	4	11.11%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	7	18.92%	6	16.67%
Mild	19	51.35%	19	52.78%
Serious	11	29.73%	11	30.56%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	23	62.16%	16	43.24%
Mild	14	37.84%	19	51.35%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	5.41%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	14	37.84%	11	29.73%
Mild	17	45.95%	19	51.35%
Serious	6	16.22%	7	18.92%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 38

Report Cut: Maryland

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	14	37.84%	12	32.43%
Mild	17	45.95%	17	45.95%
Serious	6	16.22%	8	21.62%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	2	5.41%	1	2.70%
Mild	22	59.46%	20	54.05%
Serious	13	35.14%	16	43.24%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	4	10.81%	6	16.67%
Mild	21	56.76%	16	44.44%
Serious	12	32.43%	14	38.89%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	11	29.73%	10	27.03%
Mild	19	51.35%	18	48.65%
Serious	7	18.92%	9	24.32%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	8	22.22%	8	22.22%
Mild	20	55.56%	18	50.00%
Serious	8	22.22%	10	27.78%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	21	58.33%	21	56.76%
Mild	10	27.78%	9	24.32%
Serious	5	13.89%	7	18.92%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	19	51.35%	18	48.65%
Mild	17	45.95%	15	40.54%
Serious	1	2.70%	4	10.81%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	16	44.44%	13	37.14%
Mild	13	36.11%	15	42.86%
Serious	7	19.44%	7	20.00%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	17	45.95%	15	40.54%
Mild	14	37.84%	15	40.54%
Serious	6	16.22%	7	18.92%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	13	37.14%	13	36.11%
Mild	17	48.57%	19	52.78%
Serious	5	14.29%	4	11.11%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 38

Report Cut: Maryland

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	13	35.14%	13	35.14%
Mild	19	51.35%	19	51.35%
Serious	5	13.51%	5	13.51%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	4	10.81%	4	10.81%
Mild	23	62.16%	24	64.86%
Serious	10	27.03%	9	24.32%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	20	54.05%	19	51.35%
Mild	9	24.32%	10	27.03%
Serious	8	21.62%	8	21.62%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	15	40.54%	14	38.89%
Mild	16	43.24%	16	44.44%
Serious	6	16.22%	6	16.67%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	6	16.22%	5	13.89%
Mild	20	54.05%	21	58.33%
Serious	11	29.73%	11	30.56%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	7	18.92%	6	16.67%
Mild	20	54.05%	16	44.44%
Serious	10	27.03%	13	36.11%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	6	16.22%	3	8.33%
Mild	19	51.35%	18	50.00%
Serious	11	29.73%	15	41.67%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	1	2.70%	1	2.78%
Mild	16	43.24%	16	44.44%
Serious	20	54.05%	20	55.56%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	15	40.54%	14	38.89%
Mild	16	43.24%	16	44.44%
Serious	6	16.22%	6	16.67%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	14	37.84%	10	27.78%
Mild	16	43.24%	15	41.67%
Serious	7	18.92%	12	33.33%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	13	35.14%	14	38.89%
Mild	12	32.43%	12	33.33%
Serious	12	32.43%	11	30.56%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 38

Report Cut: Maryland

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	14	37.84%	8	22.22%
Mild	18	48.65%	24	66.67%
Serious	5	13.51%	5	13.89%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	14	37.84%	14	38.89%
Mild	20	54.05%	17	47.22%
Serious	2	5.41%	5	13.89%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	19	51.35%	19	52.78%
Mild	6	16.22%	4	11.11%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	5.56%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	4	1	3	17
Product obsolescence	0	1	2	4
Changing customer preferences	2	2	1	11
Customer's ability to afford	2	1	1	9
Talent acquisition	6	3	4	28
Talent retention	5	10	2	37
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	1	2	7
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	1	2	3	10
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	3	0	0	9
Cost of materials	2	2	0	10
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	1	0	0	3
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	0	2	5
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	3	0	0	9
Employee safety	2	0	0	6
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	3	1	7
Inflation	0	0	2	2
Employee engagement	1	3	4	13
Developing future leaders	1	3	4	13
Cybersecurity	0	2	2	6
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	2	2
A.I. technology and platforms	1	2	1	8
Political uncertainty	0	0	0	0
Talent skills gap	1	1	0	5
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 38

Report Cut: Maryland

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%
Slightly less than planned	12	31.58%
As planned	13	34.21%
Slightly more than planned	10	26.32%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	2	5.26%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	20	52.63%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	13	34.21%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	3	7.89%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	25	65.80%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	2	5.26%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	9	23.68%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	5.26%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	12	34.29%	9	26.47%
No	23	65.71%	25	73.53%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	26	74.29%	26	72.22%
No	9	25.71%	10	27.78%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	33	91.67%	27	75.00%
No	3	8.33%	9	25.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	3	30.00%	3	30.00%
No	7	70.00%	7	70.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	17	73.91%	16	69.57%
No	6	26.09%	7	30.43%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 38

Report Cut: Maryland

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	1	2.78%
Some due to this	28	77.78%
None due to this	7	19.44%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	5	13.89%
None due to this	31	86.11%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	36	97.30%
None due to this	1	2.70%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	2.78%
Some due to this	30	83.33%
None due to this	5	13.89%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	25	67.57%
None due to this	12	32.43%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	2.86%
Some due to this	3	8.57%
None due to this	31	88.57%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 38

Report Cut: Maryland

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	1	2.70%	0	0.00%	1	2.70%
Somewhat dissatisfied	7	24.21%	2	5.41%	10	27.03%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	16.91%	4	10.81%	4	10.81%
Somewhat satisfied	18	43.32%	22	59.46%	15	40.54%
Very satisfied	10	10.85%	9	24.32%	7	18.92%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	13	34.21%	7	18.42%	6	15.79%
Middle managers	11	28.95%	5	13.16%	11	28.95%
Professional staff (non-managers)	14	36.84%	4	10.53%	10	26.32%
Skilled production workers	10	26.32%	1	2.63%	5	13.16%
Unskilled production workers	6	15.79%	1	2.63%	7	18.42%
Entry-level office workers	7	18.42%	1	2.63%	8	21.05%
Entry-level non-office workers	2	5.26%	0	0.00%	4	10.53%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	4	10.53%	1	2.63%	3	7.89%
Service workers	8	21.05%	2	5.26%	6	15.79%
Other	1	2.63%	0	0.00%	1	2.63%
None	2	5.26%	5	13.16%	2	5.26%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 38

Report Cut: Maryland

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	19	50.00%	13	34.21%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	6	15.79%	17	44.74%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	12	31.58%	26	68.42%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	16	42.11%	22	57.89%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	23	60.53%	3	7.89%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	23	60.53%	2	5.26%
Increasing starting salaries	24	63.16%	4	10.53%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	10	26.32%	11	28.95%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	11	28.95%	10	26.32%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	9	23.68%	3	7.89%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	4	10.53%	6	15.79%
Shortening the hiring process	10	26.32%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	13	34.21%	6	15.79%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	24	63.16%	9	23.68%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	6	15.79%	7	18.42%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	19	50.00%	3	7.89%
Participating in job fairs	17	44.74%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	17	44.74%	7	18.42%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	2	5.26%	2	5.26%
Using formal candidate tracking system	18	47.37%	1	2.63%
Other	2	5.26%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	16	42.11%
Team incentives	4	10.53%
Employee referral bonuses	25	65.79%
Year-end bonuses	14	36.84%
Spot bonuses	9	23.68%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	19	50.00%
Retention bonuses	1	2.63%
Commissions	13	34.21%
Project bonuses	4	10.53%
Profit sharing	5	13.16%
Hazard bonuses/pay	1	2.63%
Additional PTO	9	23.68%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 38

Report Cut: Maryland

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	7	18.42%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	1	2.63%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	20	52.63%
Resources to do their job effectively	9	23.68%
Mentoring opportunities	2	5.26%
Competitive/robust health benefits	16	42.11%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	2.63%
Driven by the mission of the organization	4	10.53%
Recognition and reward for good performance	12	31.58%
Ongoing training on new technologies	2	5.26%
Competitive pay	30	78.95%
Good work/life balance	28	73.68%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	6	15.79%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	11	28.95%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	10	26.32%
Hybrid work opportunities	9	23.68%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	1	2.63%
Strong organizational culture	11	28.95%
Challenging work	3	7.89%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	9	23.68%
Focus on employee safety	1	2.63%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	1	2.70%
No change	20	54.05%
More difficult	16	43.24%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 38

Report Cut: Maryland

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	2	12.50%
Lack of qualified candidates	13	81.25%
Lack of technical skills	5	31.25%
Lack of soft skills	3	18.75%
Lack of work experience	3	18.75%
Our organization's geographic location	1	6.25%
Market competition/high demand	5	31.25%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	8	50.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	1	6.25%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	4	25.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	0	0.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	1	6.25%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	7	18.92%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	15	40.54%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	10	27.03%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	3	8.11%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	2	5.41%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	4	10.81%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	18	48.65%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	7	18.92%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	5.41%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	6	16.22%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	5	13.16%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	19	50.00%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	4	10.53%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	6	15.79%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	10.53%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	5	13.16%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 38

Report Cut: Maryland

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	24	63.16%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	12	31.58%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	17	44.74%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	6	15.79%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	4	10.53%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	18	47.37%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	8	21.05%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	5	13.16%
Creating/redefining policies	5	13.16%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	5	13.16%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	7	18.42%
N/A	3	7.89%
Other *	1	2.63%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	3	8.11%
No	29	78.38%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	5	13.51%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	16	43.24%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	6	16.22%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	13	35.14%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	2	5.41%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 38

Report Cut: Maryland

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	37	97.37%
Paid lump sum awards	1	2.63%
Paid variable/bonus awards	12	31.58%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	2	5.26%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	1	2.63%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	34	89.47%
Paying lump sum awards	2	5.26%
Paying variable/bonus awards	14	36.84%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	1	2.63%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	1	2.63%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	25	65.79%	21	55.26%
Increased standard wages	16	42.11%	12	31.58%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	24	63.16%	19	50.00%
Implemented or increased variable pay	5	13.16%	4	10.53%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	2.63%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	1	2.63%	2	5.26%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 38

Report Cut: Maryland

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	7	18.42%	8	21.05%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	6	15.79%	2	5.26%
Invest in new technology	17	44.74%	24	63.16%
Invest in equipment	9	23.68%	10	26.32%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	4	10.53%	7	18.42%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	6	15.79%	5	13.16%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	4	10.53%	3	7.89%
Increase training budget	12	31.58%	15	39.47%
Increase total rewards communication/education	9	23.68%	13	34.21%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	16	42.11%	14	36.84%
Increase recruiting emphasis	10	26.32%	13	34.21%
Pay above market rates	4	10.53%	5	13.16%
Enhance the benefits package	9	23.68%	11	28.95%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	7	18.42%	11	28.95%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	7	18.42%	11	28.95%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	4	10.53%	3	7.89%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	1	2.63%	1	2.63%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	1	2.63%	1	2.63%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	4	10.53%	4	10.53%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	5	13.16%	7	18.42%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	2	5.26%	3	7.89%
Hold off on investing in new technology	2	5.26%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	2.63%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	1	2.63%	1	2.63%
Reduce training budget	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Limiting employee travel	9	23.68%	4	10.53%
Hiring freezes	2	5.26%	3	7.89%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	6	15.79%	0	0.00%
Reduce benefits package	1	2.63%	1	2.63%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	2	5.26%	2	5.26%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	1	2.63%
Outsourcing roles or functions	5	13.16%	6	15.79%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 38

Report Cut: Maryland

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	6	15.79%	3	7.89%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	18	47.37%	6	15.79%
Increasing presence on social media	25	65.79%	8	21.05%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	5	13.16%	3	7.89%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	11	28.95%	5	13.16%
Partnering with brand influencers	3	7.89%	1	2.63%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	9	23.68%	5	13.16%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	14	36.84%	7	18.42%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	14	36.84%	3	7.89%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 38

Report Cut: Maryland

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	16	42.11%	6	15.79%	1	2.63%
Website content production	14	36.84%	5	13.16%	4	10.53%
Marketing content production	12	31.58%	7	18.42%	4	10.53%
Other content production	11	28.95%	6	15.79%	5	13.16%
Digital personal assistant	17	44.74%	4	10.53%	1	2.63%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	13	34.21%	9	23.68%	3	7.89%
Customer relationship management	16	42.11%	5	13.16%	3	7.89%
Inventory management	17	44.74%	3	7.89%	2	5.26%
Product recommendations	18	47.37%	2	5.26%	0	0.00%
Accounting	16	42.11%	4	10.53%	2	5.26%
Supply chain operations	19	50.00%	2	5.26%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	17	44.74%	7	18.42%	2	5.26%
Application and screening management	17	44.74%	6	15.79%	2	5.26%
Audience segmentation	17	44.74%	1	2.63%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	14	36.84%	5	13.16%	3	7.89%
Idea generation	14	36.84%	6	15.79%	1	2.63%
Process automation	14	36.84%	6	15.79%	3	7.89%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	16	42.11%	3	7.89%	2	5.26%

# **Massachusetts**



# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 70

Report Cut: Massachusetts

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	3	4.29%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	1.43%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1	1.43%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	1	1.43%
Construction	2	2.86%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	10	14.29%
Education Services	5	7.14%
Financial & Insurance	5	7.14%
Health Care & Social Assistance	8	11.43%
Information	3	4.29%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	9	12.86%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	9	12.86%
Public Administration	2	2.86%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	2	2.86%
Services (Except Public Administration)	3	4.29%
Transportation & Warehousing	1	1.43%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	5	7.14%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	28	40.00%
100 to 249	22	31.43%
250 to 499	11	15.71%
500 to 999	4	5.71%
1,000 or more	5	7.14%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	46	65.71%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	4	5.71%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	20	28.57%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 70

Report Cut: Massachusetts

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	22	31.4%
Stay the same	40	57.1%
Decline	8	11.4%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	5	7.1%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	31	44.3%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	14	20.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	9	12.9%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	6	8.6%
Do not know	5	7.1%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	7	10.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	37	52.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	11	15.7%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	5	7.1%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	2.9%
Do not know	8	11.4%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	55	84.62%	50	76.92%
Mild	10	15.38%	12	18.46%
Serious	0	0.00%	3	4.62%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	13	18.84%	9	13.43%
Mild	40	57.97%	36	53.73%
Serious	16	23.19%	22	32.84%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	52	76.47%	44	64.71%
Mild	13	19.12%	22	32.35%
Serious	3	4.41%	2	2.94%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	20	29.41%	17	25.00%
Mild	40	58.82%	39	57.35%
Serious	8	11.76%	12	17.65%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 70

Report Cut: Massachusetts

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	23	33.82%	20	29.41%
Mild	31	45.59%	31	45.59%
Serious	14	20.59%	17	25.00%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	3	4.41%	3	4.48%
Mild	36	52.94%	32	47.76%
Serious	29	42.65%	32	47.76%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	6	8.82%	5	7.35%
Mild	37	54.41%	33	48.53%
Serious	25	36.76%	30	44.12%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	16	23.53%	12	17.65%
Mild	37	54.41%	34	50.00%
Serious	15	22.06%	22	32.35%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	8	11.94%	8	12.12%
Mild	41	61.19%	34	51.52%
Serious	18	26.87%	24	36.36%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	30	44.78%	27	39.71%
Mild	31	46.27%	30	44.12%
Serious	6	8.96%	11	16.18%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	32	47.06%	28	41.18%
Mild	28	41.18%	32	47.06%
Serious	8	11.76%	8	11.76%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	20	30.30%	16	25.00%
Mild	36	54.55%	33	51.56%
Serious	10	15.15%	15	23.44%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	23	34.33%	21	31.82%
Mild	33	49.25%	30	45.45%
Serious	11	16.42%	15	22.73%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	17	27.42%	16	25.00%
Mild	34	54.84%	33	51.56%
Serious	11	17.74%	15	23.44%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 70

Report Cut: Massachusetts

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	16	23.88%	15	22.39%
Mild	37	55.22%	33	49.25%
Serious	14	20.90%	19	28.36%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	12	17.65%	11	16.18%
Mild	37	54.41%	33	48.53%
Serious	19	27.94%	24	35.29%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	32	47.76%	30	45.45%
Mild	23	34.33%	23	33.82%
Serious	12	17.91%	13	19.12%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	33	48.53%	31	46.27%
Mild	25	36.76%	26	38.81%
Serious	10	14.71%	10	14.93%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	10	14.71%	9	13.43%
Mild	37	54.41%	33	49.25%
Serious	21	30.88%	26	38.81%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	12	17.65%	9	13.43%
Mild	35	51.47%	35	52.24%
Serious	22	32.35%	23	34.33%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	11	16.18%	9	13.43%
Mild	29	42.65%	23	34.33%
Serious	28	41.18%	36	53.73%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	4	5.88%	2	2.99%
Mild	27	39.71%	23	34.33%
Serious	37	54.41%	43	64.18%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	24	35.29%	22	32.84%
Mild	33	48.53%	32	47.76%
Serious	11	16.18%	14	20.90%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	25	36.76%	19	28.36%
Mild	33	48.53%	32	47.76%
Serious	11	16.18%	17	25.37%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	22	32.35%	21	31.34%
Mild	19	27.94%	24	35.82%
Serious	27	39.71%	23	34.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 70

Report Cut: Massachusetts

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	15	22.06%	12	17.91%
Mild	40	58.82%	37	55.22%
Serious	14	20.59%	20	29.85%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	18	26.47%	17	25.37%
Mild	42	61.76%	40	59.70%
Serious	6	8.82%	9	13.43%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	28	41.18%	28	41.79%
Mild	12	17.65%	9	13.43%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	2.99%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	6	1	4	24
Product obsolescence	1	1	1	6
Changing customer preferences	1	3	0	9
Customer's ability to afford	5	3	2	23
Talent acquisition	13	6	8	59
Talent retention	6	17	2	54
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	3	5	14
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	7	4	7	36
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	1	1
Ability to maintain quality product/service	6	1	1	21
Cost of materials	3	4	3	20
Cost of equipment	0	3	1	7
Taxes	2	1	0	8
Cost of regulatory compliance	2	2	2	12
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	3	0	1	10
Employee safety	2	0	1	7
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	3	1	10
Inflation	5	2	8	27
Employee engagement	2	4	3	17
Developing future leaders	0	2	5	9
Cybersecurity	1	5	3	16
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	2	2
A.I. technology and platforms	1	0	1	4
Political uncertainty	1	3	4	13
Talent skills gap	0	1	2	4
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 70

Report Cut: Massachusetts

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	4	5.71%
Slightly less than planned	21	30.00%
As planned	26	37.14%
Slightly more than planned	17	24.29%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	1	1.43%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	38	54.29%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	25	35.71%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	6	8.57%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	44	62.85%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	2	2.86%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	23	32.86%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	1.43%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	20	28.99%	14	21.21%
No	49	71.01%	52	78.79%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	54	78.26%	47	70.15%
No	15	21.74%	20	29.85%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	51	75.00%	49	72.06%
No	17	25.00%	19	27.94%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	6	25.00%	5	20.83%
No	18	75.00%	19	79.17%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	31	62.00%	31	62.00%
No	19	38.00%	19	38.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 70

Report Cut: Massachusetts

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	2	2.94%
Some due to this	47	69.12%
None due to this	19	27.94%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	1	1.47%
Some due to this	8	11.76%
None due to this	59	86.76%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	2.94%
Some due to this	61	89.71%
None due to this	5	7.35%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	5	7.35%
Some due to this	52	76.47%
None due to this	11	16.18%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	1.47%
Some due to this	40	58.82%
None due to this	27	39.71%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	1.49%
Some due to this	9	13.43%
None due to this	57	85.07%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 70

Report Cut: Massachusetts

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	3	4.48%	0	0.00%	2	2.99%
Somewhat dissatisfied	17	24.21%	9	13.43%	17	25.37%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6	16.91%	11	16.42%	10	14.93%
Somewhat satisfied	29	43.32%	35	52.24%	30	44.78%
Very satisfied	12	10.85%	12	17.91%	8	11.94%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	18	25.71%	6	8.57%	6	8.57%
Middle managers	15	21.43%	8	11.43%	16	22.86%
Professional staff (non-managers)	31	44.29%	9	12.86%	29	41.43%
Skilled production workers	25	35.71%	6	8.57%	12	17.14%
Unskilled production workers	12	17.14%	5	7.14%	9	12.86%
Entry-level office workers	17	24.29%	2	2.86%	16	22.86%
Entry-level non-office workers	12	17.14%	2	2.86%	9	12.86%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	13	18.57%	3	4.29%	7	10.00%
Service workers	17	24.29%	4	5.71%	12	17.14%
Other	3	4.29%	0	0.00%	1	1.43%
None	1	1.43%	6	8.57%	5	7.14%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 70

Report Cut: Massachusetts

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	38	54.29%	34	48.57%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	16	22.86%	39	55.71%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	16	22.86%	45	64.29%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	36	51.43%	45	64.29%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	34	48.57%	7	10.00%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	35	50.00%	6	8.57%
Increasing starting salaries	52	74.29%	15	21.43%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	22	31.43%	25	35.71%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	12	17.14%	12	17.14%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	13	18.57%	7	10.00%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	14	20.00%	16	22.86%
Shortening the hiring process	23	32.86%	3	4.29%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	23	32.86%	9	12.86%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	26	37.14%	17	24.29%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	17	24.29%	15	21.43%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	27	38.57%	5	7.14%
Participating in job fairs	23	32.86%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	29	41.43%	20	28.57%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	10	14.29%	6	8.57%
Using formal candidate tracking system	22	31.43%	4	5.71%
Other	2	2.86%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	27	38.57%
Team incentives	14	20.00%
Employee referral bonuses	39	55.71%
Year-end bonuses	34	48.57%
Spot bonuses	17	24.29%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	31	44.29%
Retention bonuses	11	15.71%
Commissions	14	20.00%
Project bonuses	8	11.43%
Profit sharing	11	15.71%
Hazard bonuses/pay	1	1.43%
Additional PTO	21	30.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 70

Report Cut: Massachusetts

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	15	21.43%
Language premiums	7	10.00%
Other*	4	5.71%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	43	61.43%
Resources to do their job effectively	16	22.86%
Mentoring opportunities	5	7.14%
Competitive/robust health benefits	21	30.00%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	1.43%
Driven by the mission of the organization	8	11.43%
Recognition and reward for good performance	15	21.43%
Ongoing training on new technologies	2	2.86%
Competitive pay	58	82.86%
Good work/life balance	57	81.43%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	8	11.43%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	19	27.14%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	13	18.57%
Hybrid work opportunities	17	24.29%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	2	2.86%
Regular full-time hours	6	8.57%
Strong organizational culture	22	31.43%
Challenging work	4	5.71%
Diverse workforce	3	4.29%
Vacation/paid time off	18	25.71%
Focus on employee safety	1	1.43%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	4	5.80%
No change	29	42.03%
More difficult	36	52.17%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 70

Report Cut: Massachusetts

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	3	8.33%
Lack of qualified candidates	31	86.11%
Lack of technical skills	9	25.00%
Lack of soft skills	9	25.00%
Lack of work experience	12	33.33%
Our organization's geographic location	4	11.11%
Market competition/high demand	14	38.89%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	18	50.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	1	2.78%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	8	22.22%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	2	5.56%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	9	25.00%
Other *	1	2.78%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	18	26.47%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	22	32.35%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	9	13.24%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	1.47%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	18	26.47%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	14	20.59%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	20	29.41%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	16	23.53%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	4.41%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	15	22.06%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	2	2.86%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	20	28.57%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	6	8.57%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	23	32.86%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	7.14%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	17	24.29%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 70

Report Cut: Massachusetts

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	37	52.86%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	21	30.00%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	40	57.14%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	11	15.71%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	7	10.00%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	30	42.86%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	8	11.43%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	10	14.29%
Creating/redefining policies	16	22.86%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	9	12.86%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	20	28.57%
N/A	5	7.14%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	3	4.35%
No	44	63.77%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	22	31.88%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	30	43.48%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	5	7.25%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	32	46.38%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	2	2.90%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 70

Report Cut: Massachusetts

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	62	88.57%
Paid lump sum awards	5	7.14%
Paid variable/bonus awards	26	37.14%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	1	1.43%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	1.43%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	1	1.43%
Uncertain	4	5.71%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	56	80.00%
Paying lump sum awards	4	5.71%
Paying variable/bonus awards	25	35.71%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	2	2.86%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	1.43%
Uncertain	12	17.14%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	43	61.43%	40	57.14%
Increased standard wages	32	45.71%	31	44.29%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	37	52.86%	38	54.29%
Implemented or increased variable pay	6	8.57%	8	11.43%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	2	2.86%	1	1.43%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	3	4.29%	5	7.14%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 70

Report Cut: Massachusetts

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	10	14.29%	12	17.14%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	10	14.29%	12	17.14%
Invest in new technology	34	48.57%	41	58.57%
Invest in equipment	24	34.29%	26	37.14%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	2	2.86%	4	5.71%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	5	7.14%	6	8.57%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	9	12.86%	6	8.57%
Increase training budget	13	18.57%	14	20.00%
Increase total rewards communication/education	8	11.43%	11	15.71%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	16	22.86%	21	30.00%
Increase recruiting emphasis	19	27.14%	20	28.57%
Pay above market rates	7	10.00%	9	12.86%
Enhance the benefits package	13	18.57%	16	22.86%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	14	20.00%	21	30.00%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	16	22.86%	17	24.29%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	8	11.43%	7	10.00%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	2	2.86%	2	2.86%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	2	2.86%	4	5.71%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	11	15.71%	10	14.29%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	6	8.57%	12	17.14%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	1.43%	3	4.29%
Hold off on investing in new technology	5	7.14%	1	1.43%
Hold off on investing in equipment	5	7.14%	1	1.43%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	1.43%	2	2.86%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	3	4.29%	3	4.29%
Reduce training budget	3	4.29%	4	5.71%
Limiting employee travel	12	17.14%	6	8.57%
Hiring freezes	5	7.14%	2	2.86%
Implementing furloughs	1	1.43%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	8	11.43%	2	2.86%
Reduce benefits package	1	1.43%	1	1.43%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	2	2.86%	3	4.29%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	1	1.43%
Outsourcing roles or functions	2	2.86%	3	4.29%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 70

Report Cut: Massachusetts

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	6	8.57%	4	5.71%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	27	38.57%	7	10.00%
Increasing presence on social media	41	58.57%	13	18.57%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	9	12.86%	3	4.29%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	22	31.43%	8	11.43%
Partnering with brand influencers	5	7.14%	3	4.29%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	19	27.14%	13	18.57%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	27	38.57%	12	17.14%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	17	24.29%	7	10.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 70

Report Cut: Massachusetts

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	37	52.86%	9	12.86%	2	2.86%
Website content production	27	38.57%	13	18.57%	6	8.57%
Marketing content production	23	32.86%	18	25.71%	5	7.14%
Other content production	26	37.14%	14	20.00%	5	7.14%
Digital personal assistant	34	48.57%	6	8.57%	2	2.86%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	32	45.71%	9	12.86%	3	4.29%
Customer relationship management	34	48.57%	8	11.43%	3	4.29%
Inventory management	35	50.00%	2	2.86%	3	4.29%
Product recommendations	36	51.43%	2	2.86%	1	1.43%
Accounting	35	50.00%	4	5.71%	3	4.29%
Supply chain operations	39	55.71%	2	2.86%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	31	44.29%	9	12.86%	7	10.00%
Application and screening management	32	45.71%	9	12.86%	4	5.71%
Audience segmentation	35	50.00%	3	4.29%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	29	41.43%	11	15.71%	4	5.71%
Idea generation	26	37.14%	14	20.00%	6	8.57%
Process automation	27	38.57%	14	20.00%	4	5.71%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	31	44.29%	7	10.00%	4	5.71%



# **Michigan**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 202

Report Cut: Michigan

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	1	0.50%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	0.50%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2	0.99%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	4	1.98%
Construction	3	1.49%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	77	38.12%
Education Services	3	1.49%
Financial & Insurance	10	4.95%
Health Care & Social Assistance	11	5.45%
Information	3	1.49%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	22	10.89%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	22	10.89%
Public Administration	2	0.99%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	7	3.47%
Services (Except Public Administration)	15	7.43%
Transportation & Warehousing	7	3.47%
Utilities	2	0.99%
Wholesale Trade	10	4.95%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	86	42.57%
100 to 249	66	32.67%
250 to 499	24	11.88%
500 to 999	13	6.44%
1,000 or more	13	6.44%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	155	76.73%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	11	5.45%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	34	16.83%
Public Sector/Government	2	0.99%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 202

Report Cut: Michigan

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	57	28.2%
Stay the same	99	49.0%
Decline	46	22.8%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	21	10.4%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	79	39.1%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	36	17.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	39	19.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	14	6.9%
Do not know	13	6.4%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	30	14.9%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	93	46.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	31	15.3%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	16	7.9%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	9	4.5%
Do not know	23	11.4%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	133	69.63%	109	57.07%
Mild	48	25.13%	58	30.37%
Serious	10	5.24%	24	12.57%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	34	17.26%	24	12.37%
Mild	118	59.90%	122	62.89%
Serious	45	22.84%	48	24.74%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	131	69.68%	108	58.06%
Mild	47	25.00%	62	33.33%
Serious	10	5.32%	16	8.60%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	70	36.65%	53	28.04%
Mild	91	47.64%	104	55.03%
Serious	30	15.71%	32	16.93%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 202

Report Cut: Michigan

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	45	23.32%	41	21.47%
Mild	98	50.78%	98	51.31%
Serious	50	25.91%	52	27.23%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	28	14.29%	25	12.82%
Mild	87	44.39%	81	41.54%
Serious	81	41.33%	89	45.64%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	30	15.31%	22	11.34%
Mild	95	48.47%	93	47.94%
Serious	71	36.22%	79	40.72%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	56	28.87%	43	22.51%
Mild	86	44.33%	82	42.93%
Serious	52	26.80%	66	34.55%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	34	17.62%	31	16.15%
Mild	107	55.44%	96	50.00%
Serious	52	26.94%	65	33.85%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	107	55.44%	100	52.36%
Mild	63	32.64%	67	35.08%
Serious	23	11.92%	24	12.57%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	107	55.73%	95	49.48%
Mild	70	36.46%	82	42.71%
Serious	15	7.81%	15	7.81%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	48	25.26%	43	23.24%
Mild	85	44.74%	82	44.32%
Serious	57	30.00%	60	32.43%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	50	26.46%	43	22.87%
Mild	93	49.21%	89	47.34%
Serious	46	24.34%	56	29.79%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	64	33.86%	61	32.28%
Mild	89	47.09%	82	43.39%
Serious	36	19.05%	46	24.34%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 202

Report Cut: Michigan

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	63	32.81%	57	29.84%
Mild	90	46.88%	91	47.64%
Serious	39	20.31%	43	22.51%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	59	30.57%	50	26.32%
Mild	95	49.22%	99	52.11%
Serious	39	20.21%	41	21.58%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	92	47.67%	90	46.88%
Mild	59	30.57%	62	32.63%
Serious	42	21.76%	40	21.05%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	114	59.38%	113	59.47%
Mild	61	31.77%	58	30.53%
Serious	17	8.85%	19	10.00%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	25	13.02%	19	10.00%
Mild	89	46.35%	105	55.26%
Serious	80	41.67%	69	36.32%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	36	18.75%	28	14.74%
Mild	106	55.21%	111	58.42%
Serious	53	27.60%	50	26.32%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	26	13.54%	17	8.95%
Mild	98	51.04%	97	51.05%
Serious	65	33.85%	76	40.00%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	16	8.33%	14	7.37%
Mild	79	41.15%	73	38.42%
Serious	100	52.08%	104	54.74%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	85	44.27%	77	40.53%
Mild	84	43.75%	88	46.32%
Serious	21	10.94%	24	12.63%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	73	38.02%	54	28.42%
Mild	95	49.48%	90	47.37%
Serious	23	11.98%	46	24.21%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	35	18.23%	37	19.47%
Mild	78	40.63%	87	45.79%
Serious	76	39.58%	66	34.74%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 202

Report Cut: Michigan

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	41	21.35%	34	17.89%
Mild	114	59.38%	109	57.37%
Serious	38	19.79%	49	25.79%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	57	29.69%	53	27.89%
Mild	107	55.73%	104	54.74%
Serious	18	9.38%	24	12.63%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	103	53.65%	104	54.74%
Mild	30	15.63%	27	14.21%
Serious	8	4.17%	8	4.21%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	6	0	2	20
Competition in general	26	10	17	115
Product obsolescence	3	3	6	21
Changing customer preferences	8	19	13	75
Customer's ability to afford	21	17	8	105
Talent acquisition	18	26	13	119
Talent retention	20	18	11	107
Ability to pay for benefits costs	6	7	13	45
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	12	20	16	92
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	2	2	1	11
Ability to maintain quality product/service	6	2	5	27
Cost of materials	18	18	9	99
Cost of equipment	0	6	4	16
Taxes	1	3	3	12
Cost of regulatory compliance	6	2	4	26
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	3	5	4	23
Employee safety	3	0	4	13
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	2	1	8
Inflation	8	5	11	45
Employee engagement	3	9	10	37
Developing future leaders	6	3	11	35
Cybersecurity	5	5	4	29
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	2	2
A.I. technology and platforms	4	3	5	23
Political uncertainty	5	4	8	31
Talent skills gap	2	4	7	21
Unknown challenges	1	3	4	13
Other	4	2	2	18

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 202

Report Cut: Michigan

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	15	7.43%
Slightly less than planned	51	25.25%
As planned	87	43.07%
Slightly more than planned	40	19.80%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	8	3.96%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	97	48.02%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	81	40.10%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	23	11.39%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	103	50.99%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	11	5.45%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	80	39.60%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	8	3.96%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	56	29.17%	28	14.89%
No	136	70.83%	160	85.11%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	145	72.14%	111	56.63%
No	56	27.86%	85	43.37%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	150	75.00%	132	66.67%
No	50	25.00%	66	33.33%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	28	32.56%	26	30.23%
No	58	67.44%	60	69.77%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	120	74.07%	119	73.91%
No	42	25.93%	42	26.09%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 202

Report Cut: Michigan

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	5	2.53%
Some due to this	139	70.20%
None due to this	54	27.27%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	2	1.03%
Some due to this	32	16.41%
None due to this	161	82.56%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	8	4.02%
Some due to this	168	84.42%
None due to this	23	11.56%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	6	3.03%
Some due to this	151	76.26%
None due to this	41	20.71%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	3	1.51%
Some due to this	131	65.83%
None due to this	65	32.66%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	2	1.02%
Some due to this	30	15.23%
None due to this	165	83.76%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 202

Report Cut: Michigan

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	7	3.50%	1	0.50%	4	2.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	42	24.21%	27	13.57%	43	21.50%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	30	16.91%	40	20.10%	36	18.00%
Somewhat satisfied	88	43.32%	86	43.22%	79	39.50%
Very satisfied	33	10.85%	45	22.61%	38	19.00%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	62	30.69%	21	10.40%	19	9.41%
Middle managers	66	32.67%	27	13.37%	36	17.82%
Professional staff (non-managers)	93	46.04%	30	14.85%	65	32.18%
Skilled production workers	84	41.58%	17	8.42%	60	29.70%
Unskilled production workers	38	18.81%	27	13.37%	62	30.69%
Entry-level office workers	38	18.81%	19	9.41%	39	19.31%
Entry-level non-office workers	30	14.85%	14	6.93%	33	16.34%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	37	18.32%	6	2.97%	19	9.41%
Service workers	28	13.86%	11	5.45%	22	10.89%
Other	15	7.43%	5	2.48%	7	3.47%
None	10	4.95%	18	8.91%	15	7.43%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 202

Report Cut: Michigan

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	92	45.54%	85	42.08%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	39	19.31%	97	48.02%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	50	24.75%	122	60.40%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	95	47.03%	135	66.83%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	80	39.60%	19	9.41%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	93	46.04%	22	10.89%
Increasing starting salaries	135	66.83%	42	20.79%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	56	27.72%	55	27.23%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	36	17.82%	35	17.33%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	27	13.37%	17	8.42%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	19	9.41%	42	20.79%
Shortening the hiring process	58	28.71%	6	2.97%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	61	30.20%	22	10.89%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	83	41.09%	53	26.24%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	27	13.37%	44	21.78%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	102	50.50%	16	7.92%
Participating in job fairs	77	38.12%	10	4.95%
Building/increasing brand awareness	78	38.61%	42	20.79%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	26	12.87%	17	8.42%
Using formal candidate tracking system	76	37.62%	15	7.43%
Other	5	2.48%	5	2.48%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	61	30.20%
Team incentives	31	15.35%
Employee referral bonuses	109	53.96%
Year-end bonuses	71	35.15%
Spot bonuses	35	17.33%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	63	31.19%
Retention bonuses	18	8.91%
Commissions	36	17.82%
Project bonuses	9	4.46%
Profit sharing	32	15.84%
Hazard bonuses/pay	3	1.49%
Additional PTO	60	29.70%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 202

Report Cut: Michigan

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	30	14.85%
Language premiums	2	0.99%
Other*	3	1.49%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	107	52.97%
Resources to do their job effectively	29	14.36%
Mentoring opportunities	6	2.97%
Competitive/robust health benefits	75	37.13%
Opportunities to connect with others	5	2.48%
Driven by the mission of the organization	26	12.87%
Recognition and reward for good performance	60	29.70%
Ongoing training on new technologies	12	5.94%
Competitive pay	169	83.66%
Good work/life balance	139	68.81%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	21	10.40%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	74	36.63%
Current technology	2	0.99%
Remote work opportunities	37	18.32%
Hybrid work opportunities	46	22.77%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	1	0.50%
Regular full-time hours	14	6.93%
Strong organizational culture	49	24.26%
Challenging work	12	5.94%
Diverse workforce	2	0.99%
Vacation/paid time off	71	35.15%
Focus on employee safety	5	2.48%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	11	5.50%
No change	101	50.50%
More difficult	88	44.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 202

Report Cut: Michigan

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	6	6.82%
Lack of qualified candidates	71	80.68%
Lack of technical skills	43	48.86%
Lack of soft skills	19	21.59%
Lack of work experience	33	37.50%
Our organization's geographic location	11	12.50%
Market competition/high demand	37	42.05%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	49	55.68%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	1	1.14%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	13	14.77%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	8	9.09%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	19	21.59%
Other *	3	3.41%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	67	33.50%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	55	27.50%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	20	10.00%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	9	4.50%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	49	24.50%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	35	17.50%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	75	37.50%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	32	16.00%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	8	4.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	49	24.50%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	16	7.92%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	62	30.69%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	23	11.39%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	6	2.97%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	36	17.82%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	15	7.43%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	48	23.76%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 202

Report Cut: Michigan

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	90	44.55%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	45	22.28%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	78	38.61%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	31	15.35%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	8	3.96%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	82	40.59%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	8	3.96%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	13	6.44%
Creating/redefining policies	27	13.37%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	9	4.46%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	39	19.31%
N/A	39	19.31%
Other *	5	2.48%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	43	21.39%
No	142	70.65%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	16	7.96%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	80	39.60%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	15	7.43%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	89	44.06%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	18	8.91%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 202

Report Cut: Michigan

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	183	90.59%
Paid lump sum awards	20	9.90%
Paid variable/bonus awards	67	33.17%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	6	2.97%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	6	2.97%
Reduced wages/salaries	1	0.50%
Reduced hours worked	4	1.98%
Uncertain	5	2.48%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	162	80.20%
Paying lump sum awards	20	9.90%
Paying variable/bonus awards	71	35.15%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	5	2.48%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	5	2.48%
Reducing wages/salaries	1	0.50%
Reducing hours worked	4	1.98%
Uncertain	26	12.87%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	122	60.40%	83	41.09%
Increased standard wages	89	44.06%	68	33.66%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	94	46.53%	97	48.02%
Implemented or increased variable pay	16	7.92%	18	8.91%
Temporarily bumped pay	3	1.49%	1	0.50%
Other	2	0.99%	4	1.98%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	29	14.36%	31	15.35%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 202

Report Cut: Michigan

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	38	18.81%	30	14.85%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	24	11.88%	40	19.80%
Invest in new technology	78	38.61%	93	46.04%
Invest in equipment	85	42.08%	91	45.05%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	11	5.45%	13	6.44%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	17	8.42%	17	8.42%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	23	11.39%	35	17.33%
Increase training budget	40	19.80%	56	27.72%
Increase total rewards communication/education	20	9.90%	36	17.82%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	46	22.77%	44	21.78%
Increase recruiting emphasis	45	22.28%	50	24.75%
Pay above market rates	21	10.40%	22	10.89%
Enhance the benefits package	28	13.86%	42	20.79%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	36	17.82%	48	23.76%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	31	15.35%	42	20.79%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	21	10.40%	19	9.41%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	6	2.97%	6	2.97%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	7	3.47%	7	3.47%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	19	9.41%	32	15.84%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	19	9.41%	45	22.28%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	4	1.98%	7	3.47%
Hold off on investing in new technology	9	4.46%	8	3.96%
Hold off on investing in equipment	10	4.95%	10	4.95%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	2	0.99%	10	4.95%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	13	6.44%	14	6.93%
Reduce training budget	5	2.48%	6	2.97%
Limiting employee travel	28	13.86%	22	10.89%
Hiring freezes	19	9.41%	12	5.94%
Implementing furloughs	8	3.96%	5	2.48%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	25	12.38%	10	4.95%
Reduce benefits package	4	1.98%	7	3.47%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	7	3.47%	8	3.96%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	3	1.49%	7	3.47%
Freezing compensation increases	5	2.48%	7	3.47%
Outsourcing roles or functions	6	2.97%	9	4.46%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 202

Report Cut: Michigan

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	25	12.38%	11	5.45%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	78	38.61%	21	10.40%
Increasing presence on social media	115	56.93%	36	17.82%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	16	7.92%	9	4.46%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	48	23.76%	21	10.40%
Partnering with brand influencers	16	7.92%	6	2.97%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	36	17.82%	17	8.42%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	73	36.14%	28	13.86%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	56	27.72%	20	9.90%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 202

Report Cut: Michigan

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	92	45.54%	37	18.32%	4	1.98%
Website content production	73	36.14%	50	24.75%	10	4.95%
Marketing content production	68	33.66%	49	24.26%	14	6.93%
Other content production	73	36.14%	38	18.81%	12	5.94%
Digital personal assistant	92	45.54%	22	10.89%	6	2.97%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	73	36.14%	40	19.80%	11	5.45%
Customer relationship management	87	43.07%	28	13.86%	7	3.47%
Inventory management	82	40.59%	28	13.86%	6	2.97%
Product recommendations	92	45.54%	14	6.93%	3	1.49%
Accounting	88	43.56%	22	10.89%	6	2.97%
Supply chain operations	92	45.54%	15	7.43%	2	0.99%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	67	33.17%	54	26.73%	14	6.93%
Application and screening management	70	34.65%	47	23.27%	11	5.45%
Audience segmentation	95	47.03%	10	4.95%	1	0.50%
Process improvement	70	34.65%	42	20.79%	10	4.95%
Idea generation	63	31.19%	45	22.28%	17	8.42%
Process automation	72	35.64%	37	18.32%	9	4.46%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	83	41.09%	23	11.39%	11	5.45%

# **Minnesota**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 133

Report Cut: Minnesota

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	1	0.75%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	1.50%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	5	3.76%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	2	1.50%
Construction	3	2.26%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	39	29.32%
Education Services	2	1.50%
Financial & Insurance	4	3.01%
Health Care & Social Assistance	4	3.01%
Information	5	3.76%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	19	14.29%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	18	13.53%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	3	2.26%
Services (Except Public Administration)	8	6.02%
Transportation & Warehousing	3	2.26%
Utilities	2	1.50%
Wholesale Trade	13	9.77%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	42	31.58%
100 to 249	44	33.08%
250 to 499	21	15.79%
500 to 999	11	8.27%
1,000 or more	15	11.28%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	107	80.45%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	6	4.51%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	18	13.53%
Public Sector/Government	2	1.50%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 133

Report Cut: Minnesota

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	39	29.3%
Stay the same	76	57.1%
Decline	18	13.5%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	13	9.8%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	56	42.1%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	22	16.5%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	33	24.8%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	7	5.3%
Do not know	2	1.5%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	18	13.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	69	51.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	28	21.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	11	8.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	1.5%
Do not know	5	3.8%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	80	66.12%	74	61.16%
Mild	33	27.27%	33	27.27%
Serious	8	6.61%	14	11.57%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	11	8.73%	8	6.45%
Mild	75	59.52%	76	61.29%
Serious	40	31.75%	40	32.26%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	82	67.77%	71	58.68%
Mild	35	28.93%	45	37.19%
Serious	4	3.31%	5	4.13%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	45	36.29%	35	28.46%
Mild	67	54.03%	72	58.54%
Serious	12	9.68%	16	13.01%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 133

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4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	26	20.80%	24	19.35%
Mild	69	55.20%	69	55.65%
Serious	30	24.00%	31	25.00%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	18	14.06%	11	8.59%
Mild	63	49.22%	65	50.78%
Serious	47	36.72%	52	40.63%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	17	13.39%	14	11.11%
Mild	73	57.48%	70	55.56%
Serious	37	29.13%	42	33.33%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	36	28.35%	29	23.39%
Mild	65	51.18%	59	47.58%
Serious	26	20.47%	36	29.03%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	21	16.41%	21	16.54%
Mild	72	56.25%	70	55.12%
Serious	35	27.34%	36	28.35%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	62	49.60%	58	46.40%
Mild	52	41.60%	54	43.20%
Serious	11	8.80%	13	10.40%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	66	52.80%	59	47.20%
Mild	50	40.00%	55	44.00%
Serious	9	7.20%	11	8.80%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	36	29.03%	31	25.62%
Mild	60	48.39%	56	46.28%
Serious	28	22.58%	34	28.10%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	32	26.67%	30	24.59%
Mild	65	54.17%	59	48.36%
Serious	23	19.17%	33	27.05%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	35	29.66%	32	26.89%
Mild	62	52.54%	66	55.46%
Serious	21	17.80%	21	17.65%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 133

Report Cut: Minnesota

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	31	25.41%	29	23.97%
Mild	68	55.74%	67	55.37%
Serious	23	18.85%	25	20.66%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	27	21.77%	27	22.13%
Mild	69	55.65%	62	50.82%
Serious	28	22.58%	33	27.05%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	52	42.28%	54	43.90%
Mild	54	43.90%	52	42.62%
Serious	17	13.82%	17	13.93%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	70	56.91%	65	53.28%
Mild	43	34.96%	49	40.16%
Serious	10	8.13%	8	6.56%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	13	10.57%	16	13.11%
Mild	66	53.66%	68	55.74%
Serious	46	37.40%	41	33.61%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	26	21.14%	23	18.85%
Mild	67	54.47%	68	55.74%
Serious	31	25.20%	30	24.59%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	24	19.51%	19	15.57%
Mild	67	54.47%	69	56.56%
Serious	34	27.64%	36	29.51%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	7	5.69%	6	4.92%
Mild	60	48.78%	56	45.90%
Serious	59	47.97%	63	51.64%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	57	46.34%	53	43.44%
Mild	57	46.34%	61	50.00%
Serious	9	7.32%	10	8.20%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	49	39.84%	42	34.43%
Mild	58	47.15%	60	49.18%
Serious	15	12.20%	21	17.21%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	28	22.76%	32	26.23%
Mild	56	45.53%	56	45.90%
Serious	41	33.33%	37	30.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 133

Report Cut: Minnesota

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	30	24.39%	26	21.31%
Mild	81	65.85%	79	64.75%
Serious	14	11.38%	21	17.21%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	38	30.89%	35	28.69%
Mild	74	60.16%	72	59.02%
Serious	3	2.44%	9	7.38%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	54	43.90%	53	43.44%
Mild	22	17.89%	22	18.03%
Serious	2	1.63%	3	2.46%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	3	1	1	12
Competition in general	27	4	7	96
Product obsolescence	2	1	1	9
Changing customer preferences	3	8	1	26
Customer's ability to afford	13	8	9	64
Talent acquisition	15	16	13	90
Talent retention	11	12	9	66
Ability to pay for benefits costs	2	5	8	24
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	4	12	11	47
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	2	1	4	12
Ability to maintain quality product/service	2	4	3	17
Cost of materials	8	12	6	54
Cost of equipment	1	3	2	11
Taxes	0	1	2	4
Cost of regulatory compliance	4	5	1	23
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	2	5	6	22
Employee safety	2	0	0	6
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	4	2	10
Inflation	4	2	10	26
Employee engagement	2	7	7	27
Developing future leaders	5	5	7	32
Cybersecurity	6	5	5	33
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	1	2	4
A.I. technology and platforms	1	2	2	9
Political uncertainty	7	1	4	27
Talent skills gap	1	3	2	11
Unknown challenges	1	1	3	8
Other	1	0	1	4

## 2025 National Business Trends

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6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	6	4.51%
Slightly less than planned	38	28.57%
As planned	53	39.85%
Slightly more than planned	30	22.56%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	5	3.76%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	63	47.37%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	56	42.11%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	13	9.77%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	66	49.63%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	4	3.01%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	61	45.86%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	1.50%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	44	34.65%	25	20.33%
No	83	65.35%	98	79.67%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	111	85.38%	91	72.80%
No	19	14.62%	34	27.20%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	107	82.31%	90	72.00%
No	23	17.69%	35	28.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	14	37.84%	14	37.84%
No	23	62.16%	23	62.16%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	79	79.00%	67	71.28%
No	21	21.00%	27	28.72%



## 2025 National Business Trends

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10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	4	3.08%
Some due to this	90	69.23%
None due to this	36	27.69%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	24	18.32%
None due to this	107	81.68%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	8	6.11%
Some due to this	116	88.55%
None due to this	7	5.34%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	4	3.05%
Some due to this	102	77.86%
None due to this	25	19.08%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	2	1.53%
Some due to this	96	73.28%
None due to this	33	25.19%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	0.77%
Some due to this	22	16.92%
None due to this	107	82.31%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 133

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<b>11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?</b>	<b>Recruit</b>		<b>Onboard</b>		<b>Retain</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	4	3.03%	0	0.00%	3	2.27%
Somewhat dissatisfied	23	24.21%	21	15.91%	24	18.18%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	17	16.91%	26	19.70%	19	14.39%
Somewhat satisfied	64	43.32%	62	46.97%	62	46.97%
Very satisfied	24	10.85%	23	17.42%	24	18.18%

<b>12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?</b>	<b>Recruitment</b>		<b>Onboarding</b>		<b>Retention</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	43	32.33%	18	13.53%	9	6.77%
Middle managers	40	30.08%	18	13.53%	20	15.04%
Professional staff (non-managers)	56	42.11%	24	18.05%	46	34.59%
Skilled production workers	53	39.85%	13	9.77%	39	29.32%
Unskilled production workers	27	20.30%	12	9.02%	27	20.30%
Entry-level office workers	28	21.05%	10	7.52%	34	25.56%
Entry-level non-office workers	19	14.29%	6	4.51%	26	19.55%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	21	15.79%	7	5.26%	11	8.27%
Service workers	14	10.53%	5	3.76%	17	12.78%
Other	10	7.52%	2	1.50%	1	0.75%
None	10	7.52%	15	11.28%	10	7.52%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 133

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13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	48	36.09%	54	40.60%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	23	17.29%	58	43.61%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	31	23.31%	75	56.39%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	64	48.12%	82	61.65%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	58	43.61%	10	7.52%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	58	43.61%	16	12.03%
Increasing starting salaries	90	67.67%	25	18.80%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	37	27.82%	33	24.81%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	24	18.05%	18	13.53%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	27	20.30%	8	6.02%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	16	12.03%	38	28.57%
Shortening the hiring process	33	24.81%	3	2.26%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	39	29.32%	16	12.03%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	53	39.85%	33	24.81%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	17	12.78%	24	18.05%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	65	48.87%	9	6.77%
Participating in job fairs	54	40.60%	7	5.26%
Building/increasing brand awareness	59	44.36%	37	27.82%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	13	9.77%	14	10.53%
Using formal candidate tracking system	56	42.11%	11	8.27%
Other	5	3.76%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	44	33.08%
Team incentives	19	14.29%
Employee referral bonuses	94	70.68%
Year-end bonuses	57	42.86%
Spot bonuses	34	25.56%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	58	43.61%
Retention bonuses	18	13.53%
Commissions	34	25.56%
Project bonuses	8	6.02%
Profit sharing	28	21.05%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	36	27.07%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	23	17.29%
Language premiums	3	2.26%
Other*	2	1.50%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	81	60.90%
Resources to do their job effectively	21	15.79%
Mentoring opportunities	4	3.01%
Competitive/robust health benefits	41	30.83%
Opportunities to connect with others	10	7.52%
Driven by the mission of the organization	22	16.54%
Recognition and reward for good performance	38	28.57%
Ongoing training on new technologies	5	3.76%
Competitive pay	106	79.70%
Good work/life balance	101	75.94%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	16	12.03%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	44	33.08%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	26	19.55%
Hybrid work opportunities	31	23.31%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	4	3.01%
Regular full-time hours	16	12.03%
Strong organizational culture	30	22.56%
Challenging work	12	9.02%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	37	27.82%
Focus on employee safety	1	0.75%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	9	6.87%
No change	71	54.20%
More difficult	51	38.93%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	4	7.84%
Lack of qualified candidates	44	86.27%
Lack of technical skills	19	37.25%
Lack of soft skills	11	21.57%
Lack of work experience	20	39.22%
Our organization's geographic location	10	19.61%
Market competition/high demand	18	35.29%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	25	49.02%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	1	1.96%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	12	23.53%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	3	5.88%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	10	19.61%
Other *	2	3.92%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	54	41.22%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	50	38.17%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	10	7.63%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	3.05%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	13	9.92%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	25	19.08%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	54	41.22%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	28	21.37%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	1.53%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	21	16.03%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	9	6.77%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	38	28.57%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	16	12.03%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	9	6.77%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	28	21.05%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	14	10.53%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	25	18.80%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 133

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<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	72	54.14%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	34	25.56%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	58	43.61%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	20	15.04%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	6	4.51%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	57	42.86%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	10	7.52%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	22	16.54%
Creating/redefining policies	15	11.28%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	11	8.27%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	33	24.81%
N/A	19	14.29%
Other *	2	1.50%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	6	4.62%
No	90	69.23%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	34	26.15%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	60	45.80%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	13	9.92%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	51	38.93%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	7	5.34%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	129	96.99%
Paid lump sum awards	14	10.53%
Paid variable/bonus awards	52	39.10%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	5	3.76%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	2	1.50%
Reduced wages/salaries	1	0.75%
Reduced hours worked	6	4.51%
Uncertain	1	0.75%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	121	90.98%
Paying lump sum awards	12	9.02%
Paying variable/bonus awards	55	41.35%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	0.75%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	0.75%
Uncertain	11	8.27%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	85	63.91%	60	45.11%
Increased standard wages	49	36.84%	41	30.83%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	69	51.88%	68	51.13%
Implemented or increased variable pay	12	9.02%	13	9.77%
Temporarily bumped pay	3	2.26%	1	0.75%
Other	1	0.75%	2	1.50%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	12	9.02%	11	8.27%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	26	19.55%	27	20.30%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	20	15.04%	9	6.77%
Invest in new technology	51	38.35%	58	43.61%
Invest in equipment	45	33.83%	45	33.83%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	5	3.76%	7	5.26%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	8	6.02%	9	6.77%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	13	9.77%	15	11.28%
Increase training budget	26	19.55%	33	24.81%
Increase total rewards communication/education	25	18.80%	37	27.82%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	32	24.06%	33	24.81%
Increase recruiting emphasis	41	30.83%	40	30.08%
Pay above market rates	16	12.03%	14	10.53%
Enhance the benefits package	21	15.79%	30	22.56%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	29	21.80%	34	25.56%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	21	15.79%	32	24.06%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	14	10.53%	9	6.77%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	4	3.01%	5	3.76%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	6	4.51%	3	2.26%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	12	9.02%	14	10.53%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	16	12.03%	24	18.05%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	2	1.50%	2	1.50%
Hold off on investing in new technology	5	3.76%	5	3.76%
Hold off on investing in equipment	4	3.01%	5	3.76%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	0.75%	2	1.50%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	10	7.52%	6	4.51%
Reduce training budget	2	1.50%	4	3.01%
Limiting employee travel	27	20.30%	17	12.78%
Hiring freezes	13	9.77%	9	6.77%
Implementing furloughs	3	2.26%	1	0.75%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	21	15.79%	2	1.50%
Reduce benefits package	1	0.75%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	3	2.26%	3	2.26%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	3	2.26%	4	3.01%
Freezing compensation increases	5	3.76%	2	1.50%
Outsourcing roles or functions	7	5.26%	7	5.26%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 133

Report Cut: Minnesota

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	20	15.04%	7	5.26%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	56	42.11%	13	9.77%
Increasing presence on social media	83	62.41%	16	12.03%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	14	10.53%	3	2.26%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	42	31.58%	10	7.52%
Partnering with brand influencers	12	9.02%	4	3.01%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	31	23.31%	13	9.77%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	58	43.61%	18	13.53%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	45	33.83%	15	11.28%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 133

Report Cut: Minnesota

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	56	42.11%	23	17.29%	3	2.26%
Website content production	46	34.59%	26	19.55%	11	8.27%
Marketing content production	39	29.32%	34	25.56%	11	8.27%
Other content production	46	34.59%	25	18.80%	8	6.02%
Digital personal assistant	51	38.35%	24	18.05%	2	1.50%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	44	33.08%	32	24.06%	5	3.76%
Customer relationship management	55	41.35%	22	16.54%	4	3.01%
Inventory management	51	38.35%	16	12.03%	3	2.26%
Product recommendations	55	41.35%	12	9.02%	2	1.50%
Accounting	58	43.61%	13	9.77%	3	2.26%
Supply chain operations	59	44.36%	10	7.52%	1	0.75%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	47	35.34%	36	27.07%	9	6.77%
Application and screening management	46	34.59%	30	22.56%	4	3.01%
Audience segmentation	59	44.36%	8	6.02%	1	0.75%
Process improvement	44	33.08%	25	18.80%	8	6.02%
Idea generation	38	28.57%	37	27.82%	9	6.77%
Process automation	42	31.58%	28	21.05%	8	6.02%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	51	38.35%	23	17.29%	6	4.51%

# **Mississippi**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 21

Report Cut: Mississippi

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	4.76%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1	4.76%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	1	4.76%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	4	19.05%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	1	4.76%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1	4.76%
Information	1	4.76%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	3	14.29%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	3	14.29%
Transportation & Warehousing	3	14.29%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	2	9.52%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	3	14.29%
100 to 249	9	42.86%
250 to 499	3	14.29%
500 to 999	1	4.76%
1,000 or more	5	23.81%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	15	71.43%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	2	9.52%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	4	19.05%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 21

Report Cut: Mississippi

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	8	38.1%
Stay the same	12	57.1%
Decline	1	4.8%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	9.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	9	42.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	5	23.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	19.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	1	4.8%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	9.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	11	52.4%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	5	23.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	4.8%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	4.8%
Do not know	1	4.8%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	11	55.00%	10	50.00%
Mild	9	45.00%	6	30.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	4	20.00%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	2	9.52%	1	4.76%
Mild	14	66.67%	14	66.67%
Serious	5	23.81%	6	28.57%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	15	71.43%	11	52.38%
Mild	6	28.57%	9	42.86%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	4.76%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	7	33.33%	5	23.81%
Mild	13	61.90%	16	76.19%
Serious	1	4.76%	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 21

Report Cut: Mississippi

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	8	38.10%	6	28.57%
Mild	9	42.86%	11	52.38%
Serious	4	19.05%	4	19.05%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	2	9.52%	2	9.52%
Mild	14	66.67%	11	52.38%
Serious	5	23.81%	8	38.10%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	3	15.00%	1	4.76%
Mild	8	40.00%	9	42.86%
Serious	9	45.00%	11	52.38%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	6	28.57%	3	15.00%
Mild	12	57.14%	11	55.00%
Serious	3	14.29%	6	30.00%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	4	19.05%	6	28.57%
Mild	11	52.38%	7	33.33%
Serious	6	28.57%	8	38.10%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	11	52.38%	11	52.38%
Mild	9	42.86%	9	42.86%
Serious	1	4.76%	1	4.76%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	9	42.86%	9	42.86%
Mild	11	52.38%	12	57.14%
Serious	1	4.76%	0	0.00%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	7	33.33%	6	30.00%
Mild	11	52.38%	14	70.00%
Serious	3	14.29%	0	0.00%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	7	33.33%	8	38.10%
Mild	12	57.14%	11	52.38%
Serious	2	9.52%	2	9.52%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	6	33.33%	6	31.58%
Mild	11	61.11%	13	68.42%
Serious	1	5.56%	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 21

Report Cut: Mississippi

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	8	38.10%	7	33.33%
Mild	10	47.62%	10	47.62%
Serious	3	14.29%	4	19.05%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	6	28.57%	6	28.57%
Mild	8	38.10%	11	52.38%
Serious	7	33.33%	4	19.05%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	8	38.10%	8	38.10%
Mild	10	47.62%	11	52.38%
Serious	3	14.29%	2	9.52%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	8	40.00%	8	40.00%
Mild	10	50.00%	10	50.00%
Serious	2	10.00%	2	10.00%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	3	15.00%	2	10.00%
Mild	13	65.00%	15	75.00%
Serious	5	25.00%	4	20.00%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	2	10.00%	2	10.00%
Mild	12	60.00%	10	50.00%
Serious	7	35.00%	8	40.00%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	2	10.00%	2	10.00%
Mild	10	50.00%	9	45.00%
Serious	9	45.00%	10	50.00%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	2	10.00%	1	5.00%
Mild	8	40.00%	9	45.00%
Serious	11	55.00%	11	55.00%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	7	35.00%	7	35.00%
Mild	9	45.00%	9	45.00%
Serious	5	25.00%	5	25.00%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	7	35.00%	5	25.00%
Mild	12	60.00%	10	50.00%
Serious	2	10.00%	6	30.00%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	4	20.00%	5	25.00%
Mild	13	65.00%	13	65.00%
Serious	4	20.00%	3	15.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 21

Report Cut: Mississippi

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	5	25.00%	5	25.00%
Mild	12	60.00%	11	55.00%
Serious	4	20.00%	5	25.00%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	7	35.00%	6	30.00%
Mild	10	50.00%	9	45.00%
Serious	2	10.00%	4	20.00%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	9	45.00%	9	45.00%
Mild	4	20.00%	3	15.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	5.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	1	1	0	5
Competition in general	3	1	2	13
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	0	1	0	2
Customer's ability to afford	2	0	1	7
Talent acquisition	2	1	3	11
Talent retention	2	6	0	18
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	0	0	0
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	0	2	1	5
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	0	0	3
Cost of materials	1	0	0	3
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	1	1
Cost of regulatory compliance	2	1	1	9
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	2	1	0	8
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	0	2
Inflation	1	0	0	3
Employee engagement	1	1	4	9
Developing future leaders	1	1	2	7
Cybersecurity	1	1	1	6
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	1	1
Political uncertainty	1	1	1	6
Talent skills gap	0	2	1	5
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 21

Report Cut: Mississippi

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%
Slightly less than planned	8	38.10%
As planned	8	38.10%
Slightly more than planned	5	23.81%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	9	42.86%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	8	38.10%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	4	19.05%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	13	61.90%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	8	38.10%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	10	47.62%	6	30.00%
No	11	52.38%	14	70.00%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	20	95.24%	18	85.71%
No	1	4.76%	3	14.29%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	20	95.24%	16	76.19%
No	1	4.76%	5	23.81%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	4	44.44%	4	44.44%
No	5	55.56%	5	55.56%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	13	72.22%	12	66.67%
No	5	27.78%	6	33.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 21

Report Cut: Mississippi

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	19	90.48%
None due to this	2	9.52%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	4	19.05%
None due to this	17	80.95%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	4.76%
Some due to this	20	95.24%
None due to this	0	0.00%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	4.76%
Some due to this	18	85.71%
None due to this	2	9.52%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	4.76%
Some due to this	15	71.43%
None due to this	5	23.81%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	4.76%
Some due to this	4	19.05%
None due to this	16	76.19%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 21

Report Cut: Mississippi

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	7	24.21%	5	23.81%	6	28.57%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	16.91%	3	14.29%	3	14.29%
Somewhat satisfied	5	43.32%	10	47.62%	9	42.86%
Very satisfied	7	10.85%	3	14.29%	3	14.29%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	11	52.38%	4	19.05%	1	4.76%
Middle managers	11	52.38%	6	28.57%	5	23.81%
Professional staff (non-managers)	10	47.62%	6	28.57%	7	33.33%
Skilled production workers	6	28.57%	1	4.76%	6	28.57%
Unskilled production workers	3	14.29%	0	0.00%	6	28.57%
Entry-level office workers	3	14.29%	5	23.81%	7	33.33%
Entry-level non-office workers	1	4.76%	1	4.76%	5	23.81%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	4	19.05%	3	14.29%	1	4.76%
Service workers	4	19.05%	1	4.76%	6	28.57%
Other	1	4.76%	0	0.00%	1	4.76%
None	1	4.76%	0	0.00%	1	4.76%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 21

Report Cut: Mississippi

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	7	33.33%	8	38.10%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	4	19.05%	8	38.10%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	5	23.81%	11	52.38%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	12	57.14%	11	52.38%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	17	80.95%	3	14.29%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	12	57.14%	2	9.52%
Increasing starting salaries	17	80.95%	2	9.52%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	9	42.86%	8	38.10%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	7	33.33%	5	23.81%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	5	23.81%	1	4.76%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	4	19.05%	3	14.29%
Shortening the hiring process	6	28.57%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	7	33.33%	4	19.05%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	10	47.62%	6	28.57%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	5	23.81%	3	14.29%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	10	47.62%	1	4.76%
Participating in job fairs	10	47.62%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	11	52.38%	5	23.81%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	4	19.05%	2	9.52%
Using formal candidate tracking system	11	52.38%	3	14.29%
Other	1	4.76%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	6	28.57%
Team incentives	3	14.29%
Employee referral bonuses	13	61.90%
Year-end bonuses	9	42.86%
Spot bonuses	6	28.57%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	12	57.14%
Retention bonuses	2	9.52%
Commissions	6	28.57%
Project bonuses	3	14.29%
Profit sharing	1	4.76%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	6	28.57%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 21

Report Cut: Mississippi

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	4	19.05%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	8	38.10%
Resources to do their job effectively	6	28.57%
Mentoring opportunities	3	14.29%
Competitive/robust health benefits	5	23.81%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	4.76%
Driven by the mission of the organization	4	19.05%
Recognition and reward for good performance	5	23.81%
Ongoing training on new technologies	1	4.76%
Competitive pay	17	80.95%
Good work/life balance	13	61.90%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	3	14.29%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	8	38.10%
Current technology	1	4.76%
Remote work opportunities	6	28.57%
Hybrid work opportunities	4	19.05%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	1	4.76%
Strong organizational culture	7	33.33%
Challenging work	3	14.29%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	8	38.10%
Focus on employee safety	1	4.76%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	2	9.52%
No change	12	57.14%
More difficult	7	33.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 21

Report Cut: Mississippi

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	1	14.29%
Lack of qualified candidates	5	71.43%
Lack of technical skills	2	28.57%
Lack of soft skills	1	14.29%
Lack of work experience	2	28.57%
Our organization's geographic location	2	28.57%
Market competition/high demand	2	28.57%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	5	71.43%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	2	28.57%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	0	0.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	1	14.29%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	9	42.86%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	6	28.57%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	19.05%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	4.76%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	1	4.76%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	4	19.05%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	7	33.33%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	6	28.57%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	4	19.05%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	2	9.52%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	7	33.33%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	4	19.05%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	19.05%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	14.29%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	5	23.81%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 21

Report Cut: Mississippi

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	12	57.14%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	6	28.57%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	12	57.14%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	6	28.57%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	3	14.29%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	12	57.14%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	5	23.81%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	4	19.05%
Creating/redefining policies	5	23.81%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	3	14.29%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	4	19.05%
N/A	2	9.52%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	2	9.52%
No	17	80.95%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	2	9.52%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	7	33.33%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	4	19.05%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	7	33.33%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	3	14.29%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 21

Report Cut: Mississippi

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	20	95.24%
Paid lump sum awards	3	14.29%
Paid variable/bonus awards	9	42.86%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	1	4.76%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	16	76.19%
Paying lump sum awards	3	14.29%
Paying variable/bonus awards	8	38.10%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	4.76%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	1	4.76%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	4.76%
Uncertain	4	19.05%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	14	66.67%	9	42.86%
Increased standard wages	10	47.62%	6	28.57%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	12	57.14%	9	42.86%
Implemented or increased variable pay	1	4.76%	4	19.05%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	4.76%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	0	0.00%	1	4.76%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 21

Report Cut: Mississippi

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	5	23.81%	5	23.81%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	2	9.52%	2	9.52%
Invest in new technology	10	47.62%	13	61.90%
Invest in equipment	10	47.62%	9	42.86%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	1	4.76%	1	4.76%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	1	4.76%	1	4.76%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	2	9.52%	3	14.29%
Increase training budget	6	28.57%	9	42.86%
Increase total rewards communication/education	7	33.33%	7	33.33%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	9	42.86%	10	47.62%
Increase recruiting emphasis	6	28.57%	6	28.57%
Pay above market rates	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Enhance the benefits package	2	9.52%	4	19.05%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	8	38.10%	10	47.62%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	8	38.10%	10	47.62%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	2	9.52%	1	4.76%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	2	9.52%	2	9.52%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	1	4.76%	1	4.76%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	1	4.76%	4	19.05%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	3	14.29%	8	38.10%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	4.76%	1	4.76%
Hold off on investing in new technology	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	1	4.76%	1	4.76%
Reduce training budget	1	4.76%	0	0.00%
Limiting employee travel	5	23.81%	3	14.29%
Hiring freezes	2	9.52%	0	0.00%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	3	14.29%	0	0.00%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	4.76%	1	4.76%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	2	9.52%	1	4.76%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 21

Report Cut: Mississippi

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	4	19.05%	4	19.05%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	10	47.62%	2	9.52%
Increasing presence on social media	14	66.67%	3	14.29%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	2	9.52%	2	9.52%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	5	23.81%	1	4.76%
Partnering with brand influencers	2	9.52%	0	0.00%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	6	28.57%	3	14.29%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	9	42.86%	4	19.05%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	5	23.81%	1	4.76%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 21

Report Cut: Mississippi

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	4	19.05%	8	38.10%	0	0.00%
Website content production	5	23.81%	4	19.05%	2	9.52%
Marketing content production	6	28.57%	2	9.52%	2	9.52%
Other content production	6	28.57%	2	9.52%	2	9.52%
Digital personal assistant	6	28.57%	3	14.29%	1	4.76%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	4	19.05%	5	23.81%	2	9.52%
Customer relationship management	5	23.81%	5	23.81%	1	4.76%
Inventory management	6	28.57%	3	14.29%	2	9.52%
Product recommendations	6	28.57%	2	9.52%	0	0.00%
Accounting	6	28.57%	4	19.05%	1	4.76%
Supply chain operations	5	23.81%	3	14.29%	1	4.76%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	5	23.81%	9	42.86%	1	4.76%
Application and screening management	4	19.05%	6	28.57%	1	4.76%
Audience segmentation	7	33.33%	1	4.76%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	6	28.57%	3	14.29%	2	9.52%
Idea generation	6	28.57%	3	14.29%	2	9.52%
Process automation	5	23.81%	4	19.05%	2	9.52%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	5	23.81%	5	23.81%	1	4.76%

# **Missouri**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 117

Report Cut: Missouri

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	1.71%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	3	2.56%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	1	0.85%
Construction	3	2.56%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	25	21.37%
Education Services	1	0.85%
Financial & Insurance	9	7.69%
Health Care & Social Assistance	10	8.55%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	1	0.85%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	7	5.98%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	17	14.53%
Public Administration	4	3.42%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	5	4.27%
Services (Except Public Administration)	11	9.40%
Transportation & Warehousing	2	1.71%
Utilities	1	0.85%
Wholesale Trade	15	12.82%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	39	33.33%
100 to 249	34	29.06%
250 to 499	25	21.37%
500 to 999	10	8.55%
1,000 or more	9	7.69%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	84	71.79%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	7	5.98%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	22	18.80%
Public Sector/Government	4	3.42%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 117

Report Cut: Missouri

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	40	34.2%
Stay the same	49	41.9%
Decline	28	23.9%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	7	6.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	57	48.7%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	22	18.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	17	14.5%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	11	9.4%
Do not know	3	2.6%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	12	10.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	71	60.7%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	19	16.2%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	7	6.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	3.4%
Do not know	4	3.4%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	84	75.68%	77	69.37%
Mild	22	19.82%	24	21.62%
Serious	5	4.50%	10	9.01%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	23	20.54%	15	13.64%
Mild	58	51.79%	63	57.27%
Serious	31	27.68%	32	29.09%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	81	72.97%	66	60.00%
Mild	25	22.52%	35	31.82%
Serious	5	4.50%	9	8.18%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	42	37.17%	34	30.36%
Mild	62	54.87%	65	58.04%
Serious	9	7.96%	13	11.61%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 117

Report Cut: Missouri

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	34	30.09%	29	25.89%
Mild	53	46.90%	59	52.68%
Serious	26	23.01%	24	21.43%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	12	10.62%	7	6.19%
Mild	52	46.02%	50	44.25%
Serious	49	43.36%	56	49.56%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	14	12.39%	9	8.04%
Mild	56	49.56%	51	45.54%
Serious	43	38.05%	52	46.43%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	29	25.89%	21	18.92%
Mild	56	50.00%	48	43.24%
Serious	27	24.11%	42	37.84%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	22	19.30%	17	15.18%
Mild	54	47.37%	48	42.86%
Serious	38	33.33%	47	41.96%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	59	52.68%	51	45.13%
Mild	40	35.71%	44	38.94%
Serious	13	11.61%	18	15.93%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	53	47.32%	48	42.86%
Mild	45	40.18%	45	40.18%
Serious	14	12.50%	19	16.96%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	39	34.51%	30	27.03%
Mild	42	37.17%	47	42.34%
Serious	32	28.32%	34	30.63%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	33	29.46%	27	24.32%
Mild	49	43.75%	50	45.05%
Serious	30	26.79%	34	30.63%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	31	28.44%	31	28.18%
Mild	61	55.96%	57	51.82%
Serious	17	15.60%	22	20.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 117

Report Cut: Missouri

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	42	38.18%	36	32.73%
Mild	48	43.64%	52	47.27%
Serious	20	18.18%	22	20.00%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	26	23.21%	23	20.91%
Mild	55	49.11%	52	47.27%
Serious	31	27.68%	35	31.82%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	55	49.11%	53	47.75%
Mild	41	36.61%	43	39.09%
Serious	16	14.29%	15	13.64%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	59	52.21%	53	47.32%
Mild	41	36.28%	45	40.18%
Serious	13	11.50%	14	12.50%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	10	8.85%	12	10.71%
Mild	58	51.33%	56	50.00%
Serious	45	39.82%	45	40.18%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	22	19.47%	18	16.07%
Mild	65	57.52%	64	57.14%
Serious	27	23.89%	31	27.68%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	19	16.81%	16	14.29%
Mild	59	52.21%	53	47.32%
Serious	33	29.20%	42	37.50%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	5	4.42%	3	2.68%
Mild	46	40.71%	40	35.71%
Serious	62	54.87%	68	60.71%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	55	48.67%	50	44.64%
Mild	47	41.59%	51	45.54%
Serious	12	10.62%	13	11.61%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	44	38.94%	30	26.79%
Mild	55	48.67%	55	49.11%
Serious	13	11.50%	27	24.11%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	23	20.35%	23	20.54%
Mild	49	43.36%	49	43.75%
Serious	41	36.28%	39	34.82%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 117

Report Cut: Missouri

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	23	20.35%	17	15.18%
Mild	62	54.87%	60	53.57%
Serious	28	24.78%	34	30.36%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	36	31.86%	33	29.46%
Mild	66	58.41%	64	57.14%
Serious	6	5.31%	11	9.82%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	50	44.25%	50	44.64%
Mild	26	23.01%	25	22.32%
Serious	1	0.88%	2	1.79%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	3	2	0	13
Competition in general	11	5	5	48
Product obsolescence	3	1	0	11
Changing customer preferences	8	4	1	33
Customer's ability to afford	9	0	7	34
Talent acquisition	20	19	9	107
Talent retention	16	23	9	103
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	5	7	20
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	7	12	19	64
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	0	0	3
Ability to maintain quality product/service	2	4	3	17
Cost of materials	6	6	7	37
Cost of equipment	2	0	2	8
Taxes	2	0	1	7
Cost of regulatory compliance	4	3	3	21
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	1	4	1	12
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	1	3
Inflation	3	4	7	24
Employee engagement	2	3	6	18
Developing future leaders	1	4	6	17
Cybersecurity	4	6	8	32
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	3	3
A.I. technology and platforms	1	1	1	6
Political uncertainty	4	2	1	17
Talent skills gap	1	2	5	12
Unknown challenges	0	1	0	2
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 117

Report Cut: Missouri

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	7	5.98%
Slightly less than planned	22	18.80%
As planned	56	47.86%
Slightly more than planned	28	23.93%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	2	1.71%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	62	52.99%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	42	35.90%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	12	10.26%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	68	58.12%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	2	1.71%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	41	35.04%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	6	5.13%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	37	34.26%	22	20.56%
No	71	65.74%	85	79.44%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	85	75.22%	73	66.97%
No	28	24.78%	36	33.03%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	102	89.47%	87	79.09%
No	12	10.53%	23	20.91%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	16	34.04%	13	29.55%
No	31	65.96%	31	70.45%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	65	77.38%	54	67.50%
No	19	22.62%	26	32.50%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 117

Report Cut: Missouri

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	4	3.48%
Some due to this	79	68.70%
None due to this	32	27.83%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	1	0.88%
Some due to this	24	21.05%
None due to this	89	78.07%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	4	3.48%
Some due to this	103	89.57%
None due to this	8	6.96%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	0.88%
Some due to this	95	83.33%
None due to this	18	15.79%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	0.88%
Some due to this	81	71.68%
None due to this	31	27.43%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	2	1.77%
Some due to this	23	20.35%
None due to this	88	77.88%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 117

Report Cut: Missouri

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	2	1.74%	0	0.00%	3	2.61%
Somewhat dissatisfied	25	24.21%	20	17.39%	27	23.48%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13	16.91%	24	20.87%	18	15.65%
Somewhat satisfied	59	43.32%	46	40.00%	47	40.87%
Very satisfied	16	10.85%	25	21.74%	20	17.39%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	44	37.61%	14	11.97%	9	7.69%
Middle managers	39	33.33%	17	14.53%	23	19.66%
Professional staff (non-managers)	50	42.74%	21	17.95%	42	35.90%
Skilled production workers	42	35.90%	17	14.53%	36	30.77%
Unskilled production workers	21	17.95%	14	11.97%	31	26.50%
Entry-level office workers	29	24.79%	14	11.97%	36	30.77%
Entry-level non-office workers	21	17.95%	6	5.13%	25	21.37%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	28	23.93%	5	4.27%	13	11.11%
Service workers	25	21.37%	6	5.13%	27	23.08%
Other	7	5.98%	0	0.00%	2	1.71%
None	3	2.56%	7	5.98%	4	3.42%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 117

Report Cut: Missouri

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	50	42.74%	53	45.30%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	22	18.80%	56	47.86%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	25	21.37%	67	57.26%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	53	45.30%	77	65.81%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	53	45.30%	14	11.97%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	61	52.14%	12	10.26%
Increasing starting salaries	83	70.94%	27	23.08%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	30	25.64%	36	30.77%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	20	17.09%	15	12.82%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	29	24.79%	9	7.69%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	13	11.11%	29	24.79%
Shortening the hiring process	36	30.77%	1	0.85%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	32	27.35%	10	8.55%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	44	37.61%	31	26.50%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	13	11.11%	18	15.38%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	46	39.32%	3	2.56%
Participating in job fairs	46	39.32%	2	1.71%
Building/increasing brand awareness	44	37.61%	20	17.09%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	16	13.68%	11	9.40%
Using formal candidate tracking system	48	41.03%	5	4.27%
Other	4	3.42%	1	0.85%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	36	30.77%
Team incentives	19	16.24%
Employee referral bonuses	82	70.09%
Year-end bonuses	51	43.59%
Spot bonuses	32	27.35%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	50	42.74%
Retention bonuses	16	13.68%
Commissions	30	25.64%
Project bonuses	7	5.98%
Profit sharing	19	16.24%
Hazard bonuses/pay	2	1.71%
Additional PTO	31	26.50%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 117

Report Cut: Missouri

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	19	16.24%
Language premiums	2	1.71%
Other*	2	1.71%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	65	55.56%
Resources to do their job effectively	17	14.53%
Mentoring opportunities	5	4.27%
Competitive/robust health benefits	45	38.46%
Opportunities to connect with others	4	3.42%
Driven by the mission of the organization	18	15.38%
Recognition and reward for good performance	27	23.08%
Ongoing training on new technologies	7	5.98%
Competitive pay	97	82.91%
Good work/life balance	87	74.36%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	13	11.11%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	38	32.48%
Current technology	2	1.71%
Remote work opportunities	25	21.37%
Hybrid work opportunities	24	20.51%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	5	4.27%
Regular full-time hours	8	6.84%
Strong organizational culture	29	24.79%
Challenging work	10	8.55%
Diverse workforce	2	1.71%
Vacation/paid time off	33	28.21%
Focus on employee safety	2	1.71%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	8	6.90%
No change	42	36.21%
More difficult	66	56.90%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 117

Report Cut: Missouri

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	6	9.09%
Lack of qualified candidates	54	81.82%
Lack of technical skills	28	42.42%
Lack of soft skills	10	15.15%
Lack of work experience	25	37.88%
Our organization's geographic location	7	10.61%
Market competition/high demand	32	48.48%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	39	59.09%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	1	1.52%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	13	19.70%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	5	7.58%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	14	21.21%
Other *	2	3.03%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	44	37.93%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	35	30.17%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	11	9.48%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	3	2.59%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	23	19.83%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	25	21.55%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	44	37.93%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	16	13.79%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	2.59%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	28	24.14%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	8	6.84%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	35	29.91%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	13	11.11%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	2	1.71%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	22	18.80%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	10	8.55%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	30	25.64%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 117

Report Cut: Missouri

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	71	60.68%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	28	23.93%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	51	43.59%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	26	22.22%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	12	10.26%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	48	41.03%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	6	5.13%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	9	7.69%
Creating/redefining policies	14	11.97%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	8	6.84%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	23	19.66%
N/A	14	11.97%
Other *	2	1.71%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	12	10.34%
No	94	81.03%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	10	8.62%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	49	42.24%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	15	12.93%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	41	35.34%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	11	9.48%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 117

Report Cut: Missouri

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	110	94.02%
Paid lump sum awards	12	10.26%
Paid variable/bonus awards	40	34.19%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	1	0.85%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	2	1.71%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	2	1.71%
Uncertain	3	2.56%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	102	87.18%
Paying lump sum awards	13	11.11%
Paying variable/bonus awards	39	33.33%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	2	1.71%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	2	1.71%
Reducing wages/salaries	1	0.85%
Reducing hours worked	1	0.85%
Uncertain	11	9.40%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	84	71.79%	61	52.14%
Increased standard wages	58	49.57%	50	42.74%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	53	45.30%	62	52.99%
Implemented or increased variable pay	6	5.13%	14	11.97%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	0.85%	0	0.00%
Other	1	0.85%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	7	5.98%	10	8.55%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 117

Report Cut: Missouri

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	24	20.51%	20	17.09%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	19	16.24%	12	10.26%
Invest in new technology	64	54.70%	68	58.12%
Invest in equipment	47	40.17%	51	43.59%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	3	2.56%	10	8.55%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	10	8.55%	13	11.11%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	9	7.69%	12	10.26%
Increase training budget	24	20.51%	37	31.62%
Increase total rewards communication/education	22	18.80%	26	22.22%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	34	29.06%	35	29.91%
Increase recruiting emphasis	27	23.08%	28	23.93%
Pay above market rates	8	6.84%	8	6.84%
Enhance the benefits package	23	19.66%	29	24.79%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	26	22.22%	31	26.50%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	32	27.35%	35	29.91%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	12	10.26%	10	8.55%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	4	3.42%	4	3.42%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	7	5.98%	8	6.84%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	13	11.11%	18	15.38%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	7	5.98%	22	18.80%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	1	0.85%
Hold off on investing in new technology	1	0.85%	3	2.56%
Hold off on investing in equipment	2	1.71%	3	2.56%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	2	1.71%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	4	3.42%	5	4.27%
Reduce training budget	3	2.56%	4	3.42%
Limiting employee travel	13	11.11%	10	8.55%
Hiring freezes	8	6.84%	8	6.84%
Implementing furloughs	2	1.71%	1	0.85%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	11	9.40%	4	3.42%
Reduce benefits package	1	0.85%	1	0.85%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	3	2.56%	2	1.71%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	3	2.56%	4	3.42%
Freezing compensation increases	1	0.85%	2	1.71%
Outsourcing roles or functions	3	2.56%	5	4.27%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 117

Report Cut: Missouri

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	15	12.82%	4	3.42%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	50	42.74%	9	7.69%
Increasing presence on social media	76	64.96%	21	17.95%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	12	10.26%	3	2.56%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	34	29.06%	12	10.26%
Partnering with brand influencers	8	6.84%	2	1.71%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	23	19.66%	11	9.40%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	46	39.32%	18	15.38%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	27	23.08%	11	9.40%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 117

Report Cut: Missouri

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	51	43.59%	20	17.09%	5	4.27%
Website content production	40	34.19%	24	20.51%	10	8.55%
Marketing content production	34	29.06%	28	23.93%	15	12.82%
Other content production	41	35.04%	14	11.97%	10	8.55%
Digital personal assistant	48	41.03%	16	13.68%	3	2.56%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	42	35.90%	20	17.09%	11	9.40%
Customer relationship management	45	38.46%	20	17.09%	6	5.13%
Inventory management	45	38.46%	16	13.68%	3	2.56%
Product recommendations	49	41.88%	8	6.84%	1	0.85%
Accounting	48	41.03%	13	11.11%	4	3.42%
Supply chain operations	53	45.30%	8	6.84%	2	1.71%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	38	32.48%	35	29.91%	5	4.27%
Application and screening management	39	33.33%	29	24.79%	3	2.56%
Audience segmentation	49	41.88%	8	6.84%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	40	34.19%	20	17.09%	7	5.98%
Idea generation	32	27.35%	32	27.35%	10	8.55%
Process automation	42	35.90%	18	15.38%	10	8.55%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	44	37.61%	20	17.09%	4	3.42%

# **Montana**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Montana

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	8.33%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	2	16.67%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	1	8.33%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1	8.33%
Information	1	8.33%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	1	8.33%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	3	25.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	2	16.67%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	5	41.67%
100 to 249	3	25.00%
250 to 499	1	8.33%
500 to 999	2	16.67%
1,000 or more	1	8.33%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	7	58.33%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	1	8.33%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	4	33.33%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Montana

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	6	50.0%
Stay the same	6	50.0%
Decline	0	0.0%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	8.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	7	58.3%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	1	8.3%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	16.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	1	8.3%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	16.7%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	6	50.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	1	8.3%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	8.3%
Do not know	2	16.7%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	8	72.73%	7	63.64%
Mild	2	18.18%	2	18.18%
Serious	1	9.09%	2	18.18%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	2	16.67%	1	8.33%
Mild	5	41.67%	6	50.00%
Serious	5	41.67%	5	41.67%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	7	63.64%	5	45.45%
Mild	3	27.27%	5	45.45%
Serious	1	9.09%	1	9.09%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	6	50.00%	5	41.67%
Mild	3	25.00%	4	33.33%
Serious	3	25.00%	3	25.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Montana

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	4	36.36%	2	18.18%
Mild	5	45.45%	7	63.64%
Serious	2	18.18%	2	18.18%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	5	45.45%	5	45.45%
Serious	6	54.55%	6	54.55%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
Serious	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	1	9.09%	1	9.09%
Mild	7	63.64%	6	54.55%
Serious	3	27.27%	4	36.36%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	1	10.00%	3	30.00%
Mild	5	50.00%	2	20.00%
Serious	4	40.00%	5	50.00%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	5	45.45%	5	45.45%
Mild	6	54.55%	6	54.55%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	3	27.27%	2	18.18%
Mild	6	54.55%	7	63.64%
Serious	2	18.18%	2	18.18%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	4	36.36%	3	30.00%
Mild	4	36.36%	3	30.00%
Serious	3	27.27%	4	40.00%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	5	45.45%	4	36.36%
Mild	4	36.36%	4	36.36%
Serious	2	18.18%	3	27.27%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	1	10.00%	1	9.09%
Mild	6	60.00%	7	63.64%
Serious	3	30.00%	3	27.27%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Montana

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	4	36.36%	3	27.27%
Mild	5	45.45%	6	54.55%
Serious	2	18.18%	2	18.18%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
Mild	4	33.33%	4	33.33%
Serious	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	4	36.36%	4	36.36%
Mild	5	45.45%	5	41.67%
Serious	2	18.18%	2	16.67%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	3	27.27%	3	27.27%
Mild	7	63.64%	7	63.64%
Serious	1	9.09%	1	9.09%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	3	27.27%	2	18.18%
Mild	6	54.55%	5	45.45%
Serious	2	18.18%	4	36.36%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	7	63.64%	5	45.45%
Serious	5	45.45%	7	63.64%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	1	9.09%	1	9.09%
Mild	7	63.64%	5	45.45%
Serious	3	27.27%	5	45.45%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	2	18.18%	1	9.09%
Serious	9	81.82%	10	90.91%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	3	27.27%	3	27.27%
Mild	6	54.55%	5	45.45%
Serious	2	18.18%	3	27.27%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	2	18.18%	1	9.09%
Mild	5	45.45%	4	36.36%
Serious	5	45.45%	7	63.64%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	2	18.18%	2	18.18%
Mild	6	54.55%	6	54.55%
Serious	3	27.27%	3	27.27%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Montana

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	3	27.27%	2	18.18%
Mild	5	45.45%	6	54.55%
Serious	4	36.36%	4	36.36%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	4	36.36%	4	36.36%
Mild	6	54.55%	6	54.55%
Serious	1	9.09%	1	9.09%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	6	54.55%	6	54.55%
Mild	3	27.27%	2	18.18%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	9.09%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	2	0	0	6
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	0	2	1	5
Customer's ability to afford	1	1	0	5
Talent acquisition	3	1	1	12
Talent retention	1	2	1	8
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	0	1	1
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	0	2	1	5
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	1	1
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	1	0	5
Cost of materials	0	1	0	2
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	0	0	0	0
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	1	0	0	3
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	0	2
Inflation	0	0	0	0
Employee engagement	1	0	2	5
Developing future leaders	0	0	2	2
Cybersecurity	1	1	0	5
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	1	0	1	4
Political uncertainty	0	0	0	0
Talent skills gap	0	0	0	0
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Montana

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	2	16.67%
Slightly less than planned	1	8.33%
As planned	7	58.33%
Slightly more than planned	2	16.67%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	6	50.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	3	25.00%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	3	25.00%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	8	66.66%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	4	33.33%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	6	50.00%	4	33.33%
No	6	50.00%	8	66.67%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	11	91.67%	10	83.33%
No	1	8.33%	2	16.67%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	10	83.33%	8	66.67%
No	2	16.67%	4	33.33%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
No	6	100.00%	6	100.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	5	50.00%	3	30.00%
No	5	50.00%	7	70.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Montana

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	1	8.33%
Some due to this	10	83.33%
None due to this	1	8.33%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	3	25.00%
None due to this	9	75.00%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	11	91.67%
None due to this	1	8.33%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	11	91.67%
None due to this	1	8.33%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	8	66.67%
None due to this	4	33.33%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	8.33%
Some due to this	2	16.67%
None due to this	9	75.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Montana

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	2	24.21%	3	25.00%	3	25.00%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	16.91%	1	8.33%	3	25.00%
Somewhat satisfied	6	43.32%	7	58.33%	6	50.00%
Very satisfied	3	10.85%	1	8.33%	0	0.00%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	6	50.00%	3	25.00%	2	16.67%
Middle managers	7	58.33%	3	25.00%	4	33.33%
Professional staff (non-managers)	7	58.33%	1	8.33%	8	66.67%
Skilled production workers	1	8.33%	0	0.00%	2	16.67%
Unskilled production workers	1	8.33%	0	0.00%	2	16.67%
Entry-level office workers	1	8.33%	1	8.33%	2	16.67%
Entry-level non-office workers	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	8.33%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	3	25.00%	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Service workers	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None	1	8.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Montana

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	4	33.33%	8	66.67%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	5	41.67%	9	75.00%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	6	50.00%	7	58.33%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	9	75.00%	1	8.33%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	6	50.00%	1	8.33%
Increasing starting salaries	9	75.00%	1	8.33%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	7	58.33%	6	50.00%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	3	25.00%	0	0.00%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	4	33.33%	2	16.67%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	1	8.33%	2	16.67%
Shortening the hiring process	4	33.33%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	3	25.00%	0	0.00%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	7	58.33%	3	25.00%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	4	33.33%	2	16.67%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	8	66.67%	1	8.33%
Participating in job fairs	6	50.00%	1	8.33%
Building/increasing brand awareness	9	75.00%	3	25.00%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	4	33.33%	3	25.00%
Using formal candidate tracking system	8	66.67%	1	8.33%
Other	1	8.33%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	6	50.00%
Team incentives	3	25.00%
Employee referral bonuses	6	50.00%
Year-end bonuses	4	33.33%
Spot bonuses	5	41.67%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	6	50.00%
Retention bonuses	2	16.67%
Commissions	3	25.00%
Project bonuses	3	25.00%
Profit sharing	2	16.67%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	2	16.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Montana

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	2	16.67%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	4	33.33%
Resources to do their job effectively	4	33.33%
Mentoring opportunities	3	25.00%
Competitive/robust health benefits	6	50.00%
Opportunities to connect with others	0	0.00%
Driven by the mission of the organization	3	25.00%
Recognition and reward for good performance	5	41.67%
Ongoing training on new technologies	0	0.00%
Competitive pay	7	58.33%
Good work/life balance	8	66.67%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	3	25.00%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	7	58.33%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	3	25.00%
Hybrid work opportunities	1	8.33%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	0	0.00%
Strong organizational culture	4	33.33%
Challenging work	0	0.00%
Diverse workforce	1	8.33%
Vacation/paid time off	1	8.33%
Focus on employee safety	0	0.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	0	0.00%
No change	6	50.00%
More difficult	6	50.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Montana

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	1	16.67%
Lack of qualified candidates	5	83.33%
Lack of technical skills	3	50.00%
Lack of soft skills	2	33.33%
Lack of work experience	3	50.00%
Our organization's geographic location	2	33.33%
Market competition/high demand	6	100.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	5	83.33%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	2	33.33%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	0	0.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	0	0.00%
Other *	2	33.33%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	16.67%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	6	50.00%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	3	25.00%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	1	8.33%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	16.67%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	5	41.67%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	25.00%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	8.33%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	1	8.33%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	2	16.67%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	0	0.00%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	6	50.00%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	1	8.33%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Montana

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	7	58.33%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	8	66.67%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	9	75.00%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	5	41.67%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	3	25.00%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	8	66.67%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	3	25.00%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	4	33.33%
Creating/redefining policies	4	33.33%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	2	16.67%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	6	50.00%
N/A	0	0.00%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	0	0.00%
No	8	66.67%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	4	33.33%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	6	50.00%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	1	8.33%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	5	41.67%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Montana

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	11	91.67%
Paid lump sum awards	2	16.67%
Paid variable/bonus awards	5	41.67%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	2	16.67%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	8.33%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	12	100.00%
Paying lump sum awards	2	16.67%
Paying variable/bonus awards	7	58.33%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	6	50.00%	5	41.67%
Increased standard wages	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	8	66.67%	6	50.00%
Implemented or increased variable pay	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	8.33%	0	0.00%
Other	1	8.33%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	1	8.33%	1	8.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Montana

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	3	25.00%	0	0.00%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	4	33.33%	1	8.33%
Invest in new technology	8	66.67%	7	58.33%
Invest in equipment	5	41.67%	3	25.00%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	2	16.67%	1	8.33%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	1	8.33%	2	16.67%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	1	8.33%	2	16.67%
Increase training budget	3	25.00%	6	50.00%
Increase total rewards communication/education	3	25.00%	5	41.67%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	7	58.33%	7	58.33%
Increase recruiting emphasis	4	33.33%	3	25.00%
Pay above market rates	1	8.33%	2	16.67%
Enhance the benefits package	2	16.67%	3	25.00%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	4	33.33%	5	41.67%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	4	33.33%	6	50.00%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	1	8.33%	0	0.00%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	2	16.67%	5	41.67%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce training budget	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Limiting employee travel	3	25.00%	3	25.00%
Hiring freezes	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	2	16.67%	0	0.00%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Montana

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	3	25.00%	2	16.67%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	4	33.33%	0	0.00%
Increasing presence on social media	10	83.33%	2	16.67%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	5	41.67%	1	8.33%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	5	41.67%	2	16.67%
Partnering with brand influencers	3	25.00%	1	8.33%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	5	41.67%	2	16.67%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	9	75.00%	2	16.67%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	6	50.00%	3	25.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Montana

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	5	41.67%	3	25.00%	0	0.00%
Website content production	2	16.67%	4	33.33%	2	16.67%
Marketing content production	1	8.33%	5	41.67%	3	25.00%
Other content production	1	8.33%	5	41.67%	3	25.00%
Digital personal assistant	3	25.00%	4	33.33%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	3	25.00%	3	25.00%	1	8.33%
Customer relationship management	3	25.00%	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
Inventory management	4	33.33%	0	0.00%	1	8.33%
Product recommendations	2	16.67%	3	25.00%	1	8.33%
Accounting	4	33.33%	0	0.00%	2	16.67%
Supply chain operations	4	33.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	5	41.67%	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
Application and screening management	3	25.00%	3	25.00%	2	16.67%
Audience segmentation	2	16.67%	2	16.67%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	2	16.67%	2	16.67%	1	8.33%
Idea generation	2	16.67%	4	33.33%	3	25.00%
Process automation	2	16.67%	3	25.00%	1	8.33%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	4	33.33%	1	8.33%	1	8.33%

# **Nebraska**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Nebraska

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	3	13.04%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	1	4.35%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	4	17.39%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	1	4.35%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	1	4.35%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	1	4.35%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	7	30.43%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	1	4.35%
Transportation & Warehousing	1	4.35%
Utilities	1	4.35%
Wholesale Trade	2	8.70%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	4	17.39%
100 to 249	6	26.09%
250 to 499	7	30.43%
500 to 999	0	0.00%
1,000 or more	6	26.09%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	21	91.30%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	0	0.00%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	2	8.70%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Nebraska

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	11	47.8%
Stay the same	10	43.5%
Decline	2	8.7%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	8.7%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	13	56.5%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	3	13.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	5	21.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	0	0.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	3	13.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	16	69.6%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	3	13.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	1	4.3%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	17	77.27%	16	72.73%
Mild	5	22.73%	4	18.18%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	9.09%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	4	17.39%	3	13.04%
Mild	13	56.52%	15	65.22%
Serious	6	26.09%	5	21.74%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	16	72.73%	13	59.09%
Mild	6	27.27%	9	40.91%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	11	47.83%	8	34.78%
Mild	10	43.48%	11	47.83%
Serious	2	8.70%	4	17.39%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

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4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	8	36.36%	8	36.36%
Mild	11	50.00%	10	45.45%
Serious	3	13.64%	4	18.18%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	5	22.73%	4	18.18%
Mild	9	40.91%	6	27.27%
Serious	8	36.36%	12	54.55%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	4	17.39%	4	17.39%
Mild	12	52.17%	9	39.13%
Serious	7	30.43%	10	43.48%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	7	31.82%	4	18.18%
Mild	12	54.55%	11	50.00%
Serious	3	13.64%	7	31.82%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	4	19.05%	3	14.29%
Mild	14	66.67%	14	66.67%
Serious	3	14.29%	4	19.05%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	13	59.09%	13	59.09%
Mild	8	36.36%	9	40.91%
Serious	1	4.55%	0	0.00%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	13	59.09%	12	54.55%
Mild	8	36.36%	9	40.91%
Serious	1	4.55%	1	4.55%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	9	40.91%	8	36.36%
Mild	10	45.45%	9	40.91%
Serious	3	13.64%	5	22.73%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	8	36.36%	8	36.36%
Mild	10	45.45%	8	36.36%
Serious	4	18.18%	6	27.27%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	7	33.33%	6	28.57%
Mild	14	66.67%	14	66.67%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	4.76%

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4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	8	36.36%	9	40.91%
Mild	10	45.45%	9	40.91%
Serious	4	18.18%	4	18.18%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	8	34.78%	8	34.78%
Mild	11	47.83%	11	47.83%
Serious	4	17.39%	4	17.39%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	9	40.91%	8	36.36%
Mild	11	50.00%	12	52.17%
Serious	2	9.09%	2	8.70%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	8	36.36%	8	36.36%
Mild	12	54.55%	11	50.00%
Serious	2	9.09%	3	13.64%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	2	9.09%	1	4.55%
Mild	13	59.09%	13	59.09%
Serious	7	31.82%	8	36.36%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	4	18.18%	3	13.64%
Mild	12	54.55%	13	59.09%
Serious	7	31.82%	7	31.82%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	3	13.64%	3	13.64%
Mild	11	50.00%	9	40.91%
Serious	8	36.36%	10	45.45%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	1	4.55%	1	4.55%
Mild	10	45.45%	9	40.91%
Serious	11	50.00%	12	54.55%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	13	59.09%	11	50.00%
Mild	8	36.36%	9	40.91%
Serious	1	4.55%	2	9.09%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	10	45.45%	9	40.91%
Mild	10	45.45%	8	36.36%
Serious	3	13.64%	6	27.27%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	4	18.18%	4	18.18%
Mild	13	59.09%	11	50.00%
Serious	5	22.73%	7	31.82%

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4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	4	18.18%	4	18.18%
Mild	17	77.27%	13	59.09%
Serious	2	9.09%	6	27.27%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	7	31.82%	7	31.82%
Mild	12	54.55%	13	59.09%
Serious	1	4.55%	1	4.55%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	14	63.64%	14	63.64%
Mild	3	13.64%	2	9.09%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	4.55%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	1	0	0	3
Competition in general	3	1	2	13
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	2	2	1	11
Customer's ability to afford	1	0	0	3
Talent acquisition	3	2	2	15
Talent retention	4	3	2	20
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	0	3	3
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	1	3	1	10
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	0	0	3
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	3	0	9
Cost of materials	1	0	0	3
Cost of equipment	0	1	0	2
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	0	0	3
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	1	0	2
Employee safety	0	0	1	1
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	1	3
Inflation	0	1	1	3
Employee engagement	1	0	1	4
Developing future leaders	0	2	2	6
Cybersecurity	2	2	2	12
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	1	0	2	5
Political uncertainty	0	1	0	2
Talent skills gap	0	0	1	1
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0

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6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	1	4.35%
Slightly less than planned	7	30.43%
As planned	5	21.74%
Slightly more than planned	10	43.48%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	14	60.87%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	7	30.43%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	8.70%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	16	69.56%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	4.35%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	5	21.74%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	4.35%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	9	40.91%	5	22.73%
No	13	59.09%	17	77.27%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	22	95.65%	22	95.65%
No	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	20	86.96%	19	82.61%
No	3	13.04%	4	17.39%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	3	33.33%	3	33.33%
No	6	66.67%	6	66.67%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	12	70.59%	12	75.00%
No	5	29.41%	4	25.00%

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10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	20	86.96%
None due to this	3	13.04%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	6	26.09%
None due to this	17	73.91%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	22	95.65%
None due to this	1	4.35%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	19	82.61%
None due to this	4	17.39%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	17	73.91%
None due to this	6	26.09%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	6	26.09%
None due to this	17	73.91%

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11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	1	4.35%	0	0.00%	2	8.70%
Somewhat dissatisfied	4	24.21%	2	8.70%	4	17.39%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	16.91%	2	8.70%	2	8.70%
Somewhat satisfied	9	43.32%	14	60.87%	10	43.48%
Very satisfied	8	10.85%	5	21.74%	5	21.74%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	8	34.78%	3	13.04%	4	17.39%
Middle managers	9	39.13%	4	17.39%	6	26.09%
Professional staff (non-managers)	9	39.13%	3	13.04%	9	39.13%
Skilled production workers	10	43.48%	1	4.35%	10	43.48%
Unskilled production workers	3	13.04%	1	4.35%	4	17.39%
Entry-level office workers	3	13.04%	2	8.70%	7	30.43%
Entry-level non-office workers	5	21.74%	0	0.00%	5	21.74%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	7	30.43%	1	4.35%	3	13.04%
Service workers	3	13.04%	0	0.00%	2	8.70%
Other	2	8.70%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None	4	17.39%	4	17.39%	1	4.35%

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13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	10	43.48%	8	34.78%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	3	13.04%	10	43.48%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	3	13.04%	10	43.48%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	14	60.87%	15	65.22%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	15	65.22%	5	21.74%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	15	65.22%	2	8.70%
Increasing starting salaries	15	65.22%	4	17.39%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	6	26.09%	7	30.43%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	8	34.78%	4	17.39%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	4	17.39%	0	0.00%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	4	17.39%	5	21.74%
Shortening the hiring process	5	21.74%	1	4.35%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	8	34.78%	2	8.70%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	12	52.17%	9	39.13%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	3	13.04%	2	8.70%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	12	52.17%	0	0.00%
Participating in job fairs	14	60.87%	2	8.70%
Building/increasing brand awareness	14	60.87%	8	34.78%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	3	13.04%	2	8.70%
Using formal candidate tracking system	11	47.83%	3	13.04%
Other	1	4.35%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	8	34.78%
Team incentives	4	17.39%
Employee referral bonuses	14	60.87%
Year-end bonuses	12	52.17%
Spot bonuses	7	30.43%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	11	47.83%
Retention bonuses	2	8.70%
Commissions	8	34.78%
Project bonuses	4	17.39%
Profit sharing	0	0.00%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	6	26.09%

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14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	3	13.04%
Language premiums	1	4.35%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	14	60.87%
Resources to do their job effectively	5	21.74%
Mentoring opportunities	2	8.70%
Competitive/robust health benefits	7	30.43%
Opportunities to connect with others	3	13.04%
Driven by the mission of the organization	7	30.43%
Recognition and reward for good performance	6	26.09%
Ongoing training on new technologies	3	13.04%
Competitive pay	19	82.61%
Good work/life balance	14	60.87%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	3	13.04%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	8	34.78%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	5	21.74%
Hybrid work opportunities	3	13.04%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	3	13.04%
Regular full-time hours	0	0.00%
Strong organizational culture	4	17.39%
Challenging work	2	8.70%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	4	17.39%
Focus on employee safety	1	4.35%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	2	8.70%
No change	10	43.48%
More difficult	11	47.83%



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17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	1	9.09%
Lack of qualified candidates	9	81.82%
Lack of technical skills	4	36.36%
Lack of soft skills	1	9.09%
Lack of work experience	3	27.27%
Our organization's geographic location	0	0.00%
Market competition/high demand	6	54.55%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	3	27.27%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	2	18.18%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	1	9.09%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	3	27.27%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	5	21.74%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	9	39.13%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	7	30.43%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	4.35%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	1	4.35%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	5	21.74%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	11	47.83%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	5	21.74%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	2	8.70%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	3	13.04%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	7	30.43%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	2	8.70%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	4.35%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	21.74%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	17.39%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	3	13.04%

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<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	17	73.91%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	7	30.43%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	9	39.13%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	5	21.74%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	4	17.39%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	11	47.83%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	3	13.04%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	4	17.39%
Creating/redefining policies	6	26.09%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	2	8.70%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	6	26.09%
N/A	1	4.35%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	5	22.73%
No	12	54.55%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	5	22.73%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	11	47.83%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	3	13.04%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	8	34.78%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	1	4.35%

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24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	23	100.00%
Paid lump sum awards	6	26.09%
Paid variable/bonus awards	13	56.52%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	1	4.35%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	1	4.35%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	23	100.00%
Paying lump sum awards	5	21.74%
Paying variable/bonus awards	14	60.87%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	14	60.87%	13	56.52%
Increased standard wages	12	52.17%	10	43.48%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	12	52.17%	12	52.17%
Implemented or increased variable pay	2	8.70%	3	13.04%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Other	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	2	8.70%	2	8.70%

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27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	4	17.39%	4	17.39%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	2	8.70%	2	8.70%
Invest in new technology	14	60.87%	14	60.87%
Invest in equipment	9	39.13%	8	34.78%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	0	0.00%	1	4.35%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	1	4.35%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	4	17.39%	3	13.04%
Increase training budget	7	30.43%	7	30.43%
Increase total rewards communication/education	1	4.35%	4	17.39%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	6	26.09%	6	26.09%
Increase recruiting emphasis	8	34.78%	6	26.09%
Pay above market rates	4	17.39%	3	13.04%
Enhance the benefits package	2	8.70%	9	39.13%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	6	26.09%	9	39.13%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	5	21.74%	6	26.09%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	2	8.70%	1	4.35%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	2	8.70%	2	8.70%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	4	17.39%	5	21.74%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	3	13.04%	3	13.04%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	0	0.00%	1	4.35%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	1	4.35%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
Reduce training budget	1	4.35%	2	8.70%
Limiting employee travel	2	8.70%	1	4.35%
Hiring freezes	0	0.00%	2	8.70%
Implementing furloughs	2	8.70%	1	4.35%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	5	21.74%	2	8.70%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	1	4.35%
Outsourcing roles or functions	1	4.35%	0	0.00%

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29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	4	17.39%	2	8.70%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	9	39.13%	3	13.04%
Increasing presence on social media	15	65.22%	3	13.04%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	4	17.39%	2	8.70%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	9	39.13%	3	13.04%
Partnering with brand influencers	4	17.39%	2	8.70%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	7	30.43%	2	8.70%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	8	34.78%	3	13.04%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	4	17.39%	3	13.04%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 23

Report Cut: Nebraska

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	8	34.78%	6	26.09%	0	0.00%
Website content production	7	30.43%	2	8.70%	3	13.04%
Marketing content production	6	26.09%	5	21.74%	3	13.04%
Other content production	6	26.09%	3	13.04%	3	13.04%
Digital personal assistant	7	30.43%	2	8.70%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	4	17.39%	5	21.74%	1	4.35%
Customer relationship management	7	30.43%	2	8.70%	1	4.35%
Inventory management	5	21.74%	2	8.70%	1	4.35%
Product recommendations	7	30.43%	2	8.70%	0	0.00%
Accounting	7	30.43%	1	4.35%	1	4.35%
Supply chain operations	8	34.78%	1	4.35%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	6	26.09%	6	26.09%	2	8.70%
Application and screening management	5	21.74%	6	26.09%	1	4.35%
Audience segmentation	8	34.78%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	6	26.09%	2	8.70%	2	8.70%
Idea generation	5	21.74%	2	8.70%	2	8.70%
Process automation	6	26.09%	3	13.04%	3	13.04%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	5	21.74%	7	30.43%	1	4.35%

# **Nevada**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Nevada

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	6.90%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	2	6.90%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	3	10.34%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	4	13.79%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	3	10.34%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	3	10.34%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	1	3.45%
Services (Except Public Administration)	3	10.34%
Transportation & Warehousing	2	6.90%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	6	20.69%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	8	27.59%
100 to 249	7	24.14%
250 to 499	4	13.79%
500 to 999	6	20.69%
1,000 or more	4	13.79%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	24	82.76%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	1	3.45%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	4	13.79%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Nevada

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	14	48.3%
Stay the same	10	34.5%
Decline	5	17.2%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	7	24.1%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	9	31.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	5	17.2%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	13.8%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	10.3%
Do not know	1	3.4%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	4	13.8%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	15	51.7%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	7	24.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	3.4%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	2	6.9%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	18	69.23%	13	50.00%
Mild	6	23.08%	10	38.46%
Serious	2	7.69%	3	11.54%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	3	11.11%	2	8.00%
Mild	14	51.85%	13	52.00%
Serious	10	37.04%	10	40.00%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	19	70.37%	15	55.56%
Mild	8	29.63%	10	37.04%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	7.41%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	11	40.74%	8	30.77%
Mild	12	44.44%	12	46.15%
Serious	4	14.81%	6	23.08%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Nevada

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	7	25.93%	6	23.08%
Mild	14	51.85%	13	50.00%
Serious	6	22.22%	7	26.92%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	2	7.41%	2	7.41%
Mild	13	48.15%	14	51.85%
Serious	12	44.44%	11	40.74%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	3	10.71%	3	11.11%
Mild	14	50.00%	17	62.96%
Serious	11	39.29%	7	25.93%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	11	39.29%	9	33.33%
Mild	11	39.29%	10	37.04%
Serious	6	21.43%	8	29.63%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	6	20.69%	7	25.00%
Mild	18	62.07%	17	60.71%
Serious	5	17.24%	4	14.29%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	16	61.54%	15	55.56%
Mild	10	38.46%	10	37.04%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	7.41%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	16	59.26%	15	53.57%
Mild	8	29.63%	10	35.71%
Serious	3	11.11%	3	10.71%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	8	28.57%	7	26.92%
Mild	10	35.71%	10	38.46%
Serious	10	35.71%	9	34.62%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	7	25.93%	7	25.93%
Mild	12	44.44%	13	48.15%
Serious	8	29.63%	7	25.93%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	9	36.00%	9	34.62%
Mild	13	52.00%	13	50.00%
Serious	3	12.00%	4	15.38%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Nevada

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	7	26.92%	5	19.23%
Mild	12	46.15%	14	53.85%
Serious	7	26.92%	7	26.92%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	7	25.00%	8	29.63%
Mild	16	57.14%	13	48.15%
Serious	5	17.86%	6	22.22%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	13	48.15%	13	48.15%
Mild	9	33.33%	9	33.33%
Serious	5	18.52%	5	18.52%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	11	40.74%	10	38.46%
Mild	15	55.56%	15	57.69%
Serious	1	3.70%	1	3.85%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	6	22.22%	4	15.38%
Mild	13	48.15%	15	57.69%
Serious	9	33.33%	9	34.62%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	4	14.81%	4	15.38%
Mild	16	59.26%	16	61.54%
Serious	7	25.93%	7	26.92%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	5	18.52%	3	11.54%
Mild	13	48.15%	15	57.69%
Serious	9	33.33%	9	34.62%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	1	3.70%	2	7.69%
Mild	12	44.44%	11	42.31%
Serious	14	51.85%	14	53.85%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	15	55.56%	14	53.85%
Mild	10	37.04%	11	42.31%
Serious	2	7.41%	2	7.69%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	12	44.44%	7	26.92%
Mild	13	48.15%	17	65.38%
Serious	2	7.41%	4	15.38%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	8	29.63%	8	30.77%
Mild	11	40.74%	12	46.15%
Serious	8	29.63%	7	26.92%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Nevada

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	12	44.44%	9	34.62%
Mild	10	37.04%	14	53.85%
Serious	5	18.52%	5	19.23%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	7	25.93%	7	26.92%
Mild	14	51.85%	12	46.15%
Serious	4	14.81%	6	23.08%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	12	44.44%	12	46.15%
Mild	4	14.81%	4	15.38%
Serious	1	3.70%	1	3.85%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	1	0	0	3
Competition in general	6	0	4	22
Product obsolescence	1	0	1	4
Changing customer preferences	2	3	0	12
Customer's ability to afford	4	1	0	14
Talent acquisition	3	6	3	24
Talent retention	3	3	2	17
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	1	1	3
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	0	3	2	8
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	1	1
Ability to maintain quality product/service	2	2	1	11
Cost of materials	3	4	1	18
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	1	1
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	0	1	4
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	0	1	1
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	0	2
Inflation	0	1	1	3
Employee engagement	0	1	2	4
Developing future leaders	0	1	2	4
Cybersecurity	2	0	2	8
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	1	0	2
Political uncertainty	1	1	1	6
Talent skills gap	0	0	2	2
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Nevada

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	2	6.90%
Slightly less than planned	9	31.03%
As planned	8	27.59%
Slightly more than planned	6	20.69%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	4	13.79%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	18	62.07%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	8	27.59%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	3	10.34%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	15	51.72%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	3.45%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	12	41.38%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	3.45%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	14	48.28%	8	27.59%
No	15	51.72%	21	72.41%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	28	96.55%	24	82.76%
No	1	3.45%	5	17.24%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	25	89.29%	20	71.43%
No	3	10.71%	8	28.57%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	2	18.18%	2	18.18%
No	9	81.82%	9	81.82%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	16	72.73%	15	68.18%
No	6	27.27%	7	31.82%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Nevada

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	20	68.97%
None due to this	9	31.03%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	6	20.69%
None due to this	23	79.31%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	3.45%
Some due to this	25	86.21%
None due to this	3	10.34%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	3.45%
Some due to this	25	86.21%
None due to this	3	10.34%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	3.45%
Some due to this	19	65.52%
None due to this	9	31.03%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	8	27.59%
None due to this	21	72.41%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Nevada

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	6	24.21%	3	10.34%	8	27.59%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	16.91%	5	17.24%	4	13.79%
Somewhat satisfied	14	43.32%	15	51.72%	12	41.38%
Very satisfied	6	10.85%	6	20.69%	5	17.24%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	16	55.17%	5	17.24%	2	6.90%
Middle managers	12	41.38%	2	6.90%	6	20.69%
Professional staff (non-managers)	13	44.83%	7	24.14%	11	37.93%
Skilled production workers	12	41.38%	3	10.34%	9	31.03%
Unskilled production workers	9	31.03%	5	17.24%	8	27.59%
Entry-level office workers	7	24.14%	5	17.24%	8	27.59%
Entry-level non-office workers	3	10.34%	2	6.90%	6	20.69%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	6	20.69%	1	3.45%	4	13.79%
Service workers	5	17.24%	1	3.45%	5	17.24%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None	2	6.90%	2	6.90%	2	6.90%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Nevada

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	15	51.72%	13	44.83%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	3	10.34%	15	51.72%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	7	24.14%	16	55.17%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	16	55.17%	19	65.52%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	16	55.17%	3	10.34%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	15	51.72%	1	3.45%
Increasing starting salaries	22	75.86%	6	20.69%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	7	24.14%	7	24.14%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	6	20.69%	4	13.79%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	5	17.24%	3	10.34%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	4	13.79%	6	20.69%
Shortening the hiring process	9	31.03%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	11	37.93%	5	17.24%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	13	44.83%	10	34.48%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	3	10.34%	5	17.24%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	17	58.62%	3	10.34%
Participating in job fairs	15	51.72%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	10	34.48%	3	10.34%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	6	20.69%	3	10.34%
Using formal candidate tracking system	11	37.93%	3	10.34%
Other	2	6.90%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	15	51.72%
Team incentives	5	17.24%
Employee referral bonuses	21	72.41%
Year-end bonuses	12	41.38%
Spot bonuses	4	13.79%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	14	48.28%
Retention bonuses	2	6.90%
Commissions	10	34.48%
Project bonuses	4	13.79%
Profit sharing	4	13.79%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	7	24.14%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Nevada

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	6	20.69%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	18	62.07%
Resources to do their job effectively	3	10.34%
Mentoring opportunities	1	3.45%
Competitive/robust health benefits	10	34.48%
Opportunities to connect with others	2	6.90%
Driven by the mission of the organization	4	13.79%
Recognition and reward for good performance	12	41.38%
Ongoing training on new technologies	0	0.00%
Competitive pay	20	68.97%
Good work/life balance	24	82.76%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	1	3.45%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	15	51.72%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	8	27.59%
Hybrid work opportunities	7	24.14%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	1	3.45%
Strong organizational culture	6	20.69%
Challenging work	0	0.00%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	7	24.14%
Focus on employee safety	1	3.45%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	2	6.90%
No change	11	37.93%
More difficult	16	55.17%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Nevada

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	2	12.50%
Lack of qualified candidates	16	100.00%
Lack of technical skills	5	31.25%
Lack of soft skills	4	25.00%
Lack of work experience	3	18.75%
Our organization's geographic location	4	25.00%
Market competition/high demand	7	43.75%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	9	56.25%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	4	25.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	0	0.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	5	31.25%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	8	27.59%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	17	58.62%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	6.90%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	6.90%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	0	0.00%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	4	13.79%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	14	48.28%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	6	20.69%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	3.45%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	4	13.79%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	1	3.45%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	7	24.14%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	2	6.90%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	10.34%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	8	27.59%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	13.79%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	4	13.79%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Nevada

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	18	62.07%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	8	27.59%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	19	65.52%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	4	13.79%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	6	20.69%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	15	51.72%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	4	13.79%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	4	13.79%
Creating/redefining policies	4	13.79%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	4	13.79%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	9	31.03%
N/A	2	6.90%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	1	3.45%
No	21	72.41%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	7	24.14%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	13	44.83%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	2	6.90%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	11	37.93%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	3	10.34%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Nevada

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	26	89.66%
Paid lump sum awards	2	6.90%
Paid variable/bonus awards	9	31.03%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	1	3.45%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	3.45%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	2	6.90%
Uncertain	1	3.45%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	24	82.76%
Paying lump sum awards	2	6.90%
Paying variable/bonus awards	8	27.59%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	1	3.45%
Reducing wages/salaries	1	3.45%
Reducing hours worked	1	3.45%
Uncertain	3	10.34%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	19	65.52%	16	55.17%
Increased standard wages	9	31.03%	8	27.59%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	15	51.72%	13	44.83%
Implemented or increased variable pay	3	10.34%	4	13.79%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	3.45%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	3	10.34%	3	10.34%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Nevada

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	8	27.59%	8	27.59%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	4	13.79%	3	10.34%
Invest in new technology	14	48.28%	16	55.17%
Invest in equipment	14	48.28%	15	51.72%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	2	6.90%	2	6.90%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	3	10.34%	2	6.90%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	6	20.69%	5	17.24%
Increase training budget	10	34.48%	8	27.59%
Increase total rewards communication/education	4	13.79%	8	27.59%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	12	41.38%	11	37.93%
Increase recruiting emphasis	9	31.03%	9	31.03%
Pay above market rates	1	3.45%	2	6.90%
Enhance the benefits package	6	20.69%	6	20.69%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	13	44.83%	14	48.28%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	7	24.14%	9	31.03%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	6	20.69%	5	17.24%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	3	10.34%	2	6.90%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	1	3.45%	1	3.45%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	4	13.79%	6	20.69%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	5	17.24%	8	27.59%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	1	3.45%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	1	3.45%	2	6.90%
Reduce training budget	0	0.00%	1	3.45%
Limiting employee travel	6	20.69%	4	13.79%
Hiring freezes	3	10.34%	2	6.90%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	6	20.69%	2	6.90%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	2	6.90%	1	3.45%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	1	3.45%
Outsourcing roles or functions	1	3.45%	1	3.45%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Nevada

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	8	27.59%	1	3.45%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	10	34.48%	3	10.34%
Increasing presence on social media	19	65.52%	7	24.14%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	3	10.34%	2	6.90%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	12	41.38%	4	13.79%
Partnering with brand influencers	2	6.90%	2	6.90%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	8	27.59%	5	17.24%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	15	51.72%	6	20.69%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	11	37.93%	6	20.69%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Nevada

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	11	37.93%	8	27.59%	1	3.45%
Website content production	10	34.48%	6	20.69%	6	20.69%
Marketing content production	7	24.14%	8	27.59%	6	20.69%
Other content production	8	27.59%	5	17.24%	6	20.69%
Digital personal assistant	12	41.38%	5	17.24%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	9	31.03%	7	24.14%	2	6.90%
Customer relationship management	10	34.48%	7	24.14%	2	6.90%
Inventory management	10	34.48%	6	20.69%	2	6.90%
Product recommendations	13	44.83%	6	20.69%	0	0.00%
Accounting	12	41.38%	4	13.79%	2	6.90%
Supply chain operations	14	48.28%	3	10.34%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	8	27.59%	8	27.59%	3	10.34%
Application and screening management	6	20.69%	8	27.59%	3	10.34%
Audience segmentation	14	48.28%	2	6.90%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	10	34.48%	5	17.24%	3	10.34%
Idea generation	10	34.48%	4	13.79%	4	13.79%
Process automation	12	41.38%	3	10.34%	2	6.90%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	11	37.93%	4	13.79%	3	10.34%

# **New Hampshire**



# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 17

Report Cut: New Hampshire

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	5.88%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	3	17.65%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	1	5.88%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	1	5.88%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	2	11.76%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	3	17.65%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	2	11.76%
Services (Except Public Administration)	1	5.88%
Transportation & Warehousing	1	5.88%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	2	11.76%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	5	29.41%
100 to 249	5	29.41%
250 to 499	2	11.76%
500 to 999	0	0.00%
1,000 or more	5	29.41%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	14	82.35%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	1	5.88%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	2	11.76%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 17

Report Cut: New Hampshire

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	6	35.3%
Stay the same	9	52.9%
Decline	2	11.8%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	5.9%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	9	52.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	4	23.5%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	17.6%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	0	0.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	11.8%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	9	52.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	5	29.4%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	5.9%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	0	0.0%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	8	53.33%	8	53.33%
Mild	7	46.67%	7	46.67%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	10	62.50%	10	66.67%
Serious	6	37.50%	5	33.33%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	10	62.50%	8	50.00%
Mild	6	37.50%	7	43.75%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	6.25%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	6	37.50%	4	25.00%
Mild	6	37.50%	7	43.75%
Serious	4	25.00%	5	31.25%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 17

Report Cut: New Hampshire

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	4	25.00%	5	31.25%
Mild	9	56.25%	8	50.00%
Serious	3	18.75%	3	18.75%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Mild	6	37.50%	6	37.50%
Serious	9	56.25%	10	62.50%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	2	12.50%	2	12.50%
Mild	3	18.75%	3	18.75%
Serious	11	68.75%	11	68.75%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	1	6.25%	1	6.25%
Mild	9	56.25%	7	43.75%
Serious	6	37.50%	8	50.00%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	3	18.75%	2	12.50%
Mild	7	43.75%	8	50.00%
Serious	6	37.50%	6	37.50%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	10	62.50%	10	62.50%
Mild	5	31.25%	5	31.25%
Serious	1	6.25%	1	6.25%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	9	56.25%	8	50.00%
Mild	5	31.25%	6	37.50%
Serious	2	12.50%	2	12.50%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	5	31.25%	5	33.33%
Mild	7	43.75%	6	40.00%
Serious	4	25.00%	4	26.67%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	5	31.25%	5	31.25%
Mild	8	50.00%	7	43.75%
Serious	3	18.75%	4	25.00%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	3	21.43%	3	20.00%
Mild	7	50.00%	8	53.33%
Serious	4	28.57%	4	26.67%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 17

Report Cut: New Hampshire

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	3	18.75%	3	18.75%
Mild	8	50.00%	9	56.25%
Serious	5	31.25%	4	25.00%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	4	25.00%	3	18.75%
Mild	8	50.00%	10	62.50%
Serious	4	25.00%	3	18.75%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	9	56.25%	9	56.25%
Mild	4	25.00%	4	25.00%
Serious	3	18.75%	3	18.75%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	4	25.00%	4	26.67%
Mild	9	56.25%	9	60.00%
Serious	3	18.75%	2	13.33%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	3	18.75%	2	13.33%
Mild	6	37.50%	7	46.67%
Serious	7	43.75%	6	40.00%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Mild	10	62.50%	9	60.00%
Serious	5	31.25%	6	40.00%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	3	18.75%	3	20.00%
Mild	8	50.00%	5	33.33%
Serious	5	31.25%	7	46.67%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	6	37.50%	6	40.00%
Serious	9	56.25%	10	66.67%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	7	43.75%	7	46.67%
Mild	7	43.75%	7	46.67%
Serious	2	12.50%	2	13.33%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	6	37.50%	5	33.33%
Mild	9	56.25%	8	53.33%
Serious	1	6.25%	3	20.00%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	6	37.50%	6	40.00%
Mild	5	31.25%	7	46.67%
Serious	5	31.25%	3	20.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 17

Report Cut: New Hampshire

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	5	31.25%	4	26.67%
Mild	7	43.75%	7	46.67%
Serious	4	25.00%	5	33.33%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	4	25.00%	4	26.67%
Mild	10	62.50%	10	66.67%
Serious	1	6.25%	1	6.67%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	7	43.75%	7	46.67%
Mild	2	12.50%	2	13.33%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	3	0	1	10
Product obsolescence	0	0	1	1
Changing customer preferences	1	2	1	8
Customer's ability to afford	1	0	0	3
Talent acquisition	2	2	3	13
Talent retention	2	4	1	15
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	0	1	4
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	1	0	1	4
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	2	1	0	8
Cost of materials	1	2	0	7
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	2	0	0	6
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	0	0	0
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	2	0	4
Inflation	0	1	1	3
Employee engagement	0	0	2	2
Developing future leaders	0	1	2	4
Cybersecurity	0	0	1	1
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	0	0
Political uncertainty	0	0	1	1
Talent skills gap	0	1	0	2
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 17

Report Cut: New Hampshire

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%
Slightly less than planned	7	41.18%
As planned	7	41.18%
Slightly more than planned	1	5.88%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	1	5.88%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	8	47.06%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	7	41.18%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	5.88%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	12	70.59%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	5	29.41%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	7	43.75%	4	25.00%
No	9	56.25%	12	75.00%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	12	75.00%	11	68.75%
No	4	25.00%	5	31.25%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	12	75.00%	10	62.50%
No	4	25.00%	6	37.50%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	1	16.67%	1	16.67%
No	5	83.33%	5	83.33%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	7	53.85%	7	53.85%
No	6	46.15%	6	46.15%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 17

Report Cut: New Hampshire

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	14	87.50%
None due to this	2	12.50%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	2	12.50%
None due to this	14	87.50%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	6.25%
Some due to this	15	93.75%
None due to this	0	0.00%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	6.25%
Some due to this	13	81.25%
None due to this	2	12.50%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	11	68.75%
None due to this	5	31.25%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	4	25.00%
None due to this	12	75.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 17

Report Cut: New Hampshire

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	4	24.21%	1	6.25%	4	25.00%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0	16.91%	2	12.50%	4	25.00%
Somewhat satisfied	8	43.32%	8	50.00%	6	37.50%
Very satisfied	4	10.85%	5	31.25%	2	12.50%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	4	23.53%	1	5.88%	2	11.76%
Middle managers	4	23.53%	1	5.88%	6	35.29%
Professional staff (non-managers)	8	47.06%	1	5.88%	7	41.18%
Skilled production workers	5	29.41%	0	0.00%	4	23.53%
Unskilled production workers	5	29.41%	0	0.00%	3	17.65%
Entry-level office workers	4	23.53%	1	5.88%	6	35.29%
Entry-level non-office workers	2	11.76%	0	0.00%	4	23.53%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	2	11.76%	0	0.00%	1	5.88%
Service workers	6	35.29%	0	0.00%	3	17.65%
Other	1	5.88%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None	1	5.88%	2	11.76%	0	0.00%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 17

Report Cut: New Hampshire

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	7	41.18%	4	23.53%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	4	23.53%	5	29.41%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	4	23.53%	5	29.41%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	7	41.18%	11	64.71%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	10	58.82%	1	5.88%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	11	64.71%	2	11.76%
Increasing starting salaries	12	70.59%	3	17.65%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	6	35.29%	6	35.29%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	4	23.53%	4	23.53%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	3	17.65%	1	5.88%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	2	11.76%	4	23.53%
Shortening the hiring process	3	17.65%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	4	23.53%	2	11.76%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	8	47.06%	4	23.53%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	4	23.53%	1	5.88%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	12	70.59%	0	0.00%
Participating in job fairs	10	58.82%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	7	41.18%	3	17.65%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	1	5.88%	0	0.00%
Using formal candidate tracking system	6	35.29%	0	0.00%
Other	1	5.88%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	7	41.18%
Team incentives	3	17.65%
Employee referral bonuses	12	70.59%
Year-end bonuses	7	41.18%
Spot bonuses	6	35.29%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	10	58.82%
Retention bonuses	1	5.88%
Commissions	7	41.18%
Project bonuses	2	11.76%
Profit sharing	2	11.76%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	4	23.53%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 17

Report Cut: New Hampshire

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	3	17.65%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	8	47.06%
Resources to do their job effectively	5	29.41%
Mentoring opportunities	2	11.76%
Competitive/robust health benefits	8	47.06%
Opportunities to connect with others	0	0.00%
Driven by the mission of the organization	2	11.76%
Recognition and reward for good performance	4	23.53%
Ongoing training on new technologies	1	5.88%
Competitive pay	12	70.59%
Good work/life balance	13	76.47%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	1	5.88%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	5	29.41%
Current technology	1	5.88%
Remote work opportunities	5	29.41%
Hybrid work opportunities	2	11.76%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	0	0.00%
Strong organizational culture	3	17.65%
Challenging work	2	11.76%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	3	17.65%
Focus on employee safety	1	5.88%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	0	0.00%
No change	10	62.50%
More difficult	6	37.50%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 17

Report Cut: New Hampshire

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	0	0.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	6	100.00%
Lack of technical skills	2	33.33%
Lack of soft skills	0	0.00%
Lack of work experience	0	0.00%
Our organization's geographic location	0	0.00%
Market competition/high demand	3	50.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	4	66.67%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	1	16.67%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	0	0.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	1	16.67%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	3	18.75%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	6	37.50%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	5	31.25%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	2	12.50%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	12.50%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	9	56.25%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	12.50%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	6.25%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	2	12.50%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	1	5.88%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	4	23.53%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	2	11.76%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	5.88%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	23.53%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	23.53%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	2	11.76%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 17

Report Cut: New Hampshire

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	10	58.82%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	5	29.41%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	11	64.71%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	2	11.76%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	4	23.53%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	9	52.94%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	1	5.88%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	3	17.65%
Creating/redefining policies	4	23.53%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	2	11.76%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	2	11.76%
N/A	2	11.76%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	0	0.00%
No	14	87.50%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	2	12.50%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	8	50.00%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	2	12.50%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	6	37.50%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 17

Report Cut: New Hampshire

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	17	100.00%
Paid lump sum awards	0	0.00%
Paid variable/bonus awards	5	29.41%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	1	5.88%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	1	5.88%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	14	82.35%
Paying lump sum awards	0	0.00%
Paying variable/bonus awards	5	29.41%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	1	5.88%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	2	11.76%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	9	52.94%	8	47.06%
Increased standard wages	6	35.29%	6	35.29%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	10	58.82%	6	35.29%
Implemented or increased variable pay	1	5.88%	0	0.00%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	5.88%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	2	11.76%	2	11.76%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 17

Report Cut: New Hampshire

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	6	35.29%	5	29.41%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	3	17.65%	2	11.76%
Invest in new technology	6	35.29%	7	41.18%
Invest in equipment	5	29.41%	3	17.65%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	0	0.00%	1	5.88%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	3	17.65%	1	5.88%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	3	17.65%	0	0.00%
Increase training budget	5	29.41%	5	29.41%
Increase total rewards communication/education	5	29.41%	5	29.41%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	5	29.41%	4	23.53%
Increase recruiting emphasis	4	23.53%	3	17.65%
Pay above market rates	2	11.76%	2	11.76%
Enhance the benefits package	5	29.41%	5	29.41%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	4	23.53%	4	23.53%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	4	23.53%	6	35.29%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	1	5.88%	1	5.88%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	1	5.88%	1	5.88%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	2	11.76%	5	29.41%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	5.88%	2	11.76%
Hold off on investing in new technology	1	5.88%	1	5.88%
Hold off on investing in equipment	1	5.88%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	1	5.88%	0	0.00%
Reduce training budget	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Limiting employee travel	3	17.65%	1	5.88%
Hiring freezes	2	11.76%	0	0.00%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	5	29.41%	2	11.76%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	3	17.65%	2	11.76%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 17

Report Cut: New Hampshire

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	4	23.53%	0	0.00%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	8	47.06%	1	5.88%
Increasing presence on social media	14	82.35%	3	17.65%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	3	17.65%	1	5.88%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	4	23.53%	1	5.88%
Partnering with brand influencers	2	11.76%	0	0.00%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	5	29.41%	3	17.65%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	8	47.06%	1	5.88%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	6	35.29%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 17

Report Cut: New Hampshire

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	8	47.06%	2	11.76%	0	0.00%
Website content production	6	35.29%	4	23.53%	1	5.88%
Marketing content production	4	23.53%	6	35.29%	1	5.88%
Other content production	4	23.53%	5	29.41%	1	5.88%
Digital personal assistant	8	47.06%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	5	29.41%	4	23.53%	2	11.76%
Customer relationship management	6	35.29%	1	5.88%	2	11.76%
Inventory management	6	35.29%	2	11.76%	1	5.88%
Product recommendations	7	41.18%	1	5.88%	0	0.00%
Accounting	8	47.06%	0	0.00%	1	5.88%
Supply chain operations	8	47.06%	1	5.88%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	7	41.18%	2	11.76%	1	5.88%
Application and screening management	6	35.29%	4	23.53%	1	5.88%
Audience segmentation	7	41.18%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	6	35.29%	2	11.76%	1	5.88%
Idea generation	5	29.41%	3	17.65%	1	5.88%
Process automation	6	35.29%	2	11.76%	1	5.88%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	7	41.18%	0	0.00%	1	5.88%



# **New Jersey**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 51

Report Cut: New Jersey

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	3	5.88%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	1	1.96%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	5	9.80%
Education Services	3	5.88%
Financial & Insurance	6	11.76%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1	1.96%
Information	1	1.96%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	5	9.80%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	6	11.76%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	1	1.96%
Retail Trade	4	7.84%
Services (Except Public Administration)	8	15.69%
Transportation & Warehousing	2	3.92%
Utilities	1	1.96%
Wholesale Trade	4	7.84%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	20	39.22%
100 to 249	14	27.45%
250 to 499	9	17.65%
500 to 999	2	3.92%
1,000 or more	6	11.76%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	39	76.47%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	2	3.92%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	10	19.61%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 51

Report Cut: New Jersey

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	17	33.3%
Stay the same	26	51.0%
Decline	8	15.7%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	6	11.8%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	28	54.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	10	19.6%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	5.9%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	5.9%
Do not know	1	2.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	7	13.7%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	29	56.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	11	21.6%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	2.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	2.0%
Do not know	2	3.9%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	36	73.47%	30	61.22%
Mild	12	24.49%	15	30.61%
Serious	1	2.04%	4	8.16%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	6	12.00%	5	10.20%
Mild	31	62.00%	32	65.31%
Serious	13	26.00%	12	24.49%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	32	64.00%	25	50.00%
Mild	17	34.00%	21	42.00%
Serious	1	2.00%	4	8.00%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	16	32.65%	9	18.37%
Mild	27	55.10%	31	63.27%
Serious	6	12.24%	9	18.37%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 51

Report Cut: New Jersey

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	16	32.00%	15	30.00%
Mild	24	48.00%	23	46.00%
Serious	10	20.00%	12	24.00%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	5	10.00%	3	6.00%
Mild	27	54.00%	22	44.00%
Serious	18	36.00%	25	50.00%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	7	14.00%	7	14.29%
Mild	24	48.00%	19	38.78%
Serious	19	38.00%	23	46.94%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	12	24.00%	8	16.00%
Mild	29	58.00%	24	48.00%
Serious	9	18.00%	18	36.00%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	9	18.37%	7	14.29%
Mild	26	53.06%	26	53.06%
Serious	14	28.57%	16	32.65%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	28	57.14%	27	54.00%
Mild	14	28.57%	14	28.00%
Serious	7	14.29%	9	18.00%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	27	54.00%	24	48.00%
Mild	21	42.00%	23	46.00%
Serious	2	4.00%	3	6.00%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	20	40.82%	17	35.42%
Mild	21	42.86%	24	50.00%
Serious	8	16.33%	7	14.58%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	24	48.00%	22	44.00%
Mild	18	36.00%	19	38.00%
Serious	8	16.00%	9	18.00%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	13	27.66%	13	27.08%
Mild	30	63.83%	29	60.42%
Serious	4	8.51%	6	12.50%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 51

Report Cut: New Jersey

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	11	22.45%	10	20.41%
Mild	28	57.14%	26	53.06%
Serious	10	20.41%	13	26.53%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	7	14.00%	7	14.00%
Mild	28	56.00%	29	58.00%
Serious	15	30.00%	14	28.00%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	21	42.00%	22	44.00%
Mild	16	32.00%	15	30.00%
Serious	13	26.00%	13	26.00%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	16	32.00%	16	32.65%
Mild	28	56.00%	25	51.02%
Serious	6	12.00%	8	16.33%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	5	10.00%	4	8.16%
Mild	30	60.00%	32	65.31%
Serious	15	30.00%	14	28.57%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	8	16.00%	5	10.20%
Mild	23	46.00%	25	51.02%
Serious	19	38.00%	18	36.73%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	6	12.00%	4	8.16%
Mild	21	42.00%	17	34.69%
Serious	22	44.00%	28	57.14%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	20	40.00%	20	40.82%
Serious	30	60.00%	30	61.22%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	21	42.00%	18	36.73%
Mild	24	48.00%	25	51.02%
Serious	5	10.00%	7	14.29%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	13	26.00%	7	14.29%
Mild	28	56.00%	27	55.10%
Serious	9	18.00%	16	32.65%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	10	20.00%	13	26.53%
Mild	25	50.00%	24	48.98%
Serious	15	30.00%	13	26.53%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 51

Report Cut: New Jersey

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	13	26.00%	9	18.37%
Mild	30	60.00%	33	67.35%
Serious	7	14.00%	8	16.33%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	16	32.00%	15	30.61%
Mild	27	54.00%	26	53.06%
Serious	6	12.00%	8	16.33%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	31	62.00%	31	63.27%
Mild	7	14.00%	6	12.24%
Serious	1	2.00%	2	4.08%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	1	0	2
Competition in general	4	1	4	18
Product obsolescence	0	0	3	3
Changing customer preferences	2	2	3	13
Customer's ability to afford	7	1	2	25
Talent acquisition	3	4	8	25
Talent retention	7	6	1	34
Ability to pay for benefits costs	2	1	3	11
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	5	6	2	29
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	1	0	2
Ability to maintain quality product/service	3	1	0	11
Cost of materials	3	6	1	22
Cost of equipment	0	1	0	2
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	2	1	1	9
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	1	2	3	10
Employee safety	2	0	2	8
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	3	1	7
Inflation	0	1	2	4
Employee engagement	1	4	3	14
Developing future leaders	2	3	4	16
Cybersecurity	2	3	4	16
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	2	2	1	11
Political uncertainty	0	0	1	1
Talent skills gap	2	0	0	6
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 51

Report Cut: New Jersey

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	2	3.92%
Slightly less than planned	15	29.41%
As planned	20	39.22%
Slightly more than planned	10	19.61%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	3	5.88%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	31	60.78%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	14	27.45%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	5	9.80%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	30	58.83%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	3	5.88%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	16	31.37%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	3.92%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	19	39.58%	12	25.00%
No	29	60.42%	36	75.00%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	40	81.63%	39	78.00%
No	9	18.37%	11	22.00%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	42	84.00%	40	80.00%
No	8	16.00%	10	20.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	6	33.33%	6	35.29%
No	12	66.67%	11	64.71%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	25	71.43%	26	76.47%
No	10	28.57%	8	23.53%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 51

Report Cut: New Jersey

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	43	87.76%
None due to this	6	12.24%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	9	18.37%
None due to this	40	81.63%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	47	94.00%
None due to this	3	6.00%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	2.04%
Some due to this	39	79.59%
None due to this	9	18.37%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	33	66.00%
None due to this	17	34.00%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	2.08%
Some due to this	9	18.75%
None due to this	38	79.17%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 51

Report Cut: New Jersey

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	1	2.00%	0	0.00%	2	4.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	6	24.21%	4	8.00%	9	18.00%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7	16.91%	7	14.00%	11	22.00%
Somewhat satisfied	27	43.32%	30	60.00%	21	42.00%
Very satisfied	9	10.85%	9	18.00%	7	14.00%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	18	35.29%	6	11.76%	7	13.73%
Middle managers	20	39.22%	8	15.69%	18	35.29%
Professional staff (non-managers)	26	50.98%	7	13.73%	21	41.18%
Skilled production workers	15	29.41%	2	3.92%	11	21.57%
Unskilled production workers	11	21.57%	4	7.84%	11	21.57%
Entry-level office workers	12	23.53%	5	9.80%	13	25.49%
Entry-level non-office workers	5	9.80%	1	1.96%	7	13.73%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	8	15.69%	1	1.96%	5	9.80%
Service workers	12	23.53%	3	5.88%	7	13.73%
Other	2	3.92%	0	0.00%	1	1.96%
None	2	3.92%	3	5.88%	2	3.92%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 51

Report Cut: New Jersey

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	20	39.22%	17	33.33%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	7	13.73%	22	43.14%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	13	25.49%	28	54.90%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	17	33.33%	31	60.78%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	28	54.90%	9	17.65%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	27	52.94%	3	5.88%
Increasing starting salaries	30	58.82%	8	15.69%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	13	25.49%	13	25.49%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	12	23.53%	12	23.53%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	7	13.73%	4	7.84%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	4	7.84%	8	15.69%
Shortening the hiring process	13	25.49%	2	3.92%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	20	39.22%	9	17.65%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	27	52.94%	16	31.37%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	9	17.65%	10	19.61%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	32	62.75%	4	7.84%
Participating in job fairs	18	35.29%	1	1.96%
Building/increasing brand awareness	23	45.10%	12	23.53%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	9	17.65%	7	13.73%
Using formal candidate tracking system	21	41.18%	2	3.92%
Other	1	1.96%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	17	33.33%
Team incentives	6	11.76%
Employee referral bonuses	29	56.86%
Year-end bonuses	21	41.18%
Spot bonuses	13	25.49%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	21	41.18%
Retention bonuses	4	7.84%
Commissions	16	31.37%
Project bonuses	3	5.88%
Profit sharing	8	15.69%
Hazard bonuses/pay	1	1.96%
Additional PTO	11	21.57%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 51

Report Cut: New Jersey

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	11	21.57%
Language premiums	2	3.92%
Other*	1	1.96%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	25	49.02%
Resources to do their job effectively	7	13.73%
Mentoring opportunities	3	5.88%
Competitive/robust health benefits	22	43.14%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	1.96%
Driven by the mission of the organization	8	15.69%
Recognition and reward for good performance	17	33.33%
Ongoing training on new technologies	3	5.88%
Competitive pay	37	72.55%
Good work/life balance	40	78.43%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	8	15.69%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	20	39.22%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	12	23.53%
Hybrid work opportunities	15	29.41%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	1	1.96%
Regular full-time hours	1	1.96%
Strong organizational culture	12	23.53%
Challenging work	1	1.96%
Diverse workforce	1	1.96%
Vacation/paid time off	9	17.65%
Focus on employee safety	1	1.96%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	3	6.00%
No change	28	56.00%
More difficult	19	38.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 51

Report Cut: New Jersey

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	4	21.05%
Lack of qualified candidates	14	73.68%
Lack of technical skills	4	21.05%
Lack of soft skills	4	21.05%
Lack of work experience	5	26.32%
Our organization's geographic location	1	5.26%
Market competition/high demand	6	31.58%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	12	63.16%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	5	26.32%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	2	10.53%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	4	21.05%
Other *	1	5.26%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	10	20.00%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	22	44.00%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	8	16.00%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	6	12.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	4	8.00%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	5	10.00%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	24	48.00%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	11	22.00%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	2.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	9	18.00%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	6	11.76%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	15	29.41%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	3	5.88%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	2	3.92%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	15	29.41%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	6	11.76%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	8	15.69%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 51

Report Cut: New Jersey

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	24	47.06%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	14	27.45%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	23	45.10%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	8	15.69%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	4	7.84%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	22	43.14%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	7	13.73%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	6	11.76%
Creating/redefining policies	9	17.65%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	5	9.80%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	8	15.69%
N/A	9	17.65%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	7	14.29%
No	34	69.39%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	8	16.33%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	16	32.00%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	8	16.00%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	20	40.00%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	6	12.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 51

Report Cut: New Jersey

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	49	96.08%
Paid lump sum awards	2	3.92%
Paid variable/bonus awards	17	33.33%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	3	5.88%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	1	1.96%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	47	92.16%
Paying lump sum awards	3	5.88%
Paying variable/bonus awards	19	37.25%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	3	5.88%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	28	54.90%	25	49.02%
Increased standard wages	16	31.37%	17	33.33%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	24	47.06%	26	50.98%
Implemented or increased variable pay	4	7.84%	7	13.73%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	1.96%	0	0.00%
Other	2	3.92%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	3	5.88%	4	7.84%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 51

Report Cut: New Jersey

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	10	19.61%	13	25.49%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	9	17.65%	10	19.61%
Invest in new technology	24	47.06%	32	62.75%
Invest in equipment	13	25.49%	17	33.33%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	3	5.88%	6	11.76%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	4	7.84%	6	11.76%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	5	9.80%	5	9.80%
Increase training budget	13	25.49%	19	37.25%
Increase total rewards communication/education	11	21.57%	20	39.22%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	16	31.37%	17	33.33%
Increase recruiting emphasis	11	21.57%	13	25.49%
Pay above market rates	3	5.88%	4	7.84%
Enhance the benefits package	12	23.53%	13	25.49%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	11	21.57%	16	31.37%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	11	21.57%	13	25.49%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	3	5.88%	3	5.88%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	3	5.88%	3	5.88%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	3	5.88%	2	3.92%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	7	13.73%	10	19.61%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	5	9.80%	9	17.65%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	1.96%	1	1.96%
Hold off on investing in new technology	3	5.88%	1	1.96%
Hold off on investing in equipment	1	1.96%	2	3.92%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	2	3.92%	1	1.96%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	2	3.92%	1	1.96%
Reduce training budget	1	1.96%	4	7.84%
Limiting employee travel	8	15.69%	5	9.80%
Hiring freezes	5	9.80%	6	11.76%
Implementing furloughs	2	3.92%	1	1.96%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	10	19.61%	2	3.92%
Reduce benefits package	1	1.96%	2	3.92%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	2	3.92%	3	5.88%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	2	3.92%
Outsourcing roles or functions	5	9.80%	6	11.76%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 51

Report Cut: New Jersey

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	7	13.73%	3	5.88%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	21	41.18%	2	3.92%
Increasing presence on social media	34	66.67%	4	7.84%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	7	13.73%	3	5.88%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	20	39.22%	4	7.84%
Partnering with brand influencers	2	3.92%	0	0.00%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	16	31.37%	5	9.80%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	21	41.18%	4	7.84%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	17	33.33%	4	7.84%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 51

Report Cut: New Jersey

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	14	27.45%	13	25.49%	1	1.96%
Website content production	10	19.61%	10	19.61%	6	11.76%
Marketing content production	8	15.69%	11	21.57%	9	17.65%
Other content production	10	19.61%	8	15.69%	7	13.73%
Digital personal assistant	17	33.33%	6	11.76%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	14	27.45%	12	23.53%	2	3.92%
Customer relationship management	14	27.45%	9	17.65%	2	3.92%
Inventory management	14	27.45%	5	9.80%	3	5.88%
Product recommendations	17	33.33%	3	5.88%	0	0.00%
Accounting	14	27.45%	7	13.73%	3	5.88%
Supply chain operations	19	37.25%	2	3.92%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	13	25.49%	16	31.37%	3	5.88%
Application and screening management	14	27.45%	10	19.61%	2	3.92%
Audience segmentation	16	31.37%	2	3.92%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	13	25.49%	12	23.53%	2	3.92%
Idea generation	11	21.57%	14	27.45%	3	5.88%
Process automation	13	25.49%	12	23.53%	2	3.92%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	15	29.41%	6	11.76%	3	5.88%

# **New Mexico**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 11

Report Cut: New Mexico

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	1	9.09%
Education Services	1	9.09%
Financial & Insurance	1	9.09%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1	9.09%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	2	18.18%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	1	9.09%
Services (Except Public Administration)	2	18.18%
Transportation & Warehousing	1	9.09%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	1	9.09%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	3	27.27%
100 to 249	1	9.09%
250 to 499	2	18.18%
500 to 999	1	9.09%
1,000 or more	4	36.36%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	6	54.55%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	1	9.09%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	4	36.36%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 11

Report Cut: New Mexico

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	6	54.5%
Stay the same	4	36.4%
Decline	1	9.1%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	18.2%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	6	54.5%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	18.2%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	9.1%
Do not know	0	0.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	10	90.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	1	9.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	0	0.0%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	9	90.00%	9	90.00%
Mild	1	10.00%	1	10.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	2	20.00%	1	10.00%
Mild	5	50.00%	4	40.00%
Serious	3	30.00%	5	50.00%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	8	80.00%	6	60.00%
Mild	2	20.00%	4	40.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	4	40.00%	4	40.00%
Mild	5	50.00%	4	40.00%
Serious	1	10.00%	2	20.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 11

Report Cut: New Mexico

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	2	20.00%	2	20.00%
Mild	4	40.00%	4	40.00%
Serious	4	40.00%	4	40.00%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	1	10.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	4	40.00%	6	60.00%
Serious	5	50.00%	4	40.00%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	5	50.00%	6	60.00%
Serious	5	50.00%	4	40.00%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	4	40.00%	3	30.00%
Serious	6	60.00%	7	70.00%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	6	60.00%	6	60.00%
Serious	4	40.00%	4	40.00%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	5	50.00%	5	50.00%
Mild	4	40.00%	4	40.00%
Serious	1	10.00%	1	10.00%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	6	60.00%	6	60.00%
Mild	3	30.00%	3	30.00%
Serious	1	10.00%	1	10.00%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	4	40.00%	4	40.00%
Mild	2	20.00%	3	30.00%
Serious	4	40.00%	3	30.00%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	4	40.00%	4	40.00%
Mild	4	40.00%	4	40.00%
Serious	2	20.00%	2	20.00%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	3	33.33%	3	33.33%
Mild	6	66.67%	6	66.67%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 11

Report Cut: New Mexico

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	2	20.00%	2	20.00%
Mild	7	70.00%	6	60.00%
Serious	1	10.00%	2	20.00%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	1	10.00%	1	10.00%
Mild	8	80.00%	8	80.00%
Serious	1	10.00%	1	10.00%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	4	40.00%	4	40.00%
Mild	6	60.00%	6	60.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	4	40.00%	4	40.00%
Mild	6	60.00%	6	60.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	2	20.00%	1	10.00%
Mild	6	60.00%	5	50.00%
Serious	2	20.00%	4	40.00%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	1	10.00%	1	10.00%
Mild	6	60.00%	6	60.00%
Serious	3	30.00%	3	30.00%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	7	70.00%	7	70.00%
Serious	3	30.00%	3	30.00%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	1	10.00%
Mild	6	60.00%	5	50.00%
Serious	4	40.00%	4	40.00%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	4	40.00%	4	40.00%
Mild	4	40.00%	4	40.00%
Serious	2	20.00%	2	20.00%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	2	20.00%	2	20.00%
Mild	8	80.00%	7	70.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	10.00%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	2	20.00%	2	20.00%
Mild	5	50.00%	5	50.00%
Serious	3	30.00%	3	30.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 11

Report Cut: New Mexico

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	4	40.00%	3	30.00%
Mild	4	40.00%	4	40.00%
Serious	2	20.00%	3	30.00%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	3	30.00%	3	30.00%
Mild	6	60.00%	6	60.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	5	50.00%	5	50.00%
Mild	2	20.00%	2	20.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	2	0	1	7
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	1	0	0	3
Customer's ability to afford	2	0	0	6
Talent acquisition	2	1	0	8
Talent retention	1	2	0	7
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	1	2	4
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	1	0	2	5
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	0	1	0	2
Cost of materials	1	1	0	5
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	0	0	1	1
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	0	0	0
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	0	2
Inflation	0	0	1	1
Employee engagement	0	0	1	1
Developing future leaders	0	1	0	2
Cybersecurity	0	0	1	1
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	1	0	2
Political uncertainty	0	1	1	3
Talent skills gap	0	0	0	0
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 11

Report Cut: New Mexico

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%
Slightly less than planned	3	27.27%
As planned	3	27.27%
Slightly more than planned	3	27.27%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	1	9.09%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	4	36.36%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	5	45.45%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	9.09%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	5	45.45%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	6	54.55%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	5	50.00%	4	40.00%
No	5	50.00%	6	60.00%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	10	100.00%	9	90.00%
No	0	0.00%	1	10.00%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	9	90.00%	6	60.00%
No	1	10.00%	4	40.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	1	25.00%	1	25.00%
No	3	75.00%	3	75.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	4	66.67%	4	66.67%
No	2	33.33%	2	33.33%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 11

Report Cut: New Mexico

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	8	80.00%
None due to this	2	20.00%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	1	10.00%
None due to this	9	90.00%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	10	100.00%
None due to this	0	0.00%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	9	90.00%
None due to this	1	10.00%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	8	80.00%
None due to this	2	20.00%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	5	55.56%
None due to this	4	44.44%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 11

Report Cut: New Mexico

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	10.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	1	24.21%	1	10.00%	2	20.00%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	16.91%	1	10.00%	2	20.00%
Somewhat satisfied	4	43.32%	6	60.00%	4	40.00%
Very satisfied	3	10.85%	2	20.00%	1	10.00%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	3	27.27%	1	9.09%	2	18.18%
Middle managers	3	27.27%	1	9.09%	3	27.27%
Professional staff (non-managers)	4	36.36%	2	18.18%	6	54.55%
Skilled production workers	3	27.27%	0	0.00%	3	27.27%
Unskilled production workers	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	18.18%
Entry-level office workers	2	18.18%	1	9.09%	4	36.36%
Entry-level non-office workers	1	9.09%	0	0.00%	2	18.18%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	1	9.09%	0	0.00%	2	18.18%
Service workers	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	9.09%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	9.09%
None	2	18.18%	1	9.09%	2	18.18%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 11

Report Cut: New Mexico

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	8	72.73%	5	45.45%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	1	9.09%	3	27.27%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	2	18.18%	6	54.55%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	6	54.55%	7	63.64%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	8	72.73%	2	18.18%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	7	63.64%	0	0.00%
Increasing starting salaries	8	72.73%	4	36.36%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	3	27.27%	3	27.27%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	3	27.27%	2	18.18%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	4	36.36%	2	18.18%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	2	18.18%	6	54.55%
Shortening the hiring process	4	36.36%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	5	45.45%	1	9.09%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	6	54.55%	5	45.45%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	3	27.27%	2	18.18%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	7	63.64%	1	9.09%
Participating in job fairs	7	63.64%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	5	45.45%	1	9.09%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	5	45.45%	1	9.09%
Using formal candidate tracking system	5	45.45%	1	9.09%
Other	2	18.18%	1	9.09%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	7	63.64%
Team incentives	2	18.18%
Employee referral bonuses	7	63.64%
Year-end bonuses	5	45.45%
Spot bonuses	3	27.27%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	6	54.55%
Retention bonuses	2	18.18%
Commissions	5	45.45%
Project bonuses	1	9.09%
Profit sharing	0	0.00%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	5	45.45%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 11

Report Cut: New Mexico

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	2	18.18%
Language premiums	1	9.09%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	6	54.55%
Resources to do their job effectively	1	9.09%
Mentoring opportunities	1	9.09%
Competitive/robust health benefits	5	45.45%
Opportunities to connect with others	0	0.00%
Driven by the mission of the organization	2	18.18%
Recognition and reward for good performance	1	9.09%
Ongoing training on new technologies	0	0.00%
Competitive pay	9	81.82%
Good work/life balance	5	45.45%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	1	9.09%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	3	27.27%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	2	18.18%
Hybrid work opportunities	4	36.36%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	1	9.09%
Regular full-time hours	0	0.00%
Strong organizational culture	3	27.27%
Challenging work	0	0.00%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	3	27.27%
Focus on employee safety	1	9.09%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	0	0.00%
No change	6	60.00%
More difficult	4	40.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 11

Report Cut: New Mexico

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	0	0.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	4	100.00%
Lack of technical skills	1	25.00%
Lack of soft skills	0	0.00%
Lack of work experience	0	0.00%
Our organization's geographic location	1	25.00%
Market competition/high demand	3	75.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	2	50.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	1	25.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	0	0.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	3	75.00%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	3	30.00%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	5	50.00%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	20.00%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	0	0.00%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	20.00%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	5	50.00%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	30.00%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	0	0.00%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	2	18.18%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	3	27.27%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	2	18.18%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	27.27%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	2	18.18%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 11

Report Cut: New Mexico

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	8	72.73%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	2	18.18%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	7	63.64%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	4	36.36%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	3	27.27%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	5	45.45%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	3	27.27%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	3	27.27%
Creating/redefining policies	4	36.36%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	2	18.18%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	5	45.45%
N/A	1	9.09%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	0	0.00%
No	7	70.00%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	3	30.00%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	4	40.00%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	1	10.00%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	4	40.00%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	1	10.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 11

Report Cut: New Mexico

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	11	100.00%
Paid lump sum awards	0	0.00%
Paid variable/bonus awards	4	36.36%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	1	9.09%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	11	100.00%
Paying lump sum awards	0	0.00%
Paying variable/bonus awards	3	27.27%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	1	9.09%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	7	63.64%	7	63.64%
Increased standard wages	6	54.55%	6	54.55%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	7	63.64%	8	72.73%
Implemented or increased variable pay	1	9.09%	2	18.18%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	9.09%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	1	9.09%	1	9.09%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 11

Report Cut: New Mexico

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	2	18.18%	2	18.18%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	3	27.27%	2	18.18%
Invest in new technology	7	63.64%	7	63.64%
Invest in equipment	5	45.45%	4	36.36%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	1	9.09%	2	18.18%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	2	18.18%	2	18.18%
Increase training budget	2	18.18%	2	18.18%
Increase total rewards communication/education	2	18.18%	4	36.36%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	4	36.36%	4	36.36%
Increase recruiting emphasis	4	36.36%	3	27.27%
Pay above market rates	1	9.09%	0	0.00%
Enhance the benefits package	2	18.18%	3	27.27%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	4	36.36%	4	36.36%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	6	54.55%	7	63.64%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	2	18.18%	2	18.18%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	1	9.09%	0	0.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	1	9.09%	1	9.09%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	2	18.18%	2	18.18%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	1	9.09%	2	18.18%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	1	9.09%
Hold off on investing in new technology	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	1	9.09%	1	9.09%
Reduce training budget	1	9.09%	1	9.09%
Limiting employee travel	2	18.18%	2	18.18%
Hiring freezes	0	0.00%	1	9.09%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	2	18.18%	2	18.18%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	2	18.18%	2	18.18%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 11

Report Cut: New Mexico

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	2	18.18%	1	9.09%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	3	27.27%	3	27.27%
Increasing presence on social media	7	63.64%	2	18.18%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	1	9.09%	0	0.00%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	5	45.45%	1	9.09%
Partnering with brand influencers	2	18.18%	1	9.09%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	5	45.45%	0	0.00%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	4	36.36%	1	9.09%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	4	36.36%	2	18.18%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 11

Report Cut: New Mexico

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	4	36.36%	4	36.36%	0	0.00%
Website content production	4	36.36%	3	27.27%	1	9.09%
Marketing content production	4	36.36%	3	27.27%	1	9.09%
Other content production	4	36.36%	2	18.18%	1	9.09%
Digital personal assistant	3	27.27%	2	18.18%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	2	18.18%	3	27.27%	1	9.09%
Customer relationship management	3	27.27%	2	18.18%	2	18.18%
Inventory management	3	27.27%	2	18.18%	1	9.09%
Product recommendations	5	45.45%	2	18.18%	0	0.00%
Accounting	5	45.45%	1	9.09%	1	9.09%
Supply chain operations	5	45.45%	2	18.18%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	3	27.27%	2	18.18%	2	18.18%
Application and screening management	2	18.18%	3	27.27%	2	18.18%
Audience segmentation	5	45.45%	1	9.09%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	4	36.36%	2	18.18%	1	9.09%
Idea generation	4	36.36%	2	18.18%	1	9.09%
Process automation	4	36.36%	2	18.18%	1	9.09%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	4	36.36%	3	27.27%	1	9.09%

# **New York**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 55

Report Cut: New York

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	3.64%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2	3.64%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	5	9.09%
Education Services	2	3.64%
Financial & Insurance	5	9.09%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1	1.82%
Information	4	7.27%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	3	5.45%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	11	20.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	3	5.45%
Services (Except Public Administration)	9	16.36%
Transportation & Warehousing	3	5.45%
Utilities	1	1.82%
Wholesale Trade	4	7.27%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	16	29.09%
100 to 249	21	38.18%
250 to 499	9	16.36%
500 to 999	1	1.82%
1,000 or more	8	14.55%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	42	76.36%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	2	3.64%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	11	20.00%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 55

Report Cut: New York

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	24	43.6%
Stay the same	23	41.8%
Decline	8	14.5%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	4	7.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	31	56.4%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	5	9.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	10	18.2%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	5.5%
Do not know	2	3.6%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	11	20.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	26	47.3%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	9	16.4%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	7.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	3.6%
Do not know	3	5.5%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	39	73.58%	34	64.15%
Mild	13	24.53%	15	28.30%
Serious	1	1.89%	4	7.55%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	6	11.11%	4	7.55%
Mild	32	59.26%	33	62.26%
Serious	16	29.63%	16	30.19%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	37	68.52%	29	53.70%
Mild	17	31.48%	21	38.89%
Serious	0	0.00%	4	7.41%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	20	37.74%	14	26.42%
Mild	24	45.28%	27	50.94%
Serious	9	16.98%	12	22.64%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 55

Report Cut: New York

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	18	33.96%	14	26.42%
Mild	26	49.06%	29	54.72%
Serious	9	16.98%	10	18.87%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	8	14.81%	6	11.11%
Mild	23	42.59%	20	37.04%
Serious	23	42.59%	28	51.85%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	8	14.81%	8	15.09%
Mild	27	50.00%	23	43.40%
Serious	19	35.19%	22	41.51%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	18	33.33%	16	29.63%
Mild	27	50.00%	26	48.15%
Serious	9	16.67%	12	22.22%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	11	20.75%	8	15.09%
Mild	27	50.94%	30	56.60%
Serious	15	28.30%	15	28.30%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	33	62.26%	30	55.56%
Mild	14	26.42%	16	29.63%
Serious	6	11.32%	8	14.81%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	29	53.70%	27	50.00%
Mild	22	40.74%	22	40.74%
Serious	3	5.56%	5	9.26%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	25	47.17%	20	39.22%
Mild	19	35.85%	21	41.18%
Serious	9	16.98%	10	19.61%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	25	47.17%	23	42.59%
Mild	19	35.85%	21	38.89%
Serious	9	16.98%	10	18.52%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	16	31.37%	16	30.77%
Mild	29	56.86%	29	55.77%
Serious	6	11.76%	7	13.46%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 55

Report Cut: New York

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	21	40.38%	18	34.62%
Mild	24	46.15%	27	51.92%
Serious	7	13.46%	7	13.46%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	12	22.22%	13	24.07%
Mild	27	50.00%	28	51.85%
Serious	15	27.78%	13	24.07%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	30	55.56%	29	53.70%
Mild	17	31.48%	17	31.48%
Serious	7	12.96%	8	14.81%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	21	38.89%	21	39.62%
Mild	24	44.44%	23	43.40%
Serious	9	16.67%	9	16.98%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	8	14.81%	7	13.21%
Mild	24	44.44%	28	52.83%
Serious	22	40.74%	19	35.85%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	7	12.96%	6	11.32%
Mild	26	48.15%	23	43.40%
Serious	21	38.89%	23	43.40%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	7	12.96%	4	7.55%
Mild	31	57.41%	27	50.94%
Serious	16	29.63%	23	43.40%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	3	5.56%	3	5.66%
Mild	20	37.04%	19	35.85%
Serious	31	57.41%	32	60.38%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	26	48.15%	26	49.06%
Mild	21	38.89%	20	37.74%
Serious	7	12.96%	8	15.09%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	21	38.89%	16	30.19%
Mild	25	46.30%	24	45.28%
Serious	8	14.81%	14	26.42%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	17	31.48%	16	30.19%
Mild	21	38.89%	23	43.40%
Serious	16	29.63%	15	28.30%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 55

Report Cut: New York

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	15	27.78%	11	20.75%
Mild	32	59.26%	36	67.92%
Serious	7	12.96%	6	11.32%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	14	25.93%	14	26.42%
Mild	35	64.81%	33	62.26%
Serious	3	5.56%	6	11.32%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	27	50.00%	27	50.94%
Mild	9	16.67%	7	13.21%
Serious	1	1.85%	3	5.66%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	2	0	0	6
Competition in general	5	1	7	24
Product obsolescence	0	0	3	3
Changing customer preferences	2	6	3	21
Customer's ability to afford	7	2	0	25
Talent acquisition	7	7	7	42
Talent retention	8	9	2	44
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	1	3	8
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	3	4	4	21
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	0	0	3
Ability to maintain quality product/service	3	1	0	11
Cost of materials	2	4	0	14
Cost of equipment	1	1	0	5
Taxes	0	0	1	1
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	0	0	3
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	4	2	3	19
Employee safety	1	0	0	3
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	2	1	5
Inflation	0	3	2	8
Employee engagement	1	4	4	15
Developing future leaders	0	3	3	9
Cybersecurity	2	2	3	13
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	2	2
A.I. technology and platforms	2	0	1	7
Political uncertainty	0	0	0	0
Talent skills gap	0	1	2	4
Unknown challenges	0	0	2	2
Other	0	0	0	0



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 55

Report Cut: New York

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	3	5.45%
Slightly less than planned	13	23.64%
As planned	20	36.36%
Slightly more than planned	13	23.64%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	5	9.09%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	33	60.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	16	29.09%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	5	9.09%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	35	63.65%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	3	5.45%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	14	25.45%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	3	5.45%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	20	37.04%	16	30.19%
No	34	62.96%	37	69.81%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	43	79.63%	45	84.91%
No	11	20.37%	8	15.09%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	46	85.19%	43	81.13%
No	8	14.81%	10	18.87%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	4	21.05%	4	21.05%
No	15	78.95%	15	78.95%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	25	65.79%	24	66.67%
No	13	34.21%	12	33.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 55

Report Cut: New York

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	1	1.92%
Some due to this	42	80.77%
None due to this	9	17.31%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	15	27.78%
None due to this	39	72.22%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	52	96.30%
None due to this	2	3.70%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	1.85%
Some due to this	47	87.04%
None due to this	6	11.11%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	37	68.52%
None due to this	17	31.48%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	1.85%
Some due to this	11	20.37%
None due to this	42	77.78%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 55

Report Cut: New York

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	13	24.21%	7	12.96%	15	27.78%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	16.91%	7	12.96%	6	11.11%
Somewhat satisfied	28	43.32%	29	53.70%	24	44.44%
Very satisfied	12	10.85%	11	20.37%	9	16.67%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	22	40.00%	8	14.55%	5	9.09%
Middle managers	20	36.36%	7	12.73%	14	25.45%
Professional staff (non-managers)	23	41.82%	9	16.36%	22	40.00%
Skilled production workers	14	25.45%	2	3.64%	12	21.82%
Unskilled production workers	9	16.36%	2	3.64%	10	18.18%
Entry-level office workers	13	23.64%	4	7.27%	15	27.27%
Entry-level non-office workers	9	16.36%	1	1.82%	8	14.55%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	7	12.73%	2	3.64%	3	5.45%
Service workers	9	16.36%	2	3.64%	7	12.73%
Other	4	7.27%	0	0.00%	1	1.82%
None	3	5.45%	7	12.73%	4	7.27%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 55

Report Cut: New York

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	19	34.55%	18	32.73%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	10	18.18%	24	43.64%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	12	21.82%	28	50.91%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	24	43.64%	35	63.64%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	35	63.64%	8	14.55%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	29	52.73%	4	7.27%
Increasing starting salaries	37	67.27%	9	16.36%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	15	27.27%	15	27.27%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	18	32.73%	14	25.45%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	10	18.18%	4	7.27%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	3	5.45%	8	14.55%
Shortening the hiring process	13	23.64%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	21	38.18%	10	18.18%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	27	49.09%	14	25.45%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	8	14.55%	8	14.55%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	32	58.18%	3	5.45%
Participating in job fairs	18	32.73%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	24	43.64%	13	23.64%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	7	12.73%	7	12.73%
Using formal candidate tracking system	23	41.82%	3	5.45%
Other	3	5.45%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	20	36.36%
Team incentives	10	18.18%
Employee referral bonuses	31	56.36%
Year-end bonuses	23	41.82%
Spot bonuses	12	21.82%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	27	49.09%
Retention bonuses	6	10.91%
Commissions	18	32.73%
Project bonuses	4	7.27%
Profit sharing	7	12.73%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	16	29.09%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 55

Report Cut: New York

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	10	18.18%
Language premiums	3	5.45%
Other*	1	1.82%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	30	54.55%
Resources to do their job effectively	11	20.00%
Mentoring opportunities	3	5.45%
Competitive/robust health benefits	20	36.36%
Opportunities to connect with others	4	7.27%
Driven by the mission of the organization	6	10.91%
Recognition and reward for good performance	16	29.09%
Ongoing training on new technologies	2	3.64%
Competitive pay	43	78.18%
Good work/life balance	40	72.73%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	6	10.91%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	17	30.91%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	17	30.91%
Hybrid work opportunities	12	21.82%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	1	1.82%
Regular full-time hours	2	3.64%
Strong organizational culture	13	23.64%
Challenging work	3	5.45%
Diverse workforce	2	3.64%
Vacation/paid time off	16	29.09%
Focus on employee safety	1	1.82%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	1	1.85%
No change	28	51.85%
More difficult	25	46.30%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 55

Report Cut: New York

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	2	8.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	20	80.00%
Lack of technical skills	4	16.00%
Lack of soft skills	5	20.00%
Lack of work experience	5	20.00%
Our organization's geographic location	2	8.00%
Market competition/high demand	9	36.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	16	64.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	2	8.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	4	16.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	2	8.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	8	32.00%
Other *	1	4.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	11	20.37%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	23	42.59%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	13	24.07%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	6	11.11%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	1	1.85%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	6	11.11%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	25	46.30%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	11	20.37%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	3.70%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	9	16.67%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	6	10.91%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	23	41.82%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	4	7.27%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	5.45%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	8	14.55%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	9.09%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	8	14.55%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 55

Report Cut: New York

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	28	50.91%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	12	21.82%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	27	49.09%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	9	16.36%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	5	9.09%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	23	41.82%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	7	12.73%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	7	12.73%
Creating/redefining policies	10	18.18%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	3	5.45%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	10	18.18%
N/A	9	16.36%
Other *	1	1.82%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	5	9.43%
No	38	71.70%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	10	18.87%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	22	40.74%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	8	14.81%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	21	38.89%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	3	5.56%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 55

Report Cut: New York

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	53	96.36%
Paid lump sum awards	4	7.27%
Paid variable/bonus awards	21	38.18%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	4	7.27%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	2	3.64%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	49	89.09%
Paying lump sum awards	3	5.45%
Paying variable/bonus awards	24	43.64%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	1	1.82%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	1.82%
Uncertain	3	5.45%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	31	56.36%	28	50.91%
Increased standard wages	19	34.55%	18	32.73%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	25	45.45%	26	47.27%
Implemented or increased variable pay	5	9.09%	6	10.91%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	1.82%	1	1.82%
Other	1	1.82%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	6	10.91%	5	9.09%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 55

Report Cut: New York

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	9	16.36%	9	16.36%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	5	9.09%	7	12.73%
Invest in new technology	23	41.82%	30	54.55%
Invest in equipment	15	27.27%	19	34.55%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	5	9.09%	7	12.73%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	4	7.27%	4	7.27%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	5	9.09%	5	9.09%
Increase training budget	13	23.64%	15	27.27%
Increase total rewards communication/education	10	18.18%	18	32.73%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	24	43.64%	20	36.36%
Increase recruiting emphasis	15	27.27%	14	25.45%
Pay above market rates	3	5.45%	4	7.27%
Enhance the benefits package	10	18.18%	12	21.82%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	14	25.45%	17	30.91%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	12	21.82%	17	30.91%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	4	7.27%	4	7.27%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	4	7.27%	5	9.09%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	3	5.45%	3	5.45%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	8	14.55%	10	18.18%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	3	5.45%	5	9.09%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	2	3.64%	2	3.64%
Hold off on investing in new technology	2	3.64%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	2	3.64%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	3	5.45%	2	3.64%
Reduce training budget	2	3.64%	3	5.45%
Limiting employee travel	13	23.64%	5	9.09%
Hiring freezes	5	9.09%	5	9.09%
Implementing furloughs	2	3.64%	2	3.64%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	12	21.82%	4	7.27%
Reduce benefits package	1	1.82%	1	1.82%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	2	3.64%	2	3.64%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	4	7.27%	4	7.27%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	1	1.82%
Outsourcing roles or functions	6	10.91%	5	9.09%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 55

Report Cut: New York

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	8	14.55%	5	9.09%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	28	50.91%	6	10.91%
Increasing presence on social media	39	70.91%	6	10.91%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	9	16.36%	6	10.91%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	23	41.82%	6	10.91%
Partnering with brand influencers	2	3.64%	2	3.64%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	15	27.27%	6	10.91%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	24	43.64%	6	10.91%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	21	38.18%	5	9.09%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 55

Report Cut: New York

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	22	40.00%	11	20.00%	2	3.64%
Website content production	17	30.91%	13	23.64%	7	12.73%
Marketing content production	13	23.64%	12	21.82%	10	18.18%
Other content production	17	30.91%	8	14.55%	7	12.73%
Digital personal assistant	26	47.27%	6	10.91%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	16	29.09%	17	30.91%	4	7.27%
Customer relationship management	21	38.18%	9	16.36%	3	5.45%
Inventory management	22	40.00%	5	9.09%	2	3.64%
Product recommendations	24	43.64%	4	7.27%	0	0.00%
Accounting	23	41.82%	7	12.73%	2	3.64%
Supply chain operations	26	47.27%	4	7.27%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	21	38.18%	13	23.64%	3	5.45%
Application and screening management	19	34.55%	12	21.82%	3	5.45%
Audience segmentation	24	43.64%	2	3.64%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	17	30.91%	11	20.00%	4	7.27%
Idea generation	17	30.91%	11	20.00%	6	10.91%
Process automation	16	29.09%	12	21.82%	5	9.09%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	21	38.18%	8	14.55%	3	5.45%

# **North Carolina**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 109

Report Cut: North Carolina

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	1.83%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1	0.92%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	5	4.59%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	30	27.52%
Education Services	3	2.75%
Financial & Insurance	8	7.34%
Health Care & Social Assistance	8	7.34%
Information	4	3.67%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	8	7.34%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	18	16.51%
Public Administration	2	1.83%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	5	4.59%
Services (Except Public Administration)	6	5.50%
Transportation & Warehousing	2	1.83%
Utilities	3	2.75%
Wholesale Trade	4	3.67%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	39	35.78%
100 to 249	31	28.44%
250 to 499	17	15.60%
500 to 999	7	6.42%
1,000 or more	15	13.76%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	78	71.56%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	12	11.01%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	17	15.60%
Public Sector/Government	2	1.83%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 109

Report Cut: North Carolina

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	35	32.1%
Stay the same	48	44.0%
Decline	26	23.9%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	10	9.2%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	53	48.6%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	18	16.5%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	15	13.8%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	8	7.3%
Do not know	5	4.6%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	16	14.7%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	50	45.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	21	19.3%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	9	8.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	1.8%
Do not know	11	10.1%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	74	72.55%	66	64.71%
Mild	24	23.53%	25	24.51%
Serious	4	3.92%	11	10.78%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	14	13.21%	9	8.57%
Mild	59	55.66%	60	57.14%
Serious	33	31.13%	36	34.29%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	73	68.87%	57	53.77%
Mild	29	27.36%	42	39.62%
Serious	4	3.77%	7	6.60%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	40	37.74%	30	28.30%
Mild	51	48.11%	53	50.00%
Serious	15	14.15%	23	21.70%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 109

Report Cut: North Carolina

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	30	28.04%	27	25.23%
Mild	45	42.06%	51	47.66%
Serious	32	29.91%	29	27.10%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	11	10.19%	5	4.67%
Mild	45	41.67%	44	41.12%
Serious	52	48.15%	58	54.21%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	12	11.21%	11	10.48%
Mild	45	42.06%	40	38.10%
Serious	50	46.73%	54	51.43%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	33	31.13%	24	22.86%
Mild	53	50.00%	49	46.67%
Serious	20	18.87%	32	30.48%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	16	15.09%	11	10.38%
Mild	51	48.11%	52	49.06%
Serious	39	36.79%	43	40.57%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	52	49.52%	51	48.57%
Mild	37	35.24%	36	34.29%
Serious	16	15.24%	18	17.14%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	50	47.62%	49	46.23%
Mild	41	39.05%	43	40.57%
Serious	14	13.33%	14	13.21%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	29	27.62%	25	24.04%
Mild	47	44.76%	47	45.19%
Serious	29	27.62%	32	30.77%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	29	27.36%	28	26.42%
Mild	53	50.00%	46	43.40%
Serious	24	22.64%	32	30.19%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	34	33.33%	31	29.81%
Mild	48	47.06%	49	47.12%
Serious	20	19.61%	24	23.08%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 109

Report Cut: North Carolina

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	28	26.17%	24	22.86%
Mild	58	54.21%	58	55.24%
Serious	21	19.63%	23	21.90%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	22	20.75%	17	16.19%
Mild	55	51.89%	61	58.10%
Serious	29	27.36%	27	25.71%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	48	46.60%	46	43.81%
Mild	35	33.98%	37	35.24%
Serious	20	19.42%	22	20.95%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	42	40.00%	42	40.38%
Mild	43	40.95%	39	37.50%
Serious	20	19.05%	23	22.12%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	12	11.43%	10	9.62%
Mild	52	49.52%	60	57.69%
Serious	44	41.90%	38	36.54%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	18	17.14%	9	8.65%
Mild	57	54.29%	61	58.65%
Serious	33	31.43%	35	33.65%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	16	15.24%	11	10.58%
Mild	45	42.86%	43	41.35%
Serious	44	41.90%	51	49.04%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	4	3.81%	5	4.81%
Mild	40	38.10%	33	31.73%
Serious	63	60.00%	69	66.35%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	47	44.76%	44	42.31%
Mild	44	41.90%	45	43.27%
Serious	15	14.29%	16	15.38%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	31	29.52%	24	23.08%
Mild	56	53.33%	49	47.12%
Serious	20	19.05%	34	32.69%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	20	19.05%	19	18.27%
Mild	53	50.48%	58	55.77%
Serious	34	32.38%	30	28.85%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 109

Report Cut: North Carolina

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	20	19.05%	15	14.42%
Mild	54	51.43%	53	50.96%
Serious	33	31.43%	39	37.50%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	27	25.71%	26	25.00%
Mild	63	60.00%	63	60.58%
Serious	13	12.38%	15	14.42%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	49	46.67%	50	48.08%
Mild	22	20.95%	20	19.23%
Serious	3	2.86%	4	3.85%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	1	2	1	8
Competition in general	18	5	5	69
Product obsolescence	0	0	2	2
Changing customer preferences	5	6	3	30
Customer's ability to afford	12	6	3	51
Talent acquisition	21	13	13	102
Talent retention	11	23	12	91
Ability to pay for benefits costs	2	1	7	15
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	5	12	14	53
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	1	1
Ability to maintain quality product/service	4	2	0	16
Cost of materials	6	14	4	50
Cost of equipment	1	0	1	4
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	3	0	3	12
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	1	3	3	12
Employee safety	2	1	1	9
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	2	3	10
Inflation	3	3	6	21
Employee engagement	2	4	8	22
Developing future leaders	1	3	7	16
Cybersecurity	4	4	3	23
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	2	2
A.I. technology and platforms	2	1	1	9
Political uncertainty	2	0	2	8
Talent skills gap	1	3	2	11
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 109

Report Cut: North Carolina

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	9	8.26%
Slightly less than planned	21	19.27%
As planned	42	38.53%
Slightly more than planned	30	27.52%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	6	5.50%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	59	54.13%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	40	36.70%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	8	7.34%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	58	53.21%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	4	3.67%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	43	39.45%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	4	3.67%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	29	28.16%	26	26.26%
No	74	71.84%	73	73.74%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	88	83.02%	73	70.19%
No	18	16.98%	31	29.81%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	92	85.98%	79	76.70%
No	15	14.02%	24	23.30%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	8	25.81%	9	30.00%
No	23	74.19%	21	70.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	54	70.13%	54	73.97%
No	23	29.87%	19	26.03%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 109

Report Cut: North Carolina

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	3	2.80%
Some due to this	79	73.83%
None due to this	25	23.36%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	18	16.98%
None due to this	88	83.02%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	6	5.61%
Some due to this	97	90.65%
None due to this	4	3.74%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	3	2.80%
Some due to this	84	78.50%
None due to this	20	18.69%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	0.94%
Some due to this	72	67.92%
None due to this	33	31.13%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	0.95%
Some due to this	22	20.95%
None due to this	82	78.10%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 109

Report Cut: North Carolina

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	5	4.63%	1	0.93%	3	2.78%
Somewhat dissatisfied	29	24.21%	21	19.44%	34	31.48%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	17	16.91%	17	15.74%	24	22.22%
Somewhat satisfied	40	43.32%	46	42.59%	34	31.48%
Very satisfied	17	10.85%	23	21.30%	13	12.04%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	45	41.28%	11	10.09%	14	12.84%
Middle managers	46	42.20%	11	10.09%	29	26.61%
Professional staff (non-managers)	57	52.29%	13	11.93%	42	38.53%
Skilled production workers	41	37.61%	9	8.26%	33	30.28%
Unskilled production workers	20	18.35%	6	5.50%	28	25.69%
Entry-level office workers	25	22.94%	10	9.17%	35	32.11%
Entry-level non-office workers	15	13.76%	5	4.59%	25	22.94%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	22	20.18%	3	2.75%	11	10.09%
Service workers	14	12.84%	2	1.83%	14	12.84%
Other	10	9.17%	4	3.67%	7	6.42%
None	6	5.50%	10	9.17%	7	6.42%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 109

Report Cut: North Carolina

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	49	44.95%	44	40.37%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	21	19.27%	53	48.62%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	22	20.18%	65	59.63%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	52	47.71%	68	62.39%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	52	47.71%	12	11.01%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	58	53.21%	10	9.17%
Increasing starting salaries	71	65.14%	27	24.77%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	32	29.36%	37	33.94%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	21	19.27%	21	19.27%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	25	22.94%	15	13.76%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	9	8.26%	16	14.68%
Shortening the hiring process	28	25.69%	2	1.83%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	38	34.86%	14	12.84%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	49	44.95%	26	23.85%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	15	13.76%	21	19.27%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	54	49.54%	6	5.50%
Participating in job fairs	46	42.20%	4	3.67%
Building/increasing brand awareness	56	51.38%	24	22.02%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	20	18.35%	10	9.17%
Using formal candidate tracking system	45	41.28%	6	5.50%
Other	2	1.83%	1	0.92%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	42	38.53%
Team incentives	15	13.76%
Employee referral bonuses	62	56.88%
Year-end bonuses	38	34.86%
Spot bonuses	27	24.77%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	46	42.20%
Retention bonuses	10	9.17%
Commissions	23	21.10%
Project bonuses	6	5.50%
Profit sharing	17	15.60%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	23	21.10%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 109

Report Cut: North Carolina

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	16	14.68%
Language premiums	3	2.75%
Other*	3	2.75%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	56	51.38%
Resources to do their job effectively	15	13.76%
Mentoring opportunities	9	8.26%
Competitive/robust health benefits	37	33.94%
Opportunities to connect with others	2	1.83%
Driven by the mission of the organization	14	12.84%
Recognition and reward for good performance	25	22.94%
Ongoing training on new technologies	9	8.26%
Competitive pay	91	83.49%
Good work/life balance	83	76.15%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	12	11.01%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	39	35.78%
Current technology	1	0.92%
Remote work opportunities	20	18.35%
Hybrid work opportunities	29	26.61%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	4	3.67%
Strong organizational culture	28	25.69%
Challenging work	8	7.34%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	40	36.70%
Focus on employee safety	2	1.83%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	0	0.00%
No change	49	45.37%
More difficult	59	54.63%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 109

Report Cut: North Carolina

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	4	6.78%
Lack of qualified candidates	45	76.27%
Lack of technical skills	27	45.76%
Lack of soft skills	9	15.25%
Lack of work experience	18	30.51%
Our organization's geographic location	5	8.47%
Market competition/high demand	27	45.76%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	32	54.24%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	16	27.12%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	2	3.39%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	19	32.20%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	36	33.33%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	43	39.81%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	16	14.81%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	3	2.78%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	10	9.26%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	22	20.37%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	48	44.44%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	16	14.81%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	1.85%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	19	17.59%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	10	9.17%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	39	35.78%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	11	10.09%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	3.67%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	24	22.02%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	14	12.84%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	20	18.35%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 109

Report Cut: North Carolina

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	59	54.13%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	21	19.27%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	45	41.28%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	14	12.84%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	9	8.26%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	38	34.86%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	9	8.26%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	13	11.93%
Creating/redefining policies	13	11.93%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	8	7.34%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	24	22.02%
N/A	15	13.76%
Other *	1	0.92%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	16	14.95%
No	80	74.77%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	11	10.28%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	44	40.74%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	12	11.11%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	46	42.59%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	6	5.56%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 109

Report Cut: North Carolina

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	103	94.50%
Paid lump sum awards	15	13.76%
Paid variable/bonus awards	45	41.28%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	7	6.42%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	0.92%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	4	3.67%
Uncertain	1	0.92%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	88	80.73%
Paying lump sum awards	12	11.01%
Paying variable/bonus awards	41	37.61%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	0.92%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	2	1.83%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	17	15.60%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	71	65.14%	51	46.79%
Increased standard wages	39	35.78%	31	28.44%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	51	46.79%	54	49.54%
Implemented or increased variable pay	9	8.26%	13	11.93%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	0.92%	1	0.92%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	12	11.01%	16	14.68%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 109

Report Cut: North Carolina

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	15	13.76%	11	10.09%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	16	14.68%	17	15.60%
Invest in new technology	53	48.62%	72	66.06%
Invest in equipment	42	38.53%	50	45.87%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	7	6.42%	10	9.17%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	9	8.26%	6	5.50%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	11	10.09%	11	10.09%
Increase training budget	30	27.52%	33	30.28%
Increase total rewards communication/education	25	22.94%	39	35.78%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	32	29.36%	32	29.36%
Increase recruiting emphasis	35	32.11%	38	34.86%
Pay above market rates	9	8.26%	11	10.09%
Enhance the benefits package	16	14.68%	23	21.10%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	25	22.94%	34	31.19%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	20	18.35%	31	28.44%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	13	11.93%	13	11.93%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	3	2.75%	5	4.59%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	7	6.42%	9	8.26%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	10	9.17%	24	22.02%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	5	4.59%	14	12.84%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	3	2.75%	2	1.83%
Hold off on investing in new technology	5	4.59%	5	4.59%
Hold off on investing in equipment	4	3.67%	5	4.59%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	2	1.83%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	10	9.17%	8	7.34%
Reduce training budget	3	2.75%	6	5.50%
Limiting employee travel	16	14.68%	14	12.84%
Hiring freezes	12	11.01%	8	7.34%
Implementing furloughs	4	3.67%	1	0.92%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	14	12.84%	7	6.42%
Reduce benefits package	2	1.83%	1	0.92%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	2	1.83%	3	2.75%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	2	1.83%	5	4.59%
Freezing compensation increases	2	1.83%	2	1.83%
Outsourcing roles or functions	9	8.26%	7	6.42%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 109

Report Cut: North Carolina

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	13	11.93%	11	10.09%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	34	31.19%	13	11.93%
Increasing presence on social media	66	60.55%	20	18.35%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	12	11.01%	4	3.67%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	36	33.03%	12	11.01%
Partnering with brand influencers	9	8.26%	5	4.59%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	26	23.85%	11	10.09%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	52	47.71%	20	18.35%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	34	31.19%	11	10.09%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 109

Report Cut: North Carolina

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	41	37.61%	21	19.27%	1	0.92%
Website content production	34	31.19%	25	22.94%	6	5.50%
Marketing content production	29	26.61%	30	27.52%	11	10.09%
Other content production	30	27.52%	24	22.02%	6	5.50%
Digital personal assistant	43	39.45%	16	14.68%	5	4.59%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	33	30.28%	26	23.85%	5	4.59%
Customer relationship management	37	33.94%	24	22.02%	5	4.59%
Inventory management	39	35.78%	13	11.93%	3	2.75%
Product recommendations	43	39.45%	8	7.34%	2	1.83%
Accounting	41	37.61%	11	10.09%	3	2.75%
Supply chain operations	45	41.28%	7	6.42%	2	1.83%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	33	30.28%	29	26.61%	10	9.17%
Application and screening management	33	30.28%	24	22.02%	7	6.42%
Audience segmentation	43	39.45%	5	4.59%	1	0.92%
Process improvement	34	31.19%	20	18.35%	8	7.34%
Idea generation	27	24.77%	31	28.44%	10	9.17%
Process automation	28	25.69%	25	22.94%	9	8.26%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	36	33.03%	16	14.68%	6	5.50%

**2025 National Business Trends**

**Ohio**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 156

Report Cut: Ohio

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	1.28%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2	1.28%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	3	1.92%
Construction	2	1.28%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	46	29.49%
Education Services	1	0.64%
Financial & Insurance	6	3.85%
Health Care & Social Assistance	10	6.41%
Information	2	1.28%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	22	14.10%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	17	10.90%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	5	3.21%
Retail Trade	5	3.21%
Services (Except Public Administration)	11	7.05%
Transportation & Warehousing	4	2.56%
Utilities	3	1.92%
Wholesale Trade	15	9.62%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	62	39.74%
100 to 249	41	26.28%
250 to 499	25	16.03%
500 to 999	13	8.33%
1,000 or more	15	9.62%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	126	80.77%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	14	8.97%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	15	9.62%
Public Sector/Government	1	0.64%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 156

Report Cut: Ohio

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	56	35.9%
Stay the same	74	47.4%
Decline	26	16.7%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	10	6.4%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	64	41.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	25	16.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	38	24.4%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	14	9.0%
Do not know	5	3.2%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	21	13.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	74	47.4%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	29	18.6%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	16	10.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	2.6%
Do not know	12	7.7%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	100	67.11%	86	58.11%
Mild	42	28.19%	48	32.43%
Serious	7	4.70%	14	9.46%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	19	12.58%	14	9.40%
Mild	90	59.60%	96	64.43%
Serious	42	27.81%	39	26.17%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	107	71.33%	88	58.67%
Mild	38	25.33%	53	35.33%
Serious	5	3.33%	9	6.00%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	58	39.19%	46	31.29%
Mild	76	51.35%	82	55.78%
Serious	14	9.46%	19	12.93%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 156

Report Cut: Ohio

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	39	26.53%	33	22.76%
Mild	75	51.02%	83	57.24%
Serious	33	22.45%	29	20.00%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	21	13.73%	16	10.60%
Mild	64	41.83%	66	43.71%
Serious	68	44.44%	69	45.70%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	17	11.11%	15	9.93%
Mild	80	52.29%	73	48.34%
Serious	56	36.60%	63	41.72%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	43	28.67%	33	22.30%
Mild	67	44.67%	57	38.51%
Serious	40	26.67%	58	39.19%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	29	19.33%	26	17.45%
Mild	82	54.67%	74	49.66%
Serious	39	26.00%	49	32.89%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	91	61.07%	83	56.46%
Mild	49	32.89%	51	34.69%
Serious	9	6.04%	13	8.84%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	85	57.43%	77	52.38%
Mild	56	37.84%	60	40.82%
Serious	7	4.73%	10	6.80%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	38	25.50%	35	24.14%
Mild	69	46.31%	63	43.45%
Serious	42	28.19%	47	32.41%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	39	26.35%	36	24.32%
Mild	73	49.32%	66	44.59%
Serious	36	24.32%	46	31.08%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	48	33.10%	46	31.51%
Mild	64	44.14%	63	43.15%
Serious	33	22.76%	37	25.34%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 156

Report Cut: Ohio

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	47	32.19%	46	31.72%
Mild	71	48.63%	66	45.52%
Serious	28	19.18%	33	22.76%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	44	29.73%	39	26.71%
Mild	78	52.70%	73	50.00%
Serious	26	17.57%	34	23.29%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	60	40.82%	60	41.10%
Mild	57	38.78%	55	37.67%
Serious	30	20.41%	31	21.23%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	86	58.11%	80	54.79%
Mild	45	30.41%	49	33.56%
Serious	17	11.49%	17	11.64%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	13	8.78%	13	8.90%
Mild	73	49.32%	87	59.59%
Serious	64	43.24%	49	33.56%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	26	17.57%	22	15.07%
Mild	80	54.05%	80	54.79%
Serious	42	28.38%	43	29.45%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	25	16.89%	20	13.70%
Mild	68	45.95%	60	41.10%
Serious	55	37.16%	68	46.58%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	11	7.43%	10	6.85%
Mild	52	35.14%	49	33.56%
Serious	86	58.11%	89	60.96%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	67	45.27%	63	43.15%
Mild	65	43.92%	64	43.84%
Serious	14	9.46%	18	12.33%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	53	35.81%	43	29.45%
Mild	71	47.97%	61	41.78%
Serious	23	15.54%	43	29.45%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	37	25.00%	39	26.71%
Mild	54	36.49%	60	41.10%
Serious	56	37.84%	47	32.19%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 156

Report Cut: Ohio

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	31	20.95%	26	17.81%
Mild	81	54.73%	78	53.42%
Serious	35	23.65%	43	29.45%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	41	27.70%	40	27.40%
Mild	84	56.76%	80	54.79%
Serious	18	12.16%	22	15.07%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	65	43.92%	67	45.89%
Mild	27	18.24%	24	16.44%
Serious	5	3.38%	5	3.42%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	3	1	2	13
Competition in general	21	7	15	92
Product obsolescence	3	2	5	18
Changing customer preferences	3	8	7	32
Customer's ability to afford	15	7	3	62
Talent acquisition	15	19	14	97
Talent retention	19	19	14	109
Ability to pay for benefits costs	5	7	6	35
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	5	9	14	47
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	0	1	4
Ability to maintain quality product/service	3	6	1	22
Cost of materials	11	18	8	77
Cost of equipment	2	5	2	18
Taxes	0	1	2	4
Cost of regulatory compliance	4	1	7	21
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	6	4	3	29
Employee safety	1	1	2	7
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	2	0	7
Inflation	7	4	10	39
Employee engagement	1	7	11	28
Developing future leaders	6	4	5	31
Cybersecurity	8	4	5	37
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	2	2
A.I. technology and platforms	0	6	0	12
Political uncertainty	7	3	2	29
Talent skills gap	2	4	5	19
Unknown challenges	0	1	3	5
Other	1	0	1	4

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 156

Report Cut: Ohio

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	8	5.13%
Slightly less than planned	42	26.92%
As planned	64	41.03%
Slightly more than planned	36	23.08%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	5	3.21%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	80	51.28%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	57	36.54%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	18	11.54%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	90	57.70%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	3	1.92%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	60	38.46%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	3	1.92%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	56	36.84%	32	21.62%
No	96	63.16%	116	78.38%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	127	81.94%	99	65.13%
No	28	18.06%	53	34.87%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	121	78.57%	100	66.23%
No	33	21.43%	51	33.77%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	22	32.84%	18	26.87%
No	45	67.16%	49	73.13%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	98	75.97%	96	75.00%
No	31	24.03%	32	25.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 156

Report Cut: Ohio

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	6	3.95%
Some due to this	108	71.05%
None due to this	38	25.00%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	2	1.32%
Some due to this	32	21.05%
None due to this	118	77.63%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	6	3.90%
Some due to this	126	81.82%
None due to this	22	14.29%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	4	2.61%
Some due to this	119	77.78%
None due to this	30	19.61%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	4	2.60%
Some due to this	101	65.58%
None due to this	49	31.82%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	2	1.31%
Some due to this	28	18.30%
None due to this	123	80.39%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 156

Report Cut: Ohio

<b>11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?</b>	<b>Recruit</b>		<b>Onboard</b>		<b>Retain</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	5	3.23%	0	0.00%	5	3.23%
Somewhat dissatisfied	35	24.21%	19	12.34%	32	20.65%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	23	16.91%	24	15.58%	21	13.55%
Somewhat satisfied	61	43.32%	83	53.90%	72	46.45%
Very satisfied	31	10.85%	28	18.18%	25	16.13%

<b>12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?</b>	<b>Recruitment</b>		<b>Onboarding</b>		<b>Retention</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	54	34.62%	16	10.26%	16	10.26%
Middle managers	53	33.97%	23	14.74%	28	17.95%
Professional staff (non-managers)	69	44.23%	21	13.46%	50	32.05%
Skilled production workers	66	42.31%	17	10.90%	50	32.05%
Unskilled production workers	35	22.44%	19	12.18%	49	31.41%
Entry-level office workers	31	19.87%	15	9.62%	37	23.72%
Entry-level non-office workers	24	15.38%	11	7.05%	26	16.67%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	33	21.15%	11	7.05%	14	8.97%
Service workers	22	14.10%	10	6.41%	20	12.82%
Other	8	5.13%	4	2.56%	5	3.21%
None	10	6.41%	15	9.62%	11	7.05%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 156

Report Cut: Ohio

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	64	41.03%	65	41.67%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	31	19.87%	75	48.08%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	39	25.00%	92	58.97%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	77	49.36%	100	64.10%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	71	45.51%	13	8.33%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	79	50.64%	20	12.82%
Increasing starting salaries	108	69.23%	39	25.00%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	44	28.21%	54	34.62%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	29	18.59%	31	19.87%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	33	21.15%	20	12.82%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	11	7.05%	26	16.67%
Shortening the hiring process	43	27.56%	3	1.92%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	38	24.36%	21	13.46%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	63	40.38%	42	26.92%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	23	14.74%	33	21.15%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	76	48.72%	11	7.05%
Participating in job fairs	66	42.31%	9	5.77%
Building/increasing brand awareness	65	41.67%	38	24.36%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	21	13.46%	17	10.90%
Using formal candidate tracking system	57	36.54%	10	6.41%
Other	4	2.56%	3	1.92%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	48	30.77%
Team incentives	27	17.31%
Employee referral bonuses	95	60.90%
Year-end bonuses	66	42.31%
Spot bonuses	30	19.23%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	71	45.51%
Retention bonuses	25	16.03%
Commissions	39	25.00%
Project bonuses	12	7.69%
Profit sharing	34	21.79%
Hazard bonuses/pay	2	1.28%
Additional PTO	50	32.05%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 156

Report Cut: Ohio

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	33	21.15%
Language premiums	1	0.64%
Other*	7	4.49%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	78	50.00%
Resources to do their job effectively	18	11.54%
Mentoring opportunities	5	3.21%
Competitive/robust health benefits	56	35.90%
Opportunities to connect with others	6	3.85%
Driven by the mission of the organization	14	8.97%
Recognition and reward for good performance	50	32.05%
Ongoing training on new technologies	9	5.77%
Competitive pay	126	80.77%
Good work/life balance	121	77.56%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	16	10.26%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	58	37.18%
Current technology	2	1.28%
Remote work opportunities	24	15.38%
Hybrid work opportunities	39	25.00%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	7	4.49%
Regular full-time hours	14	8.97%
Strong organizational culture	37	23.72%
Challenging work	10	6.41%
Diverse workforce	2	1.28%
Vacation/paid time off	57	36.54%
Focus on employee safety	5	3.21%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	10	6.49%
No change	77	50.00%
More difficult	67	43.51%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 156

Report Cut: Ohio

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	5	7.46%
Lack of qualified candidates	56	83.58%
Lack of technical skills	29	43.28%
Lack of soft skills	12	17.91%
Lack of work experience	22	32.84%
Our organization's geographic location	8	11.94%
Market competition/high demand	29	43.28%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	35	52.24%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	1	1.49%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	10	14.93%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	7	10.45%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	18	26.87%
Other *	3	4.48%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	60	38.96%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	40	25.97%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	18	11.69%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	3	1.95%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	33	21.43%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	32	20.78%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	57	37.01%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	24	15.58%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	5	3.25%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	36	23.38%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	9	5.77%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	49	31.41%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	23	14.74%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	2.56%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	25	16.03%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	14	8.97%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	43	27.56%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 156

Report Cut: Ohio

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	78	50.00%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	37	23.72%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	70	44.87%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	30	19.23%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	10	6.41%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	58	37.18%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	7	4.49%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	10	6.41%
Creating/redefining policies	20	12.82%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	10	6.41%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	34	21.79%
N/A	25	16.03%
Other *	2	1.28%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	23	14.84%
No	111	71.61%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	21	13.55%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	53	34.19%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	17	10.97%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	74	47.74%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	11	7.10%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 156

Report Cut: Ohio

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	142	91.03%
Paid lump sum awards	16	10.26%
Paid variable/bonus awards	58	37.18%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	6	3.85%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	6	3.85%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	1	0.64%
Uncertain	6	3.85%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	127	81.41%
Paying lump sum awards	19	12.18%
Paying variable/bonus awards	55	35.26%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	4	2.56%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	5	3.21%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	2	1.28%
Uncertain	25	16.03%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	101	64.74%	80	51.28%
Increased standard wages	77	49.36%	56	35.90%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	80	51.28%	83	53.21%
Implemented or increased variable pay	12	7.69%	12	7.69%
Temporarily bumped pay	2	1.28%	1	0.64%
Other	2	1.28%	1	0.64%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	14	8.97%	14	8.97%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 156

Report Cut: Ohio

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	27	17.31%	24	15.38%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	23	14.74%	19	12.18%
Invest in new technology	67	42.95%	88	56.41%
Invest in equipment	64	41.03%	73	46.79%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	9	5.77%	14	8.97%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	14	8.97%	11	7.05%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	17	10.90%	26	16.67%
Increase training budget	40	25.64%	52	33.33%
Increase total rewards communication/education	31	19.87%	45	28.85%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	49	31.41%	40	25.64%
Increase recruiting emphasis	42	26.92%	44	28.21%
Pay above market rates	12	7.69%	14	8.97%
Enhance the benefits package	27	17.31%	35	22.44%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	26	16.67%	36	23.08%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	37	23.72%	40	25.64%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	27	17.31%	18	11.54%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	3	1.92%	2	1.28%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	8	5.13%	6	3.85%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	19	12.18%	29	18.59%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	10	6.41%	28	17.95%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	0.64%	3	1.92%
Hold off on investing in new technology	9	5.77%	5	3.21%
Hold off on investing in equipment	9	5.77%	6	3.85%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	2	1.28%	5	3.21%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	14	8.97%	16	10.26%
Reduce training budget	6	3.85%	6	3.85%
Limiting employee travel	30	19.23%	19	12.18%
Hiring freezes	13	8.33%	10	6.41%
Implementing furloughs	5	3.21%	2	1.28%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	19	12.18%	7	4.49%
Reduce benefits package	3	1.92%	2	1.28%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	4	2.56%	3	1.92%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	2	1.28%	8	5.13%
Freezing compensation increases	5	3.21%	4	2.56%
Outsourcing roles or functions	7	4.49%	12	7.69%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 156

Report Cut: Ohio

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	15	9.62%	9	5.77%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	64	41.03%	14	8.97%
Increasing presence on social media	97	62.18%	27	17.31%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	16	10.26%	8	5.13%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	49	31.41%	17	10.90%
Partnering with brand influencers	15	9.62%	6	3.85%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	41	26.28%	18	11.54%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	72	46.15%	24	15.38%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	52	33.33%	20	12.82%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 156

Report Cut: Ohio

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	76	48.72%	29	18.59%	4	2.56%
Website content production	59	37.82%	42	26.92%	15	9.62%
Marketing content production	51	32.69%	46	29.49%	19	12.18%
Other content production	60	38.46%	33	21.15%	14	8.97%
Digital personal assistant	74	47.44%	24	15.38%	5	3.21%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	64	41.03%	37	23.72%	13	8.33%
Customer relationship management	76	48.72%	22	14.10%	9	5.77%
Inventory management	73	46.79%	20	12.82%	5	3.21%
Product recommendations	79	50.64%	12	7.69%	4	2.56%
Accounting	80	51.28%	14	8.97%	7	4.49%
Supply chain operations	81	51.92%	13	8.33%	2	1.28%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	64	41.03%	38	24.36%	12	7.69%
Application and screening management	64	41.03%	32	20.51%	10	6.41%
Audience segmentation	81	51.92%	7	4.49%	2	1.28%
Process improvement	61	39.10%	31	19.87%	13	8.33%
Idea generation	51	32.69%	45	28.85%	16	10.26%
Process automation	62	39.74%	31	19.87%	10	6.41%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	66	42.31%	25	16.03%	8	5.13%

# Oklahoma

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 20

Report Cut: Oklahoma

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	5.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1	5.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	3	15.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	1	5.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1	5.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	2	10.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	2	10.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	3	15.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	1	5.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	5	25.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	0	0.00%
100 to 249	7	35.00%
250 to 499	4	20.00%
500 to 999	3	15.00%
1,000 or more	6	30.00%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	17	85.00%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	1	5.00%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	2	10.00%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 20

Report Cut: Oklahoma

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	9	45.0%
Stay the same	7	35.0%
Decline	4	20.0%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	12	60.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	4	20.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	20.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	0	0.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	5.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	13	65.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	3	15.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	5.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	5.0%
Do not know	1	5.0%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	13	65.00%	12	60.00%
Mild	7	35.00%	7	35.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	5.00%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	3	15.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	11	55.00%	15	75.00%
Serious	6	30.00%	5	25.00%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	14	70.00%	13	65.00%
Mild	5	25.00%	5	25.00%
Serious	1	5.00%	2	10.00%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	9	45.00%	7	35.00%
Mild	9	45.00%	11	55.00%
Serious	2	10.00%	2	10.00%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 20

Report Cut: Oklahoma

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	7	35.00%	6	30.00%
Mild	9	45.00%	11	55.00%
Serious	4	20.00%	3	15.00%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	9	45.00%	9	45.00%
Serious	11	55.00%	11	55.00%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	1	5.00%	2	10.00%
Mild	10	50.00%	10	50.00%
Serious	9	45.00%	8	40.00%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	6	30.00%	6	30.00%
Mild	11	55.00%	9	45.00%
Serious	3	15.00%	5	25.00%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	2	10.00%	3	15.00%
Mild	13	65.00%	11	55.00%
Serious	5	25.00%	6	30.00%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	9	45.00%	9	45.00%
Mild	10	50.00%	10	50.00%
Serious	1	5.00%	1	5.00%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	10	50.00%	10	50.00%
Mild	10	50.00%	10	50.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	9	45.00%	7	36.84%
Mild	7	35.00%	8	42.11%
Serious	4	20.00%	4	21.05%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	5	25.00%	4	20.00%
Mild	11	55.00%	11	55.00%
Serious	4	20.00%	5	25.00%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	6	33.33%	5	26.32%
Mild	10	55.56%	11	57.89%
Serious	2	11.11%	3	15.79%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 20

Report Cut: Oklahoma

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	7	35.00%	7	35.00%
Mild	8	40.00%	8	40.00%
Serious	5	25.00%	5	25.00%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	6	30.00%	7	35.00%
Mild	10	50.00%	8	40.00%
Serious	4	20.00%	5	25.00%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	9	45.00%	9	45.00%
Mild	8	40.00%	8	40.00%
Serious	3	15.00%	3	15.00%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	4	20.00%	5	25.00%
Mild	10	50.00%	12	60.00%
Serious	6	30.00%	3	15.00%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	3	15.00%	1	5.00%
Mild	10	50.00%	12	60.00%
Serious	7	35.00%	7	35.00%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	2	10.00%	2	10.00%
Mild	10	50.00%	8	40.00%
Serious	8	40.00%	9	45.00%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	3	15.00%	3	15.00%
Mild	8	40.00%	7	35.00%
Serious	9	45.00%	10	50.00%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	1	5.00%
Mild	7	35.00%	6	30.00%
Serious	13	65.00%	13	65.00%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	8	40.00%	8	40.00%
Mild	10	50.00%	10	50.00%
Serious	2	10.00%	2	10.00%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	7	35.00%	6	30.00%
Mild	10	50.00%	10	50.00%
Serious	3	15.00%	4	20.00%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	4	20.00%	5	25.00%
Mild	8	40.00%	8	40.00%
Serious	8	40.00%	7	35.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 20

Report Cut: Oklahoma

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	3	15.00%	2	10.00%
Mild	11	55.00%	12	60.00%
Serious	6	30.00%	6	30.00%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	6	30.00%	6	30.00%
Mild	10	50.00%	12	60.00%
Serious	2	10.00%	1	5.00%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	10	50.00%	10	50.00%
Mild	4	20.00%	4	20.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	2	1	2	10
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	1	0	1	4
Customer's ability to afford	0	0	1	1
Talent acquisition	4	4	4	24
Talent retention	6	3	0	24
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	0	1	1
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	0	3	1	7
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	0	0	3
Cost of materials	1	1	0	5
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	1	0	5
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	0	1	1
Employee safety	0	0	1	1
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	0	2
Inflation	0	1	2	4
Employee engagement	1	0	2	5
Developing future leaders	1	1	1	6
Cybersecurity	1	2	1	8
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	0	1	0	2
Political uncertainty	1	0	0	3
Talent skills gap	0	1	1	3
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 20

Report Cut: Oklahoma

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	1	5.00%
Slightly less than planned	8	40.00%
As planned	6	30.00%
Slightly more than planned	5	25.00%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	12	60.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	6	30.00%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	10.00%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	15	75.00%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	5	25.00%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	5.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	8	42.11%	5	26.32%
No	11	57.89%	14	73.68%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	17	85.00%	14	70.00%
No	3	15.00%	6	30.00%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	17	85.00%	16	84.21%
No	3	15.00%	3	15.79%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	4	57.14%	4	57.14%
No	3	42.86%	3	42.86%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	13	86.67%	13	86.67%
No	2	13.33%	2	13.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 20

Report Cut: Oklahoma

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	17	85.00%
None due to this	3	15.00%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	7	35.00%
None due to this	13	65.00%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	20	100.00%
None due to this	0	0.00%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	18	90.00%
None due to this	2	10.00%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	17	85.00%
None due to this	3	15.00%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	5.00%
Some due to this	7	35.00%
None due to this	12	60.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 20

Report Cut: Oklahoma

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	5.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	7	24.21%	4	20.00%	4	20.00%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	16.91%	3	15.00%	6	30.00%
Somewhat satisfied	6	43.32%	9	45.00%	5	25.00%
Very satisfied	6	10.85%	4	20.00%	4	20.00%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	9	45.00%	4	20.00%	3	15.00%
Middle managers	9	45.00%	7	35.00%	6	30.00%
Professional staff (non-managers)	10	50.00%	4	20.00%	9	45.00%
Skilled production workers	9	45.00%	1	5.00%	7	35.00%
Unskilled production workers	5	25.00%	0	0.00%	7	35.00%
Entry-level office workers	6	30.00%	4	20.00%	9	45.00%
Entry-level non-office workers	3	15.00%	1	5.00%	7	35.00%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	7	35.00%	0	0.00%	2	10.00%
Service workers	6	30.00%	1	5.00%	5	25.00%
Other	3	15.00%	0	0.00%	1	5.00%
None	3	15.00%	2	10.00%	2	10.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 20

Report Cut: Oklahoma

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	10	50.00%	9	45.00%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	3	15.00%	8	40.00%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	4	20.00%	9	45.00%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	11	55.00%	12	60.00%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	14	70.00%	4	20.00%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	12	60.00%	3	15.00%
Increasing starting salaries	17	85.00%	4	20.00%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	7	35.00%	5	25.00%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	4	20.00%	4	20.00%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	5	25.00%	0	0.00%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	4	20.00%	7	35.00%
Shortening the hiring process	6	30.00%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	7	35.00%	4	20.00%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	11	55.00%	6	30.00%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	3	15.00%	2	10.00%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	12	60.00%	1	5.00%
Participating in job fairs	13	65.00%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	12	60.00%	4	20.00%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	4	20.00%	1	5.00%
Using formal candidate tracking system	10	50.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	5.00%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	10	50.00%
Team incentives	3	15.00%
Employee referral bonuses	16	80.00%
Year-end bonuses	11	55.00%
Spot bonuses	9	45.00%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	13	65.00%
Retention bonuses	4	20.00%
Commissions	9	45.00%
Project bonuses	3	15.00%
Profit sharing	1	5.00%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	8	40.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 20

Report Cut: Oklahoma

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	5	25.00%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	12	60.00%
Resources to do their job effectively	3	15.00%
Mentoring opportunities	2	10.00%
Competitive/robust health benefits	4	20.00%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	5.00%
Driven by the mission of the organization	4	20.00%
Recognition and reward for good performance	3	15.00%
Ongoing training on new technologies	2	10.00%
Competitive pay	18	90.00%
Good work/life balance	12	60.00%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	2	10.00%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	11	55.00%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	4	20.00%
Hybrid work opportunities	5	25.00%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	1	5.00%
Regular full-time hours	0	0.00%
Strong organizational culture	7	35.00%
Challenging work	1	5.00%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	5	25.00%
Focus on employee safety	1	5.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	0	0.00%
No change	11	55.00%
More difficult	9	45.00%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 20

Report Cut: Oklahoma

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	0	0.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	7	77.78%
Lack of technical skills	5	55.56%
Lack of soft skills	2	22.22%
Lack of work experience	4	44.44%
Our organization's geographic location	1	11.11%
Market competition/high demand	3	33.33%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	6	66.67%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	2	22.22%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	1	11.11%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	2	22.22%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	7	35.00%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	9	45.00%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	10.00%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	2	10.00%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	15.00%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	10	50.00%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	15.00%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	4	20.00%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	8	40.00%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	1	5.00%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	5.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	6	30.00%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	15.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	5	25.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 20

Report Cut: Oklahoma

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	12	60.00%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	8	40.00%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	10	50.00%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	6	30.00%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	3	15.00%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	10	50.00%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	2	10.00%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	4	20.00%
Creating/redefining policies	6	30.00%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	4	20.00%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	6	30.00%
N/A	3	15.00%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	1	5.00%
No	17	85.00%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	2	10.00%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	7	35.00%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	2	10.00%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	9	45.00%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	2	10.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 20

Report Cut: Oklahoma

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	19	95.00%
Paid lump sum awards	4	20.00%
Paid variable/bonus awards	10	50.00%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	18	90.00%
Paying lump sum awards	5	25.00%
Paying variable/bonus awards	10	50.00%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	1	5.00%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	14	70.00%	11	55.00%
Increased standard wages	10	50.00%	7	35.00%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	12	60.00%	12	60.00%
Implemented or increased variable pay	1	5.00%	2	10.00%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	5.00%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	1	5.00%	1	5.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 20

Report Cut: Oklahoma

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	2	10.00%	2	10.00%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	4	20.00%	0	0.00%
Invest in new technology	13	65.00%	15	75.00%
Invest in equipment	11	55.00%	12	60.00%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	1	5.00%	0	0.00%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	3	15.00%	3	15.00%
Increase training budget	7	35.00%	8	40.00%
Increase total rewards communication/education	6	30.00%	8	40.00%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	9	45.00%	9	45.00%
Increase recruiting emphasis	5	25.00%	5	25.00%
Pay above market rates	1	5.00%	1	5.00%
Enhance the benefits package	1	5.00%	3	15.00%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	4	20.00%	6	30.00%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	7	35.00%	8	40.00%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	2	10.00%	2	10.00%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	1	5.00%	1	5.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	2	10.00%	2	10.00%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	2	10.00%	5	25.00%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	5	25.00%	6	30.00%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	0	0.00%	1	5.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	1	5.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce training budget	0	0.00%	1	5.00%
Limiting employee travel	1	5.00%	1	5.00%
Hiring freezes	2	10.00%	1	5.00%
Implementing furloughs	1	5.00%	1	5.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	3	15.00%	1	5.00%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	5.00%	1	5.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	1	5.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	1	5.00%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 20

Report Cut: Oklahoma

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	2	10.00%	2	10.00%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	11	55.00%	1	5.00%
Increasing presence on social media	16	80.00%	3	15.00%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	3	15.00%	2	10.00%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	8	40.00%	2	10.00%
Partnering with brand influencers	2	10.00%	0	0.00%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	7	35.00%	2	10.00%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	12	60.00%	3	15.00%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	8	40.00%	2	10.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 20

Report Cut: Oklahoma

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	6	30.00%	5	25.00%	0	0.00%
Website content production	5	25.00%	6	30.00%	1	5.00%
Marketing content production	4	20.00%	7	35.00%	1	5.00%
Other content production	4	20.00%	4	20.00%	1	5.00%
Digital personal assistant	5	25.00%	4	20.00%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	3	15.00%	6	30.00%	3	15.00%
Customer relationship management	4	20.00%	7	35.00%	2	10.00%
Inventory management	5	25.00%	4	20.00%	1	5.00%
Product recommendations	5	25.00%	4	20.00%	0	0.00%
Accounting	5	25.00%	3	15.00%	2	10.00%
Supply chain operations	5	25.00%	4	20.00%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	5	25.00%	5	25.00%	2	10.00%
Application and screening management	5	25.00%	5	25.00%	1	5.00%
Audience segmentation	4	20.00%	3	15.00%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	4	20.00%	3	15.00%	1	5.00%
Idea generation	3	15.00%	4	20.00%	2	10.00%
Process automation	4	20.00%	2	10.00%	1	5.00%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	3	15.00%	3	15.00%	3	15.00%

# Oregon

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 93

Report Cut: Oregon

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	1	1.08%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	2.15%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2	2.15%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	4	4.30%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	12	12.90%
Education Services	4	4.30%
Financial & Insurance	5	5.38%
Health Care & Social Assistance	18	19.35%
Information	2	2.15%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	1	1.08%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	10	10.75%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	7	7.53%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	4	4.30%
Retail Trade	3	3.23%
Services (Except Public Administration)	7	7.53%
Transportation & Warehousing	6	6.45%
Utilities	3	3.23%
Wholesale Trade	2	2.15%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	49	52.69%
100 to 249	27	29.03%
250 to 499	7	7.53%
500 to 999	5	5.38%
1,000 or more	5	5.38%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	56	60.22%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	3	3.23%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	31	33.33%
Public Sector/Government	3	3.23%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 93

Report Cut: Oregon

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	30	32.3%
Stay the same	47	50.5%
Decline	16	17.2%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	8	8.6%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	39	41.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	19	20.4%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	15	16.1%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	7	7.5%
Do not know	5	5.4%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	9	9.7%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	49	52.7%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	19	20.4%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	7	7.5%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	4.3%
Do not know	5	5.4%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	75	84.27%	67	75.28%
Mild	9	10.11%	13	14.61%
Serious	5	5.62%	9	10.11%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	19	20.88%	18	19.78%
Mild	54	59.34%	48	52.75%
Serious	18	19.78%	25	27.47%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	58	64.44%	53	60.23%
Mild	30	33.33%	31	35.23%
Serious	2	2.22%	4	4.55%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	36	40.00%	29	32.58%
Mild	47	52.22%	49	55.06%
Serious	7	7.78%	11	12.36%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 93

Report Cut: Oregon

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	29	32.22%	25	28.09%
Mild	37	41.11%	43	48.31%
Serious	24	26.67%	21	23.60%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	10	10.99%	6	6.59%
Mild	36	39.56%	35	38.46%
Serious	45	49.45%	50	54.95%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	14	15.38%	10	11.11%
Mild	40	43.96%	37	41.11%
Serious	37	40.66%	43	47.78%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	14	15.56%	10	11.11%
Mild	52	57.78%	45	50.00%
Serious	24	26.67%	35	38.89%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	13	14.61%	10	11.36%
Mild	40	44.94%	37	42.05%
Serious	36	40.45%	41	46.59%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	45	49.45%	44	48.35%
Mild	37	40.66%	37	40.66%
Serious	9	9.89%	10	10.99%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	44	49.44%	39	44.32%
Mild	33	37.08%	38	43.18%
Serious	12	13.48%	11	12.50%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	22	24.44%	22	25.00%
Mild	45	50.00%	42	47.73%
Serious	23	25.56%	24	27.27%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	25	28.09%	23	26.14%
Mild	46	51.69%	44	50.00%
Serious	18	20.22%	21	23.86%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	33	38.37%	32	36.36%
Mild	40	46.51%	39	44.32%
Serious	13	15.12%	17	19.32%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 93

Report Cut: Oregon

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	31	35.23%	30	34.09%
Mild	38	43.18%	36	40.91%
Serious	19	21.59%	22	25.00%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	19	20.88%	20	22.22%
Mild	51	56.04%	47	52.22%
Serious	21	23.08%	23	25.56%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	45	50.56%	44	50.00%
Mild	30	33.71%	32	35.56%
Serious	14	15.73%	12	13.33%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	49	53.85%	46	50.55%
Mild	34	37.36%	35	38.46%
Serious	8	8.79%	10	10.99%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	13	14.29%	13	14.29%
Mild	47	51.65%	47	51.65%
Serious	30	32.97%	30	32.97%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	17	18.68%	15	16.48%
Mild	46	50.55%	43	47.25%
Serious	28	30.77%	32	35.16%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	13	14.29%	11	12.09%
Mild	49	53.85%	42	46.15%
Serious	28	30.77%	36	39.56%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	9	9.89%	9	9.89%
Mild	37	40.66%	31	34.07%
Serious	42	46.15%	48	52.75%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	36	39.56%	33	36.26%
Mild	42	46.15%	42	46.15%
Serious	12	13.19%	15	16.48%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	35	38.46%	30	32.97%
Mild	41	45.05%	38	41.76%
Serious	14	15.38%	22	24.18%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	21	23.08%	18	19.78%
Mild	39	42.86%	42	46.15%
Serious	30	32.97%	30	32.97%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 93

Report Cut: Oregon

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	18	19.78%	15	16.48%
Mild	55	60.44%	49	53.85%
Serious	18	19.78%	27	29.67%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	22	24.18%	21	23.08%
Mild	49	53.85%	49	53.85%
Serious	15	16.48%	16	17.58%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	44	48.35%	44	48.35%
Mild	15	16.48%	15	16.48%
Serious	1	1.10%	1	1.10%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	2	0	1	7
Competition in general	14	3	5	53
Product obsolescence	0	2	0	4
Changing customer preferences	3	3	3	18
Customer's ability to afford	7	2	5	30
Talent acquisition	15	8	10	71
Talent retention	9	17	5	66
Ability to pay for benefits costs	3	7	8	31
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	15	17	7	86
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	1	1	6
Ability to maintain quality product/service	3	4	5	22
Cost of materials	1	7	5	22
Cost of equipment	1	1	3	8
Taxes	0	1	2	4
Cost of regulatory compliance	3	0	1	10
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	3	2	8
Employee safety	0	0	1	1
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	1	1	6
Inflation	5	3	4	25
Employee engagement	0	1	7	9
Developing future leaders	1	3	3	12
Cybersecurity	5	4	3	26
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	2	2	3	13
Political uncertainty	0	1	1	3
Talent skills gap	0	1	5	7
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	1	0	0	3

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 93

Report Cut: Oregon

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	11	11.83%
Slightly less than planned	21	22.58%
As planned	35	37.63%
Slightly more than planned	22	23.66%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	3	3.23%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	51	54.84%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	31	33.33%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	10	10.75%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	44	47.30%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	5	5.38%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	41	44.09%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	3	3.23%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	28	31.82%	23	26.44%
No	60	68.18%	64	73.56%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	64	71.11%	55	62.50%
No	26	28.89%	33	37.50%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	71	78.89%	61	70.11%
No	19	21.11%	26	29.89%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	5	14.71%	7	20.00%
No	29	85.29%	28	80.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	45	63.38%	41	61.19%
No	26	36.62%	26	38.81%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 93

Report Cut: Oregon

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	6	6.59%
Some due to this	53	58.24%
None due to this	32	35.16%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	1	1.10%
Some due to this	14	15.38%
None due to this	76	83.52%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	3	3.26%
Some due to this	74	80.43%
None due to this	15	16.30%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	67	72.83%
None due to this	25	27.17%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	1.10%
Some due to this	53	58.24%
None due to this	37	40.66%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	15	16.85%
None due to this	74	83.15%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 93

Report Cut: Oregon

<b>11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?</b>	<b>Recruit</b>		<b>Onboard</b>		<b>Retain</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	7	7.61%	1	1.09%	2	2.17%
Somewhat dissatisfied	21	24.21%	14	15.22%	27	29.35%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	17	16.91%	19	20.65%	17	18.48%
Somewhat satisfied	30	43.32%	36	39.13%	33	35.87%
Very satisfied	17	10.85%	22	23.91%	13	14.13%

<b>12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?</b>	<b>Recruitment</b>		<b>Onboarding</b>		<b>Retention</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	30	32.26%	12	12.90%	10	10.75%
Middle managers	31	33.33%	10	10.75%	21	22.58%
Professional staff (non-managers)	47	50.54%	17	18.28%	36	38.71%
Skilled production workers	28	30.11%	6	6.45%	19	20.43%
Unskilled production workers	16	17.20%	6	6.45%	19	20.43%
Entry-level office workers	13	13.98%	10	10.75%	22	23.66%
Entry-level non-office workers	12	12.90%	5	5.38%	16	17.20%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	16	17.20%	4	4.30%	7	7.53%
Service workers	17	18.28%	6	6.45%	20	21.51%
Other	4	4.30%	1	1.08%	3	3.23%
None	8	8.60%	10	10.75%	9	9.68%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 93

Report Cut: Oregon

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	45	48.39%	39	41.94%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	16	17.20%	44	47.31%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	23	24.73%	56	60.22%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	38	40.86%	62	66.67%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	44	47.31%	13	13.98%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	33	35.48%	6	6.45%
Increasing starting salaries	56	60.22%	22	23.66%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	23	24.73%	27	29.03%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	11	11.83%	9	9.68%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	17	18.28%	8	8.60%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	6	6.45%	13	13.98%
Shortening the hiring process	25	26.88%	4	4.30%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	25	26.88%	8	8.60%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	31	33.33%	24	25.81%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	9	9.68%	14	15.05%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	43	46.24%	3	3.23%
Participating in job fairs	31	33.33%	5	5.38%
Building/increasing brand awareness	35	37.63%	18	19.35%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	12	12.90%	8	8.60%
Using formal candidate tracking system	30	32.26%	6	6.45%
Other	1	1.08%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	20	21.51%
Team incentives	10	10.75%
Employee referral bonuses	39	41.94%
Year-end bonuses	30	32.26%
Spot bonuses	16	17.20%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	20	21.51%
Retention bonuses	13	13.98%
Commissions	10	10.75%
Project bonuses	5	5.38%
Profit sharing	12	12.90%
Hazard bonuses/pay	3	3.23%
Additional PTO	26	27.96%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 93

Report Cut: Oregon

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	12	12.90%
Language premiums	8	8.60%
Other*	1	1.08%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	49	52.69%
Resources to do their job effectively	12	12.90%
Mentoring opportunities	3	3.23%
Competitive/robust health benefits	35	37.63%
Opportunities to connect with others	6	6.45%
Driven by the mission of the organization	23	24.73%
Recognition and reward for good performance	24	25.81%
Ongoing training on new technologies	7	7.53%
Competitive pay	77	82.80%
Good work/life balance	66	70.97%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	12	12.90%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	30	32.26%
Current technology	1	1.08%
Remote work opportunities	14	15.05%
Hybrid work opportunities	16	17.20%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	3	3.23%
Regular full-time hours	7	7.53%
Strong organizational culture	23	24.73%
Challenging work	3	3.23%
Diverse workforce	1	1.08%
Vacation/paid time off	24	25.81%
Focus on employee safety	1	1.08%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	6	6.52%
No change	36	39.13%
More difficult	50	54.35%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 93

Report Cut: Oregon

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	4	8.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	39	78.00%
Lack of technical skills	17	34.00%
Lack of soft skills	13	26.00%
Lack of work experience	21	42.00%
Our organization's geographic location	10	20.00%
Market competition/high demand	21	42.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	30	60.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	1	2.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	8	16.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	6	12.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	15	30.00%
Other *	3	6.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	26	28.26%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	30	32.61%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	11	11.96%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	2.17%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	23	25.00%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	16	17.39%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	39	42.39%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	12	13.04%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	3.26%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	22	23.91%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	12	12.90%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	24	25.81%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	10	10.75%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	5.38%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	21	22.58%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	5.38%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	21	22.58%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 93

Report Cut: Oregon

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	46	49.46%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	30	32.26%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	52	55.91%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	21	22.58%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	10	10.75%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	43	46.24%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	6	6.45%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	12	12.90%
Creating/redefining policies	20	21.51%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	10	10.75%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	26	27.96%
N/A	11	11.83%
Other *	2	2.15%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	4	4.40%
No	53	58.24%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	34	37.36%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	35	38.04%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	14	15.22%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	37	40.22%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	6	6.52%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 93

Report Cut: Oregon

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	86	92.47%
Paid lump sum awards	4	4.30%
Paid variable/bonus awards	25	26.88%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	2	2.15%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	1.08%
Reduced wages/salaries	1	1.08%
Reduced hours worked	4	4.30%
Uncertain	3	3.23%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	80	86.02%
Paying lump sum awards	8	8.60%
Paying variable/bonus awards	23	24.73%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	4	4.30%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	2	2.15%
Reducing wages/salaries	1	1.08%
Reducing hours worked	3	3.23%
Uncertain	9	9.68%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	58	62.37%	50	53.76%
Increased standard wages	47	50.54%	42	45.16%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	53	56.99%	46	49.46%
Implemented or increased variable pay	7	7.53%	13	13.98%
Temporarily bumped pay	4	4.30%	2	2.15%
Other	1	1.08%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	9	9.68%	10	10.75%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 93

Report Cut: Oregon

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	21	22.58%	19	20.43%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	18	19.35%	11	11.83%
Invest in new technology	37	39.78%	48	51.61%
Invest in equipment	29	31.18%	36	38.71%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	9	9.68%	13	13.98%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	6	6.45%	17	18.28%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	13	13.98%	11	11.83%
Increase training budget	18	19.35%	21	22.58%
Increase total rewards communication/education	11	11.83%	20	21.51%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	21	22.58%	23	24.73%
Increase recruiting emphasis	22	23.66%	21	22.58%
Pay above market rates	18	19.35%	16	17.20%
Enhance the benefits package	12	12.90%	24	25.81%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	21	22.58%	27	29.03%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	13	13.98%	18	19.35%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	4	4.30%	5	5.38%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	3	3.23%	3	3.23%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	5	5.38%	5	5.38%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	6	6.45%	14	15.05%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	5	5.38%	14	15.05%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	2	2.15%	4	4.30%
Hold off on investing in new technology	3	3.23%	4	4.30%
Hold off on investing in equipment	6	6.45%	5	5.38%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	2	2.15%	4	4.30%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	4	4.30%	4	4.30%
Reduce training budget	2	2.15%	4	4.30%
Limiting employee travel	14	15.05%	15	16.13%
Hiring freezes	8	8.60%	7	7.53%
Implementing furloughs	4	4.30%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	14	15.05%	6	6.45%
Reduce benefits package	1	1.08%	1	1.08%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	2	2.15%	2	2.15%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	1.08%	1	1.08%
Freezing compensation increases	4	4.30%	4	4.30%
Outsourcing roles or functions	4	4.30%	6	6.45%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 93

Report Cut: Oregon

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	12	12.90%	4	4.30%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	37	39.78%	7	7.53%
Increasing presence on social media	49	52.69%	13	13.98%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	9	9.68%	2	2.15%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	21	22.58%	6	6.45%
Partnering with brand influencers	7	7.53%	6	6.45%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	22	23.66%	8	8.60%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	31	33.33%	13	13.98%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	16	17.20%	9	9.68%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 93

Report Cut: Oregon

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	43	46.24%	14	15.05%	1	1.08%
Website content production	36	38.71%	14	15.05%	6	6.45%
Marketing content production	36	38.71%	16	17.20%	9	9.68%
Other content production	37	39.78%	11	11.83%	7	7.53%
Digital personal assistant	40	43.01%	9	9.68%	1	1.08%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	37	39.78%	14	15.05%	2	2.15%
Customer relationship management	41	44.09%	8	8.60%	2	2.15%
Inventory management	41	44.09%	7	7.53%	1	1.08%
Product recommendations	43	46.24%	6	6.45%	0	0.00%
Accounting	43	46.24%	5	5.38%	3	3.23%
Supply chain operations	45	48.39%	2	2.15%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	40	43.01%	12	12.90%	4	4.30%
Application and screening management	39	41.94%	13	13.98%	2	2.15%
Audience segmentation	41	44.09%	4	4.30%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	38	40.86%	10	10.75%	4	4.30%
Idea generation	34	36.56%	17	18.28%	8	8.60%
Process automation	37	39.78%	13	13.98%	3	3.23%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	40	43.01%	9	9.68%	2	2.15%

# **Pennsylvania**



# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 115

Report Cut: Pennsylvania

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	1	0.87%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	0.87%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2	1.74%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	2	1.74%
Construction	5	4.35%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	20	17.39%
Education Services	5	4.35%
Financial & Insurance	8	6.96%
Health Care & Social Assistance	5	4.35%
Information	2	1.74%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	1	0.87%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	15	13.04%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	14	12.17%
Public Administration	1	0.87%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	1	0.87%
Retail Trade	8	6.96%
Services (Except Public Administration)	10	8.70%
Transportation & Warehousing	4	3.48%
Utilities	1	0.87%
Wholesale Trade	9	7.83%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	51	44.35%
100 to 249	31	26.96%
250 to 499	17	14.78%
500 to 999	6	5.22%
1,000 or more	10	8.70%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	90	78.26%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	5	4.35%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	20	17.39%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 115

Report Cut: Pennsylvania

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	36	31.3%
Stay the same	57	49.6%
Decline	22	19.1%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	9	7.8%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	45	39.1%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	22	19.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	24	20.9%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	10	8.7%
Do not know	5	4.3%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	10	8.7%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	53	46.1%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	33	28.7%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	5	4.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	2.6%
Do not know	11	9.6%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	75	68.81%	65	60.19%
Mild	29	26.61%	27	25.00%
Serious	5	4.59%	16	14.81%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	14	12.50%	11	10.09%
Mild	68	60.71%	67	61.47%
Serious	30	26.79%	31	28.44%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	69	61.61%	58	52.25%
Mild	38	33.93%	41	36.94%
Serious	5	4.46%	12	10.81%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	37	33.33%	28	25.69%
Mild	59	53.15%	62	56.88%
Serious	15	13.51%	19	17.43%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 115

Report Cut: Pennsylvania

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	29	26.36%	24	22.22%
Mild	47	42.73%	53	49.07%
Serious	34	30.91%	31	28.70%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	16	14.29%	14	12.61%
Mild	61	54.46%	46	41.44%
Serious	35	31.25%	51	45.95%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	19	16.96%	15	13.64%
Mild	56	50.00%	49	44.55%
Serious	37	33.04%	46	41.82%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	31	27.93%	22	20.18%
Mild	54	48.65%	47	43.12%
Serious	26	23.42%	40	36.70%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	22	19.64%	19	17.27%
Mild	58	51.79%	54	49.09%
Serious	32	28.57%	37	33.64%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	62	56.36%	58	52.73%
Mild	38	34.55%	40	36.36%
Serious	10	9.09%	12	10.91%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	52	46.43%	48	43.24%
Mild	50	44.64%	51	45.95%
Serious	10	8.93%	12	10.81%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	30	27.27%	26	24.30%
Mild	53	48.18%	56	52.34%
Serious	27	24.55%	25	23.36%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	39	35.45%	36	32.73%
Mild	52	47.27%	51	46.36%
Serious	19	17.27%	23	20.91%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	36	33.96%	35	33.33%
Mild	56	52.83%	53	50.48%
Serious	14	13.21%	17	16.19%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 115

Report Cut: Pennsylvania

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	37	34.58%	34	32.08%
Mild	51	47.66%	49	46.23%
Serious	19	17.76%	23	21.70%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	25	22.73%	26	24.07%
Mild	58	52.73%	53	49.07%
Serious	27	24.55%	29	26.85%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	50	45.05%	47	43.12%
Mild	36	32.43%	38	35.19%
Serious	25	22.52%	24	22.22%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	58	52.25%	56	51.38%
Mild	43	38.74%	40	36.70%
Serious	10	9.01%	13	11.93%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	12	10.81%	13	11.93%
Mild	60	54.05%	67	61.47%
Serious	40	36.04%	31	28.44%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	18	16.22%	13	11.93%
Mild	57	51.35%	59	54.13%
Serious	35	31.53%	36	33.03%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	15	13.51%	11	10.09%
Mild	52	46.85%	45	41.28%
Serious	42	37.84%	52	47.71%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	7	6.31%	6	5.50%
Mild	47	42.34%	43	39.45%
Serious	56	50.45%	60	55.05%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	50	45.05%	46	42.20%
Mild	49	44.14%	51	46.79%
Serious	10	9.01%	12	11.01%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	28	25.23%	22	20.18%
Mild	68	61.26%	58	53.21%
Serious	15	13.51%	30	27.52%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	20	18.02%	21	19.27%
Mild	54	48.65%	59	54.13%
Serious	37	33.33%	30	27.52%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 115

Report Cut: Pennsylvania

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	29	26.13%	25	22.94%
Mild	65	58.56%	61	55.96%
Serious	17	15.32%	25	22.94%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	30	27.03%	30	27.52%
Mild	61	54.95%	56	51.38%
Serious	16	14.41%	21	19.27%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	52	46.85%	50	45.87%
Mild	21	18.92%	19	17.43%
Serious	5	4.50%	8	7.34%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	4	2	0	16
Competition in general	17	4	7	66
Product obsolescence	1	0	7	10
Changing customer preferences	3	10	5	34
Customer's ability to afford	14	7	7	63
Talent acquisition	15	7	13	72
Talent retention	12	11	7	65
Ability to pay for benefits costs	3	1	5	16
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	6	10	5	43
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	2	1	5
Ability to maintain quality product/service	4	5	1	23
Cost of materials	5	10	7	42
Cost of equipment	0	2	1	5
Taxes	0	1	2	4
Cost of regulatory compliance	4	1	2	16
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	4	3	4	22
Employee safety	3	1	2	13
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	3	2	8
Inflation	3	3	5	20
Employee engagement	2	9	7	31
Developing future leaders	2	7	10	30
Cybersecurity	3	6	3	24
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	1	2	0	7
Political uncertainty	2	2	4	14
Talent skills gap	2	2	2	12
Unknown challenges	1	1	1	6
Other	1	0	1	4

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 115

Report Cut: Pennsylvania

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	10	8.70%
Slightly less than planned	24	20.87%
As planned	52	45.22%
Slightly more than planned	25	21.74%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	2	1.74%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	52	45.22%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	44	38.26%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	17	14.78%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	50	43.47%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	5	4.35%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	57	49.57%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	3	2.61%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	31	28.97%	21	20.59%
No	76	71.03%	81	79.41%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	84	77.06%	68	63.55%
No	25	22.94%	39	36.45%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	90	81.08%	72	67.29%
No	21	18.92%	35	32.71%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	16	31.37%	13	27.08%
No	35	68.63%	35	72.92%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	63	73.26%	57	68.67%
No	23	26.74%	26	31.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 115

Report Cut: Pennsylvania

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	3	2.70%
Some due to this	74	66.67%
None due to this	34	30.63%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	15	13.76%
None due to this	94	86.24%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	6	5.36%
Some due to this	92	82.14%
None due to this	14	12.50%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	5	4.59%
Some due to this	80	73.39%
None due to this	24	22.02%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	4	3.57%
Some due to this	67	59.82%
None due to this	41	36.61%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	0.93%
Some due to this	17	15.74%
None due to this	90	83.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 115

Report Cut: Pennsylvania

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	2	1.77%	0	0.00%	4	3.54%
Somewhat dissatisfied	23	24.21%	14	12.39%	26	23.01%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	17	16.91%	15	13.27%	14	12.39%
Somewhat satisfied	52	43.32%	62	54.87%	47	41.59%
Very satisfied	19	10.85%	22	19.47%	22	19.47%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	42	36.52%	16	13.91%	10	8.70%
Middle managers	40	34.78%	15	13.04%	28	24.35%
Professional staff (non-managers)	52	45.22%	21	18.26%	38	33.04%
Skilled production workers	44	38.26%	15	13.04%	30	26.09%
Unskilled production workers	22	19.13%	10	8.70%	23	20.00%
Entry-level office workers	24	20.87%	13	11.30%	22	19.13%
Entry-level non-office workers	17	14.78%	7	6.09%	17	14.78%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	15	13.04%	2	1.74%	9	7.83%
Service workers	17	14.78%	4	3.48%	10	8.70%
Other	3	2.61%	1	0.87%	2	1.74%
None	5	4.35%	8	6.96%	8	6.96%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 115

Report Cut: Pennsylvania

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	49	42.61%	48	41.74%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	23	20.00%	52	45.22%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	32	27.83%	63	54.78%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	45	39.13%	61	53.04%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	55	47.83%	12	10.43%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	55	47.83%	10	8.70%
Increasing starting salaries	75	65.22%	22	19.13%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	25	21.74%	24	20.87%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	27	23.48%	24	20.87%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	21	18.26%	10	8.70%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	10	8.70%	14	12.17%
Shortening the hiring process	26	22.61%	3	2.61%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	33	28.70%	16	13.91%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	44	38.26%	27	23.48%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	13	11.30%	17	14.78%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	50	43.48%	7	6.09%
Participating in job fairs	37	32.17%	4	3.48%
Building/increasing brand awareness	38	33.04%	22	19.13%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	12	10.43%	11	9.57%
Using formal candidate tracking system	36	31.30%	6	5.22%
Other	3	2.61%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Individual incentives	35	30.43%
Team incentives	16	13.91%
Employee referral bonuses	58	50.43%
Year-end bonuses	52	45.22%
Spot bonuses	22	19.13%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	36	31.30%
Retention bonuses	8	6.96%
Commissions	31	26.96%
Project bonuses	11	9.57%
Profit sharing	19	16.52%
Hazard bonuses/pay	2	1.74%
Additional PTO	26	22.61%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 115

Report Cut: Pennsylvania

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	27	23.48%
Language premiums	1	0.87%
Other*	4	3.48%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	60	52.17%
Resources to do their job effectively	19	16.52%
Mentoring opportunities	10	8.70%
Competitive/robust health benefits	38	33.04%
Opportunities to connect with others	4	3.48%
Driven by the mission of the organization	16	13.91%
Recognition and reward for good performance	42	36.52%
Ongoing training on new technologies	6	5.22%
Competitive pay	88	76.52%
Good work/life balance	89	77.39%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	12	10.43%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	44	38.26%
Current technology	2	1.74%
Remote work opportunities	23	20.00%
Hybrid work opportunities	23	20.00%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	5	4.35%
Regular full-time hours	9	7.83%
Strong organizational culture	28	24.35%
Challenging work	9	7.83%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	22	19.13%
Focus on employee safety	1	0.87%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	6	5.31%
No change	65	57.52%
More difficult	42	37.17%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 115

Report Cut: Pennsylvania

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	4	9.52%
Lack of qualified candidates	32	76.19%
Lack of technical skills	16	38.10%
Lack of soft skills	8	19.05%
Lack of work experience	11	26.19%
Our organization's geographic location	8	19.05%
Market competition/high demand	18	42.86%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	18	42.86%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	12	28.57%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	7	16.67%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	12	28.57%
Other *	1	2.38%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	36	32.43%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	36	32.43%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	12	10.81%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	8	7.21%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	19	17.12%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	18	16.22%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	39	35.14%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	22	19.82%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	7	6.31%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	25	22.52%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	9	7.83%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	37	32.17%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	9	7.83%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	4.35%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	22	19.13%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	9	7.83%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	31	26.96%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 115

Report Cut: Pennsylvania

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	44	38.26%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	23	20.00%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	42	36.52%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	13	11.30%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	6	5.22%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	37	32.17%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	7	6.09%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	12	10.43%
Creating/redefining policies	11	9.57%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	7	6.09%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	17	14.78%
N/A	25	21.74%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	13	11.61%
No	85	75.89%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	14	12.50%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	43	38.05%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	17	15.04%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	45	39.82%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	8	7.08%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 115

Report Cut: Pennsylvania

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	108	93.91%
Paid lump sum awards	9	7.83%
Paid variable/bonus awards	35	30.43%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	3	2.61%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	1	0.87%
Reduced hours worked	2	1.74%
Uncertain	5	4.35%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	99	86.09%
Paying lump sum awards	9	7.83%
Paying variable/bonus awards	35	30.43%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	2	1.74%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	3	2.61%
Reducing wages/salaries	1	0.87%
Reducing hours worked	1	0.87%
Uncertain	12	10.43%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	65	56.52%	48	41.74%
Increased standard wages	46	40.00%	40	34.78%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	43	37.39%	47	40.87%
Implemented or increased variable pay	8	6.96%	12	10.43%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	0.87%	1	0.87%
Other	3	2.61%	1	0.87%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	12	10.43%	12	10.43%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 115

Report Cut: Pennsylvania

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	14	12.17%	23	20.00%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	9	7.83%	15	13.04%
Invest in new technology	55	47.83%	67	58.26%
Invest in equipment	37	32.17%	41	35.65%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	6	5.22%	13	11.30%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	5	4.35%	8	6.96%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	11	9.57%	13	11.30%
Increase training budget	25	21.74%	38	33.04%
Increase total rewards communication/education	18	15.65%	28	24.35%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	34	29.57%	34	29.57%
Increase recruiting emphasis	17	14.78%	29	25.22%
Pay above market rates	8	6.96%	11	9.57%
Enhance the benefits package	15	13.04%	23	20.00%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	26	22.61%	34	29.57%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	18	15.65%	24	20.87%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	9	7.83%	9	7.83%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	4	3.48%	4	3.48%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	4	3.48%	4	3.48%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	12	10.43%	21	18.26%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	9	7.83%	23	20.00%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	2	1.74%	3	2.61%
Hold off on investing in new technology	9	7.83%	5	4.35%
Hold off on investing in equipment	6	5.22%	4	3.48%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	0.87%	1	0.87%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	6	5.22%	5	4.35%
Reduce training budget	4	3.48%	4	3.48%
Limiting employee travel	21	18.26%	14	12.17%
Hiring freezes	11	9.57%	9	7.83%
Implementing furloughs	6	5.22%	2	1.74%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	20	17.39%	4	3.48%
Reduce benefits package	1	0.87%	2	1.74%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	0.87%	3	2.61%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	5	4.35%	8	6.96%
Freezing compensation increases	1	0.87%	4	3.48%
Outsourcing roles or functions	8	6.96%	9	7.83%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 115

Report Cut: Pennsylvania

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	13	11.30%	10	8.70%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	38	33.04%	13	11.30%
Increasing presence on social media	72	62.61%	20	17.39%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	13	11.30%	7	6.09%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	40	34.78%	13	11.30%
Partnering with brand influencers	6	5.22%	1	0.87%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	26	22.61%	11	9.57%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	46	40.00%	22	19.13%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	32	27.83%	12	10.43%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 115

Report Cut: Pennsylvania

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	44	38.26%	24	20.87%	2	1.74%
Website content production	37	32.17%	24	20.87%	9	7.83%
Marketing content production	30	26.09%	31	26.96%	12	10.43%
Other content production	31	26.96%	22	19.13%	14	12.17%
Digital personal assistant	48	41.74%	11	9.57%	2	1.74%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	38	33.04%	22	19.13%	8	6.96%
Customer relationship management	45	39.13%	18	15.65%	6	5.22%
Inventory management	44	38.26%	11	9.57%	5	4.35%
Product recommendations	47	40.87%	8	6.96%	1	0.87%
Accounting	45	39.13%	11	9.57%	5	4.35%
Supply chain operations	50	43.48%	8	6.96%	1	0.87%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	41	35.65%	24	20.87%	6	5.22%
Application and screening management	42	36.52%	20	17.39%	5	4.35%
Audience segmentation	47	40.87%	5	4.35%	1	0.87%
Process improvement	37	32.17%	23	20.00%	6	5.22%
Idea generation	31	26.96%	26	22.61%	9	7.83%
Process automation	36	31.30%	22	19.13%	7	6.09%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	40	34.78%	16	13.91%	6	5.22%



# **Rhode Island**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Rhode Island

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	6.67%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	1	6.67%
Education Services	1	6.67%
Financial & Insurance	1	6.67%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1	6.67%
Information	1	6.67%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	4	26.67%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	1	6.67%
Transportation & Warehousing	2	13.33%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	2	13.33%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	5	33.33%
100 to 249	5	33.33%
250 to 499	1	6.67%
500 to 999	1	6.67%
1,000 or more	3	20.00%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	9	60.00%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	2	13.33%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	4	26.67%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Rhode Island

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	6	40.0%
Stay the same	9	60.0%
Decline	0	0.0%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	8	53.3%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	1	6.7%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	13.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	13.3%
Do not know	2	13.3%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	6.7%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	9	60.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	2	13.3%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	6.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	2	13.3%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	9	60.00%	9	60.00%
Mild	6	40.00%	4	26.67%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	13.33%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Mild	12	80.00%	8	53.33%
Serious	2	13.33%	6	40.00%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	10	66.67%	9	60.00%
Mild	5	33.33%	5	33.33%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	6.67%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	5	35.71%	3	21.43%
Mild	9	64.29%	10	71.43%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	7.14%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Rhode Island

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	8	53.33%	7	46.67%
Mild	6	40.00%	8	53.33%
Serious	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Mild	10	66.67%	10	66.67%
Serious	4	26.67%	4	26.67%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Mild	8	53.33%	9	60.00%
Serious	6	40.00%	5	33.33%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	3	20.00%	1	6.67%
Mild	8	53.33%	9	60.00%
Serious	4	26.67%	5	33.33%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
Mild	11	73.33%	12	80.00%
Serious	2	13.33%	2	13.33%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	9	60.00%	7	46.67%
Mild	6	40.00%	8	53.33%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	7	46.67%	7	46.67%
Mild	8	53.33%	7	46.67%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	6.67%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	2	13.33%	2	14.29%
Mild	11	73.33%	11	78.57%
Serious	2	13.33%	1	7.14%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	4	26.67%	4	26.67%
Mild	10	66.67%	10	66.67%
Serious	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	3	25.00%	3	23.08%
Mild	8	66.67%	8	61.54%
Serious	1	8.33%	2	15.38%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Rhode Island

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	4	28.57%	4	28.57%
Mild	8	57.14%	7	50.00%
Serious	2	14.29%	3	21.43%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	4	26.67%	4	26.67%
Mild	9	60.00%	8	53.33%
Serious	2	13.33%	3	20.00%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	6	40.00%	5	33.33%
Mild	7	46.67%	7	46.67%
Serious	2	13.33%	3	20.00%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	4	26.67%	4	26.67%
Mild	9	60.00%	10	66.67%
Serious	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	4	26.67%	3	20.00%
Mild	6	40.00%	6	40.00%
Serious	5	33.33%	6	40.00%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Mild	12	80.00%	11	73.33%
Serious	2	13.33%	4	26.67%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
Mild	6	40.00%	7	46.67%
Serious	7	46.67%	7	46.67%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Mild	4	26.67%	3	20.00%
Serious	10	66.67%	12	80.00%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	6	40.00%	6	40.00%
Mild	5	33.33%	4	26.67%
Serious	4	26.67%	5	33.33%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	6	40.00%	4	26.67%
Mild	6	40.00%	6	40.00%
Serious	3	20.00%	5	33.33%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	4	26.67%	3	20.00%
Mild	5	33.33%	6	40.00%
Serious	6	40.00%	6	40.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Rhode Island

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	5	33.33%	5	33.33%
Mild	8	53.33%	8	53.33%
Serious	2	13.33%	2	13.33%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	4	26.67%	4	26.67%
Mild	9	60.00%	8	53.33%
Serious	1	6.67%	2	13.33%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	7	46.67%	7	46.67%
Mild	2	13.33%	2	13.33%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	1	0	2
Competition in general	4	0	2	14
Product obsolescence	0	0	1	1
Changing customer preferences	0	2	0	4
Customer's ability to afford	0	0	0	0
Talent acquisition	1	1	2	7
Talent retention	0	2	0	4
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	2	1	5
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	4	0	0	12
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	0	0	3
Cost of materials	0	2	0	4
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	2	0	1	7
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	2	0	0	6
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	1	0	5
Inflation	0	0	2	2
Employee engagement	0	1	1	3
Developing future leaders	0	1	1	3
Cybersecurity	0	2	2	6
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	0	0
Political uncertainty	0	0	0	0
Talent skills gap	0	0	1	1
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Rhode Island

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	1	6.67%
Slightly less than planned	4	26.67%
As planned	8	53.33%
Slightly more than planned	1	6.67%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	1	6.67%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	7	46.67%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	6	40.00%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	13.33%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	9	60.00%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	6	40.00%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	6	40.00%	6	46.15%
No	9	60.00%	7	53.85%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	13	86.67%	11	78.57%
No	2	13.33%	3	21.43%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	13	86.67%	12	85.71%
No	2	13.33%	2	14.29%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	2	66.67%	2	66.67%
No	1	33.33%	1	33.33%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	8	80.00%	8	80.00%
No	2	20.00%	2	20.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Rhode Island

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	12	80.00%
None due to this	3	20.00%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	1	6.67%
None due to this	14	93.33%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	14	93.33%
None due to this	1	6.67%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	14	93.33%
None due to this	1	6.67%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	10	66.67%
None due to this	5	33.33%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	4	26.67%
None due to this	11	73.33%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Rhode Island

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	1	6.67%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	3	24.21%	2	13.33%	5	33.33%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	16.91%	2	13.33%	3	20.00%
Somewhat satisfied	6	43.32%	5	33.33%	6	40.00%
Very satisfied	3	10.85%	6	40.00%	1	6.67%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	5	33.33%	3	20.00%	0	0.00%
Middle managers	5	33.33%	3	20.00%	4	26.67%
Professional staff (non-managers)	9	60.00%	2	13.33%	9	60.00%
Skilled production workers	6	40.00%	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Unskilled production workers	4	26.67%	1	6.67%	3	20.00%
Entry-level office workers	4	26.67%	3	20.00%	4	26.67%
Entry-level non-office workers	0	0.00%	1	6.67%	2	13.33%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	2	13.33%	0	0.00%	2	13.33%
Service workers	2	13.33%	0	0.00%	1	6.67%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None	1	6.67%	1	6.67%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Rhode Island

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	9	60.00%	2	13.33%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	4	26.67%	6	40.00%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	6	40.00%	7	46.67%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	8	53.33%	9	60.00%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	10	66.67%	2	13.33%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	8	53.33%	0	0.00%
Increasing starting salaries	11	73.33%	4	26.67%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	7	46.67%	6	40.00%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	4	26.67%	3	20.00%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	3	20.00%	1	6.67%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	2	13.33%	2	13.33%
Shortening the hiring process	4	26.67%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	7	46.67%	1	6.67%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	7	46.67%	4	26.67%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	3	20.00%	2	13.33%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	9	60.00%	1	6.67%
Participating in job fairs	6	40.00%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	9	60.00%	3	20.00%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	2	13.33%	0	0.00%
Using formal candidate tracking system	4	26.67%	0	0.00%
Other	1	6.67%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	7	46.67%
Team incentives	1	6.67%
Employee referral bonuses	8	53.33%
Year-end bonuses	6	40.00%
Spot bonuses	6	40.00%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	6	40.00%
Retention bonuses	4	26.67%
Commissions	4	26.67%
Project bonuses	1	6.67%
Profit sharing	3	20.00%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	3	20.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Rhode Island

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	3	20.00%
Language premiums	2	13.33%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	12	80.00%
Resources to do their job effectively	2	13.33%
Mentoring opportunities	2	13.33%
Competitive/robust health benefits	3	20.00%
Opportunities to connect with others	0	0.00%
Driven by the mission of the organization	2	13.33%
Recognition and reward for good performance	5	33.33%
Ongoing training on new technologies	0	0.00%
Competitive pay	11	73.33%
Good work/life balance	11	73.33%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	1	6.67%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	4	26.67%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	3	20.00%
Hybrid work opportunities	6	40.00%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	0	0.00%
Strong organizational culture	8	53.33%
Challenging work	0	0.00%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	3	20.00%
Focus on employee safety	1	6.67%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	1	6.67%
No change	10	66.67%
More difficult	4	26.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Rhode Island

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	0	0.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	4	100.00%
Lack of technical skills	2	50.00%
Lack of soft skills	0	0.00%
Lack of work experience	0	0.00%
Our organization's geographic location	1	25.00%
Market competition/high demand	2	50.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	1	25.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	1	25.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	0	0.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	1	25.00%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	5	33.33%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	6	40.00%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	26.67%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	0	0.00%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	20.00%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	7	46.67%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	13.33%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	20.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	0	0.00%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	1	6.67%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	4	26.67%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	2	13.33%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	6	40.00%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	33.33%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	1	6.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Rhode Island

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	9	60.00%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	5	33.33%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	10	66.67%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	3	20.00%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	4	26.67%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	8	53.33%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	3	20.00%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	3	20.00%
Creating/redefining policies	5	33.33%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	2	13.33%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	4	26.67%
N/A	1	6.67%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	1	6.67%
No	9	60.00%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	5	33.33%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	7	46.67%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	1	6.67%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	7	46.67%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Rhode Island

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	14	93.33%
Paid lump sum awards	1	6.67%
Paid variable/bonus awards	9	60.00%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	13	86.67%
Paying lump sum awards	0	0.00%
Paying variable/bonus awards	7	46.67%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	3	20.00%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	8	53.33%	7	46.67%
Increased standard wages	8	53.33%	7	46.67%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	5	33.33%	4	26.67%
Implemented or increased variable pay	1	6.67%	2	13.33%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	0	0.00%	2	13.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Rhode Island

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	2	13.33%	3	20.00%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	3	20.00%	4	26.67%
Invest in new technology	9	60.00%	13	86.67%
Invest in equipment	5	33.33%	8	53.33%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	2	13.33%	3	20.00%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	1	6.67%	2	13.33%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	3	20.00%	2	13.33%
Increase training budget	4	26.67%	3	20.00%
Increase total rewards communication/education	0	0.00%	2	13.33%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	6	40.00%	9	60.00%
Increase recruiting emphasis	5	33.33%	5	33.33%
Pay above market rates	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Enhance the benefits package	3	20.00%	4	26.67%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	6	40.00%	7	46.67%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	3	20.00%	3	20.00%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	3	20.00%	2	13.33%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	1	6.67%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	3	20.00%	3	20.00%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	2	13.33%	4	26.67%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Hold off on investing in new technology	2	13.33%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	2	13.33%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	0	0.00%	1	6.67%
Reduce training budget	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Limiting employee travel	3	20.00%	3	20.00%
Hiring freezes	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
Implementing furloughs	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	4	26.67%	1	6.67%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	2	13.33%	2	13.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Rhode Island

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	3	20.00%	1	6.67%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	9	60.00%	1	6.67%
Increasing presence on social media	11	73.33%	3	20.00%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	3	20.00%	1	6.67%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	8	53.33%	2	13.33%
Partnering with brand influencers	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	7	46.67%	2	13.33%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	10	66.67%	4	26.67%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	6	40.00%	1	6.67%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Rhode Island

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	7	46.67%	3	20.00%	0	0.00%
Website content production	5	33.33%	2	13.33%	3	20.00%
Marketing content production	4	26.67%	4	26.67%	3	20.00%
Other content production	4	26.67%	3	20.00%	3	20.00%
Digital personal assistant	7	46.67%	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	5	33.33%	5	33.33%	1	6.67%
Customer relationship management	6	40.00%	3	20.00%	1	6.67%
Inventory management	7	46.67%	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
Product recommendations	8	53.33%	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Accounting	7	46.67%	3	20.00%	1	6.67%
Supply chain operations	7	46.67%	3	20.00%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	7	46.67%	1	6.67%	2	13.33%
Application and screening management	7	46.67%	1	6.67%	2	13.33%
Audience segmentation	7	46.67%	2	13.33%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	5	33.33%	5	33.33%	1	6.67%
Idea generation	5	33.33%	5	33.33%	1	6.67%
Process automation	7	46.67%	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	6	40.00%	2	13.33%	2	13.33%

# **South Carolina**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 54

Report Cut: South Carolina

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	1.85%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1	1.85%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	3	5.56%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	5	9.26%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	5	9.26%
Health Care & Social Assistance	3	5.56%
Information	3	5.56%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	1	1.85%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	4	7.41%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	13	24.07%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	2	3.70%
Services (Except Public Administration)	5	9.26%
Transportation & Warehousing	4	7.41%
Utilities	1	1.85%
Wholesale Trade	3	5.56%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	14	25.93%
100 to 249	22	40.74%
250 to 499	6	11.11%
500 to 999	3	5.56%
1,000 or more	9	16.67%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	42	77.78%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	2	3.70%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	10	18.52%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 54

Report Cut: South Carolina

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	21	38.9%
Stay the same	23	42.6%
Decline	10	18.5%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	6	11.1%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	23	42.6%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	13	24.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	9	16.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	3	5.6%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	8	14.8%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	26	48.1%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	11	20.4%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	5.6%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	1.9%
Do not know	5	9.3%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	35	71.43%	30	61.22%
Mild	14	28.57%	14	28.57%
Serious	0	0.00%	5	10.20%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	9	17.31%	6	11.54%
Mild	27	51.92%	27	51.92%
Serious	16	30.77%	19	36.54%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	36	69.23%	29	54.72%
Mild	13	25.00%	18	33.96%
Serious	3	5.77%	6	11.32%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	20	38.46%	14	26.92%
Mild	25	48.08%	28	53.85%
Serious	7	13.46%	10	19.23%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 54

Report Cut: South Carolina

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	20	38.46%	17	32.69%
Mild	18	34.62%	25	48.08%
Serious	14	26.92%	10	19.23%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	6	11.54%	3	5.88%
Mild	19	36.54%	22	43.14%
Serious	27	51.92%	26	50.98%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	3	5.77%	3	5.66%
Mild	27	51.92%	28	52.83%
Serious	22	42.31%	22	41.51%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	13	25.00%	11	22.00%
Mild	27	51.92%	21	42.00%
Serious	12	23.08%	18	36.00%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	7	13.21%	8	15.09%
Mild	30	56.60%	27	50.94%
Serious	16	30.19%	18	33.96%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	25	48.08%	23	44.23%
Mild	20	38.46%	20	38.46%
Serious	7	13.46%	9	17.31%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	23	44.23%	22	42.31%
Mild	22	42.31%	22	42.31%
Serious	7	13.46%	8	15.38%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	21	41.18%	19	38.00%
Mild	20	39.22%	19	38.00%
Serious	10	19.61%	12	24.00%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	21	40.38%	20	38.46%
Mild	21	40.38%	17	32.69%
Serious	10	19.23%	15	28.85%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	14	29.17%	13	26.53%
Mild	28	58.33%	28	57.14%
Serious	6	12.50%	8	16.33%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 54

Report Cut: South Carolina

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	18	34.62%	15	29.41%
Mild	23	44.23%	27	52.94%
Serious	11	21.15%	9	17.65%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	10	19.23%	9	17.31%
Mild	27	51.92%	27	51.92%
Serious	15	28.85%	16	30.77%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	22	43.14%	21	41.18%
Mild	17	33.33%	18	34.62%
Serious	12	23.53%	12	23.08%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	13	25.49%	12	23.53%
Mild	29	56.86%	32	62.75%
Serious	9	17.65%	7	13.73%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	4	7.84%	3	5.88%
Mild	28	54.90%	31	60.78%
Serious	20	39.22%	18	35.29%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	9	17.65%	4	7.84%
Mild	25	49.02%	30	58.82%
Serious	18	35.29%	19	37.25%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	5	9.80%	3	5.88%
Mild	24	47.06%	21	41.18%
Serious	21	41.18%	25	49.02%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	1	1.96%	0	0.00%
Mild	21	41.18%	19	37.25%
Serious	29	56.86%	33	64.71%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	22	43.14%	20	39.22%
Mild	23	45.10%	23	45.10%
Serious	7	13.73%	8	15.69%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	12	23.53%	10	19.61%
Mild	33	64.71%	23	45.10%
Serious	7	13.73%	20	39.22%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	10	19.61%	11	21.57%
Mild	24	47.06%	25	49.02%
Serious	18	35.29%	16	31.37%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 54

Report Cut: South Carolina

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	13	25.49%	9	17.65%
Mild	30	58.82%	33	64.71%
Serious	9	17.65%	10	19.61%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	15	29.41%	13	25.49%
Mild	30	58.82%	28	54.90%
Serious	5	9.80%	9	17.65%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	23	45.10%	22	43.14%
Mild	9	17.65%	9	17.65%
Serious	2	3.92%	3	5.88%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	1	0	2
Competition in general	8	1	5	31
Product obsolescence	2	0	0	6
Changing customer preferences	3	2	0	13
Customer's ability to afford	6	1	0	20
Talent acquisition	7	5	5	36
Talent retention	7	13	6	53
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	2	4	8
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	2	5	8	24
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	2	2	0	10
Cost of materials	1	4	0	11
Cost of equipment	1	0	0	3
Taxes	0	0	1	1
Cost of regulatory compliance	4	1	1	15
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	4	3	1	19
Employee safety	1	1	1	6
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	2	1	5
Inflation	0	2	4	8
Employee engagement	1	3	5	14
Developing future leaders	1	1	4	9
Cybersecurity	1	3	1	10
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	0	0
Political uncertainty	1	0	2	5
Talent skills gap	1	1	2	7
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 54

Report Cut: South Carolina

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	2	3.70%
Slightly less than planned	14	25.93%
As planned	24	44.44%
Slightly more than planned	11	20.37%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	2	3.70%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	27	50.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	21	38.89%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	4	7.41%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	32	59.26%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	1.85%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	20	37.04%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	1.85%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	18	35.29%	11	22.45%
No	33	64.71%	38	77.55%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	44	83.02%	40	75.47%
No	9	16.98%	13	24.53%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	49	94.23%	44	84.62%
No	3	5.77%	8	15.38%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	3	20.00%	3	21.43%
No	12	80.00%	11	78.57%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	21	61.76%	21	63.64%
No	13	38.24%	12	36.36%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 54

Report Cut: South Carolina

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	1	1.92%
Some due to this	44	84.62%
None due to this	7	13.46%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	8	15.38%
None due to this	44	84.62%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	1.92%
Some due to this	46	88.46%
None due to this	5	9.62%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	1.92%
Some due to this	45	86.54%
None due to this	6	11.54%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	37	71.15%
None due to this	15	28.85%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	1.92%
Some due to this	13	25.00%
None due to this	38	73.08%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 54

Report Cut: South Carolina

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	3.77%
Somewhat dissatisfied	16	24.21%	14	26.42%	14	26.42%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6	16.91%	5	9.43%	13	24.53%
Somewhat satisfied	21	43.32%	26	49.06%	18	33.96%
Very satisfied	10	10.85%	8	15.09%	6	11.32%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	27	50.00%	12	22.22%	6	11.11%
Middle managers	28	51.85%	10	18.52%	14	25.93%
Professional staff (non-managers)	32	59.26%	9	16.67%	21	38.89%
Skilled production workers	14	25.93%	5	9.26%	12	22.22%
Unskilled production workers	9	16.67%	1	1.85%	10	18.52%
Entry-level office workers	15	27.78%	6	11.11%	19	35.19%
Entry-level non-office workers	5	9.26%	2	3.70%	8	14.81%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	8	14.81%	2	3.70%	5	9.26%
Service workers	8	14.81%	1	1.85%	7	12.96%
Other	6	11.11%	0	0.00%	3	5.56%
None	2	3.70%	2	3.70%	2	3.70%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 54

Report Cut: South Carolina

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	26	48.15%	21	38.89%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	10	18.52%	25	46.30%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	9	16.67%	34	62.96%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	24	44.44%	32	59.26%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	30	55.56%	8	14.81%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	26	48.15%	5	9.26%
Increasing starting salaries	39	72.22%	13	24.07%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	15	27.78%	19	35.19%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	14	25.93%	11	20.37%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	10	18.52%	1	1.85%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	5	9.26%	9	16.67%
Shortening the hiring process	16	29.63%	3	5.56%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	17	31.48%	5	9.26%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	30	55.56%	15	27.78%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	9	16.67%	12	22.22%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	25	46.30%	4	7.41%
Participating in job fairs	24	44.44%	2	3.70%
Building/increasing brand awareness	20	37.04%	9	16.67%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	7	12.96%	6	11.11%
Using formal candidate tracking system	22	40.74%	3	5.56%
Other	3	5.56%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	25	46.30%
Team incentives	8	14.81%
Employee referral bonuses	32	59.26%
Year-end bonuses	15	27.78%
Spot bonuses	16	29.63%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	22	40.74%
Retention bonuses	7	12.96%
Commissions	15	27.78%
Project bonuses	5	9.26%
Profit sharing	8	14.81%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	13	24.07%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 54

Report Cut: South Carolina

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	9	16.67%
Language premiums	1	1.85%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	21	38.89%
Resources to do their job effectively	7	12.96%
Mentoring opportunities	2	3.70%
Competitive/robust health benefits	18	33.33%
Opportunities to connect with others	2	3.70%
Driven by the mission of the organization	4	7.41%
Recognition and reward for good performance	15	27.78%
Ongoing training on new technologies	2	3.70%
Competitive pay	45	83.33%
Good work/life balance	42	77.78%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	7	12.96%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	18	33.33%
Current technology	1	1.85%
Remote work opportunities	16	29.63%
Hybrid work opportunities	15	27.78%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	2	3.70%
Strong organizational culture	18	33.33%
Challenging work	5	9.26%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	16	29.63%
Focus on employee safety	2	3.70%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	1	1.89%
No change	24	45.28%
More difficult	28	52.83%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 54

Report Cut: South Carolina

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	2	7.14%
Lack of qualified candidates	24	85.71%
Lack of technical skills	11	39.29%
Lack of soft skills	5	17.86%
Lack of work experience	7	25.00%
Our organization's geographic location	2	7.14%
Market competition/high demand	12	42.86%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	16	57.14%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	5	17.86%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	3	10.71%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	3	10.71%
Other *	1	3.57%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	12	22.64%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	27	50.94%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	11	20.75%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	1.89%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	2	3.77%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	8	15.09%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	25	47.17%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	14	26.42%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	3.77%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	4	7.55%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	6	11.11%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	16	29.63%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	3	5.56%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	9.26%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	19	35.19%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	9.26%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	7	12.96%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 54

Report Cut: South Carolina

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	25	46.30%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	11	20.37%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	23	42.59%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	7	12.96%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	6	11.11%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	21	38.89%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	4	7.41%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	7	12.96%
Creating/redefining policies	8	14.81%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	6	11.11%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	10	18.52%
N/A	9	16.67%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	7	13.21%
No	41	77.36%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	5	9.43%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	22	41.51%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	3	5.66%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	24	45.28%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	4	7.55%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 54

Report Cut: South Carolina

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	52	96.30%
Paid lump sum awards	6	11.11%
Paid variable/bonus awards	19	35.19%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	3	5.56%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	2	3.70%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	46	85.19%
Paying lump sum awards	4	7.41%
Paying variable/bonus awards	21	38.89%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	1.85%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	3	5.56%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	6	11.11%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	30	55.56%	28	51.85%
Increased standard wages	19	35.19%	21	38.89%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	24	44.44%	28	51.85%
Implemented or increased variable pay	5	9.26%	5	9.26%
Temporarily bumped pay	2	3.70%	0	0.00%
Other	1	1.85%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	7	12.96%	4	7.41%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 54

Report Cut: South Carolina

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	8	14.81%	8	14.81%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	7	12.96%	9	16.67%
Invest in new technology	25	46.30%	33	61.11%
Invest in equipment	14	25.93%	14	25.93%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	5	9.26%	7	12.96%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	5	9.26%	5	9.26%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	2	3.70%	4	7.41%
Increase training budget	14	25.93%	18	33.33%
Increase total rewards communication/education	12	22.22%	20	37.04%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	17	31.48%	18	33.33%
Increase recruiting emphasis	17	31.48%	24	44.44%
Pay above market rates	1	1.85%	2	3.70%
Enhance the benefits package	9	16.67%	14	25.93%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	17	31.48%	23	42.59%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	11	20.37%	18	33.33%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	2	3.70%	2	3.70%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	1	1.85%	2	3.70%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	1	1.85%	3	5.56%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	4	7.41%	11	20.37%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	5	9.26%	9	16.67%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	1.85%	2	3.70%
Hold off on investing in new technology	2	3.70%	2	3.70%
Hold off on investing in equipment	1	1.85%	2	3.70%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	1	1.85%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	4	7.41%	2	3.70%
Reduce training budget	2	3.70%	5	9.26%
Limiting employee travel	12	22.22%	10	18.52%
Hiring freezes	7	12.96%	5	9.26%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	6	11.11%	1	1.85%
Reduce benefits package	1	1.85%	1	1.85%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	1.85%	2	3.70%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	2	3.70%	2	3.70%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	3	5.56%
Outsourcing roles or functions	3	5.56%	5	9.26%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 54

Report Cut: South Carolina

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	8	14.81%	3	5.56%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	20	37.04%	6	11.11%
Increasing presence on social media	30	55.56%	6	11.11%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	9	16.67%	1	1.85%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	13	24.07%	6	11.11%
Partnering with brand influencers	3	5.56%	1	1.85%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	9	16.67%	2	3.70%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	22	40.74%	7	12.96%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	14	25.93%	8	14.81%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 54

Report Cut: South Carolina

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	19	35.19%	8	14.81%	1	1.85%
Website content production	15	27.78%	7	12.96%	5	9.26%
Marketing content production	11	20.37%	12	22.22%	8	14.81%
Other content production	14	25.93%	8	14.81%	4	7.41%
Digital personal assistant	20	37.04%	6	11.11%	3	5.56%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	15	27.78%	8	14.81%	4	7.41%
Customer relationship management	17	31.48%	9	16.67%	4	7.41%
Inventory management	18	33.33%	3	5.56%	3	5.56%
Product recommendations	19	35.19%	2	3.70%	0	0.00%
Accounting	21	38.89%	1	1.85%	3	5.56%
Supply chain operations	19	35.19%	4	7.41%	2	3.70%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	15	27.78%	13	24.07%	6	11.11%
Application and screening management	15	27.78%	10	18.52%	3	5.56%
Audience segmentation	16	29.63%	3	5.56%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	13	24.07%	7	12.96%	5	9.26%
Idea generation	10	18.52%	13	24.07%	8	14.81%
Process automation	12	22.22%	8	14.81%	5	9.26%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	16	29.63%	6	11.11%	4	7.41%

# **South Dakota**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 14

Report Cut: South Dakota

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	7.14%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2	14.29%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	1	7.14%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	2	14.29%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1	7.14%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	1	7.14%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	1	7.14%
Services (Except Public Administration)	2	14.29%
Transportation & Warehousing	2	14.29%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	1	7.14%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	1	7.14%
100 to 249	3	21.43%
250 to 499	2	14.29%
500 to 999	2	14.29%
1,000 or more	6	42.86%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	11	78.57%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	1	7.14%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	2	14.29%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 14

Report Cut: South Dakota

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	8	57.1%
Stay the same	2	14.3%
Decline	4	28.6%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	14.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	7	50.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	3	21.4%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	7.1%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	7.1%
Do not know	0	0.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	14.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	7	50.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	4	28.6%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	7.1%
Do not know	0	0.0%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	7	53.85%	7	53.85%
Mild	6	46.15%	4	30.77%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	15.38%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
Mild	8	61.54%	9	69.23%
Serious	4	30.77%	4	30.77%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	10	76.92%	9	69.23%
Mild	3	23.08%	4	30.77%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	9	69.23%	5	38.46%
Mild	4	30.77%	8	61.54%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 14

Report Cut: South Dakota

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	6	46.15%	5	38.46%
Mild	6	46.15%	7	53.85%
Serious	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	7	53.85%	6	46.15%
Serious	6	46.15%	7	53.85%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	7	53.85%	8	61.54%
Serious	6	46.15%	5	38.46%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
Mild	10	76.92%	7	53.85%
Serious	2	15.38%	5	38.46%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	2	15.38%	4	30.77%
Mild	9	69.23%	7	53.85%
Serious	2	15.38%	2	15.38%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	7	53.85%	6	46.15%
Mild	6	46.15%	6	46.15%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	7.69%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	8	61.54%	7	53.85%
Mild	5	38.46%	6	46.15%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	3	23.08%	2	16.67%
Mild	7	53.85%	8	66.67%
Serious	3	23.08%	2	16.67%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	3	23.08%	2	15.38%
Mild	6	46.15%	7	53.85%
Serious	4	30.77%	4	30.77%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	2	18.18%	2	16.67%
Mild	8	72.73%	9	75.00%
Serious	1	9.09%	1	8.33%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 14

Report Cut: South Dakota

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	3	23.08%	3	23.08%
Mild	7	53.85%	7	53.85%
Serious	3	23.08%	3	23.08%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	4	30.77%	3	23.08%
Mild	7	53.85%	8	61.54%
Serious	2	15.38%	2	15.38%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	2	15.38%	2	15.38%
Mild	8	61.54%	8	61.54%
Serious	3	23.08%	3	23.08%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	6	46.15%	5	38.46%
Mild	6	46.15%	6	46.15%
Serious	1	7.69%	2	15.38%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
Mild	7	53.85%	9	69.23%
Serious	5	38.46%	4	30.77%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	10	76.92%	7	53.85%
Serious	3	23.08%	6	46.15%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
Mild	5	38.46%	6	46.15%
Serious	7	53.85%	7	53.85%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	4	30.77%	5	38.46%
Serious	9	69.23%	8	61.54%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	5	38.46%	5	38.46%
Mild	6	46.15%	6	46.15%
Serious	2	15.38%	2	15.38%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	6	46.15%	4	30.77%
Mild	6	46.15%	9	69.23%
Serious	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	5	38.46%	5	38.46%
Mild	4	30.77%	6	46.15%
Serious	4	30.77%	2	15.38%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 14

Report Cut: South Dakota

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	3	23.08%	2	15.38%
Mild	10	76.92%	9	69.23%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	15.38%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	4	30.77%	4	30.77%
Mild	6	46.15%	6	46.15%
Serious	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	7	53.85%	7	53.85%
Mild	3	23.08%	3	23.08%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	1	0	0	3
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	0	0	0	0
Customer's ability to afford	0	0	1	1
Talent acquisition	4	1	2	16
Talent retention	1	2	1	8
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	0	1	1
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	1	1	0	5
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	0	0	3
Cost of materials	1	1	2	7
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	1	0	5
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	0	1	1
Employee safety	1	0	0	3
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	0	2
Inflation	0	0	1	1
Employee engagement	2	0	1	7
Developing future leaders	0	2	1	5
Cybersecurity	0	4	1	9
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	0	0
Political uncertainty	0	0	0	0
Talent skills gap	0	0	0	0
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 14

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6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%
Slightly less than planned	4	28.57%
As planned	6	42.86%
Slightly more than planned	2	14.29%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	1	7.14%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	7	50.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	4	28.57%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	14.29%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	8	57.15%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	7.14%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	5	35.71%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	6	46.15%	5	38.46%
No	7	53.85%	8	61.54%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	13	100.00%	11	84.62%
No	0	0.00%	2	15.38%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	12	92.31%	10	76.92%
No	1	7.69%	3	23.08%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	1	20.00%	2	33.33%
No	4	80.00%	4	66.67%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	10	76.92%	10	76.92%
No	3	23.08%	3	23.08%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 14

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10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	11	84.62%
None due to this	2	15.38%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	3	25.00%
None due to this	9	75.00%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	13	100.00%
None due to this	0	0.00%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	12	92.31%
None due to this	1	7.69%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	11	84.62%
None due to this	2	15.38%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	8.33%
Some due to this	3	25.00%
None due to this	8	66.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 14

Report Cut: South Dakota

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	1	7.69%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	2	24.21%	3	23.08%	4	30.77%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0	16.91%	1	7.69%	3	23.08%
Somewhat satisfied	6	43.32%	7	53.85%	6	46.15%
Very satisfied	4	10.85%	2	15.38%	0	0.00%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	7	50.00%	3	21.43%	0	0.00%
Middle managers	6	42.86%	3	21.43%	5	35.71%
Professional staff (non-managers)	8	57.14%	3	21.43%	5	35.71%
Skilled production workers	6	42.86%	1	7.14%	8	57.14%
Unskilled production workers	4	28.57%	2	14.29%	4	28.57%
Entry-level office workers	1	7.14%	1	7.14%	4	28.57%
Entry-level non-office workers	2	14.29%	0	0.00%	4	28.57%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	4	28.57%	0	0.00%	1	7.14%
Service workers	4	28.57%	1	7.14%	4	28.57%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	7.14%
None	1	7.14%	2	14.29%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 14

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13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	6	42.86%	3	21.43%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	4	28.57%	4	28.57%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	6	42.86%	6	42.86%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	8	57.14%	6	42.86%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	8	57.14%	2	14.29%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	7	50.00%	1	7.14%
Increasing starting salaries	9	64.29%	1	7.14%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	5	35.71%	3	21.43%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	1	7.14%	0	0.00%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	2	14.29%	0	0.00%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	3	21.43%	3	21.43%
Shortening the hiring process	4	28.57%	1	7.14%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	4	28.57%	0	0.00%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	7	50.00%	3	21.43%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	3	21.43%	2	14.29%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	9	64.29%	1	7.14%
Participating in job fairs	9	64.29%	2	14.29%
Building/increasing brand awareness	6	42.86%	3	21.43%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	1	7.14%	0	0.00%
Using formal candidate tracking system	7	50.00%	1	7.14%
Other	1	7.14%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	5	35.71%
Team incentives	2	14.29%
Employee referral bonuses	10	71.43%
Year-end bonuses	5	35.71%
Spot bonuses	3	21.43%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	7	50.00%
Retention bonuses	2	14.29%
Commissions	3	21.43%
Project bonuses	2	14.29%
Profit sharing	2	14.29%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	6	42.86%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 14

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14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	4	28.57%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	9	64.29%
Resources to do their job effectively	3	21.43%
Mentoring opportunities	2	14.29%
Competitive/robust health benefits	3	21.43%
Opportunities to connect with others	0	0.00%
Driven by the mission of the organization	2	14.29%
Recognition and reward for good performance	5	35.71%
Ongoing training on new technologies	0	0.00%
Competitive pay	11	78.57%
Good work/life balance	9	64.29%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	0	0.00%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	7	50.00%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	1	7.14%
Hybrid work opportunities	3	21.43%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	1	7.14%
Regular full-time hours	0	0.00%
Strong organizational culture	2	14.29%
Challenging work	3	21.43%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	3	21.43%
Focus on employee safety	1	7.14%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	0	0.00%
No change	8	61.54%
More difficult	5	38.46%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	0	0.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	4	80.00%
Lack of technical skills	1	20.00%
Lack of soft skills	1	20.00%
Lack of work experience	1	20.00%
Our organization's geographic location	3	60.00%
Market competition/high demand	2	40.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	3	60.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	1	20.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	0	0.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	1	20.00%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	8	61.54%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	3	23.08%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	7.69%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	1	7.69%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	5	38.46%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	7	53.85%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	7.69%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	0	0.00%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	5	35.71%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	2	14.29%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	21.43%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	2	14.29%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	3	21.43%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 14

Report Cut: South Dakota

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	10	71.43%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	5	35.71%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	9	64.29%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	4	28.57%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	3	21.43%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	10	71.43%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	4	28.57%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	2	14.29%
Creating/redefining policies	6	42.86%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	1	7.14%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	2	14.29%
N/A	0	0.00%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	0	0.00%
No	12	92.31%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	1	7.69%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	6	46.15%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	0	0.00%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	6	46.15%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	1	7.69%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 14

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24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	13	92.86%
Paid lump sum awards	2	14.29%
Paid variable/bonus awards	5	35.71%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	1	7.14%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	12	85.71%
Paying lump sum awards	1	7.14%
Paying variable/bonus awards	6	42.86%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	2	14.29%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	7	50.00%	6	42.86%
Increased standard wages	6	42.86%	6	42.86%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	11	78.57%	6	42.86%
Implemented or increased variable pay	0	0.00%	1	7.14%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	7.14%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	0	0.00%	0	0.00%



## 2025 National Business Trends

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27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	5	35.71%	6	42.86%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	4	28.57%	3	21.43%
Invest in new technology	9	64.29%	7	50.00%
Invest in equipment	6	42.86%	5	35.71%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	1	7.14%	0	0.00%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	2	14.29%	4	28.57%
Increase training budget	6	42.86%	5	35.71%
Increase total rewards communication/education	3	21.43%	4	28.57%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	5	35.71%	5	35.71%
Increase recruiting emphasis	5	35.71%	4	28.57%
Pay above market rates	2	14.29%	2	14.29%
Enhance the benefits package	2	14.29%	3	21.43%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	4	28.57%	5	35.71%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	3	21.43%	3	21.43%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	1	7.14%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	0	0.00%	1	7.14%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	3	21.43%	4	28.57%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	1	7.14%
Hold off on investing in new technology	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	1	7.14%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce training budget	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Limiting employee travel	3	21.43%	3	21.43%
Hiring freezes	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	3	21.43%	0	0.00%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	2	14.29%	1	7.14%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 14

Report Cut: South Dakota

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	5	35.71%	0	0.00%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	6	42.86%	0	0.00%
Increasing presence on social media	10	71.43%	1	7.14%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	2	14.29%	1	7.14%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	3	21.43%	1	7.14%
Partnering with brand influencers	3	21.43%	1	7.14%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	4	28.57%	2	14.29%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	6	42.86%	2	14.29%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	2	14.29%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 14

Report Cut: South Dakota

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	3	21.43%	3	21.43%	0	0.00%
Website content production	3	21.43%	2	14.29%	1	7.14%
Marketing content production	3	21.43%	3	21.43%	1	7.14%
Other content production	3	21.43%	0	0.00%	1	7.14%
Digital personal assistant	3	21.43%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	2	14.29%	2	14.29%	1	7.14%
Customer relationship management	2	14.29%	1	7.14%	1	7.14%
Inventory management	2	14.29%	0	0.00%	1	7.14%
Product recommendations	2	14.29%	1	7.14%	0	0.00%
Accounting	2	14.29%	0	0.00%	1	7.14%
Supply chain operations	2	14.29%	1	7.14%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	2	14.29%	3	21.43%	2	14.29%
Application and screening management	2	14.29%	3	21.43%	2	14.29%
Audience segmentation	2	14.29%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	2	14.29%	2	14.29%	1	7.14%
Idea generation	2	14.29%	3	21.43%	1	7.14%
Process automation	2	14.29%	1	7.14%	1	7.14%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	2	14.29%	2	14.29%	2	14.29%

# Tennessee

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 57

Report Cut: Tennessee

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	3.51%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	2	3.51%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	14	24.56%
Education Services	1	1.75%
Financial & Insurance	4	7.02%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	3	5.26%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	7	12.28%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	14	24.56%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	1	1.75%
Services (Except Public Administration)	6	10.53%
Transportation & Warehousing	1	1.75%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	2	3.51%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	20	35.09%
100 to 249	14	24.56%
250 to 499	13	22.81%
500 to 999	4	7.02%
1,000 or more	6	10.53%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	49	85.96%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	2	3.51%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	6	10.53%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 57

Report Cut: Tennessee

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	22	38.6%
Stay the same	26	45.6%
Decline	9	15.8%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	10	17.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	28	49.1%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	3	5.3%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	11	19.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	1.8%
Do not know	4	7.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	10	17.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	29	50.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	9	15.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	1.8%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	8	14.0%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	38	70.37%	35	64.81%
Mild	15	27.78%	12	22.22%
Serious	1	1.85%	7	12.96%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	7	12.50%	3	5.45%
Mild	32	57.14%	33	60.00%
Serious	17	30.36%	19	34.55%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	34	60.71%	24	42.86%
Mild	21	37.50%	28	50.00%
Serious	1	1.79%	4	7.14%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	25	44.64%	19	34.55%
Mild	24	42.86%	25	45.45%
Serious	7	12.50%	11	20.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 57

Report Cut: Tennessee

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	16	28.57%	17	30.91%
Mild	29	51.79%	26	47.27%
Serious	11	19.64%	12	21.82%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	9	16.07%	8	14.29%
Mild	24	42.86%	21	37.50%
Serious	23	41.07%	27	48.21%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	9	15.79%	7	12.28%
Mild	27	47.37%	28	49.12%
Serious	21	36.84%	22	38.60%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	17	30.36%	13	24.07%
Mild	29	51.79%	23	42.59%
Serious	10	17.86%	18	33.33%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	11	19.30%	9	16.07%
Mild	32	56.14%	30	53.57%
Serious	14	24.56%	17	30.36%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	29	51.79%	29	51.79%
Mild	17	30.36%	17	30.36%
Serious	10	17.86%	10	17.86%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	34	60.71%	32	57.14%
Mild	17	30.36%	19	33.93%
Serious	5	8.93%	5	8.93%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	19	34.55%	17	31.48%
Mild	24	43.64%	23	42.59%
Serious	12	21.82%	14	25.93%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	21	37.50%	19	33.93%
Mild	25	44.64%	24	42.86%
Serious	10	17.86%	13	23.21%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	17	31.48%	17	30.91%
Mild	28	51.85%	27	49.09%
Serious	9	16.67%	11	20.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 57

Report Cut: Tennessee

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	23	41.82%	20	37.04%
Mild	25	45.45%	25	46.30%
Serious	7	12.73%	9	16.67%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	15	26.32%	15	26.79%
Mild	34	59.65%	30	53.57%
Serious	8	14.04%	11	19.64%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	33	58.93%	32	57.14%
Mild	15	26.79%	16	28.57%
Serious	8	14.29%	8	14.29%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	21	37.50%	21	37.50%
Mild	27	48.21%	21	37.50%
Serious	8	14.29%	14	25.00%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	8	14.29%	5	8.93%
Mild	27	48.21%	31	55.36%
Serious	21	37.50%	20	35.71%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	9	16.07%	7	12.50%
Mild	32	57.14%	32	57.14%
Serious	15	26.79%	18	32.14%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	9	16.07%	6	10.71%
Mild	25	44.64%	24	42.86%
Serious	22	39.29%	26	46.43%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	6	10.71%	4	7.14%
Mild	21	37.50%	21	37.50%
Serious	29	51.79%	29	51.79%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	28	50.00%	26	46.43%
Mild	20	35.71%	22	39.29%
Serious	6	10.71%	6	10.71%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	17	30.36%	15	26.79%
Mild	29	51.79%	23	41.07%
Serious	10	17.86%	19	33.93%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	15	26.79%	14	25.00%
Mild	22	39.29%	24	42.86%
Serious	19	33.93%	17	30.36%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 57

Report Cut: Tennessee

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	13	23.21%	13	23.21%
Mild	31	55.36%	28	50.00%
Serious	12	21.43%	16	28.57%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	23	41.07%	21	37.50%
Mild	26	46.43%	27	48.21%
Serious	5	8.93%	6	10.71%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	29	51.79%	29	51.79%
Mild	11	19.64%	12	21.43%
Serious	4	7.14%	3	5.36%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	1	0	0	3
Competition in general	11	4	4	45
Product obsolescence	3	0	1	10
Changing customer preferences	3	6	3	24
Customer's ability to afford	3	2	1	14
Talent acquisition	8	8	5	45
Talent retention	9	5	8	45
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	1	5	10
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	2	3	5	17
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	1	1
Ability to maintain quality product/service	2	4	1	15
Cost of materials	4	7	0	26
Cost of equipment	0	1	1	3
Taxes	0	0	1	1
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	0	0	3
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	2	3	3	15
Employee safety	0	0	1	1
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	2	0	7
Inflation	0	3	2	8
Employee engagement	0	2	2	6
Developing future leaders	0	1	4	6
Cybersecurity	1	3	2	11
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	2	2	2	12
Political uncertainty	0	0	2	2
Talent skills gap	1	0	2	5
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	2	0	0	6

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 57

Report Cut: Tennessee

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	2	3.51%
Slightly less than planned	16	28.07%
As planned	14	24.56%
Slightly more than planned	24	42.11%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	1	1.75%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	33	57.89%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	21	36.84%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	3.51%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	31	54.39%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	1.75%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	23	40.35%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	3.51%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	22	40.00%	11	20.37%
No	33	60.00%	43	79.63%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	46	80.70%	41	71.93%
No	11	19.30%	16	28.07%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	46	82.14%	48	85.71%
No	10	17.86%	8	14.29%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	7	36.84%	6	31.58%
No	12	63.16%	13	68.42%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	30	73.17%	30	75.00%
No	11	26.83%	10	25.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 57

Report Cut: Tennessee

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	44	77.19%
None due to this	13	22.81%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	1	1.75%
Some due to this	10	17.54%
None due to this	46	80.70%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	3.51%
Some due to this	48	84.21%
None due to this	7	12.28%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	1.75%
Some due to this	44	77.19%
None due to this	12	21.05%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	43	75.44%
None due to this	14	24.56%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	1.79%
Some due to this	15	26.79%
None due to this	40	71.43%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 57

Report Cut: Tennessee

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	1	1.75%	0	0.00%	3	5.26%
Somewhat dissatisfied	12	24.21%	13	22.81%	14	24.56%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	16.91%	6	10.53%	9	15.79%
Somewhat satisfied	20	43.32%	24	42.11%	14	24.56%
Very satisfied	15	10.85%	14	24.56%	17	29.82%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	21	36.84%	10	17.54%	7	12.28%
Middle managers	22	38.60%	10	17.54%	13	22.81%
Professional staff (non-managers)	29	50.88%	14	24.56%	22	38.60%
Skilled production workers	20	35.09%	7	12.28%	20	35.09%
Unskilled production workers	10	17.54%	5	8.77%	15	26.32%
Entry-level office workers	13	22.81%	8	14.04%	21	36.84%
Entry-level non-office workers	12	21.05%	6	10.53%	13	22.81%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	13	22.81%	3	5.26%	5	8.77%
Service workers	8	14.04%	3	5.26%	5	8.77%
Other	6	10.53%	1	1.75%	3	5.26%
None	5	8.77%	7	12.28%	7	12.28%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 57

Report Cut: Tennessee

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	27	47.37%	25	43.86%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	10	17.54%	26	45.61%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	11	19.30%	32	56.14%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	27	47.37%	36	63.16%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	34	59.65%	9	15.79%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	27	47.37%	8	14.04%
Increasing starting salaries	38	66.67%	11	19.30%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	13	22.81%	17	29.82%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	11	19.30%	9	15.79%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	11	19.30%	2	3.51%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	5	8.77%	13	22.81%
Shortening the hiring process	14	24.56%	1	1.75%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	19	33.33%	8	14.04%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	29	50.88%	17	29.82%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	8	14.04%	10	17.54%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	28	49.12%	3	5.26%
Participating in job fairs	28	49.12%	2	3.51%
Building/increasing brand awareness	26	45.61%	13	22.81%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	13	22.81%	11	19.30%
Using formal candidate tracking system	26	45.61%	3	5.26%
Other	2	3.51%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	28	49.12%
Team incentives	17	29.82%
Employee referral bonuses	39	68.42%
Year-end bonuses	24	42.11%
Spot bonuses	11	19.30%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	25	43.86%
Retention bonuses	6	10.53%
Commissions	21	36.84%
Project bonuses	4	7.02%
Profit sharing	8	14.04%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	13	22.81%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 57

Report Cut: Tennessee

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	12	21.05%
Language premiums	2	3.51%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	33	57.89%
Resources to do their job effectively	5	8.77%
Mentoring opportunities	3	5.26%
Competitive/robust health benefits	20	35.09%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	1.75%
Driven by the mission of the organization	8	14.04%
Recognition and reward for good performance	14	24.56%
Ongoing training on new technologies	4	7.02%
Competitive pay	45	78.95%
Good work/life balance	47	82.46%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	4	7.02%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	22	38.60%
Current technology	1	1.75%
Remote work opportunities	14	24.56%
Hybrid work opportunities	16	28.07%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	4	7.02%
Strong organizational culture	13	22.81%
Challenging work	3	5.26%
Diverse workforce	1	1.75%
Vacation/paid time off	21	36.84%
Focus on employee safety	2	3.51%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	4	7.02%
No change	31	54.39%
More difficult	22	38.60%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 57

Report Cut: Tennessee

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	0	0.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	20	90.91%
Lack of technical skills	14	63.64%
Lack of soft skills	4	18.18%
Lack of work experience	9	40.91%
Our organization's geographic location	2	9.09%
Market competition/high demand	9	40.91%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	16	72.73%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	7	31.82%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	1	4.55%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	5	22.73%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	13	22.81%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	27	47.37%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	9	15.79%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	7.02%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	4	7.02%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	7	12.28%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	28	49.12%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	11	19.30%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	3.51%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	9	15.79%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	5	8.77%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	16	28.07%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	7	12.28%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	8.77%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	15	26.32%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	8.77%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	11	19.30%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 57

Report Cut: Tennessee

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	25	43.86%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	13	22.81%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	28	49.12%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	9	15.79%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	4	7.02%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	23	40.35%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	8	14.04%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	9	15.79%
Creating/redefining policies	7	12.28%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	10	17.54%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	12	21.05%
N/A	6	10.53%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	3	5.36%
No	46	82.14%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	7	12.50%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	23	40.35%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	5	8.77%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	22	38.60%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	7	12.28%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 57

Report Cut: Tennessee

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	49	85.96%
Paid lump sum awards	7	12.28%
Paid variable/bonus awards	24	42.11%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	3	5.26%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	2	3.51%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	1	1.75%
Uncertain	4	7.02%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	50	87.72%
Paying lump sum awards	7	12.28%
Paying variable/bonus awards	25	43.86%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	1.75%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	1	1.75%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	7	12.28%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	36	63.16%	23	40.35%
Increased standard wages	20	35.09%	14	24.56%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	26	45.61%	23	40.35%
Implemented or increased variable pay	3	5.26%	4	7.02%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	1.75%	0	0.00%
Other	2	3.51%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	4	7.02%	6	10.53%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 57

Report Cut: Tennessee

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	14	24.56%	7	12.28%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	5	8.77%	7	12.28%
Invest in new technology	27	47.37%	35	61.40%
Invest in equipment	20	35.09%	21	36.84%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	2	3.51%	2	3.51%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	7	12.28%	2	3.51%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	4	7.02%	4	7.02%
Increase training budget	16	28.07%	19	33.33%
Increase total rewards communication/education	9	15.79%	15	26.32%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	13	22.81%	12	21.05%
Increase recruiting emphasis	19	33.33%	16	28.07%
Pay above market rates	0	0.00%	1	1.75%
Enhance the benefits package	11	19.30%	10	17.54%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	15	26.32%	17	29.82%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	11	19.30%	14	24.56%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	8	14.04%	5	8.77%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	3	5.26%	5	8.77%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	5	8.77%	1	1.75%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	10	17.54%	15	26.32%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	6	10.53%	11	19.30%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	1.75%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	2	3.51%	2	3.51%
Hold off on investing in equipment	2	3.51%	4	7.02%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	1.75%	2	3.51%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	3	5.26%	1	1.75%
Reduce training budget	1	1.75%	3	5.26%
Limiting employee travel	5	8.77%	4	7.02%
Hiring freezes	1	1.75%	3	5.26%
Implementing furloughs	1	1.75%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	4	7.02%	1	1.75%
Reduce benefits package	1	1.75%	2	3.51%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	1.75%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	2	3.51%	3	5.26%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	1	1.75%
Outsourcing roles or functions	2	3.51%	1	1.75%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 57

Report Cut: Tennessee

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	10	17.54%	5	8.77%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	26	45.61%	6	10.53%
Increasing presence on social media	39	68.42%	11	19.30%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	6	10.53%	3	5.26%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	22	38.60%	5	8.77%
Partnering with brand influencers	4	7.02%	1	1.75%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	17	29.82%	4	7.02%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	30	52.63%	9	15.79%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	19	33.33%	7	12.28%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 57

Report Cut: Tennessee

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	20	35.09%	9	15.79%	2	3.51%
Website content production	18	31.58%	8	14.04%	5	8.77%
Marketing content production	10	17.54%	16	28.07%	7	12.28%
Other content production	13	22.81%	10	17.54%	5	8.77%
Digital personal assistant	19	33.33%	8	14.04%	3	5.26%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	17	29.82%	11	19.30%	3	5.26%
Customer relationship management	20	35.09%	7	12.28%	3	5.26%
Inventory management	20	35.09%	6	10.53%	2	3.51%
Product recommendations	21	36.84%	5	8.77%	0	0.00%
Accounting	18	31.58%	8	14.04%	2	3.51%
Supply chain operations	24	42.11%	2	3.51%	1	1.75%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	13	22.81%	17	29.82%	5	8.77%
Application and screening management	14	24.56%	13	22.81%	4	7.02%
Audience segmentation	20	35.09%	4	7.02%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	15	26.32%	7	12.28%	7	12.28%
Idea generation	13	22.81%	8	14.04%	7	12.28%
Process automation	15	26.32%	6	10.53%	7	12.28%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	16	28.07%	11	19.30%	4	7.02%

**2025 National Business Trends**

**Texas**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 123

Report Cut: Texas

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	1.63%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	4	3.25%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	1	0.81%
Construction	2	1.63%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	30	24.39%
Education Services	4	3.25%
Financial & Insurance	8	6.50%
Health Care & Social Assistance	3	2.44%
Information	5	4.07%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	9	7.32%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	21	17.07%
Public Administration	1	0.81%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	3	2.44%
Services (Except Public Administration)	8	6.50%
Transportation & Warehousing	7	5.69%
Utilities	3	2.44%
Wholesale Trade	12	9.76%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	37	30.08%
100 to 249	42	34.15%
250 to 499	16	13.01%
500 to 999	15	12.20%
1,000 or more	13	10.57%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	97	78.86%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	10	8.13%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	15	12.20%
Public Sector/Government	1	0.81%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 123

Report Cut: Texas

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	49	39.8%
Stay the same	55	44.7%
Decline	19	15.4%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	12	9.8%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	51	41.5%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	22	17.9%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	24	19.5%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	9	7.3%
Do not know	5	4.1%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	22	17.9%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	63	51.2%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	18	14.6%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	5	4.1%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	2.4%
Do not know	12	9.8%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	86	73.50%	71	60.68%
Mild	25	21.37%	29	24.79%
Serious	6	5.13%	17	14.53%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	16	13.11%	9	7.50%
Mild	66	54.10%	69	57.50%
Serious	40	32.79%	42	35.00%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	79	66.95%	61	52.14%
Mild	32	27.12%	44	37.61%
Serious	7	5.93%	12	10.26%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	45	37.50%	35	29.41%
Mild	55	45.83%	60	50.42%
Serious	20	16.67%	24	20.17%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 123

Report Cut: Texas

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	30	25.00%	30	25.21%
Mild	58	48.33%	61	51.26%
Serious	32	26.67%	28	23.53%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	17	14.05%	13	10.74%
Mild	52	42.98%	57	47.11%
Serious	52	42.98%	51	42.15%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	20	16.53%	19	15.83%
Mild	55	45.45%	52	43.33%
Serious	46	38.02%	49	40.83%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	34	28.33%	24	20.17%
Mild	58	48.33%	56	47.06%
Serious	28	23.33%	39	32.77%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	21	17.50%	21	17.65%
Mild	66	55.00%	61	51.26%
Serious	33	27.50%	37	31.09%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	65	54.17%	59	48.76%
Mild	42	35.00%	43	35.54%
Serious	13	10.83%	19	15.70%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	65	54.17%	60	50.00%
Mild	46	38.33%	50	41.67%
Serious	9	7.50%	10	8.33%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	37	31.36%	31	26.50%
Mild	48	40.68%	56	47.86%
Serious	33	27.97%	30	25.64%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	38	31.67%	36	30.25%
Mild	59	49.17%	57	47.90%
Serious	23	19.17%	26	21.85%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	39	34.51%	37	32.17%
Mild	58	51.33%	58	50.43%
Serious	16	14.16%	20	17.39%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 123

Report Cut: Texas

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	39	33.33%	36	31.03%
Mild	53	45.30%	51	43.97%
Serious	25	21.37%	29	25.00%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	29	23.97%	30	25.00%
Mild	61	50.41%	60	50.00%
Serious	31	25.62%	30	25.00%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	61	50.83%	60	50.00%
Mild	35	29.17%	36	30.00%
Serious	24	20.00%	24	20.00%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	59	49.58%	57	48.31%
Mild	44	36.97%	44	37.29%
Serious	16	13.45%	17	14.41%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	17	14.29%	13	11.02%
Mild	56	47.06%	68	57.63%
Serious	47	39.50%	39	33.05%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	23	19.33%	20	16.95%
Mild	64	53.78%	66	55.93%
Serious	34	28.57%	32	27.12%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	21	17.65%	17	14.41%
Mild	56	47.06%	48	40.68%
Serious	41	34.45%	51	43.22%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	8	6.72%	7	5.93%
Mild	46	38.66%	43	36.44%
Serious	65	54.62%	70	59.32%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	55	46.22%	53	44.92%
Mild	50	42.02%	48	40.68%
Serious	15	12.61%	18	15.25%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	39	32.77%	32	27.12%
Mild	61	51.26%	50	42.37%
Serious	21	17.65%	39	33.05%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	24	20.17%	23	19.49%
Mild	58	48.74%	61	51.69%
Serious	38	31.93%	35	29.66%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 123

Report Cut: Texas

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	24	20.17%	23	19.49%
Mild	69	57.98%	65	55.08%
Serious	27	22.69%	33	27.97%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	34	28.57%	33	27.97%
Mild	70	58.82%	66	55.93%
Serious	10	8.40%	16	13.56%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	55	46.22%	54	45.76%
Mild	24	20.17%	25	21.19%
Serious	5	4.20%	5	4.24%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	3	2	0	13
Competition in general	22	5	12	88
Product obsolescence	2	2	2	12
Changing customer preferences	7	12	6	51
Customer's ability to afford	12	4	3	47
Talent acquisition	15	13	9	80
Talent retention	12	17	3	73
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	4	8	19
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	4	12	11	47
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	2	0	2	8
Ability to maintain quality product/service	3	3	1	16
Cost of materials	4	12	6	42
Cost of equipment	1	1	2	7
Taxes	1	0	2	5
Cost of regulatory compliance	6	2	6	28
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	5	4	5	28
Employee safety	3	0	2	11
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	2	0	7
Inflation	5	5	7	32
Employee engagement	2	5	6	22
Developing future leaders	0	2	8	12
Cybersecurity	3	4	2	19
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	3	3
A.I. technology and platforms	3	2	2	15
Political uncertainty	2	4	3	17
Talent skills gap	0	3	5	11
Unknown challenges	0	0	3	3
Other	1	0	1	4

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 123

Report Cut: Texas

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	7	5.69%
Slightly less than planned	31	25.20%
As planned	42	34.15%
Slightly more than planned	37	30.08%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	5	4.07%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	66	53.66%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	41	33.33%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	14	11.38%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	70	57.18%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	4	3.25%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	47	38.21%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	1.63%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	46	38.33%	28	23.53%
No	74	61.67%	91	76.47%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	100	82.64%	89	74.79%
No	21	17.36%	30	25.21%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	104	85.95%	95	79.17%
No	17	14.05%	25	20.83%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	12	26.67%	12	26.67%
No	33	73.33%	33	73.33%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	65	73.03%	62	71.26%
No	24	26.97%	25	28.74%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 123

Report Cut: Texas

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	4	3.31%
Some due to this	94	77.69%
None due to this	23	19.01%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	23	18.85%
None due to this	99	81.15%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	1.64%
Some due to this	110	90.16%
None due to this	10	8.20%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	1.64%
Some due to this	101	82.79%
None due to this	19	15.57%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	0.82%
Some due to this	77	63.11%
None due to this	44	36.07%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	0.83%
Some due to this	27	22.31%
None due to this	93	76.86%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 123

Report Cut: Texas

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	3	2.46%	0	0.00%	3	2.46%
Somewhat dissatisfied	22	24.21%	17	13.93%	31	25.41%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	16	16.91%	15	12.30%	18	14.75%
Somewhat satisfied	55	43.32%	65	53.28%	43	35.25%
Very satisfied	26	10.85%	25	20.49%	27	22.13%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	45	36.59%	17	13.82%	12	9.76%
Middle managers	46	37.40%	17	13.82%	27	21.95%
Professional staff (non-managers)	62	50.41%	17	13.82%	54	43.90%
Skilled production workers	44	35.77%	10	8.13%	31	25.20%
Unskilled production workers	21	17.07%	7	5.69%	27	21.95%
Entry-level office workers	22	17.89%	11	8.94%	31	25.20%
Entry-level non-office workers	16	13.01%	7	5.69%	21	17.07%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	26	21.14%	5	4.07%	13	10.57%
Service workers	15	12.20%	5	4.07%	15	12.20%
Other	12	9.76%	2	1.63%	6	4.88%
None	9	7.32%	17	13.82%	13	10.57%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 123

Report Cut: Texas

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	59	47.97%	52	42.28%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	28	22.76%	66	53.66%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	33	26.83%	78	63.41%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	56	45.53%	78	63.41%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	72	58.54%	17	13.82%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	68	55.28%	14	11.38%
Increasing starting salaries	82	66.67%	28	22.76%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	35	28.46%	39	31.71%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	24	19.51%	21	17.07%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	26	21.14%	12	9.76%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	14	11.38%	26	21.14%
Shortening the hiring process	41	33.33%	2	1.63%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	43	34.96%	19	15.45%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	61	49.59%	39	31.71%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	20	16.26%	23	18.70%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	60	48.78%	5	4.07%
Participating in job fairs	43	34.96%	5	4.07%
Building/increasing brand awareness	58	47.15%	32	26.02%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	20	16.26%	18	14.63%
Using formal candidate tracking system	53	43.09%	8	6.50%
Other	3	2.44%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	41	33.33%
Team incentives	24	19.51%
Employee referral bonuses	74	60.16%
Year-end bonuses	55	44.72%
Spot bonuses	27	21.95%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	54	43.90%
Retention bonuses	17	13.82%
Commissions	36	29.27%
Project bonuses	8	6.50%
Profit sharing	16	13.01%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	36	29.27%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 123

Report Cut: Texas

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	20	16.26%
Language premiums	4	3.25%
Other*	2	1.63%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	61	49.59%
Resources to do their job effectively	19	15.45%
Mentoring opportunities	8	6.50%
Competitive/robust health benefits	44	35.77%
Opportunities to connect with others	7	5.69%
Driven by the mission of the organization	20	16.26%
Recognition and reward for good performance	33	26.83%
Ongoing training on new technologies	6	4.88%
Competitive pay	99	80.49%
Good work/life balance	88	71.54%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	13	10.57%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	48	39.02%
Current technology	3	2.44%
Remote work opportunities	27	21.95%
Hybrid work opportunities	29	23.58%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	1	0.81%
Regular full-time hours	5	4.07%
Strong organizational culture	33	26.83%
Challenging work	10	8.13%
Diverse workforce	4	3.25%
Vacation/paid time off	37	30.08%
Focus on employee safety	1	0.81%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	5	4.10%
No change	65	53.28%
More difficult	52	42.62%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 123

Report Cut: Texas

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	5	9.62%
Lack of qualified candidates	42	80.77%
Lack of technical skills	25	48.08%
Lack of soft skills	12	23.08%
Lack of work experience	18	34.62%
Our organization's geographic location	9	17.31%
Market competition/high demand	24	46.15%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	31	59.62%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	10	19.23%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	6	11.54%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	12	23.08%
Other *	1	1.92%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	35	28.69%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	54	44.26%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	21	17.21%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	6	4.92%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	6	4.92%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	16	13.11%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	58	47.54%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	26	21.31%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	6	4.92%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	16	13.11%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	9	7.32%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	48	39.02%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	11	8.94%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	6	4.88%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	31	25.20%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	9	7.32%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	19	15.45%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 123

Report Cut: Texas

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	65	52.85%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	32	26.02%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	56	45.53%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	26	21.14%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	10	8.13%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	51	41.46%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	13	10.57%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	18	14.63%
Creating/redefining policies	21	17.07%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	13	10.57%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	30	24.39%
N/A	13	10.57%
Other *	3	2.44%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	9	7.44%
No	94	77.69%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	18	14.88%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	46	37.70%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	14	11.48%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	53	43.44%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	9	7.38%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 123

Report Cut: Texas

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	114	92.68%
Paid lump sum awards	12	9.76%
Paid variable/bonus awards	54	43.90%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	7	5.69%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	4	3.25%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	2	1.63%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	103	83.74%
Paying lump sum awards	14	11.38%
Paying variable/bonus awards	51	41.46%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	2	1.63%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	6	4.88%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	14	11.38%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	76	61.79%	59	47.97%
Increased standard wages	52	42.28%	45	36.59%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	56	45.53%	67	54.47%
Implemented or increased variable pay	9	7.32%	11	8.94%
Temporarily bumped pay	3	2.44%	1	0.81%
Other	3	2.44%	2	1.63%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	13	10.57%	10	8.13%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 123

Report Cut: Texas

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	19	15.45%	18	14.63%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	18	14.63%	17	13.82%
Invest in new technology	59	47.97%	69	56.10%
Invest in equipment	52	42.28%	48	39.02%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	5	4.07%	11	8.94%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	11	8.94%	9	7.32%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	13	10.57%	16	13.01%
Increase training budget	26	21.14%	41	33.33%
Increase total rewards communication/education	19	15.45%	39	31.71%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	44	35.77%	37	30.08%
Increase recruiting emphasis	36	29.27%	38	30.89%
Pay above market rates	7	5.69%	8	6.50%
Enhance the benefits package	18	14.63%	29	23.58%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	33	26.83%	40	32.52%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	31	25.20%	39	31.71%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	10	8.13%	11	8.94%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	3	2.44%	6	4.88%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	5	4.07%	5	4.07%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	16	13.01%	27	21.95%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	11	8.94%	24	19.51%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	3	2.44%	3	2.44%
Hold off on investing in new technology	4	3.25%	3	2.44%
Hold off on investing in equipment	4	3.25%	5	4.07%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	3	2.44%	3	2.44%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	10	8.13%	6	4.88%
Reduce training budget	4	3.25%	5	4.07%
Limiting employee travel	25	20.33%	15	12.20%
Hiring freezes	14	11.38%	6	4.88%
Implementing furloughs	3	2.44%	1	0.81%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	20	16.26%	3	2.44%
Reduce benefits package	3	2.44%	3	2.44%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	2	1.63%	2	1.63%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	2	1.63%	5	4.07%
Freezing compensation increases	4	3.25%	4	3.25%
Outsourcing roles or functions	6	4.88%	9	7.32%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 123

Report Cut: Texas

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	16	13.01%	13	10.57%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	49	39.84%	15	12.20%
Increasing presence on social media	78	63.41%	25	20.33%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	13	10.57%	8	6.50%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	46	37.40%	15	12.20%
Partnering with brand influencers	13	10.57%	7	5.69%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	32	26.02%	13	10.57%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	60	48.78%	24	19.51%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	46	37.40%	16	13.01%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 123

Report Cut: Texas

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	42	34.15%	31	25.20%	2	1.63%
Website content production	33	26.83%	29	23.58%	9	7.32%
Marketing content production	27	21.95%	34	27.64%	14	11.38%
Other content production	29	23.58%	24	19.51%	12	9.76%
Digital personal assistant	43	34.96%	18	14.63%	5	4.07%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	33	26.83%	24	19.51%	6	4.88%
Customer relationship management	40	32.52%	24	19.51%	4	3.25%
Inventory management	39	31.71%	13	10.57%	3	2.44%
Product recommendations	42	34.15%	11	8.94%	2	1.63%
Accounting	43	34.96%	13	10.57%	4	3.25%
Supply chain operations	45	36.59%	7	5.69%	3	2.44%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	36	29.27%	32	26.02%	6	4.88%
Application and screening management	35	28.46%	29	23.58%	4	3.25%
Audience segmentation	43	34.96%	7	5.69%	1	0.81%
Process improvement	36	29.27%	20	16.26%	8	6.50%
Idea generation	30	24.39%	27	21.95%	11	8.94%
Process automation	31	25.20%	22	17.89%	8	6.50%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	37	30.08%	25	20.33%	5	4.07%

# 2025 National Business Trends

# Utah

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 30

Report Cut: Utah

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	6.67%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1	3.33%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	8	26.67%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	3	10.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1	3.33%
Information	1	3.33%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	1	3.33%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	3	10.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	2	6.67%
Services (Except Public Administration)	1	3.33%
Transportation & Warehousing	2	6.67%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	5	16.67%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	5	16.67%
100 to 249	10	33.33%
250 to 499	6	20.00%
500 to 999	2	6.67%
1,000 or more	7	23.33%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	23	76.67%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	3	10.00%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	4	13.33%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 30

Report Cut: Utah

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	11	36.7%
Stay the same	15	50.0%
Decline	4	13.3%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	4	13.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	15	50.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	5	16.7%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	5	16.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	3.3%
Do not know	0	0.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	5	16.7%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	15	50.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	8	26.7%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	2	6.7%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	20	74.07%	18	66.67%
Mild	6	22.22%	5	18.52%
Serious	1	3.70%	4	14.81%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	4	13.79%	2	6.90%
Mild	19	65.52%	20	68.97%
Serious	6	20.69%	7	24.14%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	17	58.62%	13	44.83%
Mild	12	41.38%	14	48.28%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	6.90%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	8	27.59%	6	20.69%
Mild	16	55.17%	18	62.07%
Serious	5	17.24%	5	17.24%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 30

Report Cut: Utah

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	8	27.59%	7	24.14%
Mild	14	48.28%	17	58.62%
Serious	7	24.14%	5	17.24%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	4	13.79%	3	10.34%
Mild	14	48.28%	12	41.38%
Serious	11	37.93%	14	48.28%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	5	17.24%	4	14.81%
Mild	14	48.28%	13	48.15%
Serious	10	34.48%	10	37.04%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	6	21.43%	3	10.34%
Mild	16	57.14%	16	55.17%
Serious	6	21.43%	10	34.48%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	4	13.79%	4	13.79%
Mild	19	65.52%	18	62.07%
Serious	6	20.69%	7	24.14%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	13	46.43%	11	37.93%
Mild	14	50.00%	15	51.72%
Serious	1	3.57%	3	10.34%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	13	44.83%	13	44.83%
Mild	12	41.38%	11	37.93%
Serious	4	13.79%	5	17.24%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	7	25.00%	6	22.22%
Mild	14	50.00%	15	55.56%
Serious	7	25.00%	6	22.22%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	6	21.43%	5	18.52%
Mild	18	64.29%	18	66.67%
Serious	4	14.29%	4	14.81%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	7	28.00%	7	25.93%
Mild	15	60.00%	14	51.85%
Serious	3	12.00%	6	22.22%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 30

Report Cut: Utah

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	8	28.57%	7	25.00%
Mild	16	57.14%	17	60.71%
Serious	4	14.29%	4	14.29%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	5	17.86%	5	17.86%
Mild	11	39.29%	13	46.43%
Serious	12	42.86%	10	35.71%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	14	48.28%	14	48.28%
Mild	11	37.93%	12	42.86%
Serious	4	13.79%	3	10.71%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	10	35.71%	10	35.71%
Mild	13	46.43%	14	50.00%
Serious	5	17.86%	4	14.29%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	4	14.29%	2	7.14%
Mild	15	53.57%	18	64.29%
Serious	10	35.71%	9	32.14%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	4	14.29%	3	10.71%
Mild	16	57.14%	17	60.71%
Serious	8	28.57%	8	28.57%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	3	10.71%	2	7.14%
Mild	15	53.57%	17	60.71%
Serious	10	35.71%	10	35.71%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	12	42.86%	8	28.57%
Serious	17	60.71%	20	71.43%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	15	53.57%	14	50.00%
Mild	12	42.86%	13	46.43%
Serious	2	7.14%	2	7.14%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	7	25.00%	5	17.86%
Mild	15	53.57%	15	53.57%
Serious	6	21.43%	8	28.57%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	3	10.71%	3	10.71%
Mild	15	53.57%	18	64.29%
Serious	11	39.29%	8	28.57%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 30

Report Cut: Utah

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	7	25.00%	6	21.43%
Mild	18	64.29%	18	64.29%
Serious	4	14.29%	5	17.86%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	6	21.43%	6	21.43%
Mild	19	67.86%	18	64.29%
Serious	1	3.57%	3	10.71%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	9	32.14%	9	32.14%
Mild	5	17.86%	5	17.86%
Serious	1	3.57%	1	3.57%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	2	0	0	6
Competition in general	5	1	1	18
Product obsolescence	0	1	0	2
Changing customer preferences	3	3	2	17
Customer's ability to afford	2	1	1	9
Talent acquisition	2	3	2	14
Talent retention	3	3	3	18
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	1	2	7
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	0	4	3	11
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	2	2
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	1	1	6
Cost of materials	2	2	1	11
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	0	1	4
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	2	1	5
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	2	0	4
Inflation	0	1	1	3
Employee engagement	0	1	2	4
Developing future leaders	1	2	4	11
Cybersecurity	4	0	1	13
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	2	0	0	6
Political uncertainty	0	0	0	0
Talent skills gap	0	0	1	1
Unknown challenges	0	1	0	2
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 30

Report Cut: Utah

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	3	10.00%
Slightly less than planned	7	23.33%
As planned	10	33.33%
Slightly more than planned	7	23.33%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	2	6.67%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	19	63.33%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	8	26.67%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	6.67%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	17	56.67%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	3.33%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	12	40.00%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	10	34.48%	10	34.48%
No	19	65.52%	19	65.52%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	26	89.66%	24	82.76%
No	3	10.34%	5	17.24%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	28	96.55%	24	82.76%
No	1	3.45%	5	17.24%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	2	20.00%	2	20.00%
No	8	80.00%	8	80.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	17	73.91%	16	72.73%
No	6	26.09%	6	27.27%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 30

Report Cut: Utah

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	4	13.79%
Some due to this	21	72.41%
None due to this	4	13.79%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	6	20.69%
None due to this	23	79.31%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	26	89.66%
None due to this	3	10.34%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	25	86.21%
None due to this	4	13.79%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	20	68.97%
None due to this	9	31.03%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	12	41.38%
None due to this	17	58.62%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 30

Report Cut: Utah

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	6	24.21%	5	17.24%	9	31.03%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	16.91%	4	13.79%	5	17.24%
Somewhat satisfied	15	43.32%	16	55.17%	11	37.93%
Very satisfied	5	10.85%	4	13.79%	4	13.79%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	11	36.67%	5	16.67%	5	16.67%
Middle managers	10	33.33%	3	10.00%	12	40.00%
Professional staff (non-managers)	13	43.33%	3	10.00%	10	33.33%
Skilled production workers	11	36.67%	3	10.00%	9	30.00%
Unskilled production workers	5	16.67%	1	3.33%	6	20.00%
Entry-level office workers	6	20.00%	3	10.00%	5	16.67%
Entry-level non-office workers	4	13.33%	1	3.33%	4	13.33%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	8	26.67%	2	6.67%	4	13.33%
Service workers	5	16.67%	0	0.00%	3	10.00%
Other	3	10.00%	0	0.00%	1	3.33%
None	3	10.00%	5	16.67%	3	10.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 30

Report Cut: Utah

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	16	53.33%	13	43.33%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	4	13.33%	13	43.33%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	6	20.00%	14	46.67%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	13	43.33%	18	60.00%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	17	56.67%	6	20.00%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	21	70.00%	5	16.67%
Increasing starting salaries	25	83.33%	7	23.33%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	9	30.00%	7	23.33%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	8	26.67%	5	16.67%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	8	26.67%	3	10.00%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	2	6.67%	5	16.67%
Shortening the hiring process	7	23.33%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	9	30.00%	4	13.33%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	13	43.33%	10	33.33%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	5	16.67%	4	13.33%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	13	43.33%	0	0.00%
Participating in job fairs	15	50.00%	1	3.33%
Building/increasing brand awareness	15	50.00%	6	20.00%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	5	16.67%	2	6.67%
Using formal candidate tracking system	14	46.67%	2	6.67%
Other	1	3.33%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	14	46.67%
Team incentives	4	13.33%
Employee referral bonuses	21	70.00%
Year-end bonuses	19	63.33%
Spot bonuses	13	43.33%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	13	43.33%
Retention bonuses	2	6.67%
Commissions	12	40.00%
Project bonuses	6	20.00%
Profit sharing	3	10.00%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	8	26.67%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 30

Report Cut: Utah

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	5	16.67%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	1	3.33%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	16	53.33%
Resources to do their job effectively	4	13.33%
Mentoring opportunities	5	16.67%
Competitive/robust health benefits	7	23.33%
Opportunities to connect with others	2	6.67%
Driven by the mission of the organization	5	16.67%
Recognition and reward for good performance	11	36.67%
Ongoing training on new technologies	1	3.33%
Competitive pay	24	80.00%
Good work/life balance	23	76.67%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	2	6.67%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	10	33.33%
Current technology	1	3.33%
Remote work opportunities	6	20.00%
Hybrid work opportunities	7	23.33%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	1	3.33%
Regular full-time hours	0	0.00%
Strong organizational culture	11	36.67%
Challenging work	2	6.67%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	2	6.67%
Focus on employee safety	1	3.33%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	1	3.45%
No change	13	44.83%
More difficult	15	51.72%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 30

Report Cut: Utah

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	1	6.67%
Lack of qualified candidates	13	86.67%
Lack of technical skills	7	46.67%
Lack of soft skills	3	20.00%
Lack of work experience	6	40.00%
Our organization's geographic location	2	13.33%
Market competition/high demand	7	46.67%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	7	46.67%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	4	26.67%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	0	0.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	2	13.33%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	7	24.14%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	15	51.72%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	13.79%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	3.45%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	2	6.90%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	4	13.79%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	14	48.28%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	6	20.69%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	5	17.24%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	1	3.33%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	6	20.00%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	1	3.33%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	3.33%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	12	40.00%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	2	6.67%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	6	20.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 30

Report Cut: Utah

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	18	60.00%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	9	30.00%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	14	46.67%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	5	16.67%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	6	20.00%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	14	46.67%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	3	10.00%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	8	26.67%
Creating/redefining policies	6	20.00%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	3	10.00%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	12	40.00%
N/A	2	6.67%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	0	0.00%
No	20	71.43%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	8	28.57%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	11	37.93%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	2	6.90%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	15	51.72%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	1	3.45%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 30

Report Cut: Utah

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	26	86.67%
Paid lump sum awards	4	13.33%
Paid variable/bonus awards	11	36.67%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	1	3.33%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	3.33%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	2	6.67%
Uncertain	1	3.33%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	26	86.67%
Paying lump sum awards	4	13.33%
Paying variable/bonus awards	9	30.00%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	3	10.00%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	18	60.00%	10	33.33%
Increased standard wages	14	46.67%	9	30.00%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	19	63.33%	15	50.00%
Implemented or increased variable pay	4	13.33%	5	16.67%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	3.33%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	2	6.67%	3	10.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 30

Report Cut: Utah

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	4	13.33%	5	16.67%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	4	13.33%	2	6.67%
Invest in new technology	17	56.67%	19	63.33%
Invest in equipment	11	36.67%	13	43.33%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	2	6.67%	3	10.00%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	2	6.67%	1	3.33%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	3	10.00%	2	6.67%
Increase training budget	11	36.67%	11	36.67%
Increase total rewards communication/education	6	20.00%	10	33.33%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	12	40.00%	12	40.00%
Increase recruiting emphasis	8	26.67%	9	30.00%
Pay above market rates	2	6.67%	2	6.67%
Enhance the benefits package	7	23.33%	9	30.00%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	11	36.67%	13	43.33%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	9	30.00%	11	36.67%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	2	6.67%	2	6.67%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	1	3.33%	1	3.33%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	1	3.33%	2	6.67%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	3	10.00%	7	23.33%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	4	13.33%	7	23.33%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	3.33%	1	3.33%
Hold off on investing in new technology	1	3.33%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	1	3.33%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	3.33%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	0	0.00%	1	3.33%
Reduce training budget	1	3.33%	0	0.00%
Limiting employee travel	8	26.67%	4	13.33%
Hiring freezes	2	6.67%	2	6.67%
Implementing furloughs	1	3.33%	1	3.33%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	6	20.00%	3	10.00%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	3.33%	1	3.33%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	3.33%	1	3.33%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	2	6.67%	2	6.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 30

Report Cut: Utah

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	7	23.33%	4	13.33%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	11	36.67%	5	16.67%
Increasing presence on social media	18	60.00%	6	20.00%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	6	20.00%	4	13.33%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	15	50.00%	4	13.33%
Partnering with brand influencers	4	13.33%	2	6.67%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	11	36.67%	2	6.67%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	14	46.67%	7	23.33%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	13	43.33%	4	13.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 30

Report Cut: Utah

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	13	43.33%	4	13.33%	0	0.00%
Website content production	10	33.33%	6	20.00%	3	10.00%
Marketing content production	7	23.33%	9	30.00%	4	13.33%
Other content production	7	23.33%	8	26.67%	4	13.33%
Digital personal assistant	9	30.00%	8	26.67%	3	10.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	7	23.33%	10	33.33%	3	10.00%
Customer relationship management	13	43.33%	5	16.67%	3	10.00%
Inventory management	10	33.33%	6	20.00%	1	3.33%
Product recommendations	10	33.33%	6	20.00%	0	0.00%
Accounting	13	43.33%	4	13.33%	1	3.33%
Supply chain operations	14	46.67%	4	13.33%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	10	33.33%	7	23.33%	4	13.33%
Application and screening management	8	26.67%	10	33.33%	3	10.00%
Audience segmentation	10	33.33%	4	13.33%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	6	20.00%	7	23.33%	3	10.00%
Idea generation	7	23.33%	10	33.33%	3	10.00%
Process automation	7	23.33%	6	20.00%	3	10.00%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	8	26.67%	6	20.00%	3	10.00%

# **Virginia**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Virginia

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	2.08%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2	4.17%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	2	4.17%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	8	16.67%
Education Services	1	2.08%
Financial & Insurance	5	10.42%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1	2.08%
Information	4	8.33%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	4	8.33%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	6	12.50%
Public Administration	1	2.08%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	2	4.17%
Services (Except Public Administration)	7	14.58%
Transportation & Warehousing	1	2.08%
Utilities	1	2.08%
Wholesale Trade	2	4.17%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	12	25.00%
100 to 249	14	29.17%
250 to 499	8	16.67%
500 to 999	3	6.25%
1,000 or more	11	22.92%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	33	68.75%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	4	8.33%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	11	22.92%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Virginia

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	19	39.6%
Stay the same	22	45.8%
Decline	7	14.6%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	22	45.8%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	13	27.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	7	14.6%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	8.3%
Do not know	2	4.2%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	9	18.8%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	22	45.8%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	7	14.6%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	6.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	4.2%
Do not know	5	10.4%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	31	68.89%	29	64.44%
Mild	10	22.22%	10	22.22%
Serious	4	8.89%	6	13.33%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	7	14.89%	6	12.77%
Mild	28	59.57%	28	59.57%
Serious	12	25.53%	13	27.66%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	31	65.96%	29	61.70%
Mild	15	31.91%	16	34.04%
Serious	1	2.13%	2	4.26%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	17	36.17%	11	23.40%
Mild	20	42.55%	25	53.19%
Serious	10	21.28%	11	23.40%

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Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Virginia

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	17	36.96%	18	39.13%
Mild	17	36.96%	19	41.30%
Serious	12	26.09%	9	19.57%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	7	14.89%	5	10.87%
Mild	24	51.06%	27	58.70%
Serious	16	34.04%	14	30.43%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	9	19.57%	8	17.02%
Mild	19	41.30%	20	42.55%
Serious	18	39.13%	19	40.43%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	17	36.17%	14	30.43%
Mild	23	48.94%	19	41.30%
Serious	7	14.89%	13	28.26%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	11	23.40%	9	19.15%
Mild	24	51.06%	24	51.06%
Serious	12	25.53%	14	29.79%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	29	61.70%	28	59.57%
Mild	11	23.40%	11	23.40%
Serious	7	14.89%	8	17.02%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	28	59.57%	27	57.45%
Mild	17	36.17%	17	36.17%
Serious	2	4.26%	3	6.38%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	16	34.78%	14	31.11%
Mild	19	41.30%	20	44.44%
Serious	11	23.91%	11	24.44%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	14	29.79%	14	29.79%
Mild	27	57.45%	23	48.94%
Serious	6	12.77%	10	21.28%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	15	34.88%	15	34.09%
Mild	24	55.81%	23	52.27%
Serious	4	9.30%	6	13.64%

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Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Virginia

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	13	28.26%	11	24.44%
Mild	25	54.35%	26	57.78%
Serious	8	17.39%	8	17.78%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	14	29.79%	13	27.66%
Mild	17	36.17%	22	46.81%
Serious	16	34.04%	12	25.53%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	24	52.17%	23	50.00%
Mild	15	32.61%	15	31.91%
Serious	7	15.22%	8	17.02%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	18	38.30%	18	38.30%
Mild	23	48.94%	22	46.81%
Serious	6	12.77%	7	14.89%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	4	8.51%	3	6.38%
Mild	22	46.81%	27	57.45%
Serious	21	44.68%	17	36.17%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	11	23.40%	8	17.02%
Mild	23	48.94%	24	51.06%
Serious	13	27.66%	15	31.91%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	10	21.28%	7	14.89%
Mild	20	42.55%	18	38.30%
Serious	15	31.91%	19	40.43%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	3	6.38%	3	6.38%
Mild	19	40.43%	14	29.79%
Serious	24	51.06%	30	63.83%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	23	48.94%	22	46.81%
Mild	17	36.17%	17	36.17%
Serious	7	14.89%	8	17.02%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	11	23.40%	10	21.28%
Mild	29	61.70%	19	40.43%
Serious	7	14.89%	18	38.30%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	11	23.40%	12	25.53%
Mild	23	48.94%	24	51.06%
Serious	13	27.66%	11	23.40%

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Report Cut: Virginia

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	14	29.79%	11	23.40%
Mild	24	51.06%	23	48.94%
Serious	9	19.15%	13	27.66%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	17	36.17%	16	34.04%
Mild	24	51.06%	23	48.94%
Serious	4	8.51%	6	12.77%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	24	51.06%	24	51.06%
Mild	6	12.77%	6	12.77%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	1	1	0	5
Competition in general	7	1	2	25
Product obsolescence	0	0	1	1
Changing customer preferences	1	4	3	14
Customer's ability to afford	4	1	2	16
Talent acquisition	3	6	5	26
Talent retention	6	8	2	36
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	0	2	5
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	2	2	3	13
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	0	0	3
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	0	0	3
Cost of materials	4	4	2	22
Cost of equipment	1	1	0	5
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	3	0	2	11
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	1	3	0	9
Employee safety	1	0	1	4
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	3	1	7
Inflation	2	3	2	14
Employee engagement	1	2	6	13
Developing future leaders	1	1	4	9
Cybersecurity	1	1	2	7
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	2	2	0	10
Political uncertainty	2	1	2	10
Talent skills gap	0	2	1	5
Unknown challenges	0	0	2	2
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

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6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	3	6.25%
Slightly less than planned	12	25.00%
As planned	19	39.58%
Slightly more than planned	10	20.83%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	3	6.25%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	25	52.08%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	15	31.25%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	7	14.58%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	27	56.25%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	2	4.17%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	18	37.50%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	2.08%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	15	34.09%	12	27.91%
No	29	65.91%	31	72.09%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	39	86.67%	34	75.56%
No	6	13.33%	11	24.44%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	42	91.30%	36	80.00%
No	4	8.70%	9	20.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	5	27.78%	5	27.78%
No	13	72.22%	13	72.22%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	22	70.97%	21	72.41%
No	9	29.03%	8	27.59%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	3	6.52%
Some due to this	36	78.26%
None due to this	7	15.22%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	12	26.09%
None due to this	34	73.91%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	4.26%
Some due to this	42	89.36%
None due to this	3	6.38%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	4.35%
Some due to this	41	89.13%
None due to this	3	6.52%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	2.13%
Some due to this	33	70.21%
None due to this	13	27.66%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	2.22%
Some due to this	11	24.44%
None due to this	33	73.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	4.26%
Somewhat dissatisfied	7	24.21%	4	8.51%	11	23.40%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6	16.91%	5	10.64%	7	14.89%
Somewhat satisfied	22	43.32%	27	57.45%	15	31.91%
Very satisfied	12	10.85%	11	23.40%	12	25.53%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	20	41.67%	8	16.67%	7	14.58%
Middle managers	20	41.67%	9	18.75%	13	27.08%
Professional staff (non-managers)	28	58.33%	4	8.33%	16	33.33%
Skilled production workers	15	31.25%	0	0.00%	11	22.92%
Unskilled production workers	7	14.58%	0	0.00%	11	22.92%
Entry-level office workers	10	20.83%	4	8.33%	13	27.08%
Entry-level non-office workers	4	8.33%	1	2.08%	7	14.58%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	10	20.83%	1	2.08%	7	14.58%
Service workers	10	20.83%	2	4.17%	7	14.58%
Other	4	8.33%	2	4.17%	3	6.25%
None	4	8.33%	5	10.42%	4	8.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	19	39.58%	14	29.17%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	8	16.67%	21	43.75%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	11	22.92%	27	56.25%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	23	47.92%	29	60.42%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	29	60.42%	7	14.58%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	24	50.00%	4	8.33%
Increasing starting salaries	34	70.83%	10	20.83%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	12	25.00%	12	25.00%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	12	25.00%	9	18.75%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	12	25.00%	7	14.58%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	4	8.33%	9	18.75%
Shortening the hiring process	12	25.00%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	16	33.33%	8	16.67%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	22	45.83%	12	25.00%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	7	14.58%	7	14.58%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	28	58.33%	2	4.17%
Participating in job fairs	29	60.42%	1	2.08%
Building/increasing brand awareness	23	47.92%	9	18.75%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	7	14.58%	3	6.25%
Using formal candidate tracking system	24	50.00%	3	6.25%
Other	1	2.08%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	19	39.58%
Team incentives	7	14.58%
Employee referral bonuses	25	52.08%
Year-end bonuses	18	37.50%
Spot bonuses	13	27.08%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	21	43.75%
Retention bonuses	7	14.58%
Commissions	13	27.08%
Project bonuses	3	6.25%
Profit sharing	5	10.42%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	15	31.25%



## 2025 National Business Trends

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14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	9	18.75%
Language premiums	2	4.17%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	25	52.08%
Resources to do their job effectively	8	16.67%
Mentoring opportunities	2	4.17%
Competitive/robust health benefits	18	37.50%
Opportunities to connect with others	2	4.17%
Driven by the mission of the organization	8	16.67%
Recognition and reward for good performance	11	22.92%
Ongoing training on new technologies	3	6.25%
Competitive pay	42	87.50%
Good work/life balance	36	75.00%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	7	14.58%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	13	27.08%
Current technology	2	4.17%
Remote work opportunities	11	22.92%
Hybrid work opportunities	12	25.00%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	1	2.08%
Strong organizational culture	16	33.33%
Challenging work	3	6.25%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	11	22.92%
Focus on employee safety	1	2.08%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	1	2.13%
No change	26	55.32%
More difficult	20	42.55%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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Report Cut: Virginia

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	1	5.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	16	80.00%
Lack of technical skills	7	35.00%
Lack of soft skills	4	20.00%
Lack of work experience	6	30.00%
Our organization's geographic location	3	15.00%
Market competition/high demand	10	50.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	12	60.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	2	10.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	4	20.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	1	5.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	4	20.00%
Other *	1	5.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	12	25.53%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	24	51.06%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	8	17.02%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	4.26%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	1	2.13%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	6	12.77%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	25	53.19%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	11	23.40%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	2.13%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	4	8.51%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	4	8.33%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	18	37.50%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	8	16.67%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	2.08%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	13	27.08%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	6	12.50%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	6	12.50%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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Report Cut: Virginia

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	27	56.25%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	16	33.33%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	23	47.92%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	11	22.92%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	6	12.50%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	25	52.08%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	9	18.75%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	8	16.67%
Creating/redefining policies	8	16.67%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	6	12.50%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	9	18.75%
N/A	4	8.33%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	4	8.70%
No	33	71.74%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	9	19.57%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	21	44.68%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	4	8.51%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	22	46.81%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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Report Cut: Virginia

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	45	93.75%
Paid lump sum awards	6	12.50%
Paid variable/bonus awards	19	39.58%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	2	4.17%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	2.08%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	1	2.08%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	39	81.25%
Paying lump sum awards	7	14.58%
Paying variable/bonus awards	18	37.50%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	2.08%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	2	4.17%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	2.08%
Uncertain	7	14.58%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	31	64.58%	23	47.92%
Increased standard wages	19	39.58%	15	31.25%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	26	54.17%	26	54.17%
Implemented or increased variable pay	5	10.42%	8	16.67%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	2.08%	1	2.08%
Other	1	2.08%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	4	8.33%	3	6.25%

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27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	8	16.67%	8	16.67%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	7	14.58%	5	10.42%
Invest in new technology	22	45.83%	28	58.33%
Invest in equipment	20	41.67%	19	39.58%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	4	8.33%	6	12.50%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	5	10.42%	3	6.25%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	6	12.50%	9	18.75%
Increase training budget	12	25.00%	14	29.17%
Increase total rewards communication/education	11	22.92%	19	39.58%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	14	29.17%	14	29.17%
Increase recruiting emphasis	14	29.17%	19	39.58%
Pay above market rates	5	10.42%	5	10.42%
Enhance the benefits package	9	18.75%	12	25.00%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	15	31.25%	20	41.67%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	10	20.83%	15	31.25%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	4	8.33%	3	6.25%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	1	2.08%	1	2.08%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	1	2.08%	4	8.33%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	5	10.42%	10	20.83%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	3	6.25%	9	18.75%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	2	4.17%	2	4.17%
Hold off on investing in new technology	2	4.17%	1	2.08%
Hold off on investing in equipment	1	2.08%	1	2.08%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	2.08%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	4	8.33%	2	4.17%
Reduce training budget	1	2.08%	2	4.17%
Limiting employee travel	6	12.50%	6	12.50%
Hiring freezes	5	10.42%	2	4.17%
Implementing furloughs	2	4.17%	1	2.08%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	7	14.58%	2	4.17%
Reduce benefits package	1	2.08%	1	2.08%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	2.08%	1	2.08%
Freezing compensation increases	1	2.08%	1	2.08%
Outsourcing roles or functions	5	10.42%	5	10.42%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	9	18.75%	2	4.17%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	18	37.50%	5	10.42%
Increasing presence on social media	29	60.42%	7	14.58%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	3	6.25%	2	4.17%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	16	33.33%	2	4.17%
Partnering with brand influencers	5	10.42%	2	4.17%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	15	31.25%	7	14.58%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	18	37.50%	6	12.50%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	13	27.08%	4	8.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 48

Report Cut: Virginia

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	13	27.08%	10	20.83%	0	0.00%
Website content production	10	20.83%	11	22.92%	3	6.25%
Marketing content production	8	16.67%	11	22.92%	5	10.42%
Other content production	8	16.67%	11	22.92%	3	6.25%
Digital personal assistant	12	25.00%	7	14.58%	3	6.25%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	10	20.83%	9	18.75%	4	8.33%
Customer relationship management	12	25.00%	8	16.67%	2	4.17%
Inventory management	13	27.08%	5	10.42%	2	4.17%
Product recommendations	12	25.00%	5	10.42%	1	2.08%
Accounting	15	31.25%	2	4.17%	2	4.17%
Supply chain operations	15	31.25%	3	6.25%	1	2.08%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	11	22.92%	13	27.08%	5	10.42%
Application and screening management	10	20.83%	11	22.92%	4	8.33%
Audience segmentation	14	29.17%	2	4.17%	1	2.08%
Process improvement	13	27.08%	4	8.33%	2	4.17%
Idea generation	8	16.67%	10	20.83%	6	12.50%
Process automation	9	18.75%	5	10.42%	5	10.42%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	12	25.00%	7	14.58%	4	8.33%

# **Washington**



# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 42

Report Cut: Washington

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	1	2.38%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	4.76%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2	4.76%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	10	23.81%
Education Services	1	2.38%
Financial & Insurance	5	11.90%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1	2.38%
Information	2	4.76%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	1	2.38%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	2	4.76%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	7	16.67%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	2	4.76%
Services (Except Public Administration)	2	4.76%
Transportation & Warehousing	2	4.76%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	2	4.76%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	13	30.95%
100 to 249	13	30.95%
250 to 499	5	11.90%
500 to 999	4	9.52%
1,000 or more	7	16.67%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	32	76.19%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	2	4.76%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	8	19.05%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 42

Report Cut: Washington

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	17	40.5%
Stay the same	19	45.2%
Decline	6	14.3%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	2.4%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	21	50.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	6	14.3%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	8	19.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	7.1%
Do not know	3	7.1%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	4	9.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	24	57.1%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	7	16.7%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	7.1%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	2.4%
Do not know	3	7.1%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	27	65.85%	23	56.10%
Mild	13	31.71%	12	29.27%
Serious	1	2.44%	6	14.63%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	7	17.50%	5	12.20%
Mild	24	60.00%	21	51.22%
Serious	9	22.50%	15	36.59%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	21	52.50%	18	45.00%
Mild	17	42.50%	18	45.00%
Serious	2	5.00%	4	10.00%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	11	26.83%	8	19.51%
Mild	23	56.10%	24	58.54%
Serious	7	17.07%	9	21.95%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 42

Report Cut: Washington

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	10	24.39%	8	19.51%
Mild	19	46.34%	21	51.22%
Serious	12	29.27%	12	29.27%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	5	12.20%	4	9.76%
Mild	21	51.22%	16	39.02%
Serious	15	36.59%	21	51.22%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	5	12.20%	4	10.00%
Mild	19	46.34%	20	50.00%
Serious	17	41.46%	16	40.00%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	10	24.39%	8	19.51%
Mild	21	51.22%	18	43.90%
Serious	10	24.39%	15	36.59%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	4	10.26%	5	12.82%
Mild	22	56.41%	17	43.59%
Serious	13	33.33%	17	43.59%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	18	45.00%	16	39.02%
Mild	17	42.50%	18	43.90%
Serious	5	12.50%	7	17.07%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	21	51.22%	21	51.22%
Mild	13	31.71%	13	31.71%
Serious	7	17.07%	7	17.07%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	13	31.71%	10	25.00%
Mild	16	39.02%	18	45.00%
Serious	12	29.27%	12	30.00%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	16	39.02%	14	34.15%
Mild	18	43.90%	19	46.34%
Serious	7	17.07%	8	19.51%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	12	30.77%	12	30.00%
Mild	25	64.10%	24	60.00%
Serious	2	5.13%	4	10.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 42

Report Cut: Washington

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	11	26.83%	9	21.95%
Mild	25	60.98%	26	63.41%
Serious	5	12.20%	6	14.63%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	9	21.95%	9	21.95%
Mild	23	56.10%	23	56.10%
Serious	9	21.95%	9	21.95%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	18	43.90%	18	43.90%
Mild	18	43.90%	18	43.90%
Serious	5	12.20%	5	12.20%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	17	41.46%	17	41.46%
Mild	19	46.34%	18	43.90%
Serious	5	12.20%	6	14.63%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	6	14.63%	3	7.32%
Mild	18	43.90%	21	51.22%
Serious	17	41.46%	17	41.46%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	6	14.63%	5	12.20%
Mild	23	56.10%	23	56.10%
Serious	12	29.27%	13	31.71%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	8	19.51%	4	9.76%
Mild	24	58.54%	25	60.98%
Serious	9	21.95%	12	29.27%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	2	4.88%	2	4.88%
Mild	16	39.02%	15	36.59%
Serious	22	53.66%	23	56.10%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	16	39.02%	15	36.59%
Mild	19	46.34%	20	48.78%
Serious	6	14.63%	6	14.63%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	12	29.27%	9	21.95%
Mild	18	43.90%	20	48.78%
Serious	11	26.83%	12	29.27%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	6	14.63%	7	17.07%
Mild	22	53.66%	20	48.78%
Serious	13	31.71%	14	34.15%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 42

Report Cut: Washington

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	8	19.51%	5	12.20%
Mild	26	63.41%	25	60.98%
Serious	7	17.07%	11	26.83%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	8	19.51%	7	17.07%
Mild	29	70.73%	27	65.85%
Serious	2	4.88%	5	12.20%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	19	46.34%	19	46.34%
Mild	7	17.07%	6	14.63%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	6	1	2	22
Product obsolescence	1	0	0	3
Changing customer preferences	4	1	1	15
Customer's ability to afford	4	4	0	20
Talent acquisition	4	6	3	27
Talent retention	5	7	2	31
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	1	2	7
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	4	6	4	28
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	0	2	5
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	1	3	8
Cost of materials	2	2	1	11
Cost of equipment	0	1	0	2
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	0	1	4
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	1	2	0	7
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	0	2
Inflation	1	1	3	8
Employee engagement	1	2	5	12
Developing future leaders	0	1	3	5
Cybersecurity	2	2	1	11
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	1	1	2	7
Political uncertainty	1	1	1	6
Talent skills gap	0	0	1	1
Unknown challenges	0	0	3	3
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 42

Report Cut: Washington

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	5	11.90%
Slightly less than planned	14	33.33%
As planned	15	35.71%
Slightly more than planned	6	14.29%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	1	2.38%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	19	45.24%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	17	40.48%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	5	11.90%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	25	59.53%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	2	4.76%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	14	33.33%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	2.38%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	17	41.46%	10	25.00%
No	24	58.54%	30	75.00%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	37	90.24%	32	78.05%
No	4	9.76%	9	21.95%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	35	85.37%	29	70.73%
No	6	14.63%	12	29.27%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	4	25.00%	3	18.75%
No	12	75.00%	13	81.25%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	24	75.00%	21	67.74%
No	8	25.00%	10	32.26%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 42

Report Cut: Washington

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	3	7.32%
Some due to this	31	75.61%
None due to this	7	17.07%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	9	21.95%
None due to this	32	78.05%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	2.44%
Some due to this	35	85.37%
None due to this	5	12.20%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	32	78.05%
None due to this	9	21.95%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	31	75.61%
None due to this	10	24.39%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	2.50%
Some due to this	10	25.00%
None due to this	29	72.50%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 42

Report Cut: Washington

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	10	24.21%	6	14.63%	10	24.39%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	16.91%	3	7.32%	5	12.20%
Somewhat satisfied	20	43.32%	23	56.10%	19	46.34%
Very satisfied	9	10.85%	9	21.95%	7	17.07%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	14	33.33%	5	11.90%	5	11.90%
Middle managers	18	42.86%	8	19.05%	13	30.95%
Professional staff (non-managers)	18	42.86%	5	11.90%	16	38.10%
Skilled production workers	12	28.57%	2	4.76%	11	26.19%
Unskilled production workers	5	11.90%	0	0.00%	8	19.05%
Entry-level office workers	9	21.43%	2	4.76%	10	23.81%
Entry-level non-office workers	6	14.29%	1	2.38%	7	16.67%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	13	30.95%	2	4.76%	6	14.29%
Service workers	7	16.67%	2	4.76%	6	14.29%
Other	3	7.14%	1	2.38%	0	0.00%
None	5	11.90%	3	7.14%	2	4.76%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 42

Report Cut: Washington

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	21	50.00%	14	33.33%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	6	14.29%	17	40.48%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	13	30.95%	24	57.14%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	24	57.14%	27	64.29%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	23	54.76%	7	16.67%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	22	52.38%	3	7.14%
Increasing starting salaries	29	69.05%	10	23.81%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	12	28.57%	14	33.33%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	9	21.43%	7	16.67%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	5	11.90%	3	7.14%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	5	11.90%	10	23.81%
Shortening the hiring process	9	21.43%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	12	28.57%	4	9.52%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	23	54.76%	18	42.86%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	7	16.67%	8	19.05%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	25	59.52%	3	7.14%
Participating in job fairs	16	38.10%	2	4.76%
Building/increasing brand awareness	22	52.38%	9	21.43%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	12	28.57%	8	19.05%
Using formal candidate tracking system	22	52.38%	4	9.52%
Other	2	4.76%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	20	47.62%
Team incentives	9	21.43%
Employee referral bonuses	24	57.14%
Year-end bonuses	20	47.62%
Spot bonuses	7	16.67%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	16	38.10%
Retention bonuses	6	14.29%
Commissions	16	38.10%
Project bonuses	6	14.29%
Profit sharing	6	14.29%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	16	38.10%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 42

Report Cut: Washington

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	10	23.81%
Language premiums	2	4.76%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	21	50.00%
Resources to do their job effectively	7	16.67%
Mentoring opportunities	3	7.14%
Competitive/robust health benefits	13	30.95%
Opportunities to connect with others	2	4.76%
Driven by the mission of the organization	7	16.67%
Recognition and reward for good performance	12	28.57%
Ongoing training on new technologies	5	11.90%
Competitive pay	37	88.10%
Good work/life balance	30	71.43%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	2	4.76%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	16	38.10%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	11	26.19%
Hybrid work opportunities	9	21.43%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	2	4.76%
Regular full-time hours	0	0.00%
Strong organizational culture	11	26.19%
Challenging work	0	0.00%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	9	21.43%
Focus on employee safety	2	4.76%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	1	2.44%
No change	20	48.78%
More difficult	20	48.78%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 42

Report Cut: Washington

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	0	0.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	19	95.00%
Lack of technical skills	10	50.00%
Lack of soft skills	6	30.00%
Lack of work experience	8	40.00%
Our organization's geographic location	5	25.00%
Market competition/high demand	10	50.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	10	50.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	5	25.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	0	0.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	5	25.00%
Other *	1	5.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	8	19.51%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	20	48.78%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	7	17.07%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	6	14.63%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	8	19.51%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	23	56.10%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	7	17.07%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	3	7.32%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	6	14.29%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	18	42.86%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	6	14.29%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	2.38%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	11	26.19%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	11.90%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	3	7.14%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 42

Report Cut: Washington

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	26	61.90%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	11	26.19%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	25	59.52%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	12	28.57%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	8	19.05%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	24	57.14%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	7	16.67%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	12	28.57%
Creating/redefining policies	12	28.57%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	5	11.90%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	17	40.48%
N/A	3	7.14%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	3	7.50%
No	25	62.50%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	12	30.00%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	21	51.22%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	5	12.20%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	15	36.59%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 42

Report Cut: Washington

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	38	90.48%
Paid lump sum awards	2	4.76%
Paid variable/bonus awards	15	35.71%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	3	7.14%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	2.38%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	3	7.14%
Uncertain	2	4.76%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	37	88.10%
Paying lump sum awards	3	7.14%
Paying variable/bonus awards	17	40.48%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	2.38%
Uncertain	5	11.90%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	28	66.67%	25	59.52%
Increased standard wages	23	54.76%	17	40.48%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	28	66.67%	26	61.90%
Implemented or increased variable pay	3	7.14%	8	19.05%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	2.38%	1	2.38%
Other	1	2.38%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	3	7.14%	3	7.14%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 42

Report Cut: Washington

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	9	21.43%	6	14.29%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	10	23.81%	4	9.52%
Invest in new technology	22	52.38%	22	52.38%
Invest in equipment	17	40.48%	13	30.95%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	2	4.76%	2	4.76%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	3	7.14%	3	7.14%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	4	9.52%	6	14.29%
Increase training budget	10	23.81%	11	26.19%
Increase total rewards communication/education	7	16.67%	14	33.33%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	14	33.33%	13	30.95%
Increase recruiting emphasis	16	38.10%	13	30.95%
Pay above market rates	5	11.90%	5	11.90%
Enhance the benefits package	6	14.29%	11	26.19%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	13	30.95%	18	42.86%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	13	30.95%	17	40.48%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	4	9.52%	2	4.76%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	1	2.38%	1	2.38%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	2	4.76%	2	4.76%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	4	9.52%	7	16.67%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	4	9.52%	6	14.29%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	2.38%	1	2.38%
Hold off on investing in new technology	0	0.00%	1	2.38%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	1	2.38%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	2.38%	1	2.38%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	4	9.52%	3	7.14%
Reduce training budget	2	4.76%	2	4.76%
Limiting employee travel	10	23.81%	5	11.90%
Hiring freezes	5	11.90%	3	7.14%
Implementing furloughs	2	4.76%	1	2.38%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	12	28.57%	3	7.14%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	2	4.76%	1	2.38%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Freezing compensation increases	1	2.38%	1	2.38%
Outsourcing roles or functions	4	9.52%	3	7.14%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 42

Report Cut: Washington

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	8	19.05%	3	7.14%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	18	42.86%	4	9.52%
Increasing presence on social media	27	64.29%	6	14.29%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	4	9.52%	0	0.00%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	18	42.86%	3	7.14%
Partnering with brand influencers	2	4.76%	1	2.38%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	14	33.33%	5	11.90%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	18	42.86%	6	14.29%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	15	35.71%	9	21.43%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 42

Report Cut: Washington

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	12	28.57%	10	23.81%	2	4.76%
Website content production	12	28.57%	7	16.67%	3	7.14%
Marketing content production	12	28.57%	5	11.90%	5	11.90%
Other content production	11	26.19%	7	16.67%	5	11.90%
Digital personal assistant	11	26.19%	7	16.67%	2	4.76%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	10	23.81%	8	19.05%	2	4.76%
Customer relationship management	10	23.81%	9	21.43%	3	7.14%
Inventory management	10	23.81%	5	11.90%	2	4.76%
Product recommendations	13	30.95%	4	9.52%	1	2.38%
Accounting	15	35.71%	2	4.76%	2	4.76%
Supply chain operations	14	33.33%	2	4.76%	1	2.38%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	12	28.57%	6	14.29%	9	21.43%
Application and screening management	10	23.81%	8	19.05%	4	9.52%
Audience segmentation	15	35.71%	2	4.76%	1	2.38%
Process improvement	11	26.19%	4	9.52%	5	11.90%
Idea generation	9	21.43%	8	19.05%	7	16.67%
Process automation	10	23.81%	3	7.14%	5	11.90%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	12	28.57%	6	14.29%	4	9.52%



# **Washington D.C.**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 19

Report Cut: Washington D.C.

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	5.26%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1	5.26%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	1	5.26%
Financial & Insurance	1	5.26%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	1	5.26%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	1	5.26%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	1	5.26%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	6	31.58%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	4	21.05%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	1	5.26%
Wholesale Trade	1	5.26%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	6	31.58%
100 to 249	9	47.37%
250 to 499	2	10.53%
500 to 999	0	0.00%
1,000 or more	2	10.53%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	10	52.63%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	0	0.00%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	9	47.37%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 19

Report Cut: Washington D.C.

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	7	36.8%
Stay the same	12	63.2%
Decline	0	0.0%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	10.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	9	47.4%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	3	15.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	10.5%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	5.3%
Do not know	2	10.5%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	4	21.1%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	8	42.1%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	3	15.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	5.3%
Do not know	3	15.8%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	11	61.11%	10	55.56%
Mild	7	38.89%	4	22.22%
Serious	0	0.00%	4	22.22%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	2	10.53%	0	0.00%
Mild	14	73.68%	15	78.95%
Serious	3	15.79%	4	21.05%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	15	78.95%	11	57.89%
Mild	4	21.05%	7	36.84%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	5.26%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	6	31.58%	3	15.79%
Mild	13	68.42%	14	73.68%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	10.53%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 19

Report Cut: Washington D.C.

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	8	42.11%	5	26.32%
Mild	10	52.63%	13	68.42%
Serious	1	5.26%	1	5.26%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	3	15.79%	3	15.79%
Mild	9	47.37%	7	36.84%
Serious	7	36.84%	9	47.37%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	2	10.53%	2	10.53%
Mild	8	42.11%	8	42.11%
Serious	9	47.37%	9	47.37%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	3	15.79%	2	10.53%
Mild	13	68.42%	11	57.89%
Serious	3	15.79%	6	31.58%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	2	10.53%	3	15.79%
Mild	13	68.42%	10	52.63%
Serious	4	21.05%	6	31.58%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	10	52.63%	10	52.63%
Mild	7	36.84%	8	42.11%
Serious	2	10.53%	1	5.26%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	6	33.33%	5	27.78%
Mild	12	66.67%	13	72.22%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	10	55.56%	8	47.06%
Mild	7	38.89%	8	47.06%
Serious	1	5.56%	1	5.88%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	11	57.89%	10	52.63%
Mild	7	36.84%	8	42.11%
Serious	1	5.26%	1	5.26%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	8	44.44%	7	36.84%
Mild	9	50.00%	11	57.89%
Serious	1	5.56%	1	5.26%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 19

Report Cut: Washington D.C.

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	8	42.11%	7	36.84%
Mild	7	36.84%	9	47.37%
Serious	4	21.05%	3	15.79%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	6	31.58%	7	36.84%
Mild	11	57.89%	10	52.63%
Serious	2	10.53%	2	10.53%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	8	42.11%	8	42.11%
Mild	8	42.11%	8	42.11%
Serious	3	15.79%	3	15.79%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	6	31.58%	6	31.58%
Mild	11	57.89%	12	63.16%
Serious	2	10.53%	1	5.26%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	3	15.79%	2	10.53%
Mild	9	47.37%	9	47.37%
Serious	7	36.84%	8	42.11%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	1	5.26%	1	5.26%
Mild	13	68.42%	10	52.63%
Serious	5	26.32%	8	42.11%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	3	15.79%	2	10.53%
Mild	9	47.37%	9	47.37%
Serious	7	36.84%	8	42.11%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	1	5.26%	1	5.26%
Mild	9	47.37%	8	42.11%
Serious	9	47.37%	10	52.63%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	6	31.58%	5	26.32%
Mild	9	47.37%	9	47.37%
Serious	4	21.05%	5	26.32%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	5	26.32%	4	21.05%
Mild	11	57.89%	10	52.63%
Serious	3	15.79%	5	26.32%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	6	31.58%	6	31.58%
Mild	9	47.37%	8	42.11%
Serious	4	21.05%	5	26.32%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 19

Report Cut: Washington D.C.

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	4	21.05%	3	15.79%
Mild	13	68.42%	14	73.68%
Serious	2	10.53%	2	10.53%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	6	31.58%	6	31.58%
Mild	13	68.42%	12	63.16%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	5.26%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	9	47.37%	9	47.37%
Mild	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	1	0	0	3
Competition in general	1	0	3	6
Product obsolescence	0	1	1	3
Changing customer preferences	1	1	0	5
Customer's ability to afford	2	1	0	8
Talent acquisition	1	2	1	8
Talent retention	4	2	1	17
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	0	1	1
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	1	1	3	8
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	0	0	3
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	2	0	7
Cost of materials	0	0	0	0
Cost of equipment	0	1	0	2
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	0	0	3
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	1	0	0	3
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	0	2
Inflation	0	1	2	4
Employee engagement	1	2	2	9
Developing future leaders	1	0	1	4
Cybersecurity	1	1	0	5
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	1	1
Political uncertainty	1	0	0	3
Talent skills gap	0	3	0	6
Unknown challenges	0	0	2	2
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 19

Report Cut: Washington D.C.

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	1	5.26%
Slightly less than planned	3	15.79%
As planned	10	52.63%
Slightly more than planned	5	26.32%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	9	47.37%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	7	36.84%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	3	15.79%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	14	73.68%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	2	10.53%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	3	15.79%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	9	47.37%	6	33.33%
No	10	52.63%	12	66.67%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	18	94.74%	14	73.68%
No	1	5.26%	5	26.32%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	15	78.95%	11	57.89%
No	4	21.05%	8	42.11%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
No	6	100.00%	6	100.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	6	54.55%	6	54.55%
No	5	45.45%	5	45.45%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 19

Report Cut: Washington D.C.

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	18	94.74%
None due to this	1	5.26%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	6	31.58%
None due to this	13	68.42%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	18	94.74%
None due to this	1	5.26%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	5.26%
Some due to this	17	89.47%
None due to this	1	5.26%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	10	52.63%
None due to this	9	47.37%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	5.26%
Some due to this	2	10.53%
None due to this	16	84.21%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 19

Report Cut: Washington D.C.

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	1	5.26%	0	0.00%	1	5.26%
Somewhat dissatisfied	6	24.21%	5	26.32%	4	21.05%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	16.91%	1	5.26%	4	21.05%
Somewhat satisfied	3	43.32%	7	36.84%	6	31.58%
Very satisfied	8	10.85%	6	31.58%	4	21.05%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	8	42.11%	5	26.32%	3	15.79%
Middle managers	10	52.63%	6	31.58%	7	36.84%
Professional staff (non-managers)	10	52.63%	6	31.58%	10	52.63%
Skilled production workers	5	26.32%	0	0.00%	4	21.05%
Unskilled production workers	5	26.32%	1	5.26%	3	15.79%
Entry-level office workers	3	15.79%	3	15.79%	6	31.58%
Entry-level non-office workers	2	10.53%	0	0.00%	3	15.79%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	3	15.79%	3	15.79%	1	5.26%
Service workers	3	15.79%	1	5.26%	2	10.53%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	5.26%
None	1	5.26%	1	5.26%	1	5.26%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 19

Report Cut: Washington D.C.

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	9	47.37%	6	31.58%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	8	42.11%	11	57.89%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	7	36.84%	12	63.16%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	10	52.63%	12	63.16%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	14	73.68%	5	26.32%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	7	36.84%	1	5.26%
Increasing starting salaries	11	57.89%	5	26.32%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	8	42.11%	8	42.11%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	8	42.11%	7	36.84%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	1	5.26%	1	5.26%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	1	5.26%	1	5.26%
Shortening the hiring process	4	21.05%	1	5.26%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	6	31.58%	3	15.79%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	9	47.37%	6	31.58%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	4	21.05%	4	21.05%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	12	63.16%	3	15.79%
Participating in job fairs	6	31.58%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	9	47.37%	5	26.32%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	5	26.32%	2	10.53%
Using formal candidate tracking system	9	47.37%	1	5.26%
Other	1	5.26%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	9	47.37%
Team incentives	4	21.05%
Employee referral bonuses	7	36.84%
Year-end bonuses	5	26.32%
Spot bonuses	4	21.05%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	6	31.58%
Retention bonuses	0	0.00%
Commissions	4	21.05%
Project bonuses	2	10.53%
Profit sharing	1	5.26%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	6	31.58%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 19

Report Cut: Washington D.C.

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	3	15.79%
Language premiums	1	5.26%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	10	52.63%
Resources to do their job effectively	5	26.32%
Mentoring opportunities	1	5.26%
Competitive/robust health benefits	7	36.84%
Opportunities to connect with others	3	15.79%
Driven by the mission of the organization	4	21.05%
Recognition and reward for good performance	5	26.32%
Ongoing training on new technologies	0	0.00%
Competitive pay	13	68.42%
Good work/life balance	8	42.11%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	3	15.79%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	8	42.11%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	7	36.84%
Hybrid work opportunities	4	21.05%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	0	0.00%
Strong organizational culture	7	36.84%
Challenging work	1	5.26%
Diverse workforce	3	15.79%
Vacation/paid time off	6	31.58%
Focus on employee safety	0	0.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	1	5.26%
No change	6	31.58%
More difficult	12	63.16%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 19

Report Cut: Washington D.C.

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	3	25.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	10	83.33%
Lack of technical skills	0	0.00%
Lack of soft skills	1	8.33%
Lack of work experience	1	8.33%
Our organization's geographic location	1	8.33%
Market competition/high demand	5	41.67%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	5	41.67%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	2	16.67%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	1	8.33%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	1	8.33%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	21.05%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	5	26.32%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	7	36.84%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	3	15.79%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	0	0.00%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	10.53%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	6	31.58%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	4	21.05%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	15.79%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	4	21.05%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	1	5.26%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	9	47.37%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	2	10.53%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	15.79%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	2	10.53%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	4	21.05%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 19

Report Cut: Washington D.C.

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	12	63.16%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	7	36.84%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	12	63.16%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	5	26.32%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	3	15.79%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	14	73.68%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	3	15.79%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	2	10.53%
Creating/redefining policies	6	31.58%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	2	10.53%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	3	15.79%
N/A	0	0.00%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	2	10.53%
No	12	63.16%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	5	26.32%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	9	47.37%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	2	10.53%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	8	42.11%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 19

Report Cut: Washington D.C.

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	19	100.00%
Paid lump sum awards	2	10.53%
Paid variable/bonus awards	6	31.58%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	2	10.53%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	1	5.26%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	17	89.47%
Paying lump sum awards	2	10.53%
Paying variable/bonus awards	8	42.11%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	2	10.53%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	9	47.37%	11	57.89%
Increased standard wages	10	52.63%	9	47.37%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	12	63.16%	10	52.63%
Implemented or increased variable pay	1	5.26%	3	15.79%
Temporarily bumped pay	3	15.79%	1	5.26%
Other	1	5.26%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	2	10.53%	2	10.53%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 19

Report Cut: Washington D.C.

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	4	21.05%	6	31.58%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	5	26.32%	3	15.79%
Invest in new technology	7	36.84%	7	36.84%
Invest in equipment	6	31.58%	3	15.79%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	1	5.26%	2	10.53%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	1	5.26%	3	15.79%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	2	10.53%	3	15.79%
Increase training budget	7	36.84%	7	36.84%
Increase total rewards communication/education	4	21.05%	5	26.32%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	6	31.58%	7	36.84%
Increase recruiting emphasis	6	31.58%	5	26.32%
Pay above market rates	1	5.26%	1	5.26%
Enhance the benefits package	3	15.79%	9	47.37%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	4	21.05%	7	36.84%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	6	31.58%	7	36.84%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	3	15.79%	2	10.53%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	3	15.79%	2	10.53%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	1	5.26%	1	5.26%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	3	15.79%	4	21.05%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	3	15.79%	4	21.05%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	5.26%	1	5.26%
Hold off on investing in new technology	1	5.26%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	2	10.53%	1	5.26%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	0	0.00%	1	5.26%
Reduce training budget	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Limiting employee travel	7	36.84%	3	15.79%
Hiring freezes	3	15.79%	1	5.26%
Implementing furloughs	1	5.26%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	7	36.84%	0	0.00%
Reduce benefits package	1	5.26%	2	10.53%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	1	5.26%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	5.26%	1	5.26%
Freezing compensation increases	1	5.26%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	1	5.26%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 19

Report Cut: Washington D.C.

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	5	26.32%	2	10.53%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	10	52.63%	2	10.53%
Increasing presence on social media	12	63.16%	3	15.79%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	6	31.58%	1	5.26%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	7	36.84%	1	5.26%
Partnering with brand influencers	1	5.26%	0	0.00%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	6	31.58%	2	10.53%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	8	42.11%	3	15.79%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	6	31.58%	3	15.79%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 19

Report Cut: Washington D.C.

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	5	26.32%	4	21.05%	2	10.53%
Website content production	1	5.26%	5	26.32%	5	26.32%
Marketing content production	1	5.26%	3	15.79%	5	26.32%
Other content production	1	5.26%	3	15.79%	5	26.32%
Digital personal assistant	7	36.84%	2	10.53%	1	5.26%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	3	15.79%	3	15.79%	2	10.53%
Customer relationship management	4	21.05%	3	15.79%	2	10.53%
Inventory management	4	21.05%	1	5.26%	2	10.53%
Product recommendations	4	21.05%	2	10.53%	0	0.00%
Accounting	3	15.79%	3	15.79%	2	10.53%
Supply chain operations	6	31.58%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	3	15.79%	4	21.05%	3	15.79%
Application and screening management	2	10.53%	5	26.32%	3	15.79%
Audience segmentation	5	26.32%	1	5.26%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	3	15.79%	3	15.79%	2	10.53%
Idea generation	2	10.53%	4	21.05%	3	15.79%
Process automation	3	15.79%	4	21.05%	2	10.53%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	4	21.05%	4	21.05%	2	10.53%

# **West Virginia**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: West Virginia

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	6.67%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	1	6.67%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	2	13.33%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	1	6.67%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	1	6.67%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	2	13.33%
Services (Except Public Administration)	4	26.67%
Transportation & Warehousing	1	6.67%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	2	13.33%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	3	20.00%
100 to 249	3	20.00%
250 to 499	3	20.00%
500 to 999	2	13.33%
1,000 or more	4	26.67%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	12	80.00%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	2	13.33%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	1	6.67%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: West Virginia

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	7	46.7%
Stay the same	7	46.7%
Decline	1	6.7%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	7	46.7%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	3	20.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	26.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	1	6.7%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	6.7%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	9	60.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	2	13.3%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	6.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	2	13.3%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	9	64.29%	9	64.29%
Mild	5	35.71%	5	35.71%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	10	71.43%	12	85.71%
Serious	4	28.57%	2	14.29%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	11	78.57%	11	78.57%
Mild	2	14.29%	3	21.43%
Serious	1	7.14%	0	0.00%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	7	50.00%	4	28.57%
Mild	6	42.86%	9	64.29%
Serious	1	7.14%	1	7.14%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: West Virginia

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	6	42.86%	7	50.00%
Mild	7	50.00%	7	50.00%
Serious	1	7.14%	0	0.00%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	3	21.43%	2	14.29%
Mild	5	35.71%	5	35.71%
Serious	6	42.86%	7	50.00%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	2	14.29%	2	14.29%
Mild	6	42.86%	6	42.86%
Serious	6	42.86%	6	42.86%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	3	21.43%	3	21.43%
Mild	7	50.00%	5	35.71%
Serious	4	28.57%	6	42.86%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	3	21.43%	2	14.29%
Mild	9	64.29%	10	71.43%
Serious	2	14.29%	2	14.29%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	9	64.29%	9	64.29%
Mild	4	28.57%	4	28.57%
Serious	1	7.14%	1	7.14%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	7	50.00%	6	42.86%
Mild	5	35.71%	6	42.86%
Serious	2	14.29%	2	14.29%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	7	50.00%	6	46.15%
Mild	7	50.00%	7	53.85%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	4	28.57%	4	28.57%
Mild	9	64.29%	7	50.00%
Serious	1	7.14%	3	21.43%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	4	33.33%	3	23.08%
Mild	7	58.33%	8	61.54%
Serious	1	8.33%	2	15.38%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: West Virginia

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	4	28.57%	4	28.57%
Mild	6	42.86%	7	50.00%
Serious	4	28.57%	3	21.43%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	6	42.86%	6	42.86%
Mild	7	50.00%	6	42.86%
Serious	1	7.14%	2	14.29%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	6	42.86%	6	42.86%
Mild	5	35.71%	5	35.71%
Serious	3	21.43%	3	21.43%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	6	42.86%	5	35.71%
Mild	7	50.00%	8	57.14%
Serious	1	7.14%	1	7.14%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	2	14.29%	0	0.00%
Mild	5	35.71%	8	57.14%
Serious	7	50.00%	6	42.86%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	3	21.43%	1	7.14%
Mild	8	57.14%	8	57.14%
Serious	3	21.43%	4	28.57%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	2	14.29%	1	7.14%
Mild	10	71.43%	8	57.14%
Serious	2	14.29%	4	28.57%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	2	14.29%	1	7.14%
Mild	6	42.86%	6	42.86%
Serious	5	35.71%	7	50.00%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	9	64.29%	8	57.14%
Mild	2	14.29%	3	21.43%
Serious	3	21.43%	3	21.43%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	6	42.86%	4	28.57%
Mild	7	50.00%	5	35.71%
Serious	1	7.14%	5	35.71%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	4	28.57%	4	28.57%
Mild	5	35.71%	7	50.00%
Serious	5	35.71%	3	21.43%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: West Virginia

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	4	28.57%	3	21.43%
Mild	8	57.14%	6	42.86%
Serious	2	14.29%	5	35.71%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	5	35.71%	4	28.57%
Mild	8	57.14%	9	64.29%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	7	50.00%	7	50.00%
Mild	1	7.14%	1	7.14%
Serious	1	7.14%	1	7.14%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	3	1	1	12
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	0	1	1	3
Customer's ability to afford	0	0	0	0
Talent acquisition	4	3	2	20
Talent retention	0	1	2	4
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	0	1	1
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	1	0	0	3
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	0	0	3
Cost of materials	1	0	0	3
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	2	1	0	8
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	1	1	3
Employee safety	1	0	0	3
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	0	2
Inflation	0	2	1	5
Employee engagement	0	0	1	1
Developing future leaders	0	2	1	5
Cybersecurity	0	0	1	1
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	1	1
Political uncertainty	0	1	1	3
Talent skills gap	0	0	0	0
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	1	0	0	3

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: West Virginia

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%
Slightly less than planned	3	20.00%
As planned	6	40.00%
Slightly more than planned	5	33.33%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	5	33.33%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	8	53.33%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	6.67%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	0	0.00%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	7	46.67%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	4	28.57%	2	14.29%
No	10	71.43%	12	85.71%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	12	85.71%	10	71.43%
No	2	14.29%	4	28.57%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	11	78.57%	11	78.57%
No	3	21.43%	3	21.43%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	2	33.33%	2	33.33%
No	4	66.67%	4	66.67%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	10	83.33%	10	83.33%
No	2	16.67%	2	16.67%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: West Virginia

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	9	64.29%
None due to this	5	35.71%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	1	7.14%
Some due to this	1	7.14%
None due to this	12	85.71%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	14.29%
Some due to this	12	85.71%
None due to this	0	0.00%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	14.29%
Some due to this	12	85.71%
None due to this	0	0.00%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	10	71.43%
None due to this	4	28.57%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	7.14%
Some due to this	5	35.71%
None due to this	8	57.14%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: West Virginia

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	7.14%
Somewhat dissatisfied	3	24.21%	2	14.29%	2	14.29%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	16.91%	2	14.29%	4	28.57%
Somewhat satisfied	4	43.32%	7	50.00%	4	28.57%
Very satisfied	4	10.85%	3	21.43%	3	21.43%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	5	33.33%	2	13.33%	0	0.00%
Middle managers	5	33.33%	3	20.00%	2	13.33%
Professional staff (non-managers)	6	40.00%	4	26.67%	5	33.33%
Skilled production workers	6	40.00%	2	13.33%	5	33.33%
Unskilled production workers	4	26.67%	1	6.67%	6	40.00%
Entry-level office workers	2	13.33%	1	6.67%	6	40.00%
Entry-level non-office workers	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	3	20.00%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	2	13.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Service workers	3	20.00%	0	0.00%	3	20.00%
Other	1	6.67%	0	0.00%	1	6.67%
None	2	13.33%	1	6.67%	1	6.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: West Virginia

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	9	60.00%	4	26.67%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	4	26.67%	7	46.67%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	4	26.67%	9	60.00%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	8	53.33%	8	53.33%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	8	53.33%	2	13.33%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	5	33.33%	3	20.00%
Increasing starting salaries	12	80.00%	3	20.00%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	2	13.33%	2	13.33%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	2	13.33%	3	20.00%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	3	20.00%	1	6.67%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	3	20.00%	3	20.00%
Shortening the hiring process	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	5	33.33%	2	13.33%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	8	53.33%	1	6.67%
Participating in job fairs	8	53.33%	1	6.67%
Building/increasing brand awareness	5	33.33%	2	13.33%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	3	20.00%	1	6.67%
Using formal candidate tracking system	3	20.00%	1	6.67%
Other	1	6.67%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	8	53.33%
Team incentives	2	13.33%
Employee referral bonuses	8	53.33%
Year-end bonuses	4	26.67%
Spot bonuses	2	13.33%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	4	26.67%
Retention bonuses	0	0.00%
Commissions	4	26.67%
Project bonuses	1	6.67%
Profit sharing	1	6.67%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	4	26.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: West Virginia

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	2	13.33%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	8	53.33%
Resources to do their job effectively	3	20.00%
Mentoring opportunities	2	13.33%
Competitive/robust health benefits	2	13.33%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	6.67%
Driven by the mission of the organization	1	6.67%
Recognition and reward for good performance	6	40.00%
Ongoing training on new technologies	0	0.00%
Competitive pay	11	73.33%
Good work/life balance	11	73.33%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	0	0.00%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	7	46.67%
Current technology	1	6.67%
Remote work opportunities	2	13.33%
Hybrid work opportunities	2	13.33%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	0	0.00%
Strong organizational culture	6	40.00%
Challenging work	1	6.67%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	5	33.33%
Focus on employee safety	1	6.67%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	0	0.00%
No change	10	71.43%
More difficult	4	28.57%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: West Virginia

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	0	0.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	4	100.00%
Lack of technical skills	1	25.00%
Lack of soft skills	0	0.00%
Lack of work experience	1	25.00%
Our organization's geographic location	1	25.00%
Market competition/high demand	1	25.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	2	50.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	1	25.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	1	25.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	1	25.00%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	5	35.71%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	6	42.86%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	3	21.43%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	0	0.00%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	21.43%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	7	50.00%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	14.29%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	2	14.29%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	4	26.67%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	2	13.33%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	6	40.00%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	2	13.33%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	3	20.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: West Virginia

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	8	53.33%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	4	26.67%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	5	33.33%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	2	13.33%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	3	20.00%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	7	46.67%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	2	13.33%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	2	13.33%
Creating/redefining policies	2	13.33%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	3	20.00%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	3	20.00%
N/A	2	13.33%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	0	0.00%
No	13	92.86%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	1	7.14%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	4	28.57%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	1	7.14%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	8	57.14%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	1	7.14%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: West Virginia

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	13	86.67%
Paid lump sum awards	2	13.33%
Paid variable/bonus awards	7	46.67%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	2	13.33%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	1	6.67%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	12	80.00%
Paying lump sum awards	3	20.00%
Paying variable/bonus awards	6	40.00%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	6.67%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	1	6.67%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	1	6.67%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	9	60.00%	7	46.67%
Increased standard wages	8	53.33%	6	40.00%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	8	53.33%	8	53.33%
Implemented or increased variable pay	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	1	6.67%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: West Virginia

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	4	26.67%	3	20.00%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	2	13.33%	2	13.33%
Invest in new technology	5	33.33%	8	53.33%
Invest in equipment	5	33.33%	5	33.33%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	3	20.00%	2	13.33%
Increase training budget	7	46.67%	7	46.67%
Increase total rewards communication/education	5	33.33%	6	40.00%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	3	20.00%	3	20.00%
Increase recruiting emphasis	6	40.00%	4	26.67%
Pay above market rates	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Enhance the benefits package	2	13.33%	3	20.00%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	5	33.33%	5	33.33%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	3	20.00%	4	26.67%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	0	0.00%	4	26.67%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	2	13.33%	4	26.67%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	1	6.67%
Hold off on investing in new technology	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	3	20.00%	1	6.67%
Reduce training budget	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Limiting employee travel	2	13.33%	2	13.33%
Hiring freezes	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	3	20.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	1	6.67%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	2	13.33%	1	6.67%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: West Virginia

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	4	26.67%	1	6.67%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	6	40.00%	0	0.00%
Increasing presence on social media	13	86.67%	2	13.33%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	6	40.00%	0	0.00%
Partnering with brand influencers	4	26.67%	0	0.00%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	8	53.33%	2	13.33%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	8	53.33%	2	13.33%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	6	40.00%	1	6.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: West Virginia

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	6	40.00%	2	13.33%	0	0.00%
Website content production	4	26.67%	3	20.00%	1	6.67%
Marketing content production	3	20.00%	4	26.67%	1	6.67%
Other content production	3	20.00%	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
Digital personal assistant	3	20.00%	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	4	26.67%	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
Customer relationship management	4	26.67%	3	20.00%	1	6.67%
Inventory management	4	26.67%	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Product recommendations	3	20.00%	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Accounting	3	20.00%	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
Supply chain operations	3	20.00%	2	13.33%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	2	13.33%	3	20.00%	2	13.33%
Application and screening management	2	13.33%	3	20.00%	2	13.33%
Audience segmentation	3	20.00%	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	3	20.00%	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
Idea generation	2	13.33%	3	20.00%	2	13.33%
Process automation	2	13.33%	3	20.00%	1	6.67%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	3	20.00%	3	20.00%	1	6.67%

# **Wisconsin**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 247

Report Cut: Wisconsin

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	3	1.21%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	6	2.43%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	3	1.21%
Construction	9	3.64%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	105	42.51%
Education Services	4	1.62%
Financial & Insurance	10	4.05%
Health Care & Social Assistance	4	1.62%
Information	2	0.81%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	31	12.55%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	21	8.50%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	1	0.40%
Retail Trade	3	1.21%
Services (Except Public Administration)	18	7.29%
Transportation & Warehousing	8	3.24%
Utilities	2	0.81%
Wholesale Trade	17	6.88%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	112	45.34%
100 to 249	60	24.29%
250 to 499	38	15.38%
500 to 999	18	7.29%
1,000 or more	19	7.69%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	202	81.78%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	10	4.05%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	32	12.96%
Public Sector/Government	3	1.21%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 247

Report Cut: Wisconsin

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	78	31.6%
Stay the same	116	47.0%
Decline	53	21.5%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	22	8.9%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	108	43.7%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	49	19.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	47	19.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	16	6.5%
Do not know	5	2.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	35	14.2%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	133	53.8%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	47	19.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	19	7.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	0.8%
Do not know	11	4.5%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	154	68.75%	130	58.04%
Mild	61	27.23%	71	31.70%
Serious	9	4.02%	23	10.27%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	33	14.35%	24	10.53%
Mild	140	60.87%	145	63.60%
Serious	57	24.78%	59	25.88%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	150	66.08%	131	57.71%
Mild	65	28.63%	76	33.48%
Serious	12	5.29%	20	8.81%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	79	34.65%	64	28.32%
Mild	128	56.14%	131	57.96%
Serious	21	9.21%	31	13.72%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 247

Report Cut: Wisconsin

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	59	26.11%	57	25.33%
Mild	120	53.10%	120	53.33%
Serious	47	20.80%	48	21.33%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	27	11.44%	13	5.51%
Mild	109	46.19%	111	47.03%
Serious	100	42.37%	112	47.46%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	39	16.46%	31	13.19%
Mild	120	50.63%	116	49.36%
Serious	78	32.91%	88	37.45%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	61	26.18%	48	20.69%
Mild	110	47.21%	105	45.26%
Serious	62	26.61%	79	34.05%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	33	14.10%	35	15.02%
Mild	131	55.98%	115	49.36%
Serious	70	29.91%	83	35.62%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	123	53.71%	115	50.22%
Mild	81	35.37%	87	37.99%
Serious	25	10.92%	27	11.79%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	122	53.51%	117	51.09%
Mild	86	37.72%	88	38.43%
Serious	20	8.77%	24	10.48%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	47	20.35%	42	18.50%
Mild	121	52.38%	119	52.42%
Serious	63	27.27%	66	29.07%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	51	22.37%	45	19.82%
Mild	127	55.70%	122	53.74%
Serious	50	21.93%	60	26.43%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	67	29.91%	61	27.11%
Mild	116	51.79%	116	51.56%
Serious	41	18.30%	48	21.33%

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4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	71	31.56%	62	27.80%
Mild	94	41.78%	92	41.26%
Serious	60	26.67%	69	30.94%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	51	21.98%	51	22.17%
Mild	132	56.90%	124	53.91%
Serious	49	21.12%	55	23.91%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	90	38.96%	88	38.10%
Mild	89	38.53%	91	39.57%
Serious	52	22.51%	52	22.61%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	141	61.04%	137	59.83%
Mild	75	32.47%	73	31.88%
Serious	15	6.49%	19	8.30%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	20	8.66%	15	6.55%
Mild	115	49.78%	124	54.15%
Serious	95	41.13%	91	39.74%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	44	19.05%	37	16.16%
Mild	130	56.28%	130	56.77%
Serious	58	25.11%	61	26.64%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	29	12.55%	26	11.35%
Mild	123	53.25%	104	45.41%
Serious	79	34.20%	98	42.79%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	15	6.49%	14	6.11%
Mild	102	44.16%	89	38.86%
Serious	115	49.78%	129	56.33%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	118	51.08%	110	48.03%
Mild	93	40.26%	100	43.67%
Serious	18	7.79%	20	8.73%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	91	39.39%	73	31.88%
Mild	121	52.38%	119	51.97%
Serious	18	7.79%	38	16.59%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	53	22.94%	57	24.89%
Mild	95	41.13%	99	43.23%
Serious	78	33.77%	69	30.13%

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Report Cut: Wisconsin

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	46	19.91%	39	17.03%
Mild	124	53.68%	116	50.66%
Serious	62	26.84%	77	33.62%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	55	23.81%	52	22.71%
Mild	140	60.61%	136	59.39%
Serious	21	9.09%	28	12.23%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	109	47.19%	105	45.85%
Mild	33	14.29%	34	14.85%
Serious	9	3.90%	12	5.24%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	3	2	3	16
Competition in general	25	14	16	119
Product obsolescence	2	2	5	15
Changing customer preferences	8	13	4	54
Customer's ability to afford	21	3	10	79
Talent acquisition	45	36	16	223
Talent retention	21	27	18	135
Ability to pay for benefits costs	3	16	14	55
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	14	22	25	111
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	2	2	3	13
Ability to maintain quality product/service	7	7	6	41
Cost of materials	19	23	21	124
Cost of equipment	2	5	7	23
Taxes	3	1	3	14
Cost of regulatory compliance	5	5	10	35
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	2	6	5	23
Employee safety	3	4	3	20
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	4	1	9
Inflation	11	8	10	59
Employee engagement	3	3	13	28
Developing future leaders	9	8	12	55
Cybersecurity	4	8	4	32
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	1	0	4	7
A.I. technology and platforms	1	3	4	13
Political uncertainty	10	2	5	39
Talent skills gap	7	8	10	47
Unknown challenges	2	1	3	11
Other	3	3	1	16



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6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	13	5.26%
Slightly less than planned	61	24.70%
As planned	103	41.70%
Slightly more than planned	62	25.10%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	6	2.43%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	122	49.39%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	100	40.49%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	23	9.31%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	0	0.00%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	7	2.83%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	96	38.87%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	5	2.02%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	85	36.48%	48	21.15%
No	148	63.52%	179	78.85%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	182	76.47%	146	63.76%
No	56	23.53%	83	36.24%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	192	80.33%	158	68.10%
No	47	19.67%	74	31.90%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	19	22.89%	19	23.17%
No	64	77.11%	63	76.83%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	166	82.18%	163	81.50%
No	36	17.82%	37	18.50%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	7	2.87%
Some due to this	166	68.03%
None due to this	71	29.10%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	35	14.40%
None due to this	208	85.60%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	5	2.05%
Some due to this	216	88.52%
None due to this	23	9.43%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	4	1.63%
Some due to this	193	78.78%
None due to this	48	19.59%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	5	2.07%
Some due to this	180	74.38%
None due to this	57	23.55%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	0.41%
Some due to this	25	10.33%
None due to this	216	89.26%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	9	3.67%	4	1.63%	7	2.86%
Somewhat dissatisfied	55	24.21%	37	15.10%	47	19.18%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	32	16.91%	47	19.18%	42	17.14%
Somewhat satisfied	108	43.32%	110	44.90%	105	42.86%
Very satisfied	41	10.85%	47	19.18%	44	17.96%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	84	34.01%	25	10.12%	15	6.07%
Middle managers	93	37.65%	40	16.19%	34	13.77%
Professional staff (non-managers)	110	44.53%	36	14.57%	64	25.91%
Skilled production workers	127	51.42%	33	13.36%	87	35.22%
Unskilled production workers	73	29.55%	33	13.36%	77	31.17%
Entry-level office workers	43	17.41%	22	8.91%	57	23.08%
Entry-level non-office workers	36	14.57%	14	5.67%	42	17.00%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	58	23.48%	16	6.48%	26	10.53%
Service workers	32	12.96%	10	4.05%	30	12.15%
Other	8	3.24%	4	1.62%	1	0.40%
None	12	4.86%	24	9.72%	14	5.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	117	47.37%	118	47.77%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	64	25.91%	110	44.53%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	67	27.13%	147	59.51%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	126	51.01%	160	64.78%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	97	39.27%	19	7.69%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	121	48.99%	26	10.53%
Increasing starting salaries	161	65.18%	55	22.27%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	67	27.13%	72	29.15%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	29	11.74%	17	6.88%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	58	23.48%	24	9.72%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	40	16.19%	59	23.89%
Shortening the hiring process	71	28.74%	7	2.83%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	57	23.08%	23	9.31%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	103	41.70%	65	26.32%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	34	13.77%	40	16.19%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	125	50.61%	18	7.29%
Participating in job fairs	103	41.70%	15	6.07%
Building/increasing brand awareness	105	42.51%	62	25.10%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	25	10.12%	16	6.48%
Using formal candidate tracking system	100	40.49%	23	9.31%
Other	7	2.83%	2	0.81%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	69	27.94%
Team incentives	36	14.57%
Employee referral bonuses	165	66.80%
Year-end bonuses	107	43.32%
Spot bonuses	48	19.43%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	97	39.27%
Retention bonuses	38	15.38%
Commissions	55	22.27%
Project bonuses	18	7.29%
Profit sharing	52	21.05%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	70	28.34%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	47	19.03%
Language premiums	5	2.02%
Other*	2	0.81%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	145	58.70%
Resources to do their job effectively	34	13.77%
Mentoring opportunities	14	5.67%
Competitive/robust health benefits	89	36.03%
Opportunities to connect with others	11	4.45%
Driven by the mission of the organization	36	14.57%
Recognition and reward for good performance	75	30.36%
Ongoing training on new technologies	15	6.07%
Competitive pay	195	78.95%
Good work/life balance	190	76.92%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	22	8.91%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	85	34.41%
Current technology	1	0.40%
Remote work opportunities	32	12.96%
Hybrid work opportunities	58	23.48%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	11	4.45%
Regular full-time hours	20	8.10%
Strong organizational culture	63	25.51%
Challenging work	16	6.48%
Diverse workforce	4	1.62%
Vacation/paid time off	83	33.60%
Focus on employee safety	5	2.02%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	13	5.28%
No change	113	45.93%
More difficult	120	48.78%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	6	5.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	102	85.00%
Lack of technical skills	57	47.50%
Lack of soft skills	27	22.50%
Lack of work experience	40	33.33%
Our organization's geographic location	21	17.50%
Market competition/high demand	52	43.33%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	62	51.67%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	1	0.83%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	16	13.33%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	13	10.83%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	32	26.67%
Other *	3	2.50%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	94	38.37%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	63	25.71%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	13	5.31%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	1.63%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	71	28.98%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	59	24.08%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	87	35.51%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	31	12.65%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	5	2.04%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	61	24.90%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	17	6.88%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	76	30.77%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	26	10.53%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	10	4.05%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	39	15.79%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	28	11.34%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	70	28.34%

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21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	116	46.96%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	55	22.27%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	100	40.49%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	39	15.79%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	12	4.86%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	101	40.89%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	21	8.50%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	29	11.74%
Creating/redefining policies	28	11.34%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	20	8.10%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	49	19.84%
N/A	33	13.36%
Other *	4	1.62%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	52	21.40%
No	176	72.43%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	15	6.17%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	115	46.94%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	20	8.16%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	93	37.96%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	17	6.94%

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24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	230	93.12%
Paid lump sum awards	22	8.91%
Paid variable/bonus awards	78	31.58%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	7	2.83%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	7	2.83%
Reduced wages/salaries	2	0.81%
Reduced hours worked	11	4.45%
Uncertain	7	2.83%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	209	84.62%
Paying lump sum awards	19	7.69%
Paying variable/bonus awards	83	33.60%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	5	2.02%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	8	3.24%
Reducing wages/salaries	1	0.40%
Reducing hours worked	4	1.62%
Uncertain	27	10.93%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	164	66.40%	115	46.56%
Increased standard wages	117	47.37%	86	34.82%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	122	49.39%	126	51.01%
Implemented or increased variable pay	16	6.48%	21	8.50%
Temporarily bumped pay	4	1.62%	1	0.40%
Other	3	1.21%	3	1.21%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	26	10.53%	21	8.50%



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27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	39	15.79%	37	14.98%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	34	13.77%	37	14.98%
Invest in new technology	106	42.91%	123	49.80%
Invest in equipment	113	45.75%	124	50.20%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	17	6.88%	18	7.29%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	17	6.88%	27	10.93%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	28	11.34%	34	13.77%
Increase training budget	42	17.00%	60	24.29%
Increase total rewards communication/education	45	18.22%	80	32.39%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	60	24.29%	58	23.48%
Increase recruiting emphasis	68	27.53%	77	31.17%
Pay above market rates	24	9.72%	26	10.53%
Enhance the benefits package	43	17.41%	75	30.36%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	50	20.24%	60	24.29%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	38	15.38%	55	22.27%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	27	10.93%	27	10.93%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	6	2.43%	7	2.83%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	11	4.45%	10	4.05%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	21	8.50%	28	11.34%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	24	9.72%	43	17.41%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	3	1.21%	1	0.40%
Hold off on investing in new technology	6	2.43%	9	3.64%
Hold off on investing in equipment	11	4.45%	9	3.64%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	2	0.81%	3	1.21%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	17	6.88%	15	6.07%
Reduce training budget	9	3.64%	7	2.83%
Limiting employee travel	33	13.36%	17	6.88%
Hiring freezes	25	10.12%	11	4.45%
Implementing furloughs	8	3.24%	1	0.40%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	43	17.41%	4	1.62%
Reduce benefits package	2	0.81%	1	0.40%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	4	1.62%	3	1.21%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	4	1.62%	5	2.02%
Freezing compensation increases	11	4.45%	11	4.45%
Outsourcing roles or functions	13	5.26%	12	4.86%

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29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	21	8.50%	10	4.05%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	83	33.60%	24	9.72%
Increasing presence on social media	151	61.13%	48	19.43%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	16	6.48%	7	2.83%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	67	27.13%	27	10.93%
Partnering with brand influencers	19	7.69%	9	3.64%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	53	21.46%	27	10.93%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	104	42.11%	41	16.60%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	61	24.70%	27	10.93%

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30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	112	45.34%	44	17.81%	3	1.21%
Website content production	90	36.44%	62	25.10%	12	4.86%
Marketing content production	76	30.77%	74	29.96%	16	6.48%
Other content production	88	35.63%	52	21.05%	15	6.07%
Digital personal assistant	114	46.15%	22	8.91%	3	1.21%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	93	37.65%	44	17.81%	12	4.86%
Customer relationship management	113	45.75%	32	12.96%	5	2.02%
Inventory management	111	44.94%	29	11.74%	3	1.21%
Product recommendations	114	46.15%	20	8.10%	2	0.81%
Accounting	121	48.99%	18	7.29%	3	1.21%
Supply chain operations	119	48.18%	20	8.10%	3	1.21%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	89	36.03%	63	25.51%	12	4.86%
Application and screening management	95	38.46%	49	19.84%	11	4.45%
Audience segmentation	116	46.96%	16	6.48%	1	0.40%
Process improvement	86	34.82%	50	20.24%	9	3.64%
Idea generation	70	28.34%	63	25.51%	25	10.12%
Process automation	89	36.03%	39	15.79%	12	4.86%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	96	38.87%	37	14.98%	13	5.26%

# Section Seven: Industry Reports\*

\* The industries listed below represent less than 10 respondents, therefore no industry report is provided.

Administrative and Support and Waste Management  
and Remediation Services  
Management of Companies & Enterprises  
Mining

# **Accommodation & Food Services**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Accommodation & Food Services

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	13	100.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	0	0.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	4	30.77%
100 to 249	4	30.77%
250 to 499	1	7.69%
500 to 999	3	23.08%
1,000 or more	1	7.69%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	6	46.15%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	1	7.69%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	6	46.15%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Accommodation & Food Services

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	2	15.4%
Stay the same	5	38.5%
Decline	6	46.2%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	7.7%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	5	38.5%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	2	15.4%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	15.4%
Do not know	3	23.1%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	7.7%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	3	23.1%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	4	30.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	7.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	7.7%
Do not know	3	23.1%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	10	83.33%	10	83.33%
Mild	1	8.33%	0	0.00%
Serious	1	8.33%	2	16.67%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	3	27.27%	3	25.00%
Mild	7	63.64%	6	50.00%
Serious	1	9.09%	3	25.00%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	7	58.33%	7	58.33%
Mild	4	33.33%	3	25.00%
Serious	1	8.33%	2	16.67%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	2	16.67%	1	8.33%
Mild	7	58.33%	5	41.67%
Serious	3	25.00%	6	50.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Accommodation & Food Services

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
Mild	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
Serious	4	33.33%	4	33.33%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	2	16.67%	1	8.33%
Mild	6	50.00%	8	66.67%
Serious	4	33.33%	3	25.00%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	7	58.33%	7	58.33%
Serious	5	41.67%	5	41.67%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	4	36.36%	4	36.36%
Mild	1	9.09%	1	9.09%
Serious	6	54.55%	6	54.55%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
Mild	5	41.67%	4	33.33%
Serious	5	41.67%	6	50.00%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	7	58.33%	7	58.33%
Mild	3	25.00%	1	8.33%
Serious	2	16.67%	4	33.33%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	6	50.00%	4	33.33%
Mild	4	33.33%	6	50.00%
Serious	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
Mild	5	41.67%	5	41.67%
Serious	5	41.67%	5	41.67%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	2	16.67%	1	8.33%
Mild	6	50.00%	7	58.33%
Serious	4	33.33%	4	33.33%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	4	33.33%	4	33.33%
Mild	4	33.33%	4	33.33%
Serious	4	33.33%	4	33.33%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Accommodation & Food Services

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	4	33.33%	4	33.33%
Mild	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
Serious	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	7	58.33%	6	50.00%
Mild	4	33.33%	6	50.00%
Serious	1	8.33%	0	0.00%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	5	41.67%	5	41.67%
Mild	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
Serious	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	12	100.00%	11	91.67%
Mild	0	0.00%	1	8.33%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	2	16.67%	1	8.33%
Mild	4	33.33%	4	33.33%
Serious	6	50.00%	7	58.33%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	4	33.33%	2	16.67%
Mild	5	41.67%	6	50.00%
Serious	3	25.00%	3	25.00%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	3	25.00%	2	16.67%
Mild	7	58.33%	7	58.33%
Serious	2	16.67%	3	25.00%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
Mild	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
Serious	4	33.33%	4	33.33%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
Mild	5	41.67%	5	41.67%
Serious	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	8	66.67%	6	50.00%
Mild	3	25.00%	5	41.67%
Serious	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	8	66.67%	7	58.33%
Mild	2	16.67%	3	25.00%
Serious	2	16.67%	2	16.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Accommodation & Food Services

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	5	41.67%	4	33.33%
Mild	5	41.67%	5	41.67%
Serious	2	16.67%	3	25.00%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	4	33.33%	3	25.00%
Mild	7	58.33%	8	66.67%
Serious	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	5	41.67%	5	41.67%
Mild	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	1	0	0	3
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	1	0	1	4
Customer's ability to afford	2	2	1	11
Talent acquisition	0	0	1	1
Talent retention	0	1	0	2
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	0	1	1
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	1	2	0	7
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	1	0	2
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	0	1	4
Cost of materials	3	0	0	9
Cost of equipment	0	2	0	4
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	0	0	0	0
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	0	0	0
Employee safety	0	1	1	3
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	0	0	0
Inflation	2	1	3	11
Employee engagement	0	2	0	4
Developing future leaders	1	0	1	4
Cybersecurity	0	0	0	0
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	0	0
Political uncertainty	0	0	0	0
Talent skills gap	0	0	1	1
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Accommodation & Food Services

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	1	7.69%
Slightly less than planned	2	15.38%
As planned	4	30.77%
Slightly more than planned	5	38.46%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	7	53.85%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	3	23.08%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	15.38%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	5	38.46%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	7.69%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	6	46.15%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	3	25.00%	2	20.00%
No	9	75.00%	8	80.00%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	7	58.33%	6	60.00%
No	5	41.67%	4	40.00%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	9	75.00%	8	72.73%
No	3	25.00%	3	27.27%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	1	16.67%	0	0.00%
No	5	83.33%	6	100.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	10	83.33%	7	63.64%
No	2	16.67%	4	36.36%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Accommodation & Food Services

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	6	50.00%
None due to this	6	50.00%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	0	0.00%
None due to this	12	100.00%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	8.33%
Some due to this	11	91.67%
None due to this	0	0.00%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	12	100.00%
None due to this	0	0.00%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	6	50.00%
None due to this	6	50.00%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	2	16.67%
None due to this	10	83.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Accommodation & Food Services

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	2	16.67%	3	25.00%	3	25.00%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	8.33%	3	25.00%	2	16.67%
Somewhat satisfied	7	58.33%	4	33.33%	6	50.00%
Very satisfied	2	16.67%	2	16.67%	1	8.33%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	3	23.08%	1	7.69%	2	15.38%
Middle managers	5	38.46%	3	23.08%	3	23.08%
Professional staff (non-managers)	4	30.77%	2	15.38%	3	23.08%
Skilled production workers	3	23.08%	1	7.69%	4	30.77%
Unskilled production workers	3	23.08%	1	7.69%	7	53.85%
Entry-level office workers	3	23.08%	2	15.38%	4	30.77%
Entry-level non-office workers	4	30.77%	2	15.38%	5	38.46%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	3	23.08%	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
Service workers	5	38.46%	3	23.08%	5	38.46%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None	1	7.69%	1	7.69%	1	7.69%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Accommodation & Food Services

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	4	30.77%	8	61.54%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	3	23.08%	9	69.23%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	3	23.08%	6	46.15%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	5	38.46%	8	61.54%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	4	30.77%	0	0.00%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	5	38.46%	0	0.00%
Increasing starting salaries	8	61.54%	3	23.08%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	4	30.77%	4	30.77%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	2	15.38%	0	0.00%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	1	7.69%	2	15.38%
Shortening the hiring process	4	30.77%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	3	23.08%	0	0.00%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	3	23.08%	0	0.00%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	2	15.38%	1	7.69%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	3	23.08%	1	7.69%
Participating in job fairs	5	38.46%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	5	38.46%	1	7.69%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
Using formal candidate tracking system	2	15.38%	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	5	38.46%
Team incentives	2	15.38%
Employee referral bonuses	7	53.85%
Year-end bonuses	8	61.54%
Spot bonuses	1	7.69%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	6	46.15%
Retention bonuses	4	30.77%
Commissions	1	7.69%
Project bonuses	1	7.69%
Profit sharing	1	7.69%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	4	30.77%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Accommodation & Food Services

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	3	23.08%
Language premiums	1	7.69%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	8	61.54%
Resources to do their job effectively	3	23.08%
Mentoring opportunities	1	7.69%
Competitive/robust health benefits	4	30.77%
Opportunities to connect with others	0	0.00%
Driven by the mission of the organization	3	23.08%
Recognition and reward for good performance	2	15.38%
Ongoing training on new technologies	0	0.00%
Competitive pay	10	76.92%
Good work/life balance	9	69.23%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	2	15.38%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	3	23.08%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	1	7.69%
Hybrid work opportunities	0	0.00%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	3	23.08%
Strong organizational culture	3	23.08%
Challenging work	0	0.00%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	5	38.46%
Focus on employee safety	0	0.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	1	8.33%
No change	3	25.00%
More difficult	8	66.67%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Accommodation & Food Services

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	0	0.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	7	87.50%
Lack of technical skills	0	0.00%
Lack of soft skills	2	25.00%
Lack of work experience	5	62.50%
Our organization's geographic location	1	12.50%
Market competition/high demand	1	12.50%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	6	75.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	0	0.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	1	12.50%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	2	25.00%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	3	25.00%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	8.33%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	8	66.67%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	4	33.33%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	8.33%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	7	58.33%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	1	7.69%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	2	15.38%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	1	7.69%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	7.69%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	7	53.85%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Accommodation & Food Services

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	7	53.85%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	3	23.08%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	4	30.77%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	3	23.08%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	0	0.00%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	5	38.46%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	0	0.00%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	2	15.38%
Creating/redefining policies	1	7.69%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	2	15.38%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	5	38.46%
N/A	2	15.38%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	2	16.67%
No	5	41.67%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	5	41.67%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	7	58.33%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	1	8.33%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	4	33.33%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Accommodation & Food Services

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	10	76.92%
Paid lump sum awards	0	0.00%
Paid variable/bonus awards	3	23.08%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	1	7.69%
Uncertain	2	15.38%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	9	69.23%
Paying lump sum awards	0	0.00%
Paying variable/bonus awards	3	23.08%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	7.69%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	7.69%
Uncertain	3	23.08%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	8	61.54%	8	61.54%
Increased standard wages	5	38.46%	8	61.54%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	5	38.46%	6	46.15%
Implemented or increased variable pay	3	23.08%	2	15.38%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Accommodation & Food Services

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	2	15.38%	3	23.08%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	2	15.38%	1	7.69%
Invest in new technology	3	23.08%	3	23.08%
Invest in equipment	7	53.85%	7	53.85%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	1	7.69%	3	23.08%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
Increase training budget	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
Increase total rewards communication/education	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	2	15.38%	2	15.38%
Increase recruiting emphasis	3	23.08%	3	23.08%
Pay above market rates	2	15.38%	2	15.38%
Enhance the benefits package	3	23.08%	2	15.38%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	1	7.69%	2	15.38%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	0	0.00%	1	7.69%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	0	0.00%	1	7.69%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
Reduce training budget	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Limiting employee travel	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
Hiring freezes	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	2	15.38%	0	0.00%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Freezing compensation increases	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
Outsourcing roles or functions	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Accommodation & Food Services

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	4	30.77%	1	7.69%
Increasing presence on social media	3	23.08%	0	0.00%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	2	15.38%	0	0.00%
Partnering with brand influencers	0	0.00%	1	7.69%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	3	23.08%	2	15.38%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	2	15.38%	1	7.69%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 13

Report Cut: Accommodation & Food Services

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	9	69.23%	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
Website content production	6	46.15%	3	23.08%	1	7.69%
Marketing content production	5	38.46%	2	15.38%	2	15.38%
Other content production	7	53.85%	1	7.69%	2	15.38%
Digital personal assistant	8	61.54%	0	0.00%	1	7.69%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	7	53.85%	2	15.38%	0	0.00%
Customer relationship management	9	69.23%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Inventory management	8	61.54%	1	7.69%	0	0.00%
Product recommendations	9	69.23%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Accounting	8	61.54%	0	0.00%	1	7.69%
Supply chain operations	9	69.23%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	9	69.23%	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
Application and screening management	8	61.54%	2	15.38%	0	0.00%
Audience segmentation	9	69.23%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	8	61.54%	1	7.69%	1	7.69%
Idea generation	5	38.46%	1	7.69%	4	30.77%
Process automation	9	69.23%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	9	69.23%	1	7.69%	0	0.00%

# **Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	12	100.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	0	0.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	5	41.67%
100 to 249	3	25.00%
250 to 499	3	25.00%
500 to 999	0	0.00%
1,000 or more	1	8.33%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	10	83.33%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	0	0.00%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	2	16.67%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	5	41.7%
Stay the same	4	33.3%
Decline	3	25.0%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	4	33.3%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	2	16.7%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	33.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	2	16.7%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	8.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	6	50.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	3	25.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	2	16.7%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	8	66.67%	6	50.00%
Mild	3	25.00%	3	25.00%
Serious	1	8.33%	3	25.00%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	2	16.67%	1	8.33%
Mild	7	58.33%	8	66.67%
Serious	3	25.00%	3	25.00%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	9	75.00%	9	75.00%
Mild	3	25.00%	3	25.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	5	41.67%	3	25.00%
Mild	7	58.33%	9	75.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	5	41.67%	5	41.67%
Mild	5	41.67%	4	33.33%
Serious	2	16.67%	3	25.00%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	3	25.00%	1	8.33%
Mild	3	25.00%	5	41.67%
Serious	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	1	9.09%	0	0.00%
Mild	8	72.73%	9	75.00%
Serious	2	18.18%	3	25.00%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	4	33.33%	3	27.27%
Mild	7	58.33%	3	27.27%
Serious	1	8.33%	5	45.45%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Mild	9	75.00%	7	58.33%
Serious	2	16.67%	4	33.33%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	6	50.00%	5	41.67%
Mild	6	50.00%	5	41.67%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	16.67%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	8	66.67%	7	63.64%
Mild	3	25.00%	4	36.36%
Serious	1	8.33%	0	0.00%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	3	25.00%	2	16.67%
Mild	6	50.00%	7	58.33%
Serious	3	25.00%	3	25.00%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
Mild	6	50.00%	5	41.67%
Serious	4	33.33%	5	41.67%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	5	45.45%	5	45.45%
Mild	4	36.36%	4	36.36%
Serious	2	18.18%	2	18.18%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	4	33.33%	4	33.33%
Mild	5	41.67%	5	41.67%
Serious	3	25.00%	3	25.00%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	5	41.67%	4	33.33%
Mild	5	41.67%	6	50.00%
Serious	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	4	33.33%	4	33.33%
Mild	7	58.33%	7	58.33%
Serious	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	10	83.33%	9	75.00%
Mild	2	16.67%	3	25.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	1	8.33%
Mild	10	83.33%	10	83.33%
Serious	2	16.67%	1	8.33%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	4	33.33%	4	33.33%
Mild	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
Serious	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	4	33.33%	3	25.00%
Mild	4	33.33%	5	41.67%
Serious	4	33.33%	4	33.33%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Mild	5	41.67%	5	41.67%
Serious	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
Mild	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	8	66.67%	5	41.67%
Mild	3	25.00%	6	50.00%
Serious	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	4	33.33%	4	33.33%
Mild	4	33.33%	3	25.00%
Serious	4	33.33%	5	41.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Mild	9	75.00%	7	58.33%
Serious	2	16.67%	4	33.33%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
Mild	9	75.00%	10	83.33%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	5	41.67%	5	41.67%
Mild	3	25.00%	3	25.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	1	0	2
Competition in general	0	1	0	2
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	0	1	0	2
Customer's ability to afford	1	0	0	3
Talent acquisition	2	0	1	7
Talent retention	1	1	3	8
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	0	0	0
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	0	3	3	9
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	0	0	3
Ability to maintain quality product/service	2	1	0	8
Cost of materials	1	0	2	5
Cost of equipment	0	1	0	2
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	1	0	5
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	0	1	1
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	0	0	0
Inflation	2	0	0	6
Employee engagement	1	0	0	3
Developing future leaders	0	1	0	2
Cybersecurity	0	0	0	0
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	0	0
Political uncertainty	0	1	1	3
Talent skills gap	0	0	0	0
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	1	8.33%
Slightly less than planned	2	16.67%
As planned	6	50.00%
Slightly more than planned	3	25.00%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	5	41.67%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	6	50.00%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	8.33%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	3	25.00%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	8.33%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	8	66.67%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	3	25.00%	2	16.67%
No	9	75.00%	10	83.33%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	8	66.67%	7	58.33%
No	4	33.33%	5	41.67%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	10	83.33%	7	58.33%
No	2	16.67%	5	41.67%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	2	50.00%	2	50.00%
No	2	50.00%	2	50.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	11	100.00%	10	90.91%
No	0	0.00%	1	9.09%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	8	66.67%
None due to this	4	33.33%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	2	16.67%
None due to this	10	83.33%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	12	100.00%
None due to this	0	0.00%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	10	90.91%
None due to this	1	9.09%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	11	91.67%
None due to this	1	8.33%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	0	0.00%
None due to this	11	100.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	1	8.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	3	25.00%	3	25.00%	3	25.00%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	8.33%	1	8.33%	3	25.00%
Somewhat satisfied	7	58.33%	6	50.00%	4	33.33%
Very satisfied	0	0.00%	2	16.67%	2	16.67%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	6	50.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Middle managers	5	41.67%	1	8.33%	0	0.00%
Professional staff (non-managers)	4	33.33%	1	8.33%	4	33.33%
Skilled production workers	8	66.67%	0	0.00%	6	50.00%
Unskilled production workers	6	50.00%	1	8.33%	4	33.33%
Entry-level office workers	4	33.33%	1	8.33%	3	25.00%
Entry-level non-office workers	7	58.33%	1	8.33%	2	16.67%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	7	58.33%	0	0.00%	1	8.33%
Service workers	5	41.67%	0	0.00%	4	33.33%
Other	2	16.67%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None	2	16.67%	1	8.33%	1	8.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	5	41.67%	6	50.00%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	3	25.00%	6	50.00%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	4	33.33%	8	66.67%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	10	83.33%	9	75.00%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	6	50.00%	2	16.67%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	3	25.00%	0	0.00%
Increasing starting salaries	9	75.00%	4	33.33%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	3	25.00%	4	33.33%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	3	25.00%	3	25.00%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	3	25.00%	1	8.33%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	3	25.00%	5	41.67%
Shortening the hiring process	4	33.33%	1	8.33%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	3	25.00%	0	0.00%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	2	16.67%	4	33.33%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	1	8.33%	2	16.67%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	6	50.00%	0	0.00%
Participating in job fairs	5	41.67%	1	8.33%
Building/increasing brand awareness	4	33.33%	3	25.00%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	0	0.00%	1	8.33%
Using formal candidate tracking system	4	33.33%	1	8.33%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	2	16.67%
Team incentives	0	0.00%
Employee referral bonuses	7	58.33%
Year-end bonuses	5	41.67%
Spot bonuses	1	8.33%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	3	25.00%
Retention bonuses	1	8.33%
Commissions	2	16.67%
Project bonuses	2	16.67%
Profit sharing	1	8.33%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	2	16.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	1	8.33%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	9	75.00%
Resources to do their job effectively	4	33.33%
Mentoring opportunities	1	8.33%
Competitive/robust health benefits	2	16.67%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	8.33%
Driven by the mission of the organization	4	33.33%
Recognition and reward for good performance	5	41.67%
Ongoing training on new technologies	2	16.67%
Competitive pay	10	83.33%
Good work/life balance	7	58.33%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	1	8.33%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	4	33.33%
Current technology	1	8.33%
Remote work opportunities	0	0.00%
Hybrid work opportunities	0	0.00%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	1	8.33%
Regular full-time hours	1	8.33%
Strong organizational culture	4	33.33%
Challenging work	1	8.33%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	2	16.67%
Focus on employee safety	0	0.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	2	16.67%
No change	3	25.00%
More difficult	7	58.33%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	0	0.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	4	57.14%
Lack of technical skills	3	42.86%
Lack of soft skills	2	28.57%
Lack of work experience	2	28.57%
Our organization's geographic location	3	42.86%
Market competition/high demand	1	14.29%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	3	42.86%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	0	0.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	0	0.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	1	14.29%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	5	45.45%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	36.36%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	2	18.18%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	4	36.36%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	27.27%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	3	27.27%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	2	18.18%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	1	8.33%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	6	50.00%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	0	0.00%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	8.33%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	4	33.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	6	50.00%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	3	25.00%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	5	41.67%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	2	16.67%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	0	0.00%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	4	33.33%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	1	8.33%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	1	8.33%
Creating/redefining policies	1	8.33%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	0	0.00%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	1	8.33%
N/A	0	0.00%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	1	8.33%
No	8	66.67%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	3	25.00%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	8	66.67%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	2	16.67%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	2	16.67%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	11	91.67%
Paid lump sum awards	1	8.33%
Paid variable/bonus awards	4	33.33%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	9	75.00%
Paying lump sum awards	0	0.00%
Paying variable/bonus awards	4	33.33%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	1	8.33%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	9	75.00%	7	58.33%
Increased standard wages	6	50.00%	3	25.00%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	8	66.67%	8	66.67%
Implemented or increased variable pay	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Temporarily bumped pay	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	1	8.33%	1	8.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	1	8.33%
Invest in new technology	5	41.67%	4	33.33%
Invest in equipment	4	33.33%	5	41.67%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	1	8.33%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	1	8.33%	3	25.00%
Increase training budget	1	8.33%	3	25.00%
Increase total rewards communication/education	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Increase recruiting emphasis	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
Pay above market rates	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
Enhance the benefits package	1	8.33%	3	25.00%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	3	25.00%	4	33.33%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	0	0.00%	2	16.67%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	1	8.33%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	1	8.33%	2	16.67%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	1	8.33%	3	25.00%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	1	8.33%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	1	8.33%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce training budget	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Limiting employee travel	0	0.00%	1	8.33%
Hiring freezes	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Implementing furloughs	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	2	16.67%	1	8.33%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	2	16.67%	1	8.33%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	0	0.00%	1	8.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
Increasing presence on social media	2	16.67%	0	0.00%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	2	16.67%	2	16.67%
Partnering with brand influencers	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	0	0.00%	1	8.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 12

Report Cut: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	6	50.00%	3	25.00%	0	0.00%
Website content production	5	41.67%	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Marketing content production	6	50.00%	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
Other content production	7	58.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Digital personal assistant	7	58.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	6	50.00%	2	16.67%	0	0.00%
Customer relationship management	5	41.67%	2	16.67%	0	0.00%
Inventory management	5	41.67%	2	16.67%	0	0.00%
Product recommendations	6	50.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Accounting	5	41.67%	2	16.67%	0	0.00%
Supply chain operations	5	41.67%	1	8.33%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	6	50.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Application and screening management	6	50.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Audience segmentation	5	41.67%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	5	41.67%	1	8.33%	0	0.00%
Idea generation	4	33.33%	2	16.67%	1	8.33%
Process automation	5	41.67%	1	8.33%	0	0.00%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	5	41.67%	2	16.67%	0	0.00%

# **Arts, Entertainment & Recreation**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 27

Report Cut: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	27	100.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	0	0.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	14	51.85%
100 to 249	9	33.33%
250 to 499	2	7.41%
500 to 999	2	7.41%
1,000 or more	0	0.00%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	5	18.52%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	1	3.70%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	19	70.37%
Public Sector/Government	2	7.41%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 27

Report Cut: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	8	29.6%
Stay the same	16	59.3%
Decline	3	11.1%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	7.4%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	13	48.1%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	3	11.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	5	18.5%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	11.1%
Do not know	1	3.7%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	7.4%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	16	59.3%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	7	25.9%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	3.7%
Do not know	1	3.7%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	27	100.00%	27	100.00%
Mild	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	8	29.63%	7	25.93%
Mild	14	51.85%	15	55.56%
Serious	5	18.52%	5	18.52%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	18	72.00%	15	60.00%
Mild	5	20.00%	5	20.00%
Serious	2	8.00%	5	20.00%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	9	34.62%	8	30.77%
Mild	11	42.31%	13	50.00%
Serious	6	23.08%	5	19.23%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 27

Report Cut: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	5	18.52%	3	11.11%
Mild	15	55.56%	14	51.85%
Serious	7	25.93%	10	37.04%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	3	11.54%	3	11.54%
Mild	11	42.31%	11	42.31%
Serious	12	46.15%	12	46.15%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	4	14.81%	3	11.11%
Mild	12	44.44%	11	40.74%
Serious	11	40.74%	13	48.15%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	6	22.22%	4	14.81%
Mild	13	48.15%	10	37.04%
Serious	8	29.63%	13	48.15%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	2	7.41%	2	7.41%
Mild	10	37.04%	8	29.63%
Serious	15	55.56%	17	62.96%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	8	29.63%	9	33.33%
Mild	13	48.15%	12	44.44%
Serious	6	22.22%	6	22.22%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	12	44.44%	11	40.74%
Mild	14	51.85%	13	48.15%
Serious	1	3.70%	3	11.11%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	4	16.00%	2	8.00%
Mild	17	68.00%	14	56.00%
Serious	4	16.00%	9	36.00%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	4	16.00%	3	12.50%
Mild	14	56.00%	11	45.83%
Serious	7	28.00%	10	41.67%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	10	41.67%	10	40.00%
Mild	10	41.67%	10	40.00%
Serious	4	16.67%	5	20.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 27

Report Cut: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	11	40.74%	10	38.46%
Mild	16	59.26%	14	53.85%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	7.69%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	5	20.00%	5	19.23%
Mild	13	52.00%	15	57.69%
Serious	7	28.00%	6	23.08%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	6	23.08%	7	26.92%
Mild	18	69.23%	16	61.54%
Serious	2	7.69%	3	11.54%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	22	84.62%	21	80.77%
Mild	3	11.54%	4	15.38%
Serious	1	3.85%	1	3.85%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	4	15.38%	5	19.23%
Mild	15	57.69%	13	50.00%
Serious	7	26.92%	8	30.77%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	4	15.38%	4	15.38%
Mild	14	53.85%	16	61.54%
Serious	8	30.77%	6	23.08%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	3	11.54%	2	7.69%
Mild	14	53.85%	14	53.85%
Serious	10	38.46%	10	38.46%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	2	7.69%	2	7.69%
Mild	13	50.00%	11	42.31%
Serious	11	42.31%	13	50.00%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	8	30.77%	7	26.92%
Mild	13	50.00%	15	57.69%
Serious	4	15.38%	3	11.54%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	9	34.62%	5	19.23%
Mild	13	50.00%	18	69.23%
Serious	3	11.54%	2	7.69%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	7	26.92%	6	23.08%
Mild	11	42.31%	13	50.00%
Serious	8	30.77%	5	19.23%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 27

Report Cut: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	7	26.92%	6	23.08%
Mild	15	57.69%	17	65.38%
Serious	4	15.38%	3	11.54%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	7	26.92%	6	23.08%
Mild	16	61.54%	14	53.85%
Serious	2	7.69%	5	19.23%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	12	46.15%	12	46.15%
Mild	5	19.23%	3	11.54%
Serious	1	3.85%	3	11.54%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	3	2	1	14
Product obsolescence	1	0	1	4
Changing customer preferences	0	2	4	8
Customer's ability to afford	4	4	2	22
Talent acquisition	2	2	1	11
Talent retention	3	2	3	16
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	0	0	3
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	4	5	1	23
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	1	2	4
Ability to maintain quality product/service	0	3	0	6
Cost of materials	4	0	1	13
Cost of equipment	0	0	1	1
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	0	1	0	2
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	1	1	0	5
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	0	0	0
Inflation	0	0	0	0
Employee engagement	1	1	1	6
Developing future leaders	0	0	2	2
Cybersecurity	0	0	2	2
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	1	1	3
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	0	0
Political uncertainty	1	1	1	6
Talent skills gap	0	1	1	3
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	2	0	1	7

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 27

Report Cut: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	1	3.70%
Slightly less than planned	5	18.52%
As planned	12	44.44%
Slightly more than planned	7	25.93%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	2	7.41%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	12	44.44%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	13	48.15%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	7.41%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	12	44.44%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	3.70%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	14	51.85%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	10	38.46%	2	8.00%
No	16	61.54%	23	92.00%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	21	80.77%	8	30.77%
No	5	19.23%	18	69.23%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	21	77.78%	16	61.54%
No	6	22.22%	10	38.46%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	3	23.08%	3	21.43%
No	10	76.92%	11	78.57%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	14	63.64%	15	65.22%
No	8	36.36%	8	34.78%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 27

Report Cut: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	1	3.70%
Some due to this	17	62.96%
None due to this	9	33.33%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	0	0.00%
None due to this	26	100.00%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	7.69%
Some due to this	23	88.46%
None due to this	1	3.85%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	18	69.23%
None due to this	8	30.77%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	4.00%
Some due to this	13	52.00%
None due to this	11	44.00%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	2	7.69%
None due to this	24	92.31%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 27

Report Cut: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

<b>11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?</b>	<b>Recruit</b>		<b>Onboard</b>		<b>Retain</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	2	7.41%	1	3.70%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	3	11.11%	4	14.81%	5	18.52%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	7.41%	3	11.11%	2	7.41%
Somewhat satisfied	14	51.85%	14	51.85%	14	51.85%
Very satisfied	6	22.22%	5	18.52%	6	22.22%

<b>12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?</b>	<b>Recruitment</b>		<b>Onboarding</b>		<b>Retention</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	5	18.52%	5	18.52%	2	7.41%
Middle managers	7	25.93%	7	25.93%	3	11.11%
Professional staff (non-managers)	9	33.33%	6	22.22%	5	18.52%
Skilled production workers	8	29.63%	6	22.22%	2	7.41%
Unskilled production workers	6	22.22%	5	18.52%	4	14.81%
Entry-level office workers	10	37.04%	1	3.70%	4	14.81%
Entry-level non-office workers	6	22.22%	4	14.81%	5	18.52%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	3	11.11%	2	7.41%	1	3.70%
Service workers	6	22.22%	4	14.81%	10	37.04%
Other	0	0.00%	1	3.70%	4	14.81%
None	1	3.70%	3	11.11%	2	7.41%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 27

Report Cut: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	9	33.33%	10	37.04%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	3	11.11%	13	48.15%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	5	18.52%	16	59.26%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	11	40.74%	18	66.67%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	10	37.04%	1	3.70%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	13	48.15%	1	3.70%
Increasing starting salaries	20	74.07%	8	29.63%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	6	22.22%	7	25.93%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	1	3.70%	1	3.70%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	6	22.22%	1	3.70%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	3	11.11%	8	29.63%
Shortening the hiring process	8	29.63%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	7	25.93%	2	7.41%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	10	37.04%	4	14.81%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	3	11.11%	2	7.41%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	4	14.81%	0	0.00%
Participating in job fairs	11	40.74%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	13	48.15%	8	29.63%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	1	3.70%	1	3.70%
Using formal candidate tracking system	9	33.33%	3	11.11%
Other	1	3.70%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	6	22.22%
Team incentives	0	0.00%
Employee referral bonuses	10	37.04%
Year-end bonuses	11	40.74%
Spot bonuses	7	25.93%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	3	11.11%
Retention bonuses	2	7.41%
Commissions	3	11.11%
Project bonuses	3	11.11%
Profit sharing	0	0.00%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	7	25.93%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 27

Report Cut: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	7	25.93%
Language premiums	2	7.41%
Other*	1	3.70%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	19	70.37%
Resources to do their job effectively	3	11.11%
Mentoring opportunities	1	3.70%
Competitive/robust health benefits	8	29.63%
Opportunities to connect with others	2	7.41%
Driven by the mission of the organization	3	11.11%
Recognition and reward for good performance	8	29.63%
Ongoing training on new technologies	1	3.70%
Competitive pay	24	88.89%
Good work/life balance	20	74.07%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	6	22.22%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	12	44.44%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	1	3.70%
Hybrid work opportunities	1	3.70%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	1	3.70%
Regular full-time hours	3	11.11%
Strong organizational culture	7	25.93%
Challenging work	1	3.70%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	8	29.63%
Focus on employee safety	0	0.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	1	3.70%
No change	10	37.04%
More difficult	16	59.26%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 27

Report Cut: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	3	18.75%
Lack of qualified candidates	14	87.50%
Lack of technical skills	2	12.50%
Lack of soft skills	3	18.75%
Lack of work experience	4	25.00%
Our organization's geographic location	6	37.50%
Market competition/high demand	8	50.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	11	68.75%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	1	6.25%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	1	6.25%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	2	12.50%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	3	18.75%
Other *	1	6.25%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	9	34.62%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	3.85%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	16	61.54%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	6	23.08%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	6	23.08%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	3.85%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	3.85%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	12	46.15%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	5	18.52%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	3	11.11%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	18.52%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	14.81%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	11	40.74%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 27

Report Cut: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	14	51.85%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	9	33.33%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	12	44.44%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	7	25.93%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	1	3.70%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	13	48.15%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	0	0.00%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	4	14.81%
Creating/redefining policies	5	18.52%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	2	7.41%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	7	25.93%
N/A	2	7.41%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	2	7.69%
No	17	65.38%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	7	26.92%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	9	33.33%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	6	22.22%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	11	40.74%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	1	3.70%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 27

Report Cut: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	25	92.59%
Paid lump sum awards	4	14.81%
Paid variable/bonus awards	5	18.52%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	2	7.41%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	20	74.07%
Paying lump sum awards	3	11.11%
Paying variable/bonus awards	7	25.93%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	1	3.70%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	3.70%
Uncertain	6	22.22%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	21	77.78%	14	51.85%
Increased standard wages	18	66.67%	15	55.56%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	15	55.56%	13	48.15%
Implemented or increased variable pay	3	11.11%	2	7.41%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	3.70%	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%	1	3.70%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 27

Report Cut: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	3	11.11%	3	11.11%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	3	11.11%	3	11.11%
Invest in new technology	8	29.63%	11	40.74%
Invest in equipment	7	25.93%	8	29.63%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	3	11.11%	3	11.11%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	2	7.41%	2	7.41%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	1	3.70%	2	7.41%
Increase training budget	6	22.22%	7	25.93%
Increase total rewards communication/education	4	14.81%	5	18.52%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	5	18.52%	6	22.22%
Increase recruiting emphasis	4	14.81%	4	14.81%
Pay above market rates	4	14.81%	4	14.81%
Enhance the benefits package	4	14.81%	6	22.22%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	4	14.81%	5	18.52%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	2	7.41%	2	7.41%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	1	3.70%	1	3.70%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	2	7.41%	5	18.52%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	1	3.70%	2	7.41%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	1	3.70%
Hold off on investing in new technology	4	14.81%	3	11.11%
Hold off on investing in equipment	3	11.11%	2	7.41%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	2	7.41%	0	0.00%
Reduce training budget	2	7.41%	0	0.00%
Limiting employee travel	4	14.81%	3	11.11%
Hiring freezes	4	14.81%	1	3.70%
Implementing furloughs	1	3.70%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	0	0.00%	1	3.70%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	2	7.41%	3	11.11%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	1	3.70%
Outsourcing roles or functions	1	3.70%	3	11.11%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 27

Report Cut: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	2	7.41%	1	3.70%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	13	48.15%	2	7.41%
Increasing presence on social media	21	77.78%	3	11.11%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	4	14.81%	1	3.70%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	11	40.74%	2	7.41%
Partnering with brand influencers	3	11.11%	1	3.70%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	10	37.04%	5	18.52%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	12	44.44%	5	18.52%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	12	44.44%	4	14.81%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 27

Report Cut: Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	12	44.44%	5	18.52%	3	11.11%
Website content production	8	29.63%	7	25.93%	3	11.11%
Marketing content production	7	25.93%	8	29.63%	2	7.41%
Other content production	7	25.93%	8	29.63%	1	3.70%
Digital personal assistant	8	29.63%	3	11.11%	2	7.41%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	11	40.74%	2	7.41%	1	3.70%
Customer relationship management	8	29.63%	9	33.33%	0	0.00%
Inventory management	7	25.93%	6	22.22%	0	0.00%
Product recommendations	10	37.04%	4	14.81%	0	0.00%
Accounting	10	37.04%	1	3.70%	2	7.41%
Supply chain operations	10	37.04%	1	3.70%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	9	33.33%	5	18.52%	0	0.00%
Application and screening management	11	40.74%	1	3.70%	0	0.00%
Audience segmentation	9	33.33%	3	11.11%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	6	22.22%	9	33.33%	2	7.41%
Idea generation	4	14.81%	8	29.63%	5	18.52%
Process automation	5	18.52%	8	29.63%	0	0.00%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	8	29.63%	2	7.41%	1	3.70%

# **Construction**



# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 37

Report Cut: Construction

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	37	100.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	0	0.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	19	51.35%
100 to 249	10	27.03%
250 to 499	3	8.11%
500 to 999	2	5.41%
1,000 or more	3	8.11%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	36	97.30%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	0	0.00%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	1	2.70%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 37

Report Cut: Construction

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	10	27.0%
Stay the same	20	54.1%
Decline	7	18.9%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	5	13.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	21	56.8%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	7	18.9%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	2.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	2.7%
Do not know	2	5.4%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	4	10.8%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	22	59.5%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	5	13.5%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	8.1%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	2.7%
Do not know	2	5.4%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	32	94.12%	30	88.24%
Mild	1	2.94%	3	8.82%
Serious	1	2.94%	1	2.94%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	4	10.81%	3	8.11%
Mild	22	59.46%	22	59.46%
Serious	11	29.73%	12	32.43%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	28	75.68%	26	70.27%
Mild	7	18.92%	8	21.62%
Serious	2	5.41%	3	8.11%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	15	40.54%	13	35.14%
Mild	16	43.24%	18	48.65%
Serious	6	16.22%	6	16.22%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 37

Report Cut: Construction

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	11	29.73%	10	27.03%
Mild	17	45.95%	17	45.95%
Serious	9	24.32%	10	27.03%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	2	5.41%	0	0.00%
Mild	14	37.84%	13	35.14%
Serious	21	56.76%	24	64.86%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	3	8.11%	3	8.11%
Mild	16	43.24%	16	43.24%
Serious	18	48.65%	18	48.65%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	7	18.92%	7	18.92%
Mild	23	62.16%	19	51.35%
Serious	7	18.92%	11	29.73%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	6	16.67%	6	16.67%
Mild	19	52.78%	17	47.22%
Serious	11	30.56%	13	36.11%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	20	54.05%	19	51.35%
Mild	14	37.84%	15	40.54%
Serious	3	8.11%	3	8.11%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	17	45.95%	14	37.84%
Mild	15	40.54%	15	40.54%
Serious	5	13.51%	8	21.62%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	4	10.81%	3	8.11%
Mild	20	54.05%	17	45.95%
Serious	13	35.14%	17	45.95%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	5	13.51%	2	5.41%
Mild	18	48.65%	18	48.65%
Serious	14	37.84%	17	45.95%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	3	8.33%	3	8.33%
Mild	19	52.78%	17	47.22%
Serious	14	38.89%	16	44.44%

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4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	11	30.56%	9	24.32%
Mild	15	41.67%	18	48.65%
Serious	10	27.78%	10	27.03%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	6	16.22%	4	10.81%
Mild	20	54.05%	22	59.46%
Serious	11	29.73%	11	29.73%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	5	13.51%	5	13.89%
Mild	13	35.14%	13	35.14%
Serious	19	51.35%	18	48.65%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	27	72.97%	26	70.27%
Mild	8	21.62%	9	24.32%
Serious	2	5.41%	2	5.41%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	2	5.41%	3	8.11%
Mild	22	59.46%	16	43.24%
Serious	13	35.14%	18	48.65%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	3	8.11%	4	10.81%
Mild	21	56.76%	18	48.65%
Serious	13	35.14%	15	40.54%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	2	5.41%	2	5.41%
Mild	19	51.35%	16	43.24%
Serious	15	40.54%	18	48.65%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	3	8.11%	3	8.11%
Mild	20	54.05%	17	45.95%
Serious	11	29.73%	15	40.54%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	19	51.35%	16	43.24%
Mild	16	43.24%	18	48.65%
Serious	1	2.70%	2	5.41%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	15	40.54%	13	35.14%
Mild	21	56.76%	20	54.05%
Serious	1	2.70%	4	10.81%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	5	13.51%	5	13.51%
Mild	18	48.65%	21	56.76%
Serious	14	37.84%	11	29.73%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 37

Report Cut: Construction

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	1	2.70%	2	5.41%
Mild	19	51.35%	13	35.14%
Serious	17	45.95%	22	59.46%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	5	13.51%	4	10.81%
Mild	24	64.86%	26	70.27%
Serious	8	21.62%	7	18.92%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	15	40.54%	15	40.54%
Mild	6	16.22%	6	16.22%
Serious	1	2.70%	1	2.70%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	3	2	2	15
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	1	1	1	6
Customer's ability to afford	5	1	3	20
Talent acquisition	11	6	2	47
Talent retention	5	5	4	29
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	1	2	4
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	1	1	5	10
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	1	0	2
Ability to maintain quality product/service	0	0	2	2
Cost of materials	0	7	3	17
Cost of equipment	1	2	2	9
Taxes	0	1	0	2
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	0	1	4
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	1	0	1	4
Employee safety	3	2	0	13
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	0	0	0
Inflation	1	1	1	6
Employee engagement	0	1	3	5
Developing future leaders	2	2	0	10
Cybersecurity	0	2	1	5
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	1	1
Political uncertainty	1	0	1	4
Talent skills gap	1	1	2	7
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

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6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	1	2.70%
Slightly less than planned	7	18.92%
As planned	19	51.35%
Slightly more than planned	8	21.62%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	2	5.41%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	25	67.57%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	7	18.92%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	5	13.51%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	24	64.86%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	12	32.43%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	2.70%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	7	20.59%	3	9.68%
No	27	79.41%	28	90.32%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	30	81.08%	23	63.89%
No	7	18.92%	13	36.11%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	29	78.38%	28	77.78%
No	8	21.62%	8	22.22%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	10	55.56%	9	52.94%
No	8	44.44%	8	47.06%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	29	90.63%	25	80.65%
No	3	9.38%	6	19.35%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	3	8.11%
Some due to this	27	72.97%
None due to this	7	18.92%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	3	8.11%
None due to this	34	91.89%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	5.41%
Some due to this	34	91.89%
None due to this	1	2.70%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	2.70%
Some due to this	28	75.68%
None due to this	8	21.62%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	2.70%
Some due to this	18	48.65%
None due to this	18	48.65%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	1	2.70%
None due to this	36	97.30%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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Report Cut: Construction

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	3	8.11%	0	0.00%	1	2.70%
Somewhat dissatisfied	6	16.22%	7	18.92%	7	18.92%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	10.81%	5	13.51%	4	10.81%
Somewhat satisfied	21	56.76%	19	51.35%	19	51.35%
Very satisfied	3	8.11%	6	16.22%	6	16.22%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	15	40.54%	4	10.81%	5	13.51%
Middle managers	19	51.35%	4	10.81%	7	18.92%
Professional staff (non-managers)	16	43.24%	3	8.11%	7	18.92%
Skilled production workers	24	64.86%	7	18.92%	17	45.95%
Unskilled production workers	10	27.03%	9	24.32%	11	29.73%
Entry-level office workers	9	24.32%	3	8.11%	5	13.51%
Entry-level non-office workers	6	16.22%	2	5.41%	7	18.92%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	10	27.03%	2	5.41%	5	13.51%
Service workers	4	10.81%	2	5.41%	5	13.51%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None	1	2.70%	3	8.11%	2	5.41%



## 2025 National Business Trends

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13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	16	43.24%	18	48.65%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	7	18.92%	20	54.05%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	6	16.22%	23	62.16%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	23	62.16%	27	72.97%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	10	27.03%	1	2.70%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	17	45.95%	4	10.81%
Increasing starting salaries	28	75.68%	10	27.03%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	12	32.43%	15	40.54%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	0	0.00%	1	2.70%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	13	35.14%	4	10.81%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	5	13.51%	7	18.92%
Shortening the hiring process	14	37.84%	4	10.81%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	5	13.51%	2	5.41%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	13	35.14%	7	18.92%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	4	10.81%	6	16.22%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	12	32.43%	0	0.00%
Participating in job fairs	22	59.46%	2	5.41%
Building/increasing brand awareness	20	54.05%	13	35.14%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	6	16.22%	5	13.51%
Using formal candidate tracking system	13	35.14%	1	2.70%
Other	1	2.70%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	12	32.43%
Team incentives	9	24.32%
Employee referral bonuses	24	64.86%
Year-end bonuses	20	54.05%
Spot bonuses	6	16.22%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	7	18.92%
Retention bonuses	4	10.81%
Commissions	10	27.03%
Project bonuses	7	18.92%
Profit sharing	12	32.43%
Hazard bonuses/pay	2	5.41%
Additional PTO	6	16.22%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 37

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14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	9	24.32%
Language premiums	1	2.70%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	17	45.95%
Resources to do their job effectively	7	18.92%
Mentoring opportunities	4	10.81%
Competitive/robust health benefits	12	32.43%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	2.70%
Driven by the mission of the organization	4	10.81%
Recognition and reward for good performance	11	29.73%
Ongoing training on new technologies	3	8.11%
Competitive pay	34	91.89%
Good work/life balance	27	72.97%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	7	18.92%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	15	40.54%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	1	2.70%
Hybrid work opportunities	4	10.81%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	3	8.11%
Regular full-time hours	4	10.81%
Strong organizational culture	9	24.32%
Challenging work	2	5.41%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	11	29.73%
Focus on employee safety	1	2.70%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	0	0.00%
No change	13	35.14%
More difficult	24	64.86%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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Report Cut: Construction

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	2	8.33%
Lack of qualified candidates	20	83.33%
Lack of technical skills	13	54.17%
Lack of soft skills	8	33.33%
Lack of work experience	9	37.50%
Our organization's geographic location	5	20.83%
Market competition/high demand	15	62.50%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	12	50.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	3	12.50%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	4	16.67%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	7	29.17%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	14	37.84%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	6	16.22%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	17	45.95%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	7	18.92%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	12	32.43%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	18	48.65%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	1	2.70%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	6	16.22%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	1	2.70%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	7	18.92%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	2.70%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	19	51.35%

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21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	18	48.65%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	13	35.14%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	14	37.84%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	7	18.92%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	4	10.81%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	12	32.43%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	5	13.51%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	2	5.41%
Creating/redefining policies	8	21.62%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	3	8.11%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	11	29.73%
N/A	7	18.92%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	3	8.33%
No	29	80.56%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	4	11.11%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	14	38.89%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	1	2.78%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	16	44.44%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	5	13.89%

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24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	34	91.89%
Paid lump sum awards	3	8.11%
Paid variable/bonus awards	14	37.84%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	2	5.41%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	1	2.70%
Uncertain	2	5.41%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	32	86.49%
Paying lump sum awards	3	8.11%
Paying variable/bonus awards	16	43.24%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	2.70%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	3	8.11%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	27	72.97%	20	54.05%
Increased standard wages	18	48.65%	17	45.95%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	19	51.35%	21	56.76%
Implemented or increased variable pay	4	10.81%	5	13.51%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	4	10.81%	3	8.11%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	3	8.11%	7	18.92%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	4	10.81%	7	18.92%
Invest in new technology	16	43.24%	20	54.05%
Invest in equipment	15	40.54%	16	43.24%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	2	5.41%	4	10.81%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	6	16.22%	4	10.81%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	7	18.92%	5	13.51%
Increase training budget	7	18.92%	11	29.73%
Increase total rewards communication/education	7	18.92%	11	29.73%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	8	21.62%	8	21.62%
Increase recruiting emphasis	15	40.54%	14	37.84%
Pay above market rates	10	27.03%	11	29.73%
Enhance the benefits package	11	29.73%	10	27.03%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	7	18.92%	10	27.03%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	5	13.51%	9	24.32%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	1	2.70%	0	0.00%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	2	5.41%	3	8.11%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	0	0.00%	4	10.81%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	0	0.00%	1	2.70%
Hold off on investing in equipment	1	2.70%	2	5.41%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	1	2.70%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	3	8.11%	2	5.41%
Reduce training budget	1	2.70%	1	2.70%
Limiting employee travel	1	2.70%	0	0.00%
Hiring freezes	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Implementing furloughs	1	2.70%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	5	13.51%	1	2.70%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	2	5.41%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	2	5.41%	3	8.11%
Freezing compensation increases	2	5.41%	1	2.70%
Outsourcing roles or functions	1	2.70%	2	5.41%

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29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	3	8.11%	2	5.41%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	12	32.43%	3	8.11%
Increasing presence on social media	21	56.76%	9	24.32%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	2	5.41%	0	0.00%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	8	21.62%	5	13.51%
Partnering with brand influencers	2	5.41%	1	2.70%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	12	32.43%	7	18.92%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	15	40.54%	7	18.92%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	7	18.92%	6	16.22%

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30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	16	43.24%	5	13.51%	0	0.00%
Website content production	16	43.24%	5	13.51%	1	2.70%
Marketing content production	14	37.84%	7	18.92%	2	5.41%
Other content production	14	37.84%	4	10.81%	1	2.70%
Digital personal assistant	17	45.95%	5	13.51%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	15	40.54%	7	18.92%	1	2.70%
Customer relationship management	16	43.24%	5	13.51%	0	0.00%
Inventory management	18	48.65%	3	8.11%	0	0.00%
Product recommendations	19	51.35%	1	2.70%	0	0.00%
Accounting	16	43.24%	6	16.22%	1	2.70%
Supply chain operations	18	48.65%	2	5.41%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	10	27.03%	13	35.14%	2	5.41%
Application and screening management	15	40.54%	8	21.62%	0	0.00%
Audience segmentation	18	48.65%	2	5.41%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	11	29.73%	13	35.14%	2	5.41%
Idea generation	7	18.92%	13	35.14%	2	5.41%
Process automation	14	37.84%	8	21.62%	4	10.81%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	15	40.54%	5	13.51%	0	0.00%



# **Durable Goods Manufacturing**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 295

Report Cut: Durable Goods Manufacturing

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	295	100.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	0	0.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	127	43.05%
100 to 249	98	33.22%
250 to 499	39	13.22%
500 to 999	19	6.44%
1,000 or more	12	4.07%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	265	89.83%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	27	9.15%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	3	1.02%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 295

Report Cut: Durable Goods Manufacturing

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	74	25.1%
Stay the same	139	47.1%
Decline	82	27.8%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	26	8.8%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	101	34.2%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	51	17.3%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	78	26.4%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	36	12.2%
Do not know	3	1.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	40	13.6%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	148	50.2%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	60	20.3%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	28	9.5%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	9	3.1%
Do not know	10	3.4%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	131	46.45%	100	35.84%
Mild	122	43.26%	127	45.52%
Serious	29	10.28%	52	18.64%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	41	14.44%	30	10.68%
Mild	183	64.44%	182	64.77%
Serious	60	21.13%	69	24.56%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	182	65.00%	153	55.43%
Mild	91	32.50%	103	37.32%
Serious	7	2.50%	20	7.25%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	102	36.30%	86	30.94%
Mild	149	53.02%	151	54.32%
Serious	30	10.68%	41	14.75%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 295

Report Cut: Durable Goods Manufacturing

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	73	25.89%	71	25.45%
Mild	146	51.77%	150	53.76%
Serious	63	22.34%	58	20.79%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	41	14.19%	25	8.71%
Mild	124	42.91%	124	43.21%
Serious	124	42.91%	138	48.08%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	49	17.01%	33	11.54%
Mild	145	50.35%	149	52.10%
Serious	94	32.64%	104	36.36%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	74	26.06%	60	21.51%
Mild	139	48.94%	130	46.59%
Serious	71	25.00%	89	31.90%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	53	18.73%	50	17.79%
Mild	154	54.42%	144	51.25%
Serious	76	26.86%	87	30.96%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	165	58.72%	150	54.15%
Mild	92	32.74%	104	37.55%
Serious	24	8.54%	23	8.30%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	151	53.17%	140	49.65%
Mild	113	39.79%	119	42.20%
Serious	20	7.04%	23	8.16%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	17	5.96%	14	4.98%
Mild	170	59.65%	157	55.87%
Serious	98	34.39%	110	39.15%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	36	12.86%	28	10.11%
Mild	172	61.43%	158	57.04%
Serious	72	25.71%	91	32.85%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	70	25.09%	62	22.38%
Mild	145	51.97%	140	50.54%
Serious	64	22.94%	75	27.08%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 295

Report Cut: Durable Goods Manufacturing

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	79	28.32%	71	25.82%
Mild	136	48.75%	128	46.55%
Serious	64	22.94%	76	27.64%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	85	30.36%	72	25.99%
Mild	158	56.43%	156	56.32%
Serious	37	13.21%	49	17.69%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	114	40.43%	110	39.43%
Mild	103	36.52%	105	37.91%
Serious	65	23.05%	64	23.10%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	202	71.38%	188	67.14%
Mild	68	24.03%	77	27.50%
Serious	13	4.59%	15	5.36%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	18	6.36%	18	6.43%
Mild	141	49.82%	147	52.50%
Serious	126	44.52%	117	41.79%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	55	19.43%	49	17.50%
Mild	171	60.42%	159	56.79%
Serious	57	20.14%	67	23.93%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	39	13.78%	27	9.64%
Mild	155	54.77%	143	51.07%
Serious	88	31.10%	109	38.93%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	19	6.71%	17	6.07%
Mild	137	48.41%	117	41.79%
Serious	126	44.52%	144	51.43%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	149	52.65%	142	50.71%
Mild	117	41.34%	122	43.57%
Serious	12	4.24%	14	5.00%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	117	41.34%	92	32.86%
Mild	140	49.47%	141	50.36%
Serious	21	7.42%	43	15.36%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	47	16.61%	49	17.50%
Mild	136	48.06%	144	51.43%
Serious	97	34.28%	82	29.29%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 295

Report Cut: Durable Goods Manufacturing

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	41	14.49%	32	11.43%
Mild	158	55.83%	146	52.14%
Serious	84	29.68%	102	36.43%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	66	23.32%	62	22.14%
Mild	169	59.72%	166	59.29%
Serious	30	10.60%	32	11.43%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	124	43.82%	124	44.29%
Mild	55	19.43%	53	18.93%
Serious	6	2.12%	6	2.14%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	15	5	5	60
Competition in general	39	19	15	170
Product obsolescence	6	4	7	33
Changing customer preferences	18	14	10	92
Customer's ability to afford	19	14	18	103
Talent acquisition	49	46	16	255
Talent retention	13	28	21	116
Ability to pay for benefits costs	5	13	13	54
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	14	19	26	106
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	2	5	12
Ability to maintain quality product/service	5	8	8	39
Cost of materials	31	41	25	200
Cost of equipment	4	10	13	45
Taxes	3	5	4	23
Cost of regulatory compliance	7	7	8	43
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	3	5	5	24
Employee safety	6	2	4	26
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	3	5
Inflation	14	9	13	73
Employee engagement	0	5	14	24
Developing future leaders	9	7	19	60
Cybersecurity	3	7	10	33
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	1	2	2	9
Political uncertainty	11	6	7	52
Talent skills gap	9	9	15	60
Unknown challenges	3	2	2	15
Other	3	1	2	13

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 295

Report Cut: Durable Goods Manufacturing

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	30	10.17%
Slightly less than planned	85	28.81%
As planned	129	43.73%
Slightly more than planned	47	15.93%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	4	1.36%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	122	41.36%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	136	46.10%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	37	12.54%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	135	45.76%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	14	4.75%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	133	45.08%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	12	4.07%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	85	30.69%	45	16.61%
No	192	69.31%	226	83.39%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	198	68.28%	149	53.02%
No	92	31.72%	132	46.98%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	207	71.38%	172	60.78%
No	83	28.62%	111	39.22%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	37	35.92%	31	31.63%
No	66	64.08%	67	68.37%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	244	86.52%	226	81.59%
No	38	13.48%	51	18.41%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 295

Report Cut: Durable Goods Manufacturing

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	5	1.72%
Some due to this	174	60.00%
None due to this	111	38.28%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	2	0.70%
Some due to this	32	11.27%
None due to this	250	88.03%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	13	4.47%
Some due to this	251	86.25%
None due to this	27	9.28%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	6	2.07%
Some due to this	225	77.59%
None due to this	59	20.34%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	9	3.11%
Some due to this	213	73.70%
None due to this	67	23.18%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	2	0.70%
Some due to this	33	11.54%
None due to this	251	87.76%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 295

Report Cut: Durable Goods Manufacturing

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	13	4.44%	4	1.37%	9	3.07%
Somewhat dissatisfied	67	22.87%	49	16.78%	55	18.77%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	51	17.41%	61	20.89%	56	19.11%
Somewhat satisfied	131	44.71%	126	43.15%	126	43.00%
Very satisfied	31	10.58%	52	17.81%	47	16.04%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	92	31.19%	20	6.78%	20	6.78%
Middle managers	97	32.88%	42	14.24%	37	12.54%
Professional staff (non-managers)	127	43.05%	39	13.22%	63	21.36%
Skilled production workers	200	67.80%	55	18.64%	125	42.37%
Unskilled production workers	87	29.49%	48	16.27%	106	35.93%
Entry-level office workers	40	13.56%	26	8.81%	43	14.58%
Entry-level non-office workers	46	15.59%	26	8.81%	45	15.25%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	64	21.69%	18	6.10%	29	9.83%
Service workers	27	9.15%	11	3.73%	20	6.78%
Other	7	2.37%	8	2.71%	5	1.69%
None	11	3.73%	22	7.46%	17	5.76%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 295

Report Cut: Durable Goods Manufacturing

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	149	50.51%	145	49.15%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	70	23.73%	151	51.19%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	80	27.12%	179	60.68%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	132	44.75%	186	63.05%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	96	32.54%	22	7.46%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	122	41.36%	32	10.85%
Increasing starting salaries	183	62.03%	69	23.39%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	67	22.71%	73	24.75%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	20	6.78%	13	4.41%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	71	24.07%	38	12.88%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	31	10.51%	59	20.00%
Shortening the hiring process	70	23.73%	9	3.05%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	51	17.29%	13	4.41%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	100	33.90%	61	20.68%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	35	11.86%	57	19.32%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	159	53.90%	21	7.12%
Participating in job fairs	119	40.34%	19	6.44%
Building/increasing brand awareness	95	32.20%	58	19.66%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	36	12.20%	22	7.46%
Using formal candidate tracking system	98	33.22%	22	7.46%
Other	4	1.36%	3	1.02%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	83	28.14%
Team incentives	44	14.92%
Employee referral bonuses	190	64.41%
Year-end bonuses	126	42.71%
Spot bonuses	58	19.66%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	105	35.59%
Retention bonuses	35	11.86%
Commissions	50	16.95%
Project bonuses	14	4.75%
Profit sharing	85	28.81%
Hazard bonuses/pay	4	1.36%
Additional PTO	86	29.15%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 295

Report Cut: Durable Goods Manufacturing

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	56	18.98%
Language premiums	2	0.68%
Other*	7	2.37%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	159	53.90%
Resources to do their job effectively	35	11.86%
Mentoring opportunities	10	3.39%
Competitive/robust health benefits	106	35.93%
Opportunities to connect with others	9	3.05%
Driven by the mission of the organization	20	6.78%
Recognition and reward for good performance	90	30.51%
Ongoing training on new technologies	21	7.12%
Competitive pay	245	83.05%
Good work/life balance	226	76.61%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	27	9.15%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	119	40.34%
Current technology	3	1.02%
Remote work opportunities	28	9.49%
Hybrid work opportunities	54	18.31%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	5	1.69%
Regular full-time hours	33	11.19%
Strong organizational culture	70	23.73%
Challenging work	21	7.12%
Diverse workforce	1	0.34%
Vacation/paid time off	123	41.69%
Focus on employee safety	8	2.71%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	18	6.12%
No change	126	42.86%
More difficult	150	51.02%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 295

Report Cut: Durable Goods Manufacturing

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	8	5.33%
Lack of qualified candidates	133	88.67%
Lack of technical skills	102	68.00%
Lack of soft skills	40	26.67%
Lack of work experience	65	43.33%
Our organization's geographic location	26	17.33%
Market competition/high demand	64	42.67%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	82	54.67%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	16	10.67%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	10	6.67%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	34	22.67%
Other *	5	3.33%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	137	46.92%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	51	17.47%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	5	1.71%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	0.34%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	98	33.56%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	85	29.11%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	83	28.42%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	22	7.53%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	0.34%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	102	34.93%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	17	5.76%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	59	20.00%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	35	11.86%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	1.02%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	44	14.92%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	25	8.47%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	108	36.61%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 295

Report Cut: Durable Goods Manufacturing

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	143	48.47%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	61	20.68%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	114	38.64%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	45	15.25%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	12	4.07%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	109	36.95%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	18	6.10%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	19	6.44%
Creating/redefining policies	32	10.85%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	20	6.78%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	51	17.29%
N/A	44	14.92%
Other *	5	1.69%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	57	19.45%
No	198	67.58%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	38	12.97%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	141	48.12%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	21	7.17%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	113	38.57%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	18	6.14%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 295

Report Cut: Durable Goods Manufacturing

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	270	91.53%
Paid lump sum awards	22	7.46%
Paid variable/bonus awards	86	29.15%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	6	2.03%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	9	3.05%
Reduced wages/salaries	4	1.36%
Reduced hours worked	14	4.75%
Uncertain	11	3.73%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	242	82.03%
Paying lump sum awards	20	6.78%
Paying variable/bonus awards	89	30.17%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	7	2.37%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	10	3.39%
Reducing wages/salaries	1	0.34%
Reducing hours worked	5	1.69%
Uncertain	45	15.25%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	195	66.10%	124	42.03%
Increased standard wages	152	51.53%	103	34.92%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	154	52.20%	137	46.44%
Implemented or increased variable pay	21	7.12%	27	9.15%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	0.34%	0	0.00%
Other	5	1.69%	5	1.69%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	33	11.19%	29	9.83%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 295

Report Cut: Durable Goods Manufacturing

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	53	17.97%	39	13.22%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	34	11.53%	47	15.93%
Invest in new technology	123	41.69%	152	51.53%
Invest in equipment	152	51.53%	167	56.61%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	23	7.80%	23	7.80%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	25	8.47%	30	10.17%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	31	10.51%	48	16.27%
Increase training budget	48	16.27%	75	25.42%
Increase total rewards communication/education	32	10.85%	60	20.34%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	70	23.73%	66	22.37%
Increase recruiting emphasis	67	22.71%	71	24.07%
Pay above market rates	27	9.15%	29	9.83%
Enhance the benefits package	38	12.88%	71	24.07%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	56	18.98%	68	23.05%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	49	16.61%	66	22.37%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	29	9.83%	26	8.81%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	2	0.68%	6	2.03%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	13	4.41%	12	4.07%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	18	6.10%	35	11.86%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	23	7.80%	62	21.02%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	4	1.36%	5	1.69%
Hold off on investing in new technology	16	5.42%	18	6.10%
Hold off on investing in equipment	24	8.14%	19	6.44%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	0.34%	11	3.73%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	15	5.08%	27	9.15%
Reduce training budget	6	2.03%	8	2.71%
Limiting employee travel	48	16.27%	36	12.20%
Hiring freezes	42	14.24%	23	7.80%
Implementing furloughs	12	4.07%	1	0.34%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	43	14.58%	10	3.39%
Reduce benefits package	3	1.02%	4	1.36%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	6	2.03%	7	2.37%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	3	1.02%	8	2.71%
Freezing compensation increases	9	3.05%	9	3.05%
Outsourcing roles or functions	7	2.37%	10	3.39%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 295

Report Cut: Durable Goods Manufacturing

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	23	7.80%	19	6.44%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	94	31.86%	32	10.85%
Increasing presence on social media	164	55.59%	61	20.68%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	20	6.78%	6	2.03%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	61	20.68%	37	12.54%
Partnering with brand influencers	28	9.49%	14	4.75%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	64	21.69%	32	10.85%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	117	39.66%	43	14.58%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	67	22.71%	33	11.19%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 295

Report Cut: Durable Goods Manufacturing

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	135	45.76%	56	18.98%	5	1.69%
Website content production	112	37.97%	69	23.39%	15	5.08%
Marketing content production	103	34.92%	79	26.78%	20	6.78%
Other content production	116	39.32%	52	17.63%	13	4.41%
Digital personal assistant	133	45.08%	31	10.51%	7	2.37%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	113	38.31%	50	16.95%	15	5.08%
Customer relationship management	135	45.76%	36	12.20%	8	2.71%
Inventory management	124	42.03%	42	14.24%	4	1.36%
Product recommendations	136	46.10%	23	7.80%	2	0.68%
Accounting	137	46.44%	24	8.14%	4	1.36%
Supply chain operations	137	46.44%	29	9.83%	6	2.03%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	102	34.58%	71	24.07%	17	5.76%
Application and screening management	112	37.97%	52	17.63%	12	4.07%
Audience segmentation	141	47.80%	15	5.08%	1	0.34%
Process improvement	108	36.61%	65	22.03%	6	2.03%
Idea generation	97	32.88%	76	25.76%	19	6.44%
Process automation	98	33.22%	67	22.71%	11	3.73%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	121	41.02%	35	11.86%	10	3.39%

# **Education Services**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Education Services

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	29	100.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	0	0.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	13	44.83%
100 to 249	8	27.59%
250 to 499	5	17.24%
500 to 999	1	3.45%
1,000 or more	2	6.90%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	3	10.34%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	0	0.00%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	22	75.86%
Public Sector/Government	4	13.79%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Education Services

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	15	51.7%
Stay the same	10	34.5%
Decline	4	13.8%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	13	44.8%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	6	20.7%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	7	24.1%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	6.9%
Do not know	1	3.4%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	3.4%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	17	58.6%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	4	13.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	13.8%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	6.9%
Do not know	1	3.4%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	25	96.15%	24	92.31%
Mild	1	3.85%	1	3.85%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	3.85%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	8	28.57%	7	25.00%
Mild	13	46.43%	15	53.57%
Serious	7	25.00%	6	21.43%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	22	78.57%	21	75.00%
Mild	5	17.86%	6	21.43%
Serious	1	3.57%	1	3.57%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	7	25.93%	6	22.22%
Mild	16	59.26%	16	59.26%
Serious	4	14.81%	5	18.52%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Education Services

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	5	17.86%	5	17.86%
Mild	8	28.57%	8	28.57%
Serious	15	53.57%	15	53.57%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	5	17.24%	5	17.24%
Mild	12	41.38%	11	37.93%
Serious	12	41.38%	13	44.83%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	5	17.86%	5	17.86%
Mild	13	46.43%	11	39.29%
Serious	10	35.71%	12	42.86%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	3	10.34%	3	10.34%
Mild	16	55.17%	14	48.28%
Serious	10	34.48%	12	41.38%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	16	55.17%	14	48.28%
Serious	13	44.83%	15	51.72%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	11	37.93%	11	37.93%
Mild	12	41.38%	10	34.48%
Serious	6	20.69%	8	27.59%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	13	46.43%	12	42.86%
Mild	10	35.71%	12	42.86%
Serious	5	17.86%	4	14.29%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	10	37.04%	10	37.04%
Mild	12	44.44%	11	40.74%
Serious	5	18.52%	6	22.22%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	14	51.85%	12	44.44%
Mild	10	37.04%	12	44.44%
Serious	3	11.11%	3	11.11%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	20	76.92%	20	76.92%
Mild	6	23.08%	6	23.08%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Education Services

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	12	44.44%	11	40.74%
Mild	13	48.15%	11	40.74%
Serious	2	7.41%	5	18.52%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	8	28.57%	8	29.63%
Mild	14	50.00%	13	48.15%
Serious	6	21.43%	6	22.22%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	15	51.72%	14	51.85%
Mild	8	27.59%	7	25.93%
Serious	6	20.69%	6	22.22%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	21	75.00%	19	70.37%
Mild	6	21.43%	7	25.93%
Serious	1	3.57%	1	3.70%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	4	14.29%	4	14.81%
Mild	15	53.57%	15	55.56%
Serious	9	32.14%	8	29.63%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	8	28.57%	7	25.93%
Mild	15	53.57%	16	59.26%
Serious	6	21.43%	5	18.52%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	7	25.00%	6	22.22%
Mild	12	42.86%	11	40.74%
Serious	10	35.71%	11	40.74%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	7	25.00%	7	25.93%
Mild	9	32.14%	8	29.63%
Serious	13	46.43%	13	48.15%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	11	39.29%	11	40.74%
Mild	9	32.14%	8	29.63%
Serious	9	32.14%	9	33.33%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	11	39.29%	8	29.63%
Mild	12	42.86%	14	51.85%
Serious	5	17.86%	6	22.22%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	5	17.86%	5	18.52%
Mild	15	53.57%	15	55.56%
Serious	8	28.57%	7	25.93%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Education Services

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	8	28.57%	9	33.33%
Mild	12	42.86%	10	37.04%
Serious	8	28.57%	9	33.33%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	5	17.86%	5	18.52%
Mild	16	57.14%	16	59.26%
Serious	6	21.43%	5	18.52%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	16	57.14%	15	55.56%
Mild	3	10.71%	4	14.81%
Serious	1	3.57%	1	3.70%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	5	2	0	19
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	0	4	4	12
Customer's ability to afford	6	1	2	22
Talent acquisition	8	1	3	29
Talent retention	1	5	0	13
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	6	3	15
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	4	6	4	28
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	2	2
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	0	1	4
Cost of materials	1	0	0	3
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	0	0	1	1
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	0	0	0
Employee safety	0	0	2	2
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	0	0	0
Inflation	0	0	0	0
Employee engagement	0	0	1	1
Developing future leaders	0	0	1	1
Cybersecurity	0	0	2	2
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	2	0	4
Political uncertainty	2	0	1	7
Talent skills gap	0	1	0	2
Unknown challenges	1	1	2	7
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Education Services

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	2	6.90%
Slightly less than planned	5	17.24%
As planned	14	48.28%
Slightly more than planned	7	24.14%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	1	3.45%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	10	34.48%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	13	44.83%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	6	20.69%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	14	48.28%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	13	44.83%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	6.90%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	9	31.03%	10	35.71%
No	20	68.97%	18	64.29%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	19	67.86%	13	48.15%
No	9	32.14%	14	51.85%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	21	72.41%	18	64.29%
No	8	27.59%	10	35.71%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	3	33.33%	3	33.33%
No	6	66.67%	6	66.67%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	5	29.41%	6	35.29%
No	12	70.59%	11	64.71%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Education Services

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	1	3.45%
Some due to this	18	62.07%
None due to this	10	34.48%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	0	0.00%
None due to this	29	100.00%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	3	10.34%
Some due to this	21	72.41%
None due to this	5	17.24%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	3.45%
Some due to this	15	51.72%
None due to this	13	44.83%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	14	48.28%
None due to this	15	51.72%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	2	7.14%
None due to this	26	92.86%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Education Services

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	2	7.41%	1	3.57%	1	3.57%
Somewhat dissatisfied	4	14.81%	1	3.57%	8	28.57%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	14.81%	6	21.43%	4	14.29%
Somewhat satisfied	12	44.44%	14	50.00%	7	25.00%
Very satisfied	5	18.52%	6	21.43%	8	28.57%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	11	37.93%	6	20.69%	2	6.90%
Middle managers	10	34.48%	6	20.69%	5	17.24%
Professional staff (non-managers)	17	58.62%	6	20.69%	13	44.83%
Skilled production workers	6	20.69%	0	0.00%	2	6.90%
Unskilled production workers	4	13.79%	0	0.00%	2	6.90%
Entry-level office workers	10	34.48%	1	3.45%	4	13.79%
Entry-level non-office workers	8	27.59%	2	6.90%	3	10.34%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	7	24.14%	3	10.34%	5	17.24%
Service workers	5	17.24%	1	3.45%	4	13.79%
Other	2	6.90%	1	3.45%	0	0.00%
None	3	10.34%	3	10.34%	3	10.34%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Education Services

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	13	44.83%	10	34.48%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	11	37.93%	16	55.17%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	8	27.59%	18	62.07%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	15	51.72%	19	65.52%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	15	51.72%	2	6.90%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	17	58.62%	3	10.34%
Increasing starting salaries	17	58.62%	9	31.03%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	8	27.59%	7	24.14%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	4	13.79%	3	10.34%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	5	17.24%	6	20.69%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	5	17.24%	9	31.03%
Shortening the hiring process	10	34.48%	3	10.34%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	12	41.38%	5	17.24%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	10	34.48%	10	34.48%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	5	17.24%	6	20.69%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	5	17.24%	1	3.45%
Participating in job fairs	8	27.59%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	12	41.38%	8	27.59%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	5	17.24%	4	13.79%
Using formal candidate tracking system	10	34.48%	3	10.34%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	6	20.69%
Team incentives	1	3.45%
Employee referral bonuses	10	34.48%
Year-end bonuses	8	27.59%
Spot bonuses	5	17.24%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	8	27.59%
Retention bonuses	4	13.79%
Commissions	1	3.45%
Project bonuses	2	6.90%
Profit sharing	3	10.34%
Hazard bonuses/pay	1	3.45%
Additional PTO	5	17.24%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Education Services

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	7	24.14%
Language premiums	4	13.79%
Other*	1	3.45%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	14	48.28%
Resources to do their job effectively	5	17.24%
Mentoring opportunities	0	0.00%
Competitive/robust health benefits	15	51.72%
Opportunities to connect with others	2	6.90%
Driven by the mission of the organization	11	37.93%
Recognition and reward for good performance	4	13.79%
Ongoing training on new technologies	2	6.90%
Competitive pay	25	86.21%
Good work/life balance	21	72.41%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	4	13.79%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	8	27.59%
Current technology	1	3.45%
Remote work opportunities	5	17.24%
Hybrid work opportunities	5	17.24%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	2	6.90%
Regular full-time hours	2	6.90%
Strong organizational culture	9	31.03%
Challenging work	2	6.90%
Diverse workforce	1	3.45%
Vacation/paid time off	5	17.24%
Focus on employee safety	0	0.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	2	6.90%
No change	10	34.48%
More difficult	17	58.62%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Education Services

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	2	11.76%
Lack of qualified candidates	13	76.47%
Lack of technical skills	2	11.76%
Lack of soft skills	4	23.53%
Lack of work experience	7	41.18%
Our organization's geographic location	4	23.53%
Market competition/high demand	6	35.29%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	9	52.94%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	2	11.76%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	3	17.65%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	2	11.76%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	2	11.76%
Other *	1	5.88%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	13	44.83%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	8	27.59%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	6.90%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	6.90%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	4	13.79%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	12	41.38%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	8	27.59%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	3.45%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	4	13.79%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	4	13.79%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	2	6.90%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	8	27.59%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	6	20.69%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	7	24.14%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	3.45%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	8	27.59%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Education Services

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	16	55.17%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	7	24.14%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	15	51.72%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	7	24.14%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	2	6.90%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	9	31.03%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	1	3.45%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	7	24.14%
Creating/redefining policies	8	27.59%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	3	10.34%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	10	34.48%
N/A	1	3.45%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	1	3.45%
No	20	68.97%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	8	27.59%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	10	34.48%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	3	10.34%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	15	51.72%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	1	3.45%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Education Services

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	27	93.10%
Paid lump sum awards	1	3.45%
Paid variable/bonus awards	5	17.24%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	3	10.34%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	3.45%
Reduced wages/salaries	1	3.45%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	1	3.45%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	25	86.21%
Paying lump sum awards	2	6.90%
Paying variable/bonus awards	6	20.69%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	2	6.90%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	2	6.90%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	3	10.34%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	16	55.17%	15	51.72%
Increased standard wages	14	48.28%	15	51.72%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	15	51.72%	11	37.93%
Implemented or increased variable pay	2	6.90%	2	6.90%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	3.45%	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	4	13.79%	4	13.79%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Education Services

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	4	13.79%	8	27.59%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	5	17.24%	5	17.24%
Invest in new technology	8	27.59%	11	37.93%
Invest in equipment	5	17.24%	6	20.69%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	3	10.34%	4	13.79%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	2	6.90%	6	20.69%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	2	6.90%	2	6.90%
Increase training budget	7	24.14%	7	24.14%
Increase total rewards communication/education	8	27.59%	8	27.59%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	3	10.34%	2	6.90%
Increase recruiting emphasis	9	31.03%	10	34.48%
Pay above market rates	4	13.79%	3	10.34%
Enhance the benefits package	5	17.24%	8	27.59%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	5	17.24%	5	17.24%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	6	20.69%	5	17.24%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	4	13.79%	5	17.24%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	1	3.45%	1	3.45%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	2	6.90%	1	3.45%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	3	10.34%	4	13.79%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	2	6.90%	10	34.48%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	2	6.90%
Hold off on investing in new technology	2	6.90%	1	3.45%
Hold off on investing in equipment	1	3.45%	1	3.45%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	2	6.90%	1	3.45%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	1	3.45%	3	10.34%
Reduce training budget	0	0.00%	1	3.45%
Limiting employee travel	6	20.69%	5	17.24%
Hiring freezes	3	10.34%	2	6.90%
Implementing furloughs	1	3.45%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	3	10.34%	2	6.90%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	1	3.45%
Freezing compensation increases	1	3.45%	1	3.45%
Outsourcing roles or functions	1	3.45%	2	6.90%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Education Services

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	2	6.90%	3	10.34%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	14	48.28%	1	3.45%
Increasing presence on social media	18	62.07%	5	17.24%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	3	10.34%	0	0.00%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	8	27.59%	3	10.34%
Partnering with brand influencers	1	3.45%	1	3.45%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	5	17.24%	2	6.90%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	14	48.28%	5	17.24%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	6	20.69%	2	6.90%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Education Services

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	15	51.72%	4	13.79%	0	0.00%
Website content production	14	48.28%	4	13.79%	1	3.45%
Marketing content production	11	37.93%	8	27.59%	1	3.45%
Other content production	14	48.28%	3	10.34%	1	3.45%
Digital personal assistant	14	48.28%	3	10.34%	1	3.45%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	12	41.38%	3	10.34%	1	3.45%
Customer relationship management	14	48.28%	2	6.90%	1	3.45%
Inventory management	13	44.83%	3	10.34%	0	0.00%
Product recommendations	15	51.72%	1	3.45%	0	0.00%
Accounting	12	41.38%	4	13.79%	0	0.00%
Supply chain operations	15	51.72%	1	3.45%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	10	34.48%	5	17.24%	3	10.34%
Application and screening management	11	37.93%	5	17.24%	2	6.90%
Audience segmentation	14	48.28%	2	6.90%	1	3.45%
Process improvement	11	37.93%	6	20.69%	1	3.45%
Idea generation	13	44.83%	2	6.90%	2	6.90%
Process automation	11	37.93%	4	13.79%	2	6.90%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	13	44.83%	3	10.34%	1	3.45%

# **Financial & Insurance**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 62

Report Cut: Financial & Insurance

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	62	100.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	0	0.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	32	51.61%
100 to 249	19	30.65%
250 to 499	7	11.29%
500 to 999	3	4.84%
1,000 or more	1	1.61%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	34	54.84%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	5	8.06%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	22	35.48%
Public Sector/Government	1	1.61%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 62

Report Cut: Financial & Insurance

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	23	37.1%
Stay the same	32	51.6%
Decline	7	11.3%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	3	4.8%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	34	54.8%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	10	16.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	6	9.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	6.5%
Do not know	5	8.1%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	4	6.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	36	58.1%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	10	16.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	4.8%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	9	14.5%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	54	91.53%	50	86.21%
Mild	5	8.47%	7	12.07%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	1.72%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	7	11.67%	6	10.17%
Mild	33	55.00%	28	47.46%
Serious	20	33.33%	25	42.37%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	38	64.41%	35	60.34%
Mild	17	28.81%	16	27.59%
Serious	4	6.78%	7	12.07%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	11	18.33%	8	13.56%
Mild	36	60.00%	37	62.71%
Serious	13	21.67%	14	23.73%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 62

Report Cut: Financial & Insurance

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	13	22.03%	14	24.14%
Mild	31	52.54%	32	55.17%
Serious	15	25.42%	12	20.69%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	4	6.67%	5	8.47%
Mild	30	50.00%	25	42.37%
Serious	26	43.33%	29	49.15%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	6	9.84%	7	11.86%
Mild	33	54.10%	29	49.15%
Serious	22	36.07%	23	38.98%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	18	30.00%	15	25.42%
Mild	33	55.00%	29	49.15%
Serious	9	15.00%	15	25.42%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	10	16.95%	10	17.24%
Mild	33	55.93%	30	51.72%
Serious	16	27.12%	18	31.03%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	28	46.67%	27	45.76%
Mild	25	41.67%	25	42.37%
Serious	7	11.67%	7	11.86%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	26	43.33%	24	40.68%
Mild	24	40.00%	23	38.98%
Serious	10	16.67%	12	20.34%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	40	66.67%	41	69.49%
Mild	15	25.00%	12	20.34%
Serious	5	8.33%	6	10.17%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	37	61.67%	35	59.32%
Mild	19	31.67%	19	32.20%
Serious	4	6.67%	5	8.47%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	25	41.67%	26	44.07%
Mild	28	46.67%	25	42.37%
Serious	7	11.67%	8	13.56%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 62

Report Cut: Financial & Insurance

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	14	23.33%	13	22.03%
Mild	34	56.67%	33	55.93%
Serious	12	20.00%	13	22.03%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	8	13.33%	7	12.28%
Mild	35	58.33%	35	61.40%
Serious	17	28.33%	15	26.32%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	36	61.02%	34	57.63%
Mild	18	30.51%	21	36.84%
Serious	5	8.47%	4	7.02%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	34	56.67%	30	50.85%
Mild	23	38.33%	25	42.37%
Serious	3	5.00%	4	6.78%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	6	10.00%	5	8.47%
Mild	38	63.33%	40	67.80%
Serious	16	26.67%	14	23.73%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	9	15.00%	6	10.17%
Mild	40	66.67%	39	66.10%
Serious	11	18.33%	13	22.03%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	9	15.00%	7	11.86%
Mild	27	45.00%	24	40.68%
Serious	21	35.00%	26	44.07%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	4	6.67%	3	5.08%
Mild	13	21.67%	12	20.34%
Serious	43	71.67%	43	72.88%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	26	43.33%	21	35.59%
Mild	33	55.00%	37	62.71%
Serious	2	3.33%	2	3.39%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	15	25.00%	9	15.25%
Mild	32	53.33%	36	61.02%
Serious	13	21.67%	13	22.03%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	14	23.33%	16	27.12%
Mild	32	53.33%	32	54.24%
Serious	12	20.00%	11	18.64%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 62

Report Cut: Financial & Insurance

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	13	21.67%	10	16.95%
Mild	36	60.00%	36	61.02%
Serious	11	18.33%	13	22.03%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	19	31.67%	18	30.51%
Mild	35	58.33%	35	59.32%
Serious	5	8.33%	5	8.47%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	25	41.67%	24	40.68%
Mild	13	21.67%	13	22.03%
Serious	4	6.67%	4	6.78%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	1	1
Competition in general	13	3	4	49
Product obsolescence	1	0	0	3
Changing customer preferences	2	2	1	11
Customer's ability to afford	4	5	2	24
Talent acquisition	6	7	9	41
Talent retention	6	7	3	35
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	0	4	7
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	4	8	3	31
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	2	2
Ability to maintain quality product/service	2	2	0	10
Cost of materials	0	1	0	2
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	2	5	12
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	1	4	3	14
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	2	3	7
Inflation	5	7	1	30
Employee engagement	0	1	3	5
Developing future leaders	2	1	7	15
Cybersecurity	7	4	4	33
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	1	0	3	6
Political uncertainty	2	0	2	8
Talent skills gap	1	2	0	7
Unknown challenges	0	1	0	2
Other	1	1	0	5



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 62

Report Cut: Financial & Insurance

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	2	3.23%
Slightly less than planned	10	16.13%
As planned	32	51.61%
Slightly more than planned	15	24.19%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	2	3.23%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	26	41.94%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	31	50.00%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	4	6.45%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	28	45.16%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	3	4.84%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	29	46.77%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	14	24.14%	10	17.86%
No	44	75.86%	46	82.14%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	39	65.00%	34	59.65%
No	21	35.00%	23	40.35%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	49	81.67%	46	79.31%
No	11	18.33%	12	20.69%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	0	0.00%	1	7.14%
No	15	100.00%	13	92.86%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	2	10.00%	3	15.00%
No	18	90.00%	17	85.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 62

Report Cut: Financial & Insurance

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	3	5.08%
Some due to this	33	55.93%
None due to this	23	38.98%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	14	24.14%
None due to this	44	75.86%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	7	12.07%
Some due to this	45	77.59%
None due to this	6	10.34%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	1.79%
Some due to this	33	58.93%
None due to this	22	39.29%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	3	5.08%
Some due to this	44	74.58%
None due to this	12	20.34%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	2	3.45%
Some due to this	11	18.97%
None due to this	45	77.59%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 62

Report Cut: Financial & Insurance

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	4	6.56%	1	1.64%	1	1.64%
Somewhat dissatisfied	7	11.48%	4	6.56%	6	9.84%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12	19.67%	10	16.39%	10	16.39%
Somewhat satisfied	31	50.82%	28	45.90%	31	50.82%
Very satisfied	7	11.48%	18	29.51%	13	21.31%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	26	41.94%	7	11.29%	5	8.06%
Middle managers	30	48.39%	8	12.90%	7	11.29%
Professional staff (non-managers)	34	54.84%	7	11.29%	23	37.10%
Skilled production workers	4	6.45%	0	0.00%	5	8.06%
Unskilled production workers	3	4.84%	1	1.61%	2	3.23%
Entry-level office workers	25	40.32%	12	19.35%	27	43.55%
Entry-level non-office workers	4	6.45%	5	8.06%	7	11.29%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	10	16.13%	1	1.61%	6	9.68%
Service workers	5	8.06%	3	4.84%	2	3.23%
Other	1	1.61%	2	3.23%	1	1.61%
None	3	4.84%	11	17.74%	7	11.29%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 62

Report Cut: Financial & Insurance

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	22	35.48%	28	45.16%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	14	22.58%	34	54.84%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	16	25.81%	43	69.35%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	24	38.71%	35	56.45%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	23	37.10%	5	8.06%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	33	53.23%	6	9.68%
Increasing starting salaries	33	53.23%	11	17.74%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	18	29.03%	17	27.42%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	11	17.74%	10	16.13%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	6	9.68%	7	11.29%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	7	11.29%	9	14.52%
Shortening the hiring process	19	30.65%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	15	24.19%	8	12.90%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	24	38.71%	20	32.26%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	5	8.06%	8	12.90%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	27	43.55%	3	4.84%
Participating in job fairs	18	29.03%	1	1.61%
Building/increasing brand awareness	26	41.94%	13	20.97%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	8	12.90%	9	14.52%
Using formal candidate tracking system	22	35.48%	3	4.84%
Other	1	1.61%	2	3.23%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	21	33.87%
Team incentives	13	20.97%
Employee referral bonuses	37	59.68%
Year-end bonuses	27	43.55%
Spot bonuses	17	27.42%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	24	38.71%
Retention bonuses	8	12.90%
Commissions	14	22.58%
Project bonuses	3	4.84%
Profit sharing	7	11.29%
Hazard bonuses/pay	1	1.61%
Additional PTO	18	29.03%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 62

Report Cut: Financial & Insurance

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	15	24.19%
Language premiums	2	3.23%
Other*	2	3.23%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	30	48.39%
Resources to do their job effectively	8	12.90%
Mentoring opportunities	2	3.23%
Competitive/robust health benefits	20	32.26%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	1.61%
Driven by the mission of the organization	12	19.35%
Recognition and reward for good performance	14	22.58%
Ongoing training on new technologies	2	3.23%
Competitive pay	47	75.81%
Good work/life balance	46	74.19%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	9	14.52%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	19	30.65%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	15	24.19%
Hybrid work opportunities	23	37.10%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	1	1.61%
Regular full-time hours	3	4.84%
Strong organizational culture	14	22.58%
Challenging work	3	4.84%
Diverse workforce	1	1.61%
Vacation/paid time off	14	22.58%
Focus on employee safety	0	0.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	3	4.92%
No change	27	44.26%
More difficult	31	50.82%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 62

Report Cut: Financial & Insurance

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	1	3.23%
Lack of qualified candidates	26	83.87%
Lack of technical skills	7	22.58%
Lack of soft skills	8	25.81%
Lack of work experience	9	29.03%
Our organization's geographic location	2	6.45%
Market competition/high demand	12	38.71%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	13	41.94%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	1	3.23%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	10	32.26%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	2	6.45%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	11	35.48%
Other *	2	6.45%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	17	27.42%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	25	40.32%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	6	9.68%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	3	4.84%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	11	17.74%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	7	11.29%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	23	37.10%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	18	29.03%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	5	8.06%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	8	12.90%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	9	14.52%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	24	38.71%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	3	4.84%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	8.06%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	19	30.65%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	2	3.23%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	9	14.52%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 62

Report Cut: Financial & Insurance

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	28	45.16%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	14	22.58%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	21	33.87%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	6	9.68%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	8	12.90%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	23	37.10%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	7	11.29%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	8	12.90%
Creating/redefining policies	6	9.68%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	4	6.45%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	10	16.13%
N/A	12	19.35%
Other *	1	1.61%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	16	25.81%
No	31	50.00%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	15	24.19%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	20	32.26%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	6	9.68%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	33	53.23%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	3	4.84%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 62

Report Cut: Financial & Insurance

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	55	88.71%
Paid lump sum awards	3	4.84%
Paid variable/bonus awards	29	46.77%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	4	6.45%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	1.61%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	4	6.45%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	51	82.26%
Paying lump sum awards	5	8.06%
Paying variable/bonus awards	30	48.39%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	2	3.23%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	1	1.61%
Reducing wages/salaries	1	1.61%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	8	12.90%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	27	43.55%	20	32.26%
Increased standard wages	20	32.26%	21	33.87%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	33	53.23%	33	53.23%
Implemented or increased variable pay	8	12.90%	8	12.90%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	1.61%	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%	2	3.23%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	7	11.29%	6	9.68%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 62

Report Cut: Financial & Insurance

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	4	6.45%	3	4.84%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	8	12.90%	5	8.06%
Invest in new technology	30	48.39%	39	62.90%
Invest in equipment	15	24.19%	18	29.03%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	3	4.84%	6	9.68%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	3	4.84%	5	8.06%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	4	6.45%	9	14.52%
Increase training budget	14	22.58%	14	22.58%
Increase total rewards communication/education	5	8.06%	13	20.97%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	22	35.48%	24	38.71%
Increase recruiting emphasis	11	17.74%	15	24.19%
Pay above market rates	1	1.61%	3	4.84%
Enhance the benefits package	7	11.29%	11	17.74%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	13	20.97%	14	22.58%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	9	14.52%	15	24.19%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	7	11.29%	6	9.68%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	4	6.45%	3	4.84%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	5	8.06%	4	6.45%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	9	14.52%	15	24.19%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	6	9.68%	4	6.45%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	1.61%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	1	1.61%	1	1.61%
Hold off on investing in equipment	1	1.61%	1	1.61%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	3	4.84%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	5	8.06%	4	6.45%
Reduce training budget	2	3.23%	0	0.00%
Limiting employee travel	1	1.61%	2	3.23%
Hiring freezes	3	4.84%	2	3.23%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	1	1.61%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	4	6.45%	3	4.84%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	1	1.61%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	2	3.23%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	2	3.23%	5	8.06%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	2	3.23%
Outsourcing roles or functions	3	4.84%	4	6.45%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 62

Report Cut: Financial & Insurance

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	11	17.74%	4	6.45%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	17	27.42%	4	6.45%
Increasing presence on social media	32	51.61%	6	9.68%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	5	8.06%	2	3.23%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	13	20.97%	5	8.06%
Partnering with brand influencers	0	0.00%	3	4.84%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	7	11.29%	4	6.45%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	21	33.87%	5	8.06%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	17	27.42%	6	9.68%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 62

Report Cut: Financial & Insurance

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	23	37.10%	15	24.19%	2	3.23%
Website content production	19	30.65%	15	24.19%	1	1.61%
Marketing content production	18	29.03%	13	20.97%	5	8.06%
Other content production	20	32.26%	10	16.13%	4	6.45%
Digital personal assistant	25	40.32%	7	11.29%	2	3.23%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	23	37.10%	15	24.19%	1	1.61%
Customer relationship management	23	37.10%	12	19.35%	1	1.61%
Inventory management	27	43.55%	2	3.23%	0	0.00%
Product recommendations	27	43.55%	3	4.84%	0	0.00%
Accounting	25	40.32%	6	9.68%	1	1.61%
Supply chain operations	26	41.94%	3	4.84%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	22	35.48%	12	19.35%	1	1.61%
Application and screening management	23	37.10%	9	14.52%	1	1.61%
Audience segmentation	26	41.94%	4	6.45%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	17	27.42%	17	27.42%	3	4.84%
Idea generation	17	27.42%	16	25.81%	4	6.45%
Process automation	16	25.81%	16	25.81%	3	4.84%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	21	33.87%	14	22.58%	3	4.84%

# **Health Care & Social Assistance**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 106

Report Cut: Health Care & Social Assistance

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	106	100.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	0	0.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	53	50.00%
100 to 249	28	26.42%
250 to 499	15	14.15%
500 to 999	7	6.60%
1,000 or more	3	2.83%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	24	22.64%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	1	0.94%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	79	74.53%
Public Sector/Government	2	1.89%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 106

Report Cut: Health Care & Social Assistance

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	31	29.2%
Stay the same	50	47.2%
Decline	25	23.6%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	6	5.7%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	44	41.5%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	30	28.3%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	11	10.4%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	6	5.7%
Do not know	9	8.5%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	3	2.8%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	52	49.1%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	29	27.4%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	10	9.4%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	0.9%
Do not know	11	10.4%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	99	99.00%	97	97.00%
Mild	1	1.00%	3	3.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	30	29.41%	24	23.53%
Mild	53	51.96%	53	51.96%
Serious	19	18.63%	25	24.51%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	88	88.00%	85	85.86%
Mild	10	10.00%	12	12.12%
Serious	2	2.00%	2	2.02%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	46	46.00%	38	38.00%
Mild	46	46.00%	51	51.00%
Serious	8	8.00%	11	11.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 106

Report Cut: Health Care & Social Assistance

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	42	42.00%	37	37.00%
Mild	38	38.00%	40	40.00%
Serious	20	20.00%	23	23.00%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	5	4.76%	7	6.73%
Mild	39	37.14%	31	29.81%
Serious	61	58.10%	66	63.46%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	6	6.00%	7	6.86%
Mild	41	41.00%	34	33.33%
Serious	53	53.00%	61	59.80%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	12	11.43%	10	9.62%
Mild	52	49.52%	46	44.23%
Serious	41	39.05%	48	46.15%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	4	3.81%	3	2.88%
Mild	47	44.76%	42	40.38%
Serious	54	51.43%	59	56.73%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	42	40.38%	40	38.83%
Mild	45	43.27%	44	42.72%
Serious	17	16.35%	19	18.45%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	37	38.14%	37	37.76%
Mild	47	48.45%	42	42.86%
Serious	13	13.40%	19	19.39%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	38	38.38%	34	35.05%
Mild	38	38.38%	33	34.02%
Serious	23	23.23%	30	30.93%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	35	35.71%	32	32.32%
Mild	38	38.78%	37	37.37%
Serious	25	25.51%	30	30.30%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	54	54.00%	51	51.52%
Mild	33	33.00%	35	35.35%
Serious	13	13.00%	13	13.13%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 106

Report Cut: Health Care & Social Assistance

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	29	28.71%	27	26.73%
Mild	52	51.49%	50	49.50%
Serious	20	19.80%	24	23.76%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	16	16.00%	13	13.00%
Mild	60	60.00%	57	57.00%
Serious	24	24.00%	30	30.00%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	37	36.63%	33	32.67%
Mild	46	45.54%	48	48.00%
Serious	18	17.82%	20	20.00%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	53	51.46%	53	51.96%
Mild	41	39.81%	37	36.27%
Serious	9	8.74%	12	11.76%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	14	13.59%	14	13.73%
Mild	49	47.57%	44	43.14%
Serious	38	36.89%	42	41.18%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	13	12.62%	11	10.78%
Mild	51	49.51%	49	48.04%
Serious	39	37.86%	42	41.18%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	12	11.65%	16	15.69%
Mild	53	51.46%	43	42.16%
Serious	35	33.98%	42	41.18%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	5	4.85%	3	2.94%
Mild	47	45.63%	44	43.14%
Serious	50	48.54%	54	52.94%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	29	28.16%	30	29.41%
Mild	54	52.43%	47	46.08%
Serious	19	18.45%	23	22.55%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	37	35.92%	27	26.47%
Mild	49	47.57%	50	49.02%
Serious	15	14.56%	24	23.53%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	23	22.33%	21	20.59%
Mild	43	41.75%	44	43.14%
Serious	36	34.95%	35	34.31%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 106

Report Cut: Health Care & Social Assistance

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	19	18.45%	17	16.67%
Mild	57	55.34%	49	48.04%
Serious	27	26.21%	35	34.31%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	24	23.30%	23	22.55%
Mild	54	52.43%	50	49.02%
Serious	18	17.48%	23	22.55%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	39	37.86%	39	38.24%
Mild	23	22.33%	22	21.57%
Serious	3	2.91%	4	3.92%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	5	1	6	23
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	1	0	3	6
Customer's ability to afford	6	4	2	28
Talent acquisition	29	17	13	134
Talent retention	14	26	8	102
Ability to pay for benefits costs	3	11	7	38
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	20	24	19	127
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	2	2
Ability to maintain quality product/service	4	1	3	17
Cost of materials	4	3	2	20
Cost of equipment	0	1	2	4
Taxes	1	0	1	4
Cost of regulatory compliance	2	0	2	8
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	2	2	2	12
Employee safety	1	0	2	5
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	0	1	1
Inflation	2	3	5	17
Employee engagement	0	2	8	12
Developing future leaders	0	3	4	10
Cybersecurity	2	5	0	16
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	2	2
A.I. technology and platforms	0	1	2	4
Political uncertainty	3	0	4	13
Talent skills gap	4	0	2	14
Unknown challenges	0	0	3	3
Other	2	1	0	8

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 106

Report Cut: Health Care & Social Assistance

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	8	7.55%
Slightly less than planned	22	20.75%
As planned	53	50.00%
Slightly more than planned	19	17.92%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	3	2.83%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	50	47.17%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	49	46.23%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	7	6.60%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	58	54.72%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	44	41.51%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	4	3.77%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	31	31.31%	18	19.35%
No	68	68.69%	75	80.65%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	79	76.70%	61	62.89%
No	24	23.30%	36	37.11%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	86	82.69%	73	74.49%
No	18	17.31%	25	25.51%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	8	20.00%	8	20.51%
No	32	80.00%	31	79.49%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	32	48.48%	28	45.90%
No	34	51.52%	33	54.10%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 106

Report Cut: Health Care & Social Assistance

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	6	5.83%
Some due to this	59	57.28%
None due to this	38	36.89%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	9	8.57%
None due to this	96	91.43%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	14	13.21%
Some due to this	85	80.19%
None due to this	7	6.60%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	7	6.80%
Some due to this	73	70.87%
None due to this	23	22.33%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	3	2.88%
Some due to this	60	57.69%
None due to this	41	39.42%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	16	15.38%
None due to this	88	84.62%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 106

Report Cut: Health Care & Social Assistance

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	4	3.81%	1	0.95%	4	3.81%
Somewhat dissatisfied	35	33.33%	17	16.19%	33	31.43%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	16	15.24%	20	19.05%	16	15.24%
Somewhat satisfied	42	40.00%	49	46.67%	41	39.05%
Very satisfied	8	7.62%	18	17.14%	11	10.48%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	29	27.36%	5	4.72%	7	6.60%
Middle managers	36	33.96%	11	10.38%	21	19.81%
Professional staff (non-managers)	65	61.32%	18	16.98%	47	44.34%
Skilled production workers	11	10.38%	3	2.83%	9	8.49%
Unskilled production workers	10	9.43%	3	2.83%	8	7.55%
Entry-level office workers	26	24.53%	10	9.43%	32	30.19%
Entry-level non-office workers	22	20.75%	9	8.49%	27	25.47%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	18	16.98%	3	2.83%	8	7.55%
Service workers	42	39.62%	20	18.87%	39	36.79%
Other	5	4.72%	0	0.00%	8	7.55%
None	3	2.83%	11	10.38%	8	7.55%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 106

Report Cut: Health Care & Social Assistance

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	59	55.66%	60	56.60%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	19	17.92%	68	64.15%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	23	21.70%	74	69.81%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	56	52.83%	75	70.75%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	42	39.62%	5	4.72%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	67	63.21%	12	11.32%
Increasing starting salaries	73	68.87%	27	25.47%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	39	36.79%	35	33.02%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	17	16.04%	20	18.87%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	28	26.42%	12	11.32%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	17	16.04%	26	24.53%
Shortening the hiring process	49	46.23%	5	4.72%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	43	40.57%	17	16.04%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	53	50.00%	35	33.02%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	18	16.98%	25	23.58%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	39	36.79%	9	8.49%
Participating in job fairs	48	45.28%	3	2.83%
Building/increasing brand awareness	53	50.00%	34	32.08%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	15	14.15%	12	11.32%
Using formal candidate tracking system	41	38.68%	5	4.72%
Other	3	2.83%	3	2.83%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Individual incentives	27	25.47%
Team incentives	8	7.55%
Employee referral bonuses	53	50.00%
Year-end bonuses	24	22.64%
Spot bonuses	21	19.81%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	29	27.36%
Retention bonuses	29	27.36%
Commissions	2	1.89%
Project bonuses	4	3.77%
Profit sharing	7	6.60%
Hazard bonuses/pay	3	2.83%
Additional PTO	21	19.81%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 106

Report Cut: Health Care & Social Assistance

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	20	18.87%
Language premiums	11	10.38%
Other*	3	2.83%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	73	68.87%
Resources to do their job effectively	12	11.32%
Mentoring opportunities	6	5.66%
Competitive/robust health benefits	35	33.02%
Opportunities to connect with others	5	4.72%
Driven by the mission of the organization	39	36.79%
Recognition and reward for good performance	29	27.36%
Ongoing training on new technologies	5	4.72%
Competitive pay	91	85.85%
Good work/life balance	78	73.58%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	15	14.15%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	16	15.09%
Current technology	1	0.94%
Remote work opportunities	15	14.15%
Hybrid work opportunities	15	14.15%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	6	5.66%
Regular full-time hours	9	8.49%
Strong organizational culture	23	21.70%
Challenging work	3	2.83%
Diverse workforce	1	0.94%
Vacation/paid time off	32	30.19%
Focus on employee safety	0	0.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	6	5.66%
No change	30	28.30%
More difficult	70	66.04%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 106

Report Cut: Health Care & Social Assistance

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	8	11.43%
Lack of qualified candidates	54	77.14%
Lack of technical skills	8	11.43%
Lack of soft skills	10	14.29%
Lack of work experience	20	28.57%
Our organization's geographic location	9	12.86%
Market competition/high demand	39	55.71%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	52	74.29%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	5	7.14%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	19	27.14%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	10	14.29%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	29	41.43%
Other *	3	4.29%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	38	35.85%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	28	26.42%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	8	7.55%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	0.94%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	31	29.25%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	29	27.36%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	40	37.74%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	12	11.32%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	5	4.72%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	20	18.87%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	8	7.55%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	33	31.13%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	14	13.21%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	2.83%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	27	25.47%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	7	6.60%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	24	22.64%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 106

Report Cut: Health Care & Social Assistance

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	49	46.23%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	26	24.53%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	58	54.72%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	23	21.70%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	7	6.60%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	41	38.68%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	5	4.72%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	13	12.26%
Creating/redefining policies	19	17.92%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	7	6.60%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	16	15.09%
N/A	10	9.43%
Other *	3	2.83%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	8	7.55%
No	65	61.32%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	33	31.13%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	45	42.45%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	14	13.21%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	44	41.51%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	3	2.83%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 106

Report Cut: Health Care & Social Assistance

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	97	91.51%
Paid lump sum awards	8	7.55%
Paid variable/bonus awards	23	21.70%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	4	3.77%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	5	4.72%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	2	1.89%
Uncertain	3	2.83%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	83	78.30%
Paying lump sum awards	8	7.55%
Paying variable/bonus awards	21	19.81%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	2	1.89%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	4	3.77%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	0.94%
Uncertain	16	15.09%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	72	67.92%	44	41.51%
Increased standard wages	59	55.66%	41	38.68%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	56	52.83%	54	50.94%
Implemented or increased variable pay	10	9.43%	13	12.26%
Temporarily bumped pay	4	3.77%	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	6	5.66%	10	9.43%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 106

Report Cut: Health Care & Social Assistance

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	17	16.04%	16	15.09%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	16	15.09%	15	14.15%
Invest in new technology	44	41.51%	54	50.94%
Invest in equipment	32	30.19%	36	33.96%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	9	8.49%	13	12.26%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	4	3.77%	12	11.32%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	14	13.21%	13	12.26%
Increase training budget	21	19.81%	23	21.70%
Increase total rewards communication/education	15	14.15%	23	21.70%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	24	22.64%	26	24.53%
Increase recruiting emphasis	37	34.91%	37	34.91%
Pay above market rates	17	16.04%	11	10.38%
Enhance the benefits package	16	15.09%	23	21.70%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	18	16.98%	29	27.36%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	24	22.64%	29	27.36%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	13	12.26%	14	13.21%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	2	1.89%	2	1.89%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	6	5.66%	11	10.38%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	9	8.49%	26	24.53%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	6	5.66%	22	20.75%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	0.94%	4	3.77%
Hold off on investing in new technology	8	7.55%	5	4.72%
Hold off on investing in equipment	5	4.72%	4	3.77%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	2	1.89%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	4	3.77%	8	7.55%
Reduce training budget	2	1.89%	6	5.66%
Limiting employee travel	13	12.26%	16	15.09%
Hiring freezes	6	5.66%	5	4.72%
Implementing furloughs	1	0.94%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	7	6.60%	5	4.72%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	2	1.89%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	2	1.89%	4	3.77%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	3	2.83%	5	4.72%
Freezing compensation increases	6	5.66%	5	4.72%
Outsourcing roles or functions	4	3.77%	7	6.60%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 106

Report Cut: Health Care & Social Assistance

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	2	1.89%	4	3.77%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	51	48.11%	14	13.21%
Increasing presence on social media	75	70.75%	21	19.81%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	5	4.72%	3	2.83%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	21	19.81%	8	7.55%
Partnering with brand influencers	4	3.77%	1	0.94%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	17	16.04%	9	8.49%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	43	40.57%	14	13.21%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	10	9.43%	5	4.72%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 106

Report Cut: Health Care & Social Assistance

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	47	44.34%	11	10.38%	1	0.94%
Website content production	40	37.74%	19	17.92%	3	2.83%
Marketing content production	38	35.85%	20	18.87%	8	7.55%
Other content production	39	36.79%	19	17.92%	4	3.77%
Digital personal assistant	48	45.28%	10	9.43%	2	1.89%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	42	39.62%	12	11.32%	5	4.72%
Customer relationship management	47	44.34%	10	9.43%	2	1.89%
Inventory management	47	44.34%	6	5.66%	1	0.94%
Product recommendations	50	47.17%	2	1.89%	3	2.83%
Accounting	47	44.34%	7	6.60%	4	3.77%
Supply chain operations	53	50.00%	2	1.89%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	40	37.74%	19	17.92%	7	6.60%
Application and screening management	40	37.74%	15	14.15%	6	5.66%
Audience segmentation	53	50.00%	1	0.94%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	39	36.79%	14	13.21%	3	2.83%
Idea generation	36	33.96%	20	18.87%	8	7.55%
Process automation	37	34.91%	17	16.04%	4	3.77%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	43	40.57%	10	9.43%	3	2.83%

# **Information**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Information

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	15	100.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	0	0.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	8	53.33%
100 to 249	6	40.00%
250 to 499	1	6.67%
500 to 999	0	0.00%
1,000 or more	0	0.00%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	8	53.33%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	0	0.00%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	3	20.00%
Public Sector/Government	4	26.67%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Information

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	5	33.3%
Stay the same	8	53.3%
Decline	2	13.3%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	7	46.7%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	3	20.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	13.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	13.3%
Do not know	1	6.7%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	13.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	6	40.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	3	20.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	20.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	1	6.7%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	13	86.67%	10	66.67%
Mild	2	13.33%	4	26.67%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	6.67%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	5	33.33%	4	26.67%
Mild	6	40.00%	5	33.33%
Serious	4	26.67%	6	40.00%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	8	53.33%	5	33.33%
Mild	4	26.67%	7	46.67%
Serious	3	20.00%	3	20.00%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	4	26.67%	3	20.00%
Mild	9	60.00%	10	66.67%
Serious	2	13.33%	2	13.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Information

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	8	53.33%	8	53.33%
Mild	6	40.00%	6	40.00%
Serious	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	5	33.33%	3	20.00%
Mild	7	46.67%	9	60.00%
Serious	3	20.00%	3	20.00%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	5	33.33%	4	26.67%
Mild	8	53.33%	8	53.33%
Serious	2	13.33%	3	20.00%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	5	33.33%	3	20.00%
Mild	9	60.00%	9	60.00%
Serious	1	6.67%	3	20.00%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	4	26.67%	1	6.67%
Mild	7	46.67%	9	60.00%
Serious	4	26.67%	5	33.33%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	8	53.33%	7	46.67%
Mild	6	40.00%	7	46.67%
Serious	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	9	60.00%	8	53.33%
Mild	5	33.33%	6	40.00%
Serious	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	6	40.00%	5	35.71%
Mild	9	60.00%	6	42.86%
Serious	0	0.00%	3	21.43%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	9	60.00%	9	60.00%
Mild	6	40.00%	3	20.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	3	20.00%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	7	46.67%	7	46.67%
Mild	7	46.67%	7	46.67%
Serious	1	6.67%	1	6.67%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Information

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	8	53.33%	8	53.33%
Mild	4	26.67%	5	33.33%
Serious	3	20.00%	2	13.33%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	4	26.67%	3	20.00%
Mild	8	53.33%	8	53.33%
Serious	3	20.00%	4	26.67%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	9	60.00%	9	60.00%
Mild	5	33.33%	5	33.33%
Serious	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	7	46.67%	7	46.67%
Mild	6	40.00%	6	40.00%
Serious	2	13.33%	2	13.33%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	2	13.33%	2	13.33%
Mild	8	53.33%	9	60.00%
Serious	5	33.33%	4	26.67%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	4	26.67%	3	20.00%
Mild	6	40.00%	7	46.67%
Serious	5	33.33%	5	33.33%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	3	20.00%	2	13.33%
Mild	10	66.67%	8	53.33%
Serious	2	13.33%	4	26.67%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Mild	6	40.00%	3	20.00%
Serious	7	46.67%	11	73.33%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	5	33.33%	5	33.33%
Mild	6	40.00%	6	40.00%
Serious	4	26.67%	4	26.67%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	2	13.33%	2	13.33%
Mild	10	66.67%	7	46.67%
Serious	3	20.00%	6	40.00%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Mild	6	40.00%	9	60.00%
Serious	8	53.33%	5	33.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Information

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	4	26.67%	5	33.33%
Mild	10	66.67%	7	46.67%
Serious	1	6.67%	3	20.00%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	3	20.00%	3	20.00%
Mild	10	66.67%	9	60.00%
Serious	2	13.33%	3	20.00%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	8	53.33%	8	53.33%
Mild	3	20.00%	2	13.33%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	6.67%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	1	1	0	5
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	0	3	2	8
Customer's ability to afford	1	0	0	3
Talent acquisition	1	2	0	7
Talent retention	2	1	0	8
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	0	1	1
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	0	0	2	2
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	1	0	5
Cost of materials	0	0	0	0
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	0	0	3
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	2	2	0	10
Employee safety	0	0	1	1
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	0	1	1
Inflation	2	2	1	11
Employee engagement	1	1	1	6
Developing future leaders	1	0	0	3
Cybersecurity	1	0	1	4
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	2	0	4
A.I. technology and platforms	1	0	0	3
Political uncertainty	0	0	3	3
Talent skills gap	0	0	1	1
Unknown challenges	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Information

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	2	13.33%
Slightly less than planned	4	26.67%
As planned	6	40.00%
Slightly more than planned	3	20.00%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	5	33.33%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	9	60.00%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	6.67%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	7	46.67%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	8	53.33%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	3	21.43%	3	23.08%
No	11	78.57%	10	76.92%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	9	64.29%	7	50.00%
No	5	35.71%	7	50.00%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	12	85.71%	12	85.71%
No	2	14.29%	2	14.29%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	2	28.57%	2	28.57%
No	5	71.43%	5	71.43%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	2	20.00%	1	11.11%
No	8	80.00%	8	88.89%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Information

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	11	78.57%
None due to this	3	21.43%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	0	0.00%
None due to this	14	100.00%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	7.14%
Some due to this	12	85.71%
None due to this	1	7.14%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	6.67%
Some due to this	9	60.00%
None due to this	5	33.33%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	10	71.43%
None due to this	4	28.57%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	1	7.14%
None due to this	13	92.86%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Information

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	5	33.33%	3	20.00%	2	13.33%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	13.33%	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
Somewhat satisfied	4	26.67%	5	33.33%	7	46.67%
Very satisfied	4	26.67%	5	33.33%	5	33.33%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	3	20.00%	3	20.00%	1	6.67%
Middle managers	5	33.33%	3	20.00%	1	6.67%
Professional staff (non-managers)	7	46.67%	0	0.00%	6	40.00%
Skilled production workers	1	6.67%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Unskilled production workers	1	6.67%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Entry-level office workers	7	46.67%	0	0.00%	6	40.00%
Entry-level non-office workers	2	13.33%	0	0.00%	2	13.33%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	0	0.00%	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Service workers	2	13.33%	0	0.00%	2	13.33%
Other	5	33.33%	1	6.67%	2	13.33%
None	1	6.67%	3	20.00%	2	13.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Information

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	6	40.00%	5	33.33%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	3	20.00%	5	33.33%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	4	26.67%	8	53.33%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	5	33.33%	10	66.67%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	9	60.00%	1	6.67%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	5	33.33%	0	0.00%
Increasing starting salaries	8	53.33%	2	13.33%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	5	33.33%	3	20.00%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	5	33.33%	2	13.33%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	2	13.33%	0	0.00%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	2	13.33%	5	33.33%
Shortening the hiring process	3	20.00%	1	6.67%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	4	26.67%	0	0.00%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	5	33.33%	2	13.33%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	3	20.00%	4	26.67%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	4	26.67%	0	0.00%
Participating in job fairs	3	20.00%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	4	26.67%	2	13.33%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	0	0.00%	2	13.33%
Using formal candidate tracking system	3	20.00%	0	0.00%
Other	1	6.67%	1	6.67%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	4	26.67%
Team incentives	1	6.67%
Employee referral bonuses	6	40.00%
Year-end bonuses	3	20.00%
Spot bonuses	3	20.00%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	3	20.00%
Retention bonuses	3	20.00%
Commissions	2	13.33%
Project bonuses	1	6.67%
Profit sharing	1	6.67%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	3	20.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Information

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	0	0.00%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	1	6.67%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	11	73.33%
Resources to do their job effectively	3	20.00%
Mentoring opportunities	0	0.00%
Competitive/robust health benefits	6	40.00%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	6.67%
Driven by the mission of the organization	3	20.00%
Recognition and reward for good performance	2	13.33%
Ongoing training on new technologies	0	0.00%
Competitive pay	11	73.33%
Good work/life balance	13	86.67%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	2	13.33%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	3	20.00%
Current technology	1	6.67%
Remote work opportunities	5	33.33%
Hybrid work opportunities	1	6.67%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	1	6.67%
Regular full-time hours	2	13.33%
Strong organizational culture	3	20.00%
Challenging work	2	13.33%
Diverse workforce	1	6.67%
Vacation/paid time off	4	26.67%
Focus on employee safety	0	0.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	0	0.00%
No change	11	73.33%
More difficult	4	26.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Information

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	1	25.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	3	75.00%
Lack of technical skills	1	25.00%
Lack of soft skills	3	75.00%
Lack of work experience	2	50.00%
Our organization's geographic location	1	25.00%
Market competition/high demand	2	50.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	4	100.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	1	25.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	2	50.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	2	50.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	1	25.00%
Other *	2	50.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	13.33%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	6	40.00%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	26.67%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	3	20.00%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	13.33%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	5	33.33%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	6	40.00%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	6.67%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	1	6.67%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	2	13.33%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	5	33.33%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	3	20.00%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	6.67%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	20.00%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	6.67%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	1	6.67%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Information

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	10	66.67%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	4	26.67%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	12	80.00%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	4	26.67%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	2	13.33%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	9	60.00%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	1	6.67%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	4	26.67%
Creating/redefining policies	3	20.00%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	1	6.67%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	3	20.00%
N/A	2	13.33%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	0	0.00%
No	9	64.29%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	5	35.71%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	4	26.67%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	4	26.67%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	6	40.00%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	1	6.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Information

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	13	86.67%
Paid lump sum awards	2	13.33%
Paid variable/bonus awards	5	33.33%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	6.67%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	12	80.00%
Paying lump sum awards	1	6.67%
Paying variable/bonus awards	4	26.67%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	6.67%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	2	13.33%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	1	6.67%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	7	46.67%	6	40.00%
Increased standard wages	7	46.67%	7	46.67%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	6	40.00%	7	46.67%
Implemented or increased variable pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	3	20.00%	3	20.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Information

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	2	13.33%	0	0.00%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	5	33.33%	1	6.67%
Invest in new technology	7	46.67%	6	40.00%
Invest in equipment	6	40.00%	6	40.00%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Increase training budget	3	20.00%	6	40.00%
Increase total rewards communication/education	3	20.00%	6	40.00%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	3	20.00%	3	20.00%
Increase recruiting emphasis	3	20.00%	3	20.00%
Pay above market rates	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Enhance the benefits package	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	4	26.67%	4	26.67%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	4	26.67%	3	20.00%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	3	20.00%	0	0.00%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	2	13.33%	2	13.33%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	1	6.67%	2	13.33%
Hold off on investing in equipment	2	13.33%	2	13.33%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Reduce training budget	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Limiting employee travel	4	26.67%	2	13.33%
Hiring freezes	4	26.67%	0	0.00%
Implementing furloughs	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Freezing compensation increases	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	2	13.33%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Information

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	4	26.67%	1	6.67%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	4	26.67%	1	6.67%
Increasing presence on social media	9	60.00%	0	0.00%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	3	20.00%	0	0.00%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	4	26.67%	1	6.67%
Partnering with brand influencers	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	3	20.00%	0	0.00%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	6	40.00%	1	6.67%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	7	46.67%	1	6.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 15

Report Cut: Information

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	6	40.00%	4	26.67%	1	6.67%
Website content production	6	40.00%	5	33.33%	0	0.00%
Marketing content production	7	46.67%	4	26.67%	0	0.00%
Other content production	7	46.67%	4	26.67%	0	0.00%
Digital personal assistant	8	53.33%	3	20.00%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	8	53.33%	3	20.00%	0	0.00%
Customer relationship management	10	66.67%	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Inventory management	11	73.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Product recommendations	9	60.00%	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Accounting	11	73.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Supply chain operations	11	73.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	9	60.00%	2	13.33%	0	0.00%
Application and screening management	10	66.67%	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Audience segmentation	9	60.00%	2	13.33%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	8	53.33%	3	20.00%	0	0.00%
Idea generation	5	33.33%	5	33.33%	1	6.67%
Process automation	6	40.00%	5	33.33%	0	0.00%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	7	46.67%	4	26.67%	0	0.00%

# **Non Durable Goods Manufacturing**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 111

Report Cut: Non Durable Goods Manufacturing

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	111	100.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	0	0.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	59	53.15%
100 to 249	24	21.62%
250 to 499	14	12.61%
500 to 999	8	7.21%
1,000 or more	6	5.41%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	107	96.40%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	3	2.70%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	0	0.00%
Public Sector/Government	1	0.90%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 111

Report Cut: Non Durable Goods Manufacturing

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	28	25.2%
Stay the same	58	52.3%
Decline	25	22.5%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	13	11.7%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	43	38.7%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	19	17.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	19	17.1%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	13	11.7%
Do not know	4	3.6%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	16	14.4%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	54	48.6%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	19	17.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	7	6.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	3.6%
Do not know	11	9.9%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	63	64.29%	53	53.54%
Mild	26	26.53%	33	33.33%
Serious	9	9.18%	13	13.13%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	14	13.59%	11	10.78%
Mild	64	62.14%	69	67.65%
Serious	25	24.27%	22	21.57%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	59	59.00%	50	50.51%
Mild	31	31.00%	39	39.39%
Serious	10	10.00%	10	10.10%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	41	40.59%	36	36.00%
Mild	52	51.49%	50	50.00%
Serious	8	7.92%	14	14.00%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 111

Report Cut: Non Durable Goods Manufacturing

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	19	19.00%	19	19.19%
Mild	57	57.00%	61	61.62%
Serious	24	24.00%	19	19.19%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	9	8.82%	7	6.86%
Mild	53	51.96%	51	50.00%
Serious	40	39.22%	44	43.14%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	17	16.83%	16	16.16%
Mild	52	51.49%	48	48.48%
Serious	32	31.68%	35	35.35%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	26	25.74%	16	15.84%
Mild	53	52.48%	54	53.47%
Serious	22	21.78%	31	30.69%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	16	15.53%	12	12.00%
Mild	67	65.05%	59	59.00%
Serious	20	19.42%	29	29.00%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	54	54.00%	48	48.48%
Mild	40	40.00%	40	40.40%
Serious	6	6.00%	11	11.11%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	53	53.00%	50	49.02%
Mild	35	35.00%	39	38.24%
Serious	12	12.00%	13	12.75%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	9	8.74%	2	1.98%
Mild	57	55.34%	55	54.46%
Serious	37	35.92%	44	43.56%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	15	14.85%	10	9.90%
Mild	52	51.49%	50	49.50%
Serious	34	33.66%	41	40.59%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	25	25.00%	22	22.22%
Mild	45	45.00%	41	41.41%
Serious	30	30.00%	36	36.36%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 111

Report Cut: Non Durable Goods Manufacturing

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	30	31.25%	30	31.25%
Mild	40	41.67%	33	34.38%
Serious	26	27.08%	33	34.38%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	26	26.00%	25	25.25%
Mild	58	58.00%	52	52.53%
Serious	16	16.00%	22	22.22%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	36	36.73%	35	35.71%
Mild	38	38.78%	40	40.40%
Serious	24	24.49%	23	23.23%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	67	66.34%	60	59.41%
Mild	30	29.70%	32	31.68%
Serious	4	3.96%	9	8.91%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	5	4.95%	7	6.93%
Mild	46	45.54%	56	55.45%
Serious	51	50.50%	39	38.61%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	23	22.77%	18	17.82%
Mild	53	52.48%	56	55.45%
Serious	24	23.76%	26	25.74%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	13	12.87%	11	10.89%
Mild	48	47.52%	37	36.63%
Serious	38	37.62%	50	49.50%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	14	13.86%	10	9.90%
Mild	42	41.58%	40	39.60%
Serious	44	43.56%	51	50.50%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	52	51.49%	47	46.53%
Mild	40	39.60%	44	43.56%
Serious	8	7.92%	9	8.91%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	43	42.57%	33	32.67%
Mild	48	47.52%	48	47.52%
Serious	9	8.91%	20	19.80%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	22	21.78%	24	23.76%
Mild	35	34.65%	42	41.58%
Serious	42	41.58%	33	32.67%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 111

Report Cut: Non Durable Goods Manufacturing

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	14	13.86%	10	9.90%
Mild	57	56.44%	52	51.49%
Serious	29	28.71%	38	37.62%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	30	29.70%	27	26.73%
Mild	57	56.44%	59	58.42%
Serious	9	8.91%	10	9.90%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	42	41.58%	42	41.58%
Mild	18	17.82%	18	17.82%
Serious	4	3.96%	3	2.97%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	2	1	2	10
Competition in general	13	5	8	57
Product obsolescence	1	0	3	6
Changing customer preferences	3	8	2	27
Customer's ability to afford	6	4	8	34
Talent acquisition	14	11	7	71
Talent retention	8	8	5	45
Ability to pay for benefits costs	2	3	2	14
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	6	5	6	34
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	2	2	2	12
Cost of materials	17	13	15	92
Cost of equipment	0	4	4	12
Taxes	1	0	2	5
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	3	5	14
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	3	1	7
Employee safety	1	1	1	6
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	1	1	0	5
Inflation	8	10	11	55
Employee engagement	1	4	7	18
Developing future leaders	5	3	6	27
Cybersecurity	3	4	2	19
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	1	1	0	5
Political uncertainty	5	3	4	25
Talent skills gap	2	6	2	20
Unknown challenges	0	3	0	6
Other	3	0	1	10

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 111

Report Cut: Non Durable Goods Manufacturing

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	7	6.31%
Slightly less than planned	25	22.52%
As planned	56	50.45%
Slightly more than planned	16	14.41%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	6	5.41%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	51	45.95%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	44	39.64%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	15	13.51%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	55	49.55%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	9	8.11%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	42	37.84%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	4	3.60%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	28	27.45%	16	16.00%
No	74	72.55%	84	84.00%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	76	71.03%	50	48.54%
No	31	28.97%	53	51.46%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	77	71.96%	61	58.10%
No	30	28.04%	44	41.90%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	16	32.00%	16	32.00%
No	34	68.00%	34	68.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	86	85.15%	82	82.00%
No	15	14.85%	18	18.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 111

Report Cut: Non Durable Goods Manufacturing

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	4	3.67%
Some due to this	62	56.88%
None due to this	43	39.45%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	12	11.21%
None due to this	95	88.79%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	5	4.59%
Some due to this	85	77.98%
None due to this	19	17.43%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	3	2.78%
Some due to this	83	76.85%
None due to this	22	20.37%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	3	2.75%
Some due to this	70	64.22%
None due to this	36	33.03%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	16	14.81%
None due to this	92	85.19%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 111

Report Cut: Non Durable Goods Manufacturing

<b>11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?</b>	<b>Recruit</b>		<b>Onboard</b>		<b>Retain</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	5	4.50%	0	0.00%	4	3.60%
Somewhat dissatisfied	25	22.52%	19	17.12%	21	18.92%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	25	22.52%	26	23.42%	14	12.61%
Somewhat satisfied	46	41.44%	51	45.95%	57	51.35%
Very satisfied	10	9.01%	15	13.51%	15	13.51%

<b>12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?</b>	<b>Recruitment</b>		<b>Onboarding</b>		<b>Retention</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	24	21.62%	8	7.21%	8	7.21%
Middle managers	32	28.83%	9	8.11%	20	18.02%
Professional staff (non-managers)	39	35.14%	8	7.21%	26	23.42%
Skilled production workers	68	61.26%	23	20.72%	46	41.44%
Unskilled production workers	43	38.74%	24	21.62%	50	45.05%
Entry-level office workers	13	11.71%	7	6.31%	12	10.81%
Entry-level non-office workers	15	13.51%	7	6.31%	17	15.32%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	23	20.72%	4	3.60%	10	9.01%
Service workers	9	8.11%	3	2.70%	8	7.21%
Other	5	4.50%	0	0.00%	3	2.70%
None	5	4.50%	14	12.61%	11	9.91%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 111

Report Cut: Non Durable Goods Manufacturing

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	63	56.76%	52	46.85%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	33	29.73%	45	40.54%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	42	37.84%	56	50.45%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	51	45.95%	62	55.86%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	36	32.43%	8	7.21%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	37	33.33%	10	9.01%
Increasing starting salaries	65	58.56%	21	18.92%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	31	27.93%	33	29.73%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	7	6.31%	9	8.11%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	24	21.62%	11	9.91%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	12	10.81%	18	16.22%
Shortening the hiring process	25	22.52%	5	4.50%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	21	18.92%	6	5.41%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	38	34.23%	24	21.62%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	11	9.91%	13	11.71%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	61	54.95%	12	10.81%
Participating in job fairs	37	33.33%	7	6.31%
Building/increasing brand awareness	35	31.53%	21	18.92%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	9	8.11%	7	6.31%
Using formal candidate tracking system	33	29.73%	8	7.21%
Other	3	2.70%	3	2.70%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	30	27.03%
Team incentives	16	14.41%
Employee referral bonuses	73	65.77%
Year-end bonuses	44	39.64%
Spot bonuses	23	20.72%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	38	34.23%
Retention bonuses	11	9.91%
Commissions	15	13.51%
Project bonuses	5	4.50%
Profit sharing	25	22.52%
Hazard bonuses/pay	1	0.90%
Additional PTO	35	31.53%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 111

Report Cut: Non Durable Goods Manufacturing

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	19	17.12%
Language premiums	1	0.90%
Other*	3	2.70%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	53	47.75%
Resources to do their job effectively	17	15.32%
Mentoring opportunities	2	1.80%
Competitive/robust health benefits	42	37.84%
Opportunities to connect with others	5	4.50%
Driven by the mission of the organization	7	6.31%
Recognition and reward for good performance	42	37.84%
Ongoing training on new technologies	3	2.70%
Competitive pay	98	88.29%
Good work/life balance	81	72.97%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	10	9.01%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	43	38.74%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	9	8.11%
Hybrid work opportunities	23	20.72%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	5	4.50%
Regular full-time hours	15	13.51%
Strong organizational culture	24	21.62%
Challenging work	6	5.41%
Diverse workforce	2	1.80%
Vacation/paid time off	52	46.85%
Focus on employee safety	4	3.60%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	8	7.21%
No change	54	48.65%
More difficult	49	44.14%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 111

Report Cut: Non Durable Goods Manufacturing

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	2	4.08%
Lack of qualified candidates	43	87.76%
Lack of technical skills	28	57.14%
Lack of soft skills	12	24.49%
Lack of work experience	26	53.06%
Our organization's geographic location	11	22.45%
Market competition/high demand	19	38.78%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	22	44.90%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	8	16.33%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	3	6.12%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	12	24.49%
Other *	1	2.04%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	50	45.87%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	14	12.84%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	1.83%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	43	39.45%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	23	21.10%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	35	32.11%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	7	6.42%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	0.92%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	43	39.45%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	2	1.80%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	25	22.52%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	9	8.11%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	3.60%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	21	18.92%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	10	9.01%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	51	45.95%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 111

Report Cut: Non Durable Goods Manufacturing

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	48	43.24%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	24	21.62%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	42	37.84%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	12	10.81%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	4	3.60%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	30	27.03%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	6	5.41%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	11	9.91%
Creating/redefining policies	9	8.11%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	6	5.41%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	21	18.92%
N/A	26	23.42%
Other *	2	1.80%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	16	14.41%
No	72	64.86%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	23	20.72%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	47	42.34%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	8	7.21%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	43	38.74%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	13	11.71%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 111

Report Cut: Non Durable Goods Manufacturing

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	100	90.09%
Paid lump sum awards	10	9.01%
Paid variable/bonus awards	36	32.43%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	1	0.90%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	3	2.70%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	4	3.60%
Uncertain	3	2.70%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	88	79.28%
Paying lump sum awards	13	11.71%
Paying variable/bonus awards	35	31.53%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	0.90%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	1	0.90%
Reducing wages/salaries	1	0.90%
Reducing hours worked	3	2.70%
Uncertain	20	18.02%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	77	69.37%	55	49.55%
Increased standard wages	55	49.55%	44	39.64%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	52	46.85%	54	48.65%
Implemented or increased variable pay	9	8.11%	8	7.21%
Temporarily bumped pay	2	1.80%	0	0.00%
Other	1	0.90%	1	0.90%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	11	9.91%	11	9.91%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 111

Report Cut: Non Durable Goods Manufacturing

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	20	18.02%	14	12.61%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	16	14.41%	20	18.02%
Invest in new technology	46	41.44%	48	43.24%
Invest in equipment	58	52.25%	71	63.96%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	7	6.31%	8	7.21%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	10	9.01%	9	8.11%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	12	10.81%	17	15.32%
Increase training budget	28	25.23%	36	32.43%
Increase total rewards communication/education	17	15.32%	30	27.03%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	19	17.12%	17	15.32%
Increase recruiting emphasis	26	23.42%	29	26.13%
Pay above market rates	17	15.32%	19	17.12%
Enhance the benefits package	24	21.62%	28	25.23%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	17	15.32%	21	18.92%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	11	9.91%	22	19.82%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	8	7.21%	6	5.41%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	3	2.70%	1	0.90%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	7	6.31%	10	9.01%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	12	10.81%	18	16.22%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	5	4.50%	8	7.21%
Hold off on investing in equipment	7	6.31%	9	8.11%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	0.90%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	7	6.31%	3	2.70%
Reduce training budget	2	1.80%	2	1.80%
Limiting employee travel	10	9.01%	9	8.11%
Hiring freezes	6	5.41%	9	8.11%
Implementing furloughs	3	2.70%	1	0.90%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	10	9.01%	4	3.60%
Reduce benefits package	1	0.90%	1	0.90%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	0.90%	1	0.90%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Freezing compensation increases	4	3.60%	3	2.70%
Outsourcing roles or functions	3	2.70%	7	6.31%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 111

Report Cut: Non Durable Goods Manufacturing

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	8	7.21%	1	0.90%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	34	30.63%	9	8.11%
Increasing presence on social media	52	46.85%	19	17.12%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	5	4.50%	2	1.80%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	29	26.13%	8	7.21%
Partnering with brand influencers	12	10.81%	5	4.50%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	16	14.41%	9	8.11%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	35	31.53%	20	18.02%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	25	22.52%	11	9.91%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 111

Report Cut: Non Durable Goods Manufacturing

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	61	54.95%	7	6.31%	1	0.90%
Website content production	48	43.24%	18	16.22%	7	6.31%
Marketing content production	43	38.74%	27	24.32%	8	7.21%
Other content production	50	45.05%	18	16.22%	4	3.60%
Digital personal assistant	55	49.55%	11	9.91%	1	0.90%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	53	47.75%	9	8.11%	6	5.41%
Customer relationship management	60	54.05%	8	7.21%	1	0.90%
Inventory management	53	47.75%	16	14.41%	4	3.60%
Product recommendations	56	50.45%	8	7.21%	2	1.80%
Accounting	60	54.05%	6	5.41%	3	2.70%
Supply chain operations	60	54.05%	8	7.21%	1	0.90%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	52	46.85%	20	18.02%	6	5.41%
Application and screening management	54	48.65%	16	14.41%	5	4.50%
Audience segmentation	62	55.86%	3	2.70%	1	0.90%
Process improvement	51	45.95%	15	13.51%	4	3.60%
Idea generation	45	40.54%	21	18.92%	7	6.31%
Process automation	53	47.75%	13	11.71%	3	2.70%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	57	51.35%	10	9.01%	2	1.80%

# **Professional, Scientific & Technical Services**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Report Cut:

Number of Respondents = 85

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	85	100.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	0	0.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	56	65.88%
100 to 249	19	22.35%
250 to 499	6	7.06%
500 to 999	2	2.35%
1,000 or more	2	2.35%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	71	83.53%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	0	0.00%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	13	15.29%
Public Sector/Government	1	1.18%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 85

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	28	32.9%
Stay the same	43	50.6%
Decline	14	16.5%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	12	14.1%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	47	55.3%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	14	16.5%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	4.7%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	5	5.9%
Do not know	3	3.5%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	9	10.6%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	49	57.6%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	12	14.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	7	8.2%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	1.2%
Do not know	7	8.2%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	71	86.59%	63	76.83%
Mild	9	10.98%	14	17.07%
Serious	2	2.44%	5	6.10%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	11	13.25%	10	11.90%
Mild	48	57.83%	46	54.76%
Serious	24	28.92%	28	33.33%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	55	67.07%	51	60.71%
Mild	24	29.27%	23	27.38%
Serious	3	3.66%	10	11.90%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	30	36.14%	21	25.00%
Mild	42	50.60%	48	57.14%
Serious	11	13.25%	15	17.86%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 85

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	24	29.27%	20	24.10%
Mild	38	46.34%	43	51.81%
Serious	20	24.39%	20	24.10%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	15	18.29%	9	10.98%
Mild	31	37.80%	37	45.12%
Serious	36	43.90%	36	43.90%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	21	25.00%	12	14.29%
Mild	27	32.14%	31	36.90%
Serious	36	42.86%	41	48.81%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	26	32.10%	22	26.83%
Mild	30	37.04%	30	36.59%
Serious	25	30.86%	30	36.59%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	17	20.48%	10	12.05%
Mild	38	45.78%	42	50.60%
Serious	28	33.73%	31	37.35%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	55	67.07%	50	60.98%
Mild	17	20.73%	20	24.39%
Serious	10	12.20%	12	14.63%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	44	53.66%	41	49.40%
Mild	30	36.59%	33	39.76%
Serious	8	9.76%	9	10.84%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	44	54.32%	43	53.09%
Mild	24	29.63%	23	28.40%
Serious	13	16.05%	15	18.52%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	42	51.22%	38	46.91%
Mild	30	36.59%	31	38.27%
Serious	10	12.20%	12	14.81%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	27	33.33%	22	26.51%
Mild	42	51.85%	41	49.40%
Serious	12	14.81%	20	24.10%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 85

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	34	41.98%	32	39.51%
Mild	39	48.15%	35	43.21%
Serious	8	9.88%	14	17.28%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	23	27.71%	21	25.00%
Mild	41	49.40%	40	47.62%
Serious	19	22.89%	23	27.38%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	52	65.00%	52	63.41%
Mild	25	31.25%	25	29.76%
Serious	3	3.75%	5	5.95%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	33	40.24%	37	44.58%
Mild	38	46.34%	34	40.96%
Serious	11	13.41%	12	14.46%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	5	6.10%	6	7.23%
Mild	49	59.76%	48	57.83%
Serious	28	34.15%	29	34.94%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	19	23.17%	14	16.87%
Mild	41	50.00%	48	57.83%
Serious	23	28.05%	23	27.71%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	16	19.51%	16	19.28%
Mild	33	40.24%	30	36.14%
Serious	32	39.02%	36	43.37%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	5	6.10%	6	7.23%
Mild	35	42.68%	32	38.55%
Serious	42	51.22%	44	53.01%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	38	46.34%	36	43.37%
Mild	37	45.12%	39	46.99%
Serious	7	8.54%	7	8.43%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	18	21.95%	14	16.87%
Mild	48	58.54%	40	48.19%
Serious	17	20.73%	30	36.14%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	17	20.73%	17	20.48%
Mild	37	45.12%	40	48.19%
Serious	27	32.93%	26	31.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 85

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	20	24.39%	17	20.48%
Mild	46	56.10%	46	55.42%
Serious	17	20.73%	22	26.51%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	22	26.83%	22	26.51%
Mild	51	62.20%	47	56.63%
Serious	8	9.76%	12	14.46%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	45	54.88%	45	54.22%
Mild	12	14.63%	13	15.66%
Serious	3	3.66%	3	3.61%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	1	0	1	4
Competition in general	14	6	8	62
Product obsolescence	2	2	2	12
Changing customer preferences	5	5	1	26
Customer's ability to afford	9	3	3	36
Talent acquisition	21	7	5	82
Talent retention	9	15	7	64
Ability to pay for benefits costs	2	6	7	25
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	4	10	9	41
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	1	0	2
Ability to maintain quality product/service	0	2	1	5
Cost of materials	1	3	3	12
Cost of equipment	0	1	1	3
Taxes	2	0	2	8
Cost of regulatory compliance	2	1	2	10
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	2	4	8
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	2	2	6
Inflation	2	1	5	13
Employee engagement	3	2	4	17
Developing future leaders	2	3	3	15
Cybersecurity	3	3	0	15
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	1	1
A.I. technology and platforms	2	3	5	17
Political uncertainty	1	2	3	10
Talent skills gap	0	4	3	11
Unknown challenges	0	1	1	3
Other	0	0	2	2

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 85

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	7	8.24%
Slightly less than planned	17	20.00%
As planned	37	43.53%
Slightly more than planned	20	23.53%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	4	4.71%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	42	49.41%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	32	37.65%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	10	11.76%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	44	51.76%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	4	4.71%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	36	42.35%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	1.18%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	17	20.73%	14	17.72%
No	65	79.27%	65	82.28%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	53	63.10%	55	67.07%
No	31	36.90%	27	32.93%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	61	74.39%	50	61.73%
No	21	25.61%	31	38.27%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	3	12.50%	1	4.35%
No	21	87.50%	22	95.65%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	9	23.68%	10	27.03%
No	29	76.32%	27	72.97%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 85

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	4	4.82%
Some due to this	48	57.83%
None due to this	31	37.35%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	2	2.41%
Some due to this	11	13.25%
None due to this	70	84.34%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	4	4.76%
Some due to this	63	75.00%
None due to this	17	20.24%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	3	3.61%
Some due to this	50	60.24%
None due to this	30	36.14%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	3	3.57%
Some due to this	42	50.00%
None due to this	39	46.43%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	10	12.05%
None due to this	73	87.95%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 85

Report Cut: Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

<b>11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?</b>	<b>Recruit</b>		<b>Onboard</b>		<b>Retain</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	1	1.18%	1	1.19%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	14	16.47%	11	13.10%	12	14.29%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	16	18.82%	12	14.29%	19	22.62%
Somewhat satisfied	37	43.53%	42	50.00%	32	38.10%
Very satisfied	17	20.00%	18	21.43%	21	25.00%

<b>12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?</b>	<b>Recruitment</b>		<b>Onboarding</b>		<b>Retention</b>	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	31	36.47%	10	11.76%	13	15.29%
Middle managers	30	35.29%	13	15.29%	18	21.18%
Professional staff (non-managers)	50	58.82%	22	25.88%	38	44.71%
Skilled production workers	10	11.76%	2	2.35%	9	10.59%
Unskilled production workers	3	3.53%	2	2.35%	2	2.35%
Entry-level office workers	16	18.82%	8	9.41%	14	16.47%
Entry-level non-office workers	6	7.06%	1	1.18%	4	4.71%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	15	17.65%	3	3.53%	8	9.41%
Service workers	6	7.06%	0	0.00%	5	5.88%
Other	4	4.71%	1	1.18%	2	2.35%
None	8	9.41%	15	17.65%	12	14.12%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 85

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	30	35.29%	38	44.71%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	14	16.47%	45	52.94%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	17	20.00%	49	57.65%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	40	47.06%	56	65.88%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	45	52.94%	9	10.59%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	35	41.18%	5	5.88%
Increasing starting salaries	52	61.18%	14	16.47%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	18	21.18%	23	27.06%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	31	36.47%	25	29.41%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	13	15.29%	5	5.88%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	6	7.06%	11	12.94%
Shortening the hiring process	22	25.88%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	27	31.76%	9	10.59%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	35	41.18%	20	23.53%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	9	10.59%	12	14.12%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	27	31.76%	1	1.18%
Participating in job fairs	24	28.24%	3	3.53%
Building/increasing brand awareness	31	36.47%	17	20.00%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	11	12.94%	9	10.59%
Using formal candidate tracking system	30	35.29%	4	4.71%
Other	2	2.35%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	29	34.12%
Team incentives	10	11.76%
Employee referral bonuses	41	48.24%
Year-end bonuses	38	44.71%
Spot bonuses	18	21.18%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	31	36.47%
Retention bonuses	9	10.59%
Commissions	15	17.65%
Project bonuses	5	5.88%
Profit sharing	13	15.29%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	20	23.53%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 85

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	12	14.12%
Language premiums	1	1.18%
Other*	1	1.18%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	54	63.53%
Resources to do their job effectively	11	12.94%
Mentoring opportunities	10	11.76%
Competitive/robust health benefits	31	36.47%
Opportunities to connect with others	6	7.06%
Driven by the mission of the organization	15	17.65%
Recognition and reward for good performance	15	17.65%
Ongoing training on new technologies	3	3.53%
Competitive pay	64	75.29%
Good work/life balance	56	65.88%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	18	21.18%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	26	30.59%
Current technology	1	1.18%
Remote work opportunities	29	34.12%
Hybrid work opportunities	24	28.24%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	4	4.71%
Regular full-time hours	1	1.18%
Strong organizational culture	23	27.06%
Challenging work	7	8.24%
Diverse workforce	2	2.35%
Vacation/paid time off	18	21.18%
Focus on employee safety	0	0.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	2	2.35%
No change	48	56.47%
More difficult	35	41.18%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 85

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	1	2.86%
Lack of qualified candidates	26	74.29%
Lack of technical skills	13	37.14%
Lack of soft skills	5	14.29%
Lack of work experience	13	37.14%
Our organization's geographic location	6	17.14%
Market competition/high demand	17	48.57%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	16	45.71%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	7	20.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	4	11.43%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	6	17.14%
Other *	2	5.71%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	17	20.24%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	29	34.52%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	18	21.43%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	8	9.52%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	12	14.29%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	15	17.86%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	28	33.33%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	24	28.57%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	5	5.95%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	13	15.48%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	12	14.12%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	31	36.47%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	5	5.88%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	4	4.71%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	16	18.82%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	6	7.06%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	15	17.65%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 85

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	33	38.82%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	12	14.12%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	30	35.29%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	10	11.76%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	3	3.53%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	28	32.94%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	6	7.06%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	7	8.24%
Creating/redefining policies	8	9.41%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	2	2.35%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	19	22.35%
N/A	18	21.18%
Other *	2	2.35%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	11	12.94%
No	64	75.29%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	10	11.76%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	31	36.47%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	12	14.12%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	34	40.00%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	8	9.41%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 85

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	71	83.53%
Paid lump sum awards	7	8.24%
Paid variable/bonus awards	34	40.00%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	7	8.24%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	7	8.24%
Reduced wages/salaries	2	2.35%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	6	7.06%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	66	77.65%
Paying lump sum awards	7	8.24%
Paying variable/bonus awards	35	41.18%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	2	2.35%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	3	3.53%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	12	14.12%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	49	57.65%	39	45.88%
Increased standard wages	36	42.35%	33	38.82%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	36	42.35%	40	47.06%
Implemented or increased variable pay	11	12.94%	11	12.94%
Temporarily bumped pay	2	2.35%	0	0.00%
Other	1	1.18%	1	1.18%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	15	17.65%	17	20.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 85

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	8	9.41%	10	11.76%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	11	12.94%	11	12.94%
Invest in new technology	32	37.65%	43	50.59%
Invest in equipment	16	18.82%	19	22.35%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	8	9.41%	8	9.41%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	3	3.53%	7	8.24%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	6	7.06%	9	10.59%
Increase training budget	17	20.00%	21	24.71%
Increase total rewards communication/education	12	14.12%	20	23.53%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	27	31.76%	26	30.59%
Increase recruiting emphasis	26	30.59%	29	34.12%
Pay above market rates	4	4.71%	7	8.24%
Enhance the benefits package	10	11.76%	22	25.88%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	14	16.47%	17	20.00%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	15	17.65%	22	25.88%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	14	16.47%	11	12.94%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	4	4.71%	6	7.06%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	4	4.71%	4	4.71%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	21	24.71%	23	27.06%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	6	7.06%	8	9.41%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	1.18%	1	1.18%
Hold off on investing in new technology	4	4.71%	2	2.35%
Hold off on investing in equipment	4	4.71%	3	3.53%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	1.18%	1	1.18%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	6	7.06%	4	4.71%
Reduce training budget	4	4.71%	3	3.53%
Limiting employee travel	5	5.88%	4	4.71%
Hiring freezes	5	5.88%	4	4.71%
Implementing furloughs	2	2.35%	1	1.18%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	10	11.76%	2	2.35%
Reduce benefits package	3	3.53%	2	2.35%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	1.18%	2	2.35%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	5	5.88%	6	7.06%
Freezing compensation increases	6	7.06%	3	3.53%
Outsourcing roles or functions	5	5.88%	4	4.71%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 85

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	10	11.76%	4	4.71%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	35	41.18%	9	10.59%
Increasing presence on social media	53	62.35%	11	12.94%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	10	11.76%	6	7.06%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	24	28.24%	9	10.59%
Partnering with brand influencers	5	5.88%	1	1.18%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	21	24.71%	10	11.76%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	34	40.00%	14	16.47%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	22	25.88%	9	10.59%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 85

Report Cut: Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	44	51.76%	13	15.29%	3	3.53%
Website content production	28	32.94%	23	27.06%	11	12.94%
Marketing content production	27	31.76%	20	23.53%	15	17.65%
Other content production	30	35.29%	17	20.00%	9	10.59%
Digital personal assistant	40	47.06%	14	16.47%	1	1.18%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	32	37.65%	20	23.53%	6	7.06%
Customer relationship management	39	45.88%	11	12.94%	1	1.18%
Inventory management	41	48.24%	6	7.06%	0	0.00%
Product recommendations	44	51.76%	5	5.88%	0	0.00%
Accounting	39	45.88%	14	16.47%	2	2.35%
Supply chain operations	46	54.12%	1	1.18%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	29	34.12%	24	28.24%	6	7.06%
Application and screening management	32	37.65%	22	25.88%	1	1.18%
Audience segmentation	39	45.88%	6	7.06%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	30	35.29%	15	17.65%	8	9.41%
Idea generation	22	25.88%	27	31.76%	10	11.76%
Process automation	28	32.94%	20	23.53%	8	9.41%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	33	38.82%	15	17.65%	7	8.24%

# **Public Administration**



# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 24

Report Cut: Public Administration

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	24	100.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	0	0.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	13	54.17%
100 to 249	5	20.83%
250 to 499	3	12.50%
500 to 999	0	0.00%
1,000 or more	3	12.50%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	0	0.00%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	0	0.00%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	7	29.17%
Public Sector/Government	17	70.83%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 24

Report Cut: Public Administration

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	10	41.7%
Stay the same	12	50.0%
Decline	2	8.3%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	8.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	8	33.3%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	9	37.5%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	4.2%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	4	16.7%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	4.2%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	11	45.8%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	2	8.3%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	12.5%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	4.2%
Do not know	6	25.0%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	23	100.00%	22	95.65%
Mild	0	0.00%	1	4.35%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	13	56.52%	11	50.00%
Mild	9	39.13%	9	40.91%
Serious	1	4.35%	2	9.09%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	19	82.61%	17	73.91%
Mild	4	17.39%	5	21.74%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	4.35%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	11	47.83%	10	43.48%
Mild	9	39.13%	7	30.43%
Serious	3	13.04%	6	26.09%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 24

Report Cut: Public Administration

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	12	52.17%	12	52.17%
Mild	9	39.13%	8	34.78%
Serious	2	8.70%	3	13.04%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	5	20.83%	1	4.17%
Mild	8	33.33%	11	45.83%
Serious	11	45.83%	12	50.00%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	5	20.83%	2	8.33%
Mild	9	37.50%	11	45.83%
Serious	10	41.67%	11	45.83%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	3	13.04%	2	8.70%
Mild	12	52.17%	11	47.83%
Serious	8	34.78%	10	43.48%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	4	16.67%	2	8.33%
Mild	6	25.00%	5	20.83%
Serious	14	58.33%	17	70.83%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	10	43.48%	10	43.48%
Mild	7	30.43%	6	26.09%
Serious	6	26.09%	7	30.43%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	11	47.83%	10	43.48%
Mild	7	30.43%	9	39.13%
Serious	5	21.74%	4	17.39%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	7	30.43%	7	31.82%
Mild	7	30.43%	9	40.91%
Serious	9	39.13%	6	27.27%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	5	21.74%	3	13.04%
Mild	12	52.17%	13	56.52%
Serious	6	26.09%	7	30.43%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	15	68.18%	15	68.18%
Mild	2	9.09%	2	9.09%
Serious	5	22.73%	5	22.73%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 24

Report Cut: Public Administration

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	5	21.74%	5	21.74%
Mild	10	43.48%	11	47.83%
Serious	8	34.78%	7	30.43%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	5	22.73%	5	22.73%
Mild	5	22.73%	6	27.27%
Serious	12	54.55%	11	50.00%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	9	39.13%	8	34.78%
Mild	11	47.83%	12	54.55%
Serious	3	13.04%	3	13.64%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	12	50.00%	11	45.83%
Mild	7	29.17%	8	33.33%
Serious	5	20.83%	5	20.83%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	3	12.50%	2	8.33%
Mild	10	41.67%	13	54.17%
Serious	10	41.67%	8	33.33%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	2	8.33%	2	8.33%
Mild	13	54.17%	12	50.00%
Serious	8	33.33%	9	37.50%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	4	16.67%	2	8.33%
Mild	7	29.17%	9	37.50%
Serious	13	54.17%	13	54.17%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	7	29.17%	5	20.83%
Serious	16	66.67%	18	75.00%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	4	16.67%	5	20.83%
Mild	13	54.17%	12	50.00%
Serious	6	25.00%	6	25.00%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	8	33.33%	8	33.33%
Mild	13	54.17%	10	41.67%
Serious	2	8.33%	5	20.83%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	5	20.83%	3	12.50%
Mild	7	29.17%	9	37.50%
Serious	11	45.83%	11	45.83%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 24

Report Cut: Public Administration

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	4	16.67%	4	16.67%
Mild	17	70.83%	15	62.50%
Serious	3	12.50%	5	20.83%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	5	20.83%	5	20.83%
Mild	13	54.17%	11	45.83%
Serious	3	12.50%	5	20.83%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	10	41.67%	10	41.67%
Mild	6	25.00%	6	25.00%
Serious	2	8.33%	2	8.33%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	1	0	1	4
Product obsolescence	1	0	0	3
Changing customer preferences	0	2	1	5
Customer's ability to afford	0	1	2	4
Talent acquisition	3	3	2	17
Talent retention	2	2	3	13
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	4	2	13
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	6	4	4	30
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	0	1	4
Cost of materials	0	0	1	1
Cost of equipment	0	0	0	0
Taxes	2	0	0	6
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	0	0	3
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	0	0	0
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	0	2
Inflation	0	2	0	4
Employee engagement	1	1	2	7
Developing future leaders	1	2	0	7
Cybersecurity	2	1	1	9
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	1	1	3
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	1	1
Political uncertainty	2	0	2	8
Talent skills gap	0	0	0	0
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 24

Report Cut: Public Administration

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	2	8.33%
Slightly less than planned	2	8.33%
As planned	14	58.33%
Slightly more than planned	6	25.00%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	10	41.67%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	14	58.33%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	13	54.17%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	4.17%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	10	41.67%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	9	37.50%	5	21.74%
No	15	62.50%	18	78.26%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	16	66.67%	14	60.87%
No	8	33.33%	9	39.13%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	19	82.61%	18	78.26%
No	4	17.39%	5	21.74%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	3	23.08%	3	25.00%
No	10	76.92%	9	75.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	6	33.33%	7	38.89%
No	12	66.67%	11	61.11%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 24

Report Cut: Public Administration

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	1	4.35%
Some due to this	15	65.22%
None due to this	7	30.43%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	1	4.35%
Some due to this	0	0.00%
None due to this	22	95.65%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	8.70%
Some due to this	17	73.91%
None due to this	4	17.39%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	8.33%
Some due to this	11	45.83%
None due to this	11	45.83%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	4.35%
Some due to this	18	78.26%
None due to this	4	17.39%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	1	4.55%
None due to this	21	95.45%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 24

Report Cut: Public Administration

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	1	4.17%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	2	8.33%	0	0.00%	3	13.04%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	5	20.83%	5	21.74%	1	4.35%
Somewhat satisfied	13	54.17%	10	43.48%	13	56.52%
Very satisfied	3	12.50%	8	34.78%	6	26.09%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	12	50.00%	3	12.50%	4	16.67%
Middle managers	9	37.50%	3	12.50%	5	20.83%
Professional staff (non-managers)	10	41.67%	1	4.17%	12	50.00%
Skilled production workers	7	29.17%	4	16.67%	7	29.17%
Unskilled production workers	4	16.67%	0	0.00%	3	12.50%
Entry-level office workers	8	33.33%	1	4.17%	9	37.50%
Entry-level non-office workers	8	33.33%	0	0.00%	8	33.33%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	4	16.67%	1	4.17%	5	20.83%
Service workers	6	25.00%	3	12.50%	7	29.17%
Other	2	8.33%	1	4.17%	2	8.33%
None	1	4.17%	3	12.50%	1	4.17%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 24

Report Cut: Public Administration

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	12	50.00%	8	33.33%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	4	16.67%	10	41.67%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	4	16.67%	14	58.33%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	7	29.17%	16	66.67%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	8	33.33%	0	0.00%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	15	62.50%	0	0.00%
Increasing starting salaries	17	70.83%	6	25.00%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	7	29.17%	8	33.33%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	4	16.67%	3	12.50%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	7	29.17%	1	4.17%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	5	20.83%	8	33.33%
Shortening the hiring process	11	45.83%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	6	25.00%	2	8.33%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	8	33.33%	4	16.67%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	1	4.17%	2	8.33%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	6	25.00%	0	0.00%
Participating in job fairs	10	41.67%	0	0.00%
Building/increasing brand awareness	8	33.33%	1	4.17%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	2	8.33%	2	8.33%
Using formal candidate tracking system	12	50.00%	1	4.17%
Other	1	4.17%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	4	16.67%
Team incentives	0	0.00%
Employee referral bonuses	7	29.17%
Year-end bonuses	4	16.67%
Spot bonuses	1	4.17%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	5	20.83%
Retention bonuses	2	8.33%
Commissions	0	0.00%
Project bonuses	0	0.00%
Profit sharing	0	0.00%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	6	25.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 24

Report Cut: Public Administration

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	1	4.17%
Language premiums	1	4.17%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	13	54.17%
Resources to do their job effectively	3	12.50%
Mentoring opportunities	2	8.33%
Competitive/robust health benefits	12	50.00%
Opportunities to connect with others	3	12.50%
Driven by the mission of the organization	5	20.83%
Recognition and reward for good performance	2	8.33%
Ongoing training on new technologies	0	0.00%
Competitive pay	19	79.17%
Good work/life balance	19	79.17%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	2	8.33%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	8	33.33%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	6	25.00%
Hybrid work opportunities	3	12.50%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	2	8.33%
Regular full-time hours	4	16.67%
Strong organizational culture	4	16.67%
Challenging work	2	8.33%
Diverse workforce	1	4.17%
Vacation/paid time off	10	41.67%
Focus on employee safety	0	0.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	2	8.33%
No change	9	37.50%
More difficult	13	54.17%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 24

Report Cut: Public Administration

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	2	15.38%
Lack of qualified candidates	10	76.92%
Lack of technical skills	2	15.38%
Lack of soft skills	4	30.77%
Lack of work experience	4	30.77%
Our organization's geographic location	1	7.69%
Market competition/high demand	8	61.54%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	10	76.92%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	1	7.69%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	4	30.77%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	4	30.77%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	6	46.15%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	7	29.17%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	16.67%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	4.17%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	4.17%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	11	45.83%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	8	33.33%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	6	25.00%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	8.33%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	4.17%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	6	25.00%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	2	8.33%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	7	29.17%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	2	8.33%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	4.17%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	12.50%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	2	8.33%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	8	33.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 24

Report Cut: Public Administration

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	14	58.33%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	8	33.33%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	9	37.50%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	7	29.17%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	4	16.67%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	15	62.50%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	0	0.00%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	5	20.83%
Creating/redefining policies	5	20.83%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	2	8.33%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	3	12.50%
N/A	2	8.33%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	1	4.17%
No	15	62.50%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	8	33.33%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	11	45.83%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	2	8.33%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	10	41.67%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	1	4.17%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 24

Report Cut: Public Administration

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	21	87.50%
Paid lump sum awards	2	8.33%
Paid variable/bonus awards	3	12.50%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	4.17%
Reduced wages/salaries	1	4.17%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	1	4.17%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	19	79.17%
Paying lump sum awards	2	8.33%
Paying variable/bonus awards	5	20.83%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	3	12.50%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	12	50.00%	14	58.33%
Increased standard wages	9	37.50%	11	45.83%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	11	45.83%	12	50.00%
Implemented or increased variable pay	1	4.17%	2	8.33%
Temporarily bumped pay	3	12.50%	2	8.33%
Other	0	0.00%	1	4.17%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	3	12.50%	4	16.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 24

Report Cut: Public Administration

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	1	4.17%	5	20.83%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	4	16.67%	3	12.50%
Invest in new technology	12	50.00%	14	58.33%
Invest in equipment	10	41.67%	13	54.17%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	1	4.17%	1	4.17%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	1	4.17%	0	0.00%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	1	4.17%	1	4.17%
Increase training budget	6	25.00%	7	29.17%
Increase total rewards communication/education	6	25.00%	6	25.00%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	10	41.67%	13	54.17%
Increase recruiting emphasis	7	29.17%	9	37.50%
Pay above market rates	4	16.67%	7	29.17%
Enhance the benefits package	5	20.83%	5	20.83%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	1	4.17%	2	8.33%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	3	12.50%	4	16.67%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	3	12.50%	3	12.50%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	1	4.17%	0	0.00%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	1	4.17%	2	8.33%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	0	0.00%	1	4.17%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	0	0.00%	1	4.17%
Reduce training budget	0	0.00%	1	4.17%
Limiting employee travel	3	12.50%	2	8.33%
Hiring freezes	1	4.17%	0	0.00%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	4.17%	1	4.17%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	1	4.17%
Outsourcing roles or functions	1	4.17%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 24

Report Cut: Public Administration

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	0	0.00%	3	12.50%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	7	29.17%	4	16.67%
Increasing presence on social media	14	58.33%	6	25.00%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	2	8.33%	3	12.50%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	0	0.00%	3	12.50%
Partnering with brand influencers	0	0.00%	1	4.17%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	2	8.33%	7	29.17%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	10	41.67%	3	12.50%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	3	12.50%	2	8.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 24

Report Cut: Public Administration

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	10	41.67%	5	20.83%	1	4.17%
Website content production	8	33.33%	7	29.17%	0	0.00%
Marketing content production	8	33.33%	5	20.83%	0	0.00%
Other content production	10	41.67%	2	8.33%	1	4.17%
Digital personal assistant	9	37.50%	3	12.50%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	9	37.50%	4	16.67%	1	4.17%
Customer relationship management	10	41.67%	3	12.50%	0	0.00%
Inventory management	11	45.83%	1	4.17%	0	0.00%
Product recommendations	11	45.83%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Accounting	11	45.83%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Supply chain operations	10	41.67%	1	4.17%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	8	33.33%	7	29.17%	0	0.00%
Application and screening management	9	37.50%	5	20.83%	0	0.00%
Audience segmentation	11	45.83%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	8	33.33%	4	16.67%	0	0.00%
Idea generation	5	20.83%	8	33.33%	2	8.33%
Process automation	10	41.67%	5	20.83%	0	0.00%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	9	37.50%	5	20.83%	0	0.00%



# **Real Estate Rental & Leasing**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 16

Report Cut: Real Estate Rental & Leasing

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	16	100.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	0	0.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	15	93.75%
100 to 249	1	6.25%
250 to 499	0	0.00%
500 to 999	0	0.00%
1,000 or more	0	0.00%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	12	75.00%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	0	0.00%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	2	12.50%
Public Sector/Government	2	12.50%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 16

Report Cut: Real Estate Rental & Leasing

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	5	31.3%
Stay the same	10	62.5%
Decline	1	6.3%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	6.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	5	31.3%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	8	50.0%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	6.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	1	6.3%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	12.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	7	43.8%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	5	31.3%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	6.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	1	6.3%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	15	100.00%	15	100.00%
Mild	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	3	18.75%	5	31.25%
Mild	11	68.75%	9	56.25%
Serious	2	12.50%	2	12.50%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	13	81.25%	13	81.25%
Mild	3	18.75%	3	18.75%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	9	60.00%	9	60.00%
Mild	6	40.00%	5	33.33%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	6.67%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 16

Report Cut: Real Estate Rental & Leasing

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	3	20.00%	3	20.00%
Mild	8	53.33%	7	46.67%
Serious	4	26.67%	5	33.33%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	13	81.25%	10	66.67%
Serious	3	18.75%	5	33.33%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	1	6.25%	1	6.25%
Mild	9	56.25%	9	56.25%
Serious	6	37.50%	6	37.50%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Mild	12	80.00%	12	80.00%
Serious	2	13.33%	3	20.00%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	2	13.33%	2	13.33%
Mild	8	53.33%	8	53.33%
Serious	5	33.33%	5	33.33%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	10	66.67%	10	66.67%
Mild	3	20.00%	3	20.00%
Serious	2	13.33%	2	13.33%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	9	60.00%	7	46.67%
Mild	3	20.00%	5	33.33%
Serious	3	20.00%	3	20.00%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	2	13.33%	1	7.14%
Mild	5	33.33%	6	42.86%
Serious	8	53.33%	7	50.00%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
Mild	7	46.67%	9	60.00%
Serious	6	40.00%	5	33.33%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	4	28.57%	4	26.67%
Mild	8	57.14%	8	53.33%
Serious	2	14.29%	3	20.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 16

Report Cut: Real Estate Rental & Leasing

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	5	33.33%	4	26.67%
Mild	6	40.00%	6	40.00%
Serious	4	26.67%	5	33.33%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	4	26.67%	4	26.67%
Mild	11	73.33%	10	66.67%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	6.67%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	9	60.00%	9	60.00%
Mild	3	20.00%	3	20.00%
Serious	3	20.00%	3	20.00%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	11	73.33%	11	73.33%
Mild	4	26.67%	3	20.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	6.67%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	1	6.67%
Mild	9	60.00%	10	66.67%
Serious	6	40.00%	4	26.67%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	2	13.33%	2	13.33%
Mild	12	80.00%	11	73.33%
Serious	1	6.67%	2	13.33%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	4	26.67%	4	26.67%
Mild	6	40.00%	5	33.33%
Serious	5	33.33%	6	40.00%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	3	20.00%	3	20.00%
Mild	6	40.00%	6	40.00%
Serious	6	40.00%	6	40.00%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	9	60.00%	8	53.33%
Mild	5	33.33%	5	33.33%
Serious	1	6.67%	2	13.33%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	5	33.33%	6	40.00%
Mild	9	60.00%	6	40.00%
Serious	1	6.67%	3	20.00%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	4	26.67%	3	20.00%
Mild	7	46.67%	8	53.33%
Serious	4	26.67%	4	26.67%

# 2025 National Business Trends

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4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	5	33.33%	3	20.00%
Mild	9	60.00%	11	73.33%
Serious	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Mild	11	73.33%	10	66.67%
Serious	3	20.00%	4	26.67%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	8	53.33%	8	53.33%
Mild	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	1	0	1	4
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	1	0	0	3
Customer's ability to afford	1	0	0	3
Talent acquisition	2	2	1	11
Talent retention	1	2	2	9
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	1	2	4
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	2	1	1	9
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	0	2	1	5
Cost of materials	1	1	1	6
Cost of equipment	0	1	0	2
Taxes	0	0	1	1
Cost of regulatory compliance	2	0	1	7
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	1	0	2
Employee safety	0	0	1	1
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	0	0	0
Inflation	1	1	0	5
Employee engagement	0	0	1	1
Developing future leaders	2	2	0	10
Cybersecurity	1	0	0	3
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	0	0
Political uncertainty	0	1	1	3
Talent skills gap	0	0	1	1
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

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6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	1	6.25%
Slightly less than planned	2	12.50%
As planned	10	62.50%
Slightly more than planned	3	18.75%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	9	56.25%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	7	43.75%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	6	37.50%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	6.25%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	8	50.00%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	6.25%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	3	18.75%	2	12.50%
No	13	81.25%	14	87.50%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	10	62.50%	5	31.25%
No	6	37.50%	11	68.75%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	11	68.75%	8	50.00%
No	5	31.25%	8	50.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	3	37.50%	3	37.50%
No	5	62.50%	5	62.50%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	6	42.86%	6	42.86%
No	8	57.14%	8	57.14%

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10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	12	75.00%
None due to this	4	25.00%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	1	6.25%
None due to this	15	93.75%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	6.25%
Some due to this	12	75.00%
None due to this	3	18.75%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	6.25%
Some due to this	9	56.25%
None due to this	6	37.50%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	3	18.75%
None due to this	13	81.25%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	0	0.00%
None due to this	16	100.00%



## 2025 National Business Trends

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11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	3	18.75%	3	18.75%	2	12.50%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	18.75%	2	12.50%	3	18.75%
Somewhat satisfied	5	31.25%	6	37.50%	9	56.25%
Very satisfied	5	31.25%	5	31.25%	2	12.50%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	3	18.75%	3	18.75%	3	18.75%
Middle managers	2	12.50%	4	25.00%	5	31.25%
Professional staff (non-managers)	4	25.00%	3	18.75%	8	50.00%
Skilled production workers	4	25.00%	1	6.25%	2	12.50%
Unskilled production workers	3	18.75%	1	6.25%	3	18.75%
Entry-level office workers	4	25.00%	1	6.25%	2	12.50%
Entry-level non-office workers	1	6.25%	1	6.25%	1	6.25%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	2	12.50%	1	6.25%	2	12.50%
Service workers	3	18.75%	1	6.25%	3	18.75%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None	1	6.25%	1	6.25%	1	6.25%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	5	31.25%	4	25.00%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	3	18.75%	7	43.75%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	0	0.00%	10	62.50%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	5	31.25%	10	62.50%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	3	18.75%	1	6.25%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	4	25.00%	1	6.25%
Increasing starting salaries	9	56.25%	4	25.00%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	5	31.25%	7	43.75%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	1	6.25%	5	31.25%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	0	0.00%	1	6.25%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	0	0.00%	3	18.75%
Shortening the hiring process	4	25.00%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	3	18.75%	0	0.00%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	4	25.00%	5	31.25%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	0	0.00%	2	12.50%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	6	37.50%	0	0.00%
Participating in job fairs	2	12.50%	1	6.25%
Building/increasing brand awareness	4	25.00%	2	12.50%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	0	0.00%	2	12.50%
Using formal candidate tracking system	6	37.50%	1	6.25%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	3	18.75%
Team incentives	3	18.75%
Employee referral bonuses	4	25.00%
Year-end bonuses	6	37.50%
Spot bonuses	2	12.50%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	1	6.25%
Retention bonuses	3	18.75%
Commissions	2	12.50%
Project bonuses	3	18.75%
Profit sharing	3	18.75%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	4	25.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	2	12.50%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	1	6.25%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	9	56.25%
Resources to do their job effectively	2	12.50%
Mentoring opportunities	0	0.00%
Competitive/robust health benefits	5	31.25%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	6.25%
Driven by the mission of the organization	2	12.50%
Recognition and reward for good performance	4	25.00%
Ongoing training on new technologies	0	0.00%
Competitive pay	12	75.00%
Good work/life balance	15	93.75%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	2	12.50%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	5	31.25%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	1	6.25%
Hybrid work opportunities	2	12.50%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	2	12.50%
Regular full-time hours	0	0.00%
Strong organizational culture	6	37.50%
Challenging work	1	6.25%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	4	25.00%
Focus on employee safety	0	0.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	0	0.00%
No change	13	81.25%
More difficult	3	18.75%

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17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	0	0.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	2	66.67%
Lack of technical skills	0	0.00%
Lack of soft skills	0	0.00%
Lack of work experience	0	0.00%
Our organization's geographic location	0	0.00%
Market competition/high demand	1	33.33%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	2	66.67%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	0	0.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	0	0.00%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	0	0.00%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	12.50%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	25.00%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	6.25%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	9	56.25%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	6.25%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	5	31.25%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	12.50%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	12.50%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	6	37.50%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	3	18.75%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	1	6.25%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	6	37.50%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	5	31.25%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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Report Cut: Real Estate Rental & Leasing

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	7	43.75%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	4	25.00%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	7	43.75%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	6	37.50%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	1	6.25%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	6	37.50%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	1	6.25%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	2	12.50%
Creating/redefining policies	3	18.75%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	2	12.50%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	3	18.75%
N/A	4	25.00%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	4	25.00%
No	6	37.50%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	6	37.50%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	3	18.75%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	1	6.25%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	10	62.50%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	2	12.50%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	15	93.75%
Paid lump sum awards	0	0.00%
Paid variable/bonus awards	6	37.50%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	15	93.75%
Paying lump sum awards	0	0.00%
Paying variable/bonus awards	6	37.50%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	9	56.25%	8	50.00%
Increased standard wages	7	43.75%	8	50.00%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	4	25.00%	4	25.00%
Implemented or increased variable pay	2	12.50%	1	6.25%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%	1	6.25%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	1	6.25%	2	12.50%

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27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	3	18.75%	3	18.75%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	3	18.75%	2	12.50%
Invest in new technology	8	50.00%	12	75.00%
Invest in equipment	5	31.25%	7	43.75%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	4	25.00%	5	31.25%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	1	6.25%	3	18.75%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	4	25.00%	3	18.75%
Increase training budget	0	0.00%	3	18.75%
Increase total rewards communication/education	2	12.50%	3	18.75%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	4	25.00%	3	18.75%
Increase recruiting emphasis	1	6.25%	1	6.25%
Pay above market rates	3	18.75%	3	18.75%
Enhance the benefits package	1	6.25%	1	6.25%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	2	12.50%	2	12.50%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	2	12.50%	1	6.25%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	2	12.50%	3	18.75%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	1	6.25%	1	6.25%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	2	12.50%	3	18.75%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	2	12.50%	2	12.50%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	0	0.00%	1	6.25%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	2	12.50%	1	6.25%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Reduce training budget	1	6.25%	1	6.25%
Limiting employee travel	4	25.00%	3	18.75%
Hiring freezes	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	1	6.25%	1	6.25%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	1	6.25%
Freezing compensation increases	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	2	12.50%	2	12.50%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 16

Report Cut: Real Estate Rental & Leasing

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	1	6.25%	2	12.50%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	7	43.75%	3	18.75%
Increasing presence on social media	9	56.25%	2	12.50%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	4	25.00%	3	18.75%
Partnering with brand influencers	1	6.25%	1	6.25%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	2	12.50%	2	12.50%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	8	50.00%	2	12.50%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	3	18.75%	1	6.25%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 16

Report Cut: Real Estate Rental & Leasing

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	10	62.50%	2	12.50%	0	0.00%
Website content production	9	56.25%	3	18.75%	0	0.00%
Marketing content production	8	50.00%	4	25.00%	2	12.50%
Other content production	8	50.00%	3	18.75%	0	0.00%
Digital personal assistant	10	62.50%	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	11	68.75%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Customer relationship management	10	62.50%	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Inventory management	9	56.25%	2	12.50%	0	0.00%
Product recommendations	10	62.50%	0	0.00%	1	6.25%
Accounting	11	68.75%	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Supply chain operations	11	68.75%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	9	56.25%	3	18.75%	0	0.00%
Application and screening management	8	50.00%	3	18.75%	0	0.00%
Audience segmentation	11	68.75%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	9	56.25%	2	12.50%	2	12.50%
Idea generation	6	37.50%	3	18.75%	3	18.75%
Process automation	9	56.25%	1	6.25%	3	18.75%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	8	50.00%	0	0.00%	2	12.50%

# **Retail Trade**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 22

Report Cut: Retail Trade

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	22	100.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	0	0.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	10	45.45%
100 to 249	5	22.73%
250 to 499	3	13.64%
500 to 999	2	9.09%
1,000 or more	2	9.09%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	16	72.73%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	2	9.09%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	4	18.18%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 22

Report Cut: Retail Trade

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	6	27.3%
Stay the same	10	45.5%
Decline	6	27.3%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	4.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	9	40.9%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	5	22.7%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	4	18.2%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	3	13.6%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	9.1%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	12	54.5%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	2	9.1%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	4.5%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	5	22.7%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	16	76.19%	16	76.19%
Mild	5	23.81%	5	23.81%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	1	4.76%	1	4.76%
Mild	10	47.62%	9	42.86%
Serious	10	47.62%	11	52.38%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	14	66.67%	12	57.14%
Mild	5	23.81%	7	33.33%
Serious	2	9.52%	2	9.52%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	5	23.81%	3	14.29%
Mild	14	66.67%	15	71.43%
Serious	2	9.52%	3	14.29%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 22

Report Cut: Retail Trade

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	2	9.52%	2	9.52%
Mild	11	52.38%	11	52.38%
Serious	8	38.10%	8	38.10%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	4	19.05%	1	4.76%
Mild	8	38.10%	10	47.62%
Serious	9	42.86%	10	47.62%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	2	9.52%	2	10.00%
Mild	10	47.62%	9	45.00%
Serious	9	42.86%	9	45.00%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	4	20.00%	4	20.00%
Mild	8	40.00%	6	30.00%
Serious	8	40.00%	10	50.00%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	4	19.05%	4	19.05%
Mild	8	38.10%	7	33.33%
Serious	9	42.86%	10	47.62%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	8	40.00%	8	38.10%
Mild	7	35.00%	7	33.33%
Serious	5	25.00%	6	28.57%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	9	42.86%	8	38.10%
Mild	8	38.10%	8	38.10%
Serious	4	19.05%	5	23.81%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	5	23.81%	5	23.81%
Mild	10	47.62%	10	47.62%
Serious	6	28.57%	6	28.57%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	6	28.57%	5	23.81%
Mild	8	38.10%	6	28.57%
Serious	7	33.33%	10	47.62%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	4	20.00%	4	19.05%
Mild	10	50.00%	9	42.86%
Serious	6	30.00%	8	38.10%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 22

Report Cut: Retail Trade

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	6	28.57%	4	19.05%
Mild	12	57.14%	13	61.90%
Serious	3	14.29%	4	19.05%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	8	38.10%	5	23.81%
Mild	6	28.57%	9	42.86%
Serious	7	33.33%	7	33.33%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	10	47.62%	10	47.62%
Mild	4	19.05%	4	19.05%
Serious	7	33.33%	7	33.33%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	15	71.43%	12	57.14%
Mild	3	14.29%	6	28.57%
Serious	3	14.29%	3	14.29%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	2	9.52%	1	4.76%
Mild	8	38.10%	12	57.14%
Serious	11	52.38%	8	38.10%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	3	14.29%	1	4.76%
Mild	10	47.62%	13	61.90%
Serious	8	38.10%	7	33.33%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	4	19.05%	3	14.29%
Mild	11	52.38%	10	47.62%
Serious	6	28.57%	8	38.10%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	2	9.52%	2	9.52%
Mild	10	47.62%	9	42.86%
Serious	9	42.86%	10	47.62%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	10	47.62%	7	33.33%
Mild	10	47.62%	13	61.90%
Serious	1	4.76%	1	4.76%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	9	42.86%	6	28.57%
Mild	10	47.62%	11	52.38%
Serious	2	9.52%	4	19.05%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	5	23.81%	7	33.33%
Mild	10	47.62%	7	33.33%
Serious	6	28.57%	7	33.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 22

Report Cut: Retail Trade

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	7	33.33%	6	28.57%
Mild	11	52.38%	11	52.38%
Serious	3	14.29%	4	19.05%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	5	23.81%	5	23.81%
Mild	13	61.90%	10	47.62%
Serious	3	14.29%	6	28.57%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	8	38.10%	6	28.57%
Mild	2	9.52%	3	14.29%
Serious	1	4.76%	1	4.76%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	5	2	2	21
Product obsolescence	0	1	1	3
Changing customer preferences	1	2	2	9
Customer's ability to afford	3	3	5	20
Talent acquisition	3	2	2	15
Talent retention	4	1	2	16
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	0	2	5
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	1	2	1	8
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	1	0	2
Ability to maintain quality product/service	0	0	1	1
Cost of materials	0	3	0	6
Cost of equipment	1	1	0	5
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	0	0	0	0
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	1	0	2
Employee safety	0	0	0	0
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	0	0	0
Inflation	1	0	1	4
Employee engagement	0	1	0	2
Developing future leaders	1	1	2	7
Cybersecurity	0	0	0	0
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	0	0
Political uncertainty	0	0	0	0
Talent skills gap	0	0	0	0
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 22

Report Cut: Retail Trade

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%
Slightly less than planned	6	27.27%
As planned	10	45.45%
Slightly more than planned	5	22.73%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	11	50.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	8	36.36%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	9.09%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	11	50.00%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	9	40.91%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	1	4.55%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	6	28.57%	5	23.81%
No	15	71.43%	16	76.19%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	17	80.95%	13	68.42%
No	4	19.05%	6	31.58%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	15	71.43%	14	73.68%
No	6	28.57%	5	26.32%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
No	9	100.00%	9	100.00%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	13	76.47%	12	75.00%
No	4	23.53%	4	25.00%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 22

Report Cut: Retail Trade

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	14	66.67%
None due to this	7	33.33%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	1	4.76%
None due to this	20	95.24%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	19	90.48%
None due to this	2	9.52%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	17	80.95%
None due to this	4	19.05%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	10	47.62%
None due to this	11	52.38%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	4	19.05%
None due to this	17	80.95%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 22

Report Cut: Retail Trade

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	4.76%
Somewhat dissatisfied	7	33.33%	3	14.29%	4	19.05%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	14.29%	4	19.05%	5	23.81%
Somewhat satisfied	7	33.33%	9	42.86%	8	38.10%
Very satisfied	4	19.05%	5	23.81%	3	14.29%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	7	31.82%	2	9.09%	1	4.55%
Middle managers	6	27.27%	2	9.09%	4	18.18%
Professional staff (non-managers)	10	45.45%	5	22.73%	6	27.27%
Skilled production workers	4	18.18%	4	18.18%	7	31.82%
Unskilled production workers	4	18.18%	4	18.18%	10	45.45%
Entry-level office workers	6	27.27%	3	13.64%	6	27.27%
Entry-level non-office workers	6	27.27%	2	9.09%	7	31.82%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	6	27.27%	3	13.64%	3	13.64%
Service workers	6	27.27%	2	9.09%	5	22.73%
Other	1	4.55%	0	0.00%	1	4.55%
None	2	9.09%	2	9.09%	2	9.09%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 22

Report Cut: Retail Trade

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	11	50.00%	11	50.00%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	5	22.73%	12	54.55%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	5	22.73%	15	68.18%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	6	27.27%	15	68.18%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	9	40.91%	1	4.55%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	9	40.91%	1	4.55%
Increasing starting salaries	12	54.55%	9	40.91%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	5	22.73%	7	31.82%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	2	9.09%	3	13.64%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	3	13.64%	1	4.55%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	2	9.09%	5	22.73%
Shortening the hiring process	7	31.82%	2	9.09%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	7	31.82%	3	13.64%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	8	36.36%	6	27.27%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	2	9.09%	3	13.64%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	9	40.91%	1	4.55%
Participating in job fairs	7	31.82%	1	4.55%
Building/increasing brand awareness	8	36.36%	4	18.18%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	2	9.09%	3	13.64%
Using formal candidate tracking system	7	31.82%	2	9.09%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	6	27.27%
Team incentives	6	27.27%
Employee referral bonuses	12	54.55%
Year-end bonuses	8	36.36%
Spot bonuses	2	9.09%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	2	9.09%
Retention bonuses	4	18.18%
Commissions	6	27.27%
Project bonuses	2	9.09%
Profit sharing	3	13.64%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	3	13.64%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 22

Report Cut: Retail Trade

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	4	18.18%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	9	40.91%
Resources to do their job effectively	2	9.09%
Mentoring opportunities	0	0.00%
Competitive/robust health benefits	7	31.82%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	4.55%
Driven by the mission of the organization	4	18.18%
Recognition and reward for good performance	13	59.09%
Ongoing training on new technologies	1	4.55%
Competitive pay	18	81.82%
Good work/life balance	17	77.27%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	3	13.64%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	7	31.82%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	1	4.55%
Hybrid work opportunities	5	22.73%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	4	18.18%
Strong organizational culture	5	22.73%
Challenging work	0	0.00%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	6	27.27%
Focus on employee safety	0	0.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	1	4.76%
No change	7	33.33%
More difficult	13	61.90%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 22

Report Cut: Retail Trade

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	1	7.69%
Lack of qualified candidates	12	92.31%
Lack of technical skills	4	30.77%
Lack of soft skills	1	7.69%
Lack of work experience	6	46.15%
Our organization's geographic location	1	7.69%
Market competition/high demand	4	30.77%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	6	46.15%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	1	7.69%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	1	7.69%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	2	15.38%
Other *	3	23.08%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	5	23.81%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	7	33.33%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	4.76%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	8	38.10%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	5	23.81%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	7	33.33%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	9.52%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	7	33.33%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	3	13.64%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	3	13.64%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	2	9.09%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	4.55%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	2	9.09%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	13.64%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	7	31.82%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 22

Report Cut: Retail Trade

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	9	40.91%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	2	9.09%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	8	36.36%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	1	4.55%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	1	4.55%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	5	22.73%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	1	4.55%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	1	4.55%
Creating/redefining policies	4	18.18%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	1	4.55%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	5	22.73%
N/A	4	18.18%
Other *	1	4.55%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	2	9.52%
No	13	61.90%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	6	28.57%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	3	14.29%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	5	23.81%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	10	47.62%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	3	14.29%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 22

Report Cut: Retail Trade

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	19	86.36%
Paid lump sum awards	0	0.00%
Paid variable/bonus awards	6	27.27%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	2	9.09%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	2	9.09%
Uncertain	1	4.55%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	17	77.27%
Paying lump sum awards	0	0.00%
Paying variable/bonus awards	7	31.82%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	2	9.09%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	1	4.55%
Uncertain	5	22.73%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	15	68.18%	8	36.36%
Increased standard wages	13	59.09%	10	45.45%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	10	45.45%	10	45.45%
Implemented or increased variable pay	3	13.64%	2	9.09%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	1	4.55%	2	9.09%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 22

Report Cut: Retail Trade

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	4	18.18%	4	18.18%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	4	18.18%	5	22.73%
Invest in new technology	9	40.91%	9	40.91%
Invest in equipment	10	45.45%	7	31.82%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	2	9.09%	3	13.64%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	2	9.09%	3	13.64%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	3	13.64%	3	13.64%
Increase training budget	4	18.18%	5	22.73%
Increase total rewards communication/education	3	13.64%	9	40.91%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	2	9.09%	2	9.09%
Increase recruiting emphasis	5	22.73%	4	18.18%
Pay above market rates	2	9.09%	3	13.64%
Enhance the benefits package	4	18.18%	5	22.73%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	3	13.64%	4	18.18%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	4	18.18%	5	22.73%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	1	4.55%	3	13.64%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	1	4.55%	2	9.09%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	1	4.55%	3	13.64%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	1	4.55%
Hold off on investing in new technology	3	13.64%	1	4.55%
Hold off on investing in equipment	3	13.64%	1	4.55%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	1	4.55%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	2	9.09%	1	4.55%
Reduce training budget	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Limiting employee travel	3	13.64%	2	9.09%
Hiring freezes	1	4.55%	1	4.55%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	5	22.73%	3	13.64%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	4.55%	1	4.55%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	2	9.09%	2	9.09%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 22

Report Cut: Retail Trade

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	4	18.18%	0	0.00%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	8	36.36%	2	9.09%
Increasing presence on social media	15	68.18%	4	18.18%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	2	9.09%	2	9.09%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	7	31.82%	5	22.73%
Partnering with brand influencers	3	13.64%	2	9.09%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	7	31.82%	5	22.73%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	9	40.91%	7	31.82%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	5	22.73%	3	13.64%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 22

Report Cut: Retail Trade

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	12	54.55%	3	13.64%	0	0.00%
Website content production	10	45.45%	5	22.73%	2	9.09%
Marketing content production	8	36.36%	5	22.73%	3	13.64%
Other content production	10	45.45%	2	9.09%	1	4.55%
Digital personal assistant	10	45.45%	3	13.64%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	11	50.00%	2	9.09%	0	0.00%
Customer relationship management	9	40.91%	6	27.27%	1	4.55%
Inventory management	10	45.45%	3	13.64%	0	0.00%
Product recommendations	9	40.91%	3	13.64%	0	0.00%
Accounting	11	50.00%	2	9.09%	0	0.00%
Supply chain operations	12	54.55%	1	4.55%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	10	45.45%	3	13.64%	0	0.00%
Application and screening management	10	45.45%	3	13.64%	0	0.00%
Audience segmentation	12	54.55%	1	4.55%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	11	50.00%	4	18.18%	0	0.00%
Idea generation	5	22.73%	7	31.82%	1	4.55%
Process automation	9	40.91%	4	18.18%	0	0.00%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	9	40.91%	4	18.18%	0	0.00%

# **Services (Except Public Administration)**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 64

Report Cut: Services (Except Public Administration)

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	64	100.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	40	62.50%
100 to 249	9	14.06%
250 to 499	10	15.63%
500 to 999	2	3.13%
1,000 or more	3	4.69%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	20	31.25%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	0	0.00%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	43	67.19%
Public Sector/Government	1	1.56%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 64

Report Cut: Services (Except Public Administration)

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	24	37.5%
Stay the same	29	45.3%
Decline	11	17.2%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	1	1.6%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	26	40.6%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	17	26.6%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	11	17.2%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	4.7%
Do not know	6	9.4%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	3	4.7%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	33	51.6%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	11	17.2%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	5	7.8%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	1.6%
Do not know	11	17.2%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	55	94.83%	51	87.93%
Mild	2	3.45%	6	10.34%
Serious	1	1.72%	1	1.72%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	20	33.33%	18	30.00%
Mild	27	45.00%	24	40.00%
Serious	13	21.67%	18	30.00%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	40	70.18%	35	61.40%
Mild	12	21.05%	15	26.32%
Serious	5	8.77%	7	12.28%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	22	37.29%	19	32.20%
Mild	32	54.24%	30	50.85%
Serious	5	8.47%	10	16.95%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 64

Report Cut: Services (Except Public Administration)

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	22	37.29%	20	33.90%
Mild	26	44.07%	26	44.07%
Serious	11	18.64%	13	22.03%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	5	8.33%	3	5.00%
Mild	36	60.00%	33	55.00%
Serious	19	31.67%	24	40.00%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	6	9.84%	4	6.56%
Mild	34	55.74%	29	47.54%
Serious	21	34.43%	28	45.90%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	11	18.33%	10	16.67%
Mild	36	60.00%	30	50.00%
Serious	13	21.67%	20	33.33%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	10	16.67%	7	11.48%
Mild	25	41.67%	22	36.07%
Serious	25	41.67%	32	52.46%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	31	51.67%	28	47.46%
Mild	20	33.33%	22	37.29%
Serious	9	15.00%	9	15.25%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	30	51.72%	27	46.55%
Mild	25	43.10%	26	44.83%
Serious	3	5.17%	5	8.62%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	23	38.98%	21	36.21%
Mild	25	42.37%	25	43.10%
Serious	11	18.64%	12	20.69%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	24	40.68%	23	38.33%
Mild	25	42.37%	22	36.67%
Serious	10	16.95%	15	25.00%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	30	51.72%	28	48.28%
Mild	21	36.21%	22	37.93%
Serious	7	12.07%	8	13.79%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 64

Report Cut: Services (Except Public Administration)

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	27	47.37%	25	43.86%
Mild	17	29.82%	17	29.82%
Serious	13	22.81%	15	26.32%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	16	26.67%	13	21.67%
Mild	31	51.67%	30	50.00%
Serious	13	21.67%	17	28.33%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	31	51.67%	31	51.67%
Mild	15	25.00%	14	23.33%
Serious	14	23.33%	15	25.00%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	36	60.00%	35	58.33%
Mild	19	31.67%	17	28.33%
Serious	5	8.33%	8	13.33%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	7	11.67%	6	10.00%
Mild	36	60.00%	33	55.00%
Serious	17	28.33%	21	35.00%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	10	16.67%	10	16.67%
Mild	35	58.33%	32	53.33%
Serious	15	25.00%	17	28.33%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	5	8.33%	4	6.67%
Mild	33	55.00%	24	40.00%
Serious	22	36.67%	32	53.33%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	9	15.00%	7	11.67%
Mild	23	38.33%	23	38.33%
Serious	28	46.67%	29	48.33%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	21	35.00%	22	36.67%
Mild	26	43.33%	24	40.00%
Serious	13	21.67%	14	23.33%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	23	38.33%	17	28.33%
Mild	30	50.00%	25	41.67%
Serious	7	11.67%	17	28.33%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	17	28.33%	16	26.67%
Mild	15	25.00%	18	30.00%
Serious	29	48.33%	27	45.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 64

Report Cut: Services (Except Public Administration)

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	19	31.67%	15	25.00%
Mild	32	53.33%	32	53.33%
Serious	9	15.00%	13	21.67%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	24	40.00%	21	35.00%
Mild	26	43.33%	28	46.67%
Serious	8	13.33%	9	15.00%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	29	48.33%	28	46.67%
Mild	12	20.00%	12	20.00%
Serious	4	6.67%	5	8.33%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	1	0	0	3
Competition in general	5	6	3	30
Product obsolescence	0	1	2	4
Changing customer preferences	3	1	4	15
Customer's ability to afford	5	2	2	21
Talent acquisition	14	7	4	60
Talent retention	3	14	7	44
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	4	3	14
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	12	7	7	57
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	1	1	3
Ability to maintain quality product/service	2	0	0	6
Cost of materials	2	1	2	10
Cost of equipment	0	0	1	1
Taxes	0	0	3	3
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	2	0	7
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	0	0	0
Employee safety	2	0	2	8
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	1	0	2
Inflation	3	1	2	13
Employee engagement	2	1	8	16
Developing future leaders	1	5	1	14
Cybersecurity	2	1	1	9
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	1	0	2	5
A.I. technology and platforms	0	2	2	6
Political uncertainty	1	2	3	10
Talent skills gap	0	0	1	1
Unknown challenges	0	1	1	3
Other	1	2	0	7



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 64

Report Cut: Services (Except Public Administration)

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	6	9.38%
Slightly less than planned	9	14.06%
As planned	28	43.75%
Slightly more than planned	20	31.25%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	1	1.56%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	30	46.88%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	30	46.88%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	4	6.25%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	26	40.63%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	1.56%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	32	50.00%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	4	6.25%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	19	33.33%	14	25.00%
No	38	66.67%	42	75.00%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	42	67.74%	36	59.02%
No	20	32.26%	25	40.98%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	51	80.95%	39	63.93%
No	12	19.05%	22	36.07%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	2	12.50%	2	12.50%
No	14	87.50%	14	87.50%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	26	68.42%	24	64.86%
No	12	31.58%	13	35.14%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 64

Report Cut: Services (Except Public Administration)

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	2	3.23%
Some due to this	35	56.45%
None due to this	25	40.32%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	8	12.90%
None due to this	54	87.10%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	6	9.52%
Some due to this	51	80.95%
None due to this	6	9.52%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	3.23%
Some due to this	42	67.74%
None due to this	18	29.03%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	1.59%
Some due to this	36	57.14%
None due to this	26	41.27%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	1.61%
Some due to this	9	14.52%
None due to this	52	83.87%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 64

Report Cut: Services (Except Public Administration)

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	3	4.76%	0	0.00%	1	1.59%
Somewhat dissatisfied	7	11.11%	3	4.76%	10	15.87%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13	20.63%	14	22.22%	14	22.22%
Somewhat satisfied	29	46.03%	28	44.44%	23	36.51%
Very satisfied	11	17.46%	18	28.57%	15	23.81%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	23	35.94%	3	4.69%	2	3.13%
Middle managers	24	37.50%	5	7.81%	10	15.63%
Professional staff (non-managers)	22	34.38%	4	6.25%	25	39.06%
Skilled production workers	8	12.50%	0	0.00%	8	12.50%
Unskilled production workers	4	6.25%	2	3.13%	10	15.63%
Entry-level office workers	7	10.94%	4	6.25%	18	28.13%
Entry-level non-office workers	7	10.94%	3	4.69%	12	18.75%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	8	12.50%	1	1.56%	3	4.69%
Service workers	10	15.63%	5	7.81%	17	26.56%
Other	5	7.81%	0	0.00%	3	4.69%
None	6	9.38%	6	9.38%	6	9.38%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 64

Report Cut: Services (Except Public Administration)

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	22	34.38%	26	40.63%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	12	18.75%	25	39.06%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	15	23.44%	41	64.06%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	26	40.63%	39	60.94%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	22	34.38%	4	6.25%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	28	43.75%	3	4.69%
Increasing starting salaries	39	60.94%	14	21.88%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	16	25.00%	19	29.69%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	10	15.63%	12	18.75%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	12	18.75%	4	6.25%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	5	7.81%	14	21.88%
Shortening the hiring process	20	31.25%	2	3.13%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	23	35.94%	10	15.63%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	28	43.75%	15	23.44%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	7	10.94%	10	15.63%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	21	32.81%	5	7.81%
Participating in job fairs	21	32.81%	2	3.13%
Building/increasing brand awareness	24	37.50%	10	15.63%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	8	12.50%	5	7.81%
Using formal candidate tracking system	15	23.44%	3	4.69%
Other	1	1.56%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	17	26.56%
Team incentives	11	17.19%
Employee referral bonuses	26	40.63%
Year-end bonuses	21	32.81%
Spot bonuses	12	18.75%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	20	31.25%
Retention bonuses	11	17.19%
Commissions	10	15.63%
Project bonuses	3	4.69%
Profit sharing	3	4.69%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	22	34.38%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 64

Report Cut: Services (Except Public Administration)

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	12	18.75%
Language premiums	1	1.56%
Other*	1	1.56%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	36	56.25%
Resources to do their job effectively	14	21.88%
Mentoring opportunities	1	1.56%
Competitive/robust health benefits	20	31.25%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	1.56%
Driven by the mission of the organization	17	26.56%
Recognition and reward for good performance	13	20.31%
Ongoing training on new technologies	4	6.25%
Competitive pay	49	76.56%
Good work/life balance	50	78.13%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	12	18.75%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	16	25.00%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	15	23.44%
Hybrid work opportunities	14	21.88%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	4	6.25%
Regular full-time hours	7	10.94%
Strong organizational culture	14	21.88%
Challenging work	4	6.25%
Diverse workforce	3	4.69%
Vacation/paid time off	13	20.31%
Focus on employee safety	1	1.56%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	3	4.84%
No change	26	41.94%
More difficult	33	53.23%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 64

Report Cut: Services (Except Public Administration)

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	2	6.06%
Lack of qualified candidates	24	72.73%
Lack of technical skills	4	12.12%
Lack of soft skills	3	9.09%
Lack of work experience	7	21.21%
Our organization's geographic location	1	3.03%
Market competition/high demand	16	48.48%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	25	75.76%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	3	9.09%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	5	15.15%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	5	15.15%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	5	15.15%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	15	23.81%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	18	28.57%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	6	9.52%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	3	4.76%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	21	33.33%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	10	15.87%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	23	36.51%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	14	22.22%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	1.59%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	14	22.22%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	8	12.50%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	24	37.50%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	7	10.94%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	11	17.19%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	4.69%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	13	20.31%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 64

Report Cut: Services (Except Public Administration)

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	25	39.06%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	13	20.31%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	30	46.88%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	12	18.75%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	4	6.25%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	27	42.19%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	4	6.25%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	10	15.63%
Creating/redefining policies	7	10.94%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	7	10.94%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	12	18.75%
N/A	10	15.63%
Other *	0	0.00%

22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	3	4.84%
No	51	82.26%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	8	12.90%

23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	21	33.33%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	6	9.52%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	32	50.79%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	4	6.35%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 64

Report Cut: Services (Except Public Administration)

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	58	90.63%
Paid lump sum awards	6	9.38%
Paid variable/bonus awards	12	18.75%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	1	1.56%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	3	4.69%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	53	82.81%
Paying lump sum awards	8	12.50%
Paying variable/bonus awards	13	20.31%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	2	3.13%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	3	4.69%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	6	9.38%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	40	62.50%	30	46.88%
Increased standard wages	24	37.50%	17	26.56%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	26	40.63%	35	54.69%
Implemented or increased variable pay	3	4.69%	6	9.38%
Temporarily bumped pay	1	1.56%	0	0.00%
Other	3	4.69%	3	4.69%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	7	10.94%	7	10.94%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 64

Report Cut: Services (Except Public Administration)

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	13	20.31%	10	15.63%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	9	14.06%	9	14.06%
Invest in new technology	20	31.25%	20	31.25%
Invest in equipment	17	26.56%	17	26.56%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	4	6.25%	1	1.56%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	5	7.81%	3	4.69%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	6	9.38%	7	10.94%
Increase training budget	13	20.31%	21	32.81%
Increase total rewards communication/education	10	15.63%	12	18.75%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	14	21.88%	14	21.88%
Increase recruiting emphasis	14	21.88%	15	23.44%
Pay above market rates	7	10.94%	6	9.38%
Enhance the benefits package	10	15.63%	11	17.19%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	13	20.31%	15	23.44%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	6	9.38%	9	14.06%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	8	12.50%	8	12.50%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	5	7.81%	2	3.13%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	6	9.38%	5	7.81%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	4	6.25%	9	14.06%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	4	6.25%	4	6.25%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	2	3.13%	2	3.13%
Hold off on investing in equipment	2	3.13%	2	3.13%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	1	1.56%	1	1.56%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	1	1.56%	3	4.69%
Reduce training budget	2	3.13%	2	3.13%
Limiting employee travel	7	10.94%	8	12.50%
Hiring freezes	3	4.69%	4	6.25%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	1	1.56%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	4	6.25%	0	0.00%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	2	3.13%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	1.56%	2	3.13%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	1.56%	2	3.13%
Freezing compensation increases	1	1.56%	2	3.13%
Outsourcing roles or functions	2	3.13%	3	4.69%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 64

Report Cut: Services (Except Public Administration)

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	6	9.38%	3	4.69%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	25	39.06%	5	7.81%
Increasing presence on social media	37	57.81%	8	12.50%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	8	12.50%	1	1.56%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	13	20.31%	3	4.69%
Partnering with brand influencers	3	4.69%	2	3.13%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	13	20.31%	4	6.25%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	24	37.50%	9	14.06%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	15	23.44%	2	3.13%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 64

Report Cut: Services (Except Public Administration)

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	34	53.13%	7	10.94%	3	4.69%
Website content production	28	43.75%	14	21.88%	4	6.25%
Marketing content production	27	42.19%	14	21.88%	3	4.69%
Other content production	27	42.19%	10	15.63%	5	7.81%
Digital personal assistant	33	51.56%	7	10.94%	3	4.69%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	30	46.88%	8	12.50%	5	7.81%
Customer relationship management	32	50.00%	9	14.06%	4	6.25%
Inventory management	37	57.81%	4	6.25%	3	4.69%
Product recommendations	38	59.38%	2	3.13%	0	0.00%
Accounting	35	54.69%	4	6.25%	4	6.25%
Supply chain operations	39	60.94%	1	1.56%	1	1.56%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	33	51.56%	9	14.06%	5	7.81%
Application and screening management	34	53.13%	7	10.94%	3	4.69%
Audience segmentation	35	54.69%	2	3.13%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	29	45.31%	11	17.19%	3	4.69%
Idea generation	28	43.75%	10	15.63%	8	12.50%
Process automation	31	48.44%	10	15.63%	2	3.13%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	30	46.88%	5	7.81%	4	6.25%

# **Transportation & Warehousing**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Transportation & Warehousing

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	0	0.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	29	100.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	12	41.38%
100 to 249	5	17.24%
250 to 499	7	24.14%
500 to 999	1	3.45%
1,000 or more	4	13.79%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	23	79.31%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	1	3.45%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	2	6.90%
Public Sector/Government	3	10.34%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Transportation & Warehousing

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	12	41.4%
Stay the same	9	31.0%
Decline	8	27.6%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	3	10.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	12	41.4%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	4	13.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	9	31.0%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	3.4%
Do not know	0	0.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	3	10.3%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	16	55.2%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	8	27.6%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	3.4%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	0	0.0%
Do not know	1	3.4%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	24	92.31%	21	80.77%
Mild	2	7.69%	5	19.23%
Serious	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	6	21.43%	6	21.43%
Mild	12	42.86%	12	42.86%
Serious	10	35.71%	10	35.71%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	22	84.62%	21	77.78%
Mild	4	15.38%	5	18.52%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	3.70%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	9	33.33%	7	25.93%
Mild	14	51.85%	16	59.26%
Serious	4	14.81%	4	14.81%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Transportation & Warehousing

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	6	21.43%	4	14.29%
Mild	13	46.43%	20	71.43%
Serious	9	32.14%	4	14.29%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	3	10.71%	1	3.70%
Mild	14	50.00%	14	51.85%
Serious	11	39.29%	12	44.44%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	6	21.43%	5	17.86%
Mild	12	42.86%	12	42.86%
Serious	10	35.71%	11	39.29%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	8	28.57%	6	21.43%
Mild	15	53.57%	13	46.43%
Serious	5	17.86%	9	32.14%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	5	17.86%	5	17.86%
Mild	17	60.71%	15	53.57%
Serious	6	21.43%	8	28.57%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	14	50.00%	14	50.00%
Mild	11	39.29%	8	28.57%
Serious	3	10.71%	6	21.43%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	17	62.96%	16	59.26%
Mild	8	29.63%	9	33.33%
Serious	2	7.41%	2	7.41%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	5	18.52%	5	18.52%
Mild	18	66.67%	18	66.67%
Serious	4	14.81%	4	14.81%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	3	11.11%	2	7.41%
Mild	17	62.96%	17	62.96%
Serious	7	25.93%	8	29.63%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	12	48.00%	12	48.00%
Mild	10	40.00%	8	32.00%
Serious	3	12.00%	5	20.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Transportation & Warehousing

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	12	44.44%	11	40.74%
Mild	8	29.63%	9	33.33%
Serious	7	25.93%	7	25.93%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	6	22.22%	6	22.22%
Mild	14	51.85%	15	55.56%
Serious	7	25.93%	6	22.22%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	8	30.77%	7	28.00%
Mild	8	30.77%	10	37.04%
Serious	10	38.46%	8	29.63%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	19	73.08%	17	65.38%
Mild	7	26.92%	8	30.77%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	3.85%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	2	7.69%	3	11.54%
Mild	13	50.00%	15	57.69%
Serious	12	46.15%	9	34.62%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	6	23.08%	6	23.08%
Mild	16	61.54%	18	69.23%
Serious	5	19.23%	3	11.54%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	7	26.92%	5	19.23%
Mild	11	42.31%	10	38.46%
Serious	9	34.62%	10	38.46%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	3	11.54%	1	3.85%
Mild	12	46.15%	13	50.00%
Serious	13	50.00%	14	53.85%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	16	61.54%	15	57.69%
Mild	10	38.46%	10	38.46%
Serious	1	3.85%	2	7.69%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	12	46.15%	9	34.62%
Mild	11	42.31%	14	53.85%
Serious	4	15.38%	4	15.38%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	4	15.38%	3	11.54%
Mild	13	50.00%	15	57.69%
Serious	10	38.46%	9	34.62%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Transportation & Warehousing

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	8	30.77%	7	26.92%
Mild	14	53.85%	15	57.69%
Serious	5	19.23%	5	19.23%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	5	19.23%	5	19.23%
Mild	15	57.69%	13	50.00%
Serious	4	15.38%	5	19.23%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	9	34.62%	9	34.62%
Mild	7	26.92%	6	23.08%
Serious	1	3.85%	2	7.69%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	6	3	3	27
Product obsolescence	0	0	0	0
Changing customer preferences	2	2	0	10
Customer's ability to afford	3	0	0	9
Talent acquisition	6	2	1	23
Talent retention	1	4	2	13
Ability to pay for benefits costs	1	0	2	5
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	0	7	2	16
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	1	0	1	4
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	0	1	4
Cost of materials	1	3	0	9
Cost of equipment	1	1	1	6
Taxes	0	0	2	2
Cost of regulatory compliance	0	1	1	3
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	1	0	1	4
Employee safety	1	1	2	7
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	0	0	0
Inflation	0	1	3	5
Employee engagement	0	0	0	0
Developing future leaders	1	1	1	6
Cybersecurity	0	0	4	4
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	0	0	0
Political uncertainty	1	1	0	5
Talent skills gap	0	0	1	1
Unknown challenges	0	1	0	2
Other	1	0	0	3

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Transportation & Warehousing

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%
Slightly less than planned	6	20.69%
As planned	16	55.17%
Slightly more than planned	5	17.24%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	2	6.90%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	16	55.17%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	11	37.93%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	2	6.90%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	14	48.28%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	1	3.45%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	14	48.28%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	9	32.14%	9	32.14%
No	19	67.86%	19	67.86%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	21	75.00%	19	67.86%
No	7	25.00%	9	32.14%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	22	78.57%	19	67.86%
No	6	21.43%	9	32.14%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	7	43.75%	7	43.75%
No	9	56.25%	9	56.25%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	19	76.00%	20	80.00%
No	6	24.00%	5	20.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Transportation & Warehousing

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	1	3.57%
Some due to this	18	64.29%
None due to this	9	32.14%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	5	17.86%
None due to this	23	82.14%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	24	85.71%
None due to this	4	14.29%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	3.57%
Some due to this	24	85.71%
None due to this	3	10.71%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	19	67.86%
None due to this	9	32.14%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	5	17.86%
None due to this	23	82.14%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Transportation & Warehousing

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	6	21.43%	4	14.29%	6	21.43%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	10.71%	7	25.00%	6	21.43%
Somewhat satisfied	9	32.14%	9	32.14%	9	32.14%
Very satisfied	10	35.71%	8	28.57%	7	25.00%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	10	34.48%	4	13.79%	0	0.00%
Middle managers	11	37.93%	2	6.90%	5	17.24%
Professional staff (non-managers)	11	37.93%	5	17.24%	8	27.59%
Skilled production workers	13	44.83%	4	13.79%	8	27.59%
Unskilled production workers	6	20.69%	3	10.34%	8	27.59%
Entry-level office workers	2	6.90%	1	3.45%	8	27.59%
Entry-level non-office workers	3	10.34%	0	0.00%	6	20.69%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	3	10.34%	0	0.00%	2	6.90%
Service workers	5	17.24%	1	3.45%	6	20.69%
Other	1	3.45%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None	1	3.45%	2	6.90%	2	6.90%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Transportation & Warehousing

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	15	51.72%	17	58.62%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	6	20.69%	14	48.28%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	8	27.59%	17	58.62%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	14	48.28%	20	68.97%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	8	27.59%	2	6.90%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	16	55.17%	2	6.90%
Increasing starting salaries	19	65.52%	8	27.59%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	9	31.03%	7	24.14%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	1	3.45%	2	6.90%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	4	13.79%	1	3.45%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	1	3.45%	6	20.69%
Shortening the hiring process	3	10.34%	1	3.45%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	4	13.79%	2	6.90%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	9	31.03%	4	13.79%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	4	13.79%	5	17.24%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	10	34.48%	2	6.90%
Participating in job fairs	13	44.83%	1	3.45%
Building/increasing brand awareness	9	31.03%	5	17.24%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	3	10.34%	3	10.34%
Using formal candidate tracking system	12	41.38%	4	13.79%
Other	0	0.00%	1	3.45%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	12	41.38%
Team incentives	5	17.24%
Employee referral bonuses	20	68.97%
Year-end bonuses	10	34.48%
Spot bonuses	9	31.03%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	11	37.93%
Retention bonuses	9	31.03%
Commissions	8	27.59%
Project bonuses	2	6.90%
Profit sharing	6	20.69%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	4	13.79%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Transportation & Warehousing

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	4	13.79%
Language premiums	1	3.45%
Other*	0	0.00%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	14	48.28%
Resources to do their job effectively	3	10.34%
Mentoring opportunities	0	0.00%
Competitive/robust health benefits	15	51.72%
Opportunities to connect with others	2	6.90%
Driven by the mission of the organization	4	13.79%
Recognition and reward for good performance	11	37.93%
Ongoing training on new technologies	3	10.34%
Competitive pay	27	93.10%
Good work/life balance	18	62.07%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	3	10.34%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	9	31.03%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	1	3.45%
Hybrid work opportunities	4	13.79%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	1	3.45%
Regular full-time hours	8	27.59%
Strong organizational culture	8	27.59%
Challenging work	1	3.45%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	11	37.93%
Focus on employee safety	1	3.45%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	4	13.79%
No change	13	44.83%
More difficult	12	41.38%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Transportation & Warehousing

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	0	0.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	9	75.00%
Lack of technical skills	1	8.33%
Lack of soft skills	4	33.33%
Lack of work experience	5	41.67%
Our organization's geographic location	2	16.67%
Market competition/high demand	4	33.33%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	5	41.67%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	2	16.67%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	1	8.33%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	5	41.67%
Other *	1	8.33%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	13	46.43%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	14.29%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	1	3.57%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	10	35.71%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	6	21.43%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	9	32.14%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	3.57%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	1	3.57%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	11	39.29%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	1	3.45%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	9	31.03%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	2	6.90%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	17.24%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	10.34%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	11	37.93%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Transportation & Warehousing

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	9	31.03%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	5	17.24%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	12	41.38%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	5	17.24%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	2	6.90%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	10	34.48%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	0	0.00%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	1	3.45%
Creating/redefining policies	2	6.90%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	2	6.90%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	9	31.03%
N/A	4	13.79%
Other *	1	3.45%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	8	27.59%
No	15	51.72%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	6	20.69%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	8	27.59%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	4	13.79%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	13	44.83%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	4	13.79%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Transportation & Warehousing

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	28	96.55%
Paid lump sum awards	3	10.34%
Paid variable/bonus awards	9	31.03%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	1	3.45%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	26	89.66%
Paying lump sum awards	3	10.34%
Paying variable/bonus awards	8	27.59%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	1	3.45%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	1	3.45%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	2	6.90%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	18	62.07%	16	55.17%
Increased standard wages	12	41.38%	13	44.83%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	12	41.38%	11	37.93%
Implemented or increased variable pay	2	6.90%	1	3.45%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%	1	3.45%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	3	10.34%	1	3.45%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Transportation & Warehousing

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	3	10.34%	4	13.79%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	4	13.79%	3	10.34%
Invest in new technology	12	41.38%	14	48.28%
Invest in equipment	12	41.38%	12	41.38%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	1	3.45%	1	3.45%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	1	3.45%	2	6.90%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	1	3.45%	2	6.90%
Increase training budget	5	17.24%	8	27.59%
Increase total rewards communication/education	2	6.90%	5	17.24%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	7	24.14%	8	27.59%
Increase recruiting emphasis	7	24.14%	8	27.59%
Pay above market rates	3	10.34%	2	6.90%
Enhance the benefits package	1	3.45%	4	13.79%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	11	37.93%	13	44.83%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	1	3.45%	5	17.24%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	1	3.45%	0	0.00%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	2	6.90%	1	3.45%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	3	10.34%	9	31.03%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	1	3.45%	1	3.45%
Hold off on investing in new technology	1	3.45%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	2	6.90%	1	3.45%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	3	10.34%	3	10.34%
Reduce training budget	2	6.90%	1	3.45%
Limiting employee travel	8	27.59%	6	20.69%
Hiring freezes	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Implementing furloughs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	2	6.90%	0	0.00%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	3.45%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	3.45%	1	3.45%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	1	3.45%	2	6.90%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Transportation & Warehousing

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	4	13.79%	1	3.45%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	11	37.93%	5	17.24%
Increasing presence on social media	21	72.41%	4	13.79%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	2	6.90%	2	6.90%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	6	20.69%	2	6.90%
Partnering with brand influencers	3	10.34%	2	6.90%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	5	17.24%	1	3.45%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	12	41.38%	2	6.90%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	6	20.69%	2	6.90%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 29

Report Cut: Transportation & Warehousing

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	13	44.83%	4	13.79%	0	0.00%
Website content production	11	37.93%	5	17.24%	1	3.45%
Marketing content production	9	31.03%	7	24.14%	1	3.45%
Other content production	11	37.93%	4	13.79%	1	3.45%
Digital personal assistant	15	51.72%	1	3.45%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	13	44.83%	3	10.34%	0	0.00%
Customer relationship management	14	48.28%	2	6.90%	0	0.00%
Inventory management	13	44.83%	1	3.45%	2	6.90%
Product recommendations	14	48.28%	3	10.34%	0	0.00%
Accounting	14	48.28%	2	6.90%	0	0.00%
Supply chain operations	12	41.38%	4	13.79%	1	3.45%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	15	51.72%	2	6.90%	1	3.45%
Application and screening management	15	51.72%	1	3.45%	0	0.00%
Audience segmentation	15	51.72%	1	3.45%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	13	44.83%	2	6.90%	2	6.90%
Idea generation	13	44.83%	2	6.90%	4	13.79%
Process automation	12	41.38%	4	13.79%	0	0.00%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	12	41.38%	4	13.79%	0	0.00%

# **Utilities**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 16

Report Cut: Utilities

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	0	0.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	16	100.00%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	11	68.75%
100 to 249	1	6.25%
250 to 499	4	25.00%
500 to 999	0	0.00%
1,000 or more	0	0.00%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	7	43.75%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	0	0.00%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	5	31.25%
Public Sector/Government	4	25.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 16

Report Cut: Utilities

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	4	25.0%
Stay the same	9	56.3%
Decline	3	18.8%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	12.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	8	50.0%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	3	18.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	6.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	2	12.5%
Do not know	0	0.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	12.5%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	9	56.3%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	3	18.8%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	6.3%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	6.3%
Do not know	0	0.0%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	14	93.33%	11	73.33%
Mild	1	6.67%	3	20.00%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	6.67%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	6	40.00%	5	33.33%
Mild	7	46.67%	8	53.33%
Serious	2	13.33%	2	13.33%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	12	85.71%	8	57.14%
Mild	2	14.29%	5	35.71%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	7.14%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	8	53.33%	7	46.67%
Mild	6	40.00%	5	33.33%
Serious	1	6.67%	3	20.00%

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Report Cut: Utilities

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	2	12.50%	2	12.50%
Mild	9	56.25%	9	56.25%
Serious	5	31.25%	5	31.25%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	1	6.25%
Mild	8	50.00%	6	37.50%
Serious	8	50.00%	9	56.25%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Mild	10	62.50%	9	56.25%
Serious	5	31.25%	7	43.75%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	1	6.25%	1	6.67%
Mild	14	87.50%	10	66.67%
Serious	1	6.25%	4	26.67%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	11	68.75%	11	68.75%
Serious	5	31.25%	5	31.25%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	5	33.33%	4	26.67%
Mild	8	53.33%	10	66.67%
Serious	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	6	40.00%	6	40.00%
Mild	8	53.33%	7	46.67%
Serious	1	6.67%	2	13.33%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	7	43.75%	7	43.75%
Serious	9	56.25%	9	56.25%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	8	50.00%	8	50.00%
Serious	8	50.00%	8	50.00%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	8	53.33%	7	46.67%
Mild	6	40.00%	7	46.67%
Serious	1	6.67%	1	6.67%



# 2025 National Business Trends

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Report Cut: Utilities

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	2	12.50%	3	18.75%
Mild	8	50.00%	8	50.00%
Serious	6	37.50%	5	31.25%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	1	6.25%	2	12.50%
Mild	13	81.25%	12	75.00%
Serious	2	12.50%	2	12.50%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	2	12.50%	2	12.50%
Mild	5	31.25%	4	25.00%
Serious	9	56.25%	10	62.50%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	9	60.00%	9	60.00%
Mild	5	33.33%	5	33.33%
Serious	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Mild	10	66.67%	12	80.00%
Serious	5	33.33%	4	26.67%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	3	20.00%	2	13.33%
Mild	8	53.33%	9	60.00%
Serious	5	33.33%	5	33.33%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	2	13.33%	1	6.67%
Mild	7	46.67%	5	33.33%
Serious	7	46.67%	10	66.67%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Mild	4	26.67%	4	26.67%
Serious	12	80.00%	12	80.00%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	5	33.33%	4	26.67%
Mild	11	73.33%	10	66.67%
Serious	0	0.00%	2	13.33%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	3	20.00%	3	20.00%
Mild	11	73.33%	9	60.00%
Serious	2	13.33%	4	26.67%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	1	6.67%	0	0.00%
Mild	11	73.33%	9	60.00%
Serious	4	26.67%	7	46.67%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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Report Cut: Utilities

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? (continued)	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	1	6.67%	1	6.67%
Mild	12	80.00%	11	73.33%
Serious	3	20.00%	4	26.67%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	3	20.00%	4	26.67%
Mild	12	80.00%	10	66.67%
Serious	1	6.67%	2	13.33%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	6	40.00%	6	40.00%
Mild	6	40.00%	5	33.33%
Serious	0	0.00%	1	6.67%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	0	0	0	0
Competition in general	2	0	2	8
Product obsolescence	0	0	1	1
Changing customer preferences	0	1	0	2
Customer's ability to afford	2	0	3	9
Talent acquisition	0	3	3	9
Talent retention	1	1	1	6
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	0	1	1
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	0	2	0	4
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	1	0	5
Cost of materials	1	1	3	8
Cost of equipment	2	1	2	10
Taxes	0	0	0	0
Cost of regulatory compliance	2	0	0	6
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	0	0	0	0
Employee safety	1	1	0	5
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	0	0	0
Inflation	0	0	0	0
Employee engagement	0	1	0	2
Developing future leaders	0	1	0	2
Cybersecurity	3	0	0	9
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	2	0	4
Political uncertainty	1	0	0	3
Talent skills gap	0	1	0	2
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 16

Report Cut: Utilities

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%
Slightly less than planned	1	6.25%
As planned	9	56.25%
Slightly more than planned	5	31.25%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	1	6.25%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	7	43.75%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	9	56.25%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	6	37.50%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	0	0.00%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	10	62.50%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	0	0.00%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	8	57.14%	3	21.43%
No	6	42.86%	11	78.57%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	11	78.57%	11	73.33%
No	3	21.43%	4	26.67%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	12	80.00%	10	71.43%
No	3	20.00%	4	28.57%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	7	53.85%	7	53.85%
No	6	46.15%	6	46.15%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	6	46.15%	5	41.67%
No	7	53.85%	7	58.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 16

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10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	13	81.25%
None due to this	3	18.75%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	1	6.67%
Some due to this	1	6.67%
None due to this	13	86.67%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	1	6.25%
Some due to this	11	68.75%
None due to this	4	25.00%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	11	68.75%
None due to this	5	31.25%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	1	6.67%
Some due to this	10	66.67%
None due to this	4	26.67%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	0	0.00%
None due to this	15	100.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 16

Report Cut: Utilities

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	1	6.25%	0	0.00%	1	6.25%
Somewhat dissatisfied	2	12.50%	2	12.50%	1	6.25%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	6.25%	2	12.50%	1	6.25%
Somewhat satisfied	8	50.00%	8	50.00%	8	50.00%
Very satisfied	4	25.00%	4	25.00%	5	31.25%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	11	68.75%	4	25.00%	4	25.00%
Middle managers	3	18.75%	3	18.75%	4	25.00%
Professional staff (non-managers)	6	37.50%	5	31.25%	5	31.25%
Skilled production workers	7	43.75%	4	25.00%	4	25.00%
Unskilled production workers	4	25.00%	0	0.00%	1	6.25%
Entry-level office workers	2	12.50%	0	0.00%	2	12.50%
Entry-level non-office workers	2	12.50%	1	6.25%	2	12.50%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	3	18.75%	0	0.00%	4	25.00%
Service workers	3	18.75%	0	0.00%	2	12.50%
Other	3	18.75%	1	6.25%	3	18.75%
None	2	12.50%	2	12.50%	2	12.50%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 16

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13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	7	43.75%	5	31.25%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	4	25.00%	8	50.00%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	3	18.75%	8	50.00%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	6	37.50%	11	68.75%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	9	56.25%	1	6.25%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	6	37.50%	2	12.50%
Increasing starting salaries	10	62.50%	5	31.25%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	4	25.00%	4	25.00%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	2	12.50%	5	31.25%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	3	18.75%	3	18.75%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	2	12.50%	2	12.50%
Shortening the hiring process	3	18.75%	0	0.00%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	5	31.25%	3	18.75%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	7	43.75%	1	6.25%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	2	12.50%	2	12.50%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	7	43.75%	0	0.00%
Participating in job fairs	5	31.25%	1	6.25%
Building/increasing brand awareness	7	43.75%	2	12.50%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	2	12.50%	0	0.00%
Using formal candidate tracking system	7	43.75%	1	6.25%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	6	37.50%
Team incentives	0	0.00%
Employee referral bonuses	3	18.75%
Year-end bonuses	3	18.75%
Spot bonuses	4	25.00%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	1	6.25%
Retention bonuses	1	6.25%
Commissions	1	6.25%
Project bonuses	1	6.25%
Profit sharing	1	6.25%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	1	6.25%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	0	0.00%
Language premiums	0	0.00%
Other*	1	6.25%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	6	37.50%
Resources to do their job effectively	1	6.25%
Mentoring opportunities	1	6.25%
Competitive/robust health benefits	9	56.25%
Opportunities to connect with others	1	6.25%
Driven by the mission of the organization	5	31.25%
Recognition and reward for good performance	4	25.00%
Ongoing training on new technologies	0	0.00%
Competitive pay	15	93.75%
Good work/life balance	12	75.00%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	2	12.50%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	5	31.25%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	0	0.00%
Hybrid work opportunities	3	18.75%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	3	18.75%
Strong organizational culture	4	25.00%
Challenging work	0	0.00%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	3	18.75%
Focus on employee safety	1	6.25%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	0	0.00%
No change	4	25.00%
More difficult	12	75.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

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17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	1	8.33%
Lack of qualified candidates	8	66.67%
Lack of technical skills	6	50.00%
Lack of soft skills	1	8.33%
Lack of work experience	3	25.00%
Our organization's geographic location	4	33.33%
Market competition/high demand	4	33.33%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	3	25.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	0	0.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	2	16.67%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	1	8.33%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	4	33.33%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	4	25.00%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	12.50%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	12.50%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	8	50.00%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	4	25.00%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	4	25.00%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	12.50%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	6	37.50%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	6	37.50%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	1	6.25%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	0	0.00%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	3	18.75%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	6.25%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	4	25.00%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 16

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<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	7	43.75%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	5	31.25%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	7	43.75%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	1	6.25%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	3	18.75%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	7	43.75%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	0	0.00%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	1	6.25%
Creating/redefining policies	1	6.25%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	2	12.50%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	3	18.75%
N/A	3	18.75%
Other *	0	0.00%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	5	31.25%
No	9	56.25%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	2	12.50%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	9	56.25%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	0	0.00%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	6	37.50%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	1	6.25%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 16

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24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	16	100.00%
Paid lump sum awards	0	0.00%
Paid variable/bonus awards	3	18.75%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	16	100.00%
Paying lump sum awards	0	0.00%
Paying variable/bonus awards	5	31.25%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reducing hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	0	0.00%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	11	68.75%	13	81.25%
Increased standard wages	5	31.25%	7	43.75%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	10	62.50%	11	68.75%
Implemented or increased variable pay	0	0.00%	2	12.50%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	2	12.50%	1	6.25%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 16

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27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	0	0.00%	1	6.25%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	2	12.50%	1	6.25%
Invest in new technology	7	43.75%	8	50.00%
Invest in equipment	6	37.50%	8	50.00%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	0	0.00%	1	6.25%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	2	12.50%	3	18.75%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Increase training budget	1	6.25%	5	31.25%
Increase total rewards communication/education	3	18.75%	6	37.50%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	3	18.75%	2	12.50%
Increase recruiting emphasis	6	37.50%	8	50.00%
Pay above market rates	4	25.00%	5	31.25%
Enhance the benefits package	1	6.25%	3	18.75%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	1	6.25%	2	12.50%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	2	12.50%	2	12.50%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	2	12.50%	2	12.50%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	1	6.25%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	2	12.50%	4	25.00%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	1	6.25%	2	12.50%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in equipment	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce training budget	0	0.00%	1	6.25%
Limiting employee travel	3	18.75%	1	6.25%
Hiring freezes	2	12.50%	0	0.00%
Implementing furloughs	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	2	12.50%	0	0.00%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	1	6.25%	3	18.75%
Freezing compensation increases	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Outsourcing roles or functions	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 16

Report Cut: Utilities

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	0	0.00%	1	6.25%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	5	31.25%	1	6.25%
Increasing presence on social media	7	43.75%	1	6.25%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	2	12.50%	0	0.00%
Partnering with brand influencers	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	3	18.75%	1	6.25%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	2	12.50%	0	0.00%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	2	12.50%	1	6.25%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 16

Report Cut: Utilities

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	7	43.75%	5	31.25%	1	6.25%
Website content production	8	50.00%	4	25.00%	2	12.50%
Marketing content production	6	37.50%	5	31.25%	3	18.75%
Other content production	8	50.00%	2	12.50%	2	12.50%
Digital personal assistant	10	62.50%	3	18.75%	0	0.00%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	6	37.50%	4	25.00%	2	12.50%
Customer relationship management	7	43.75%	4	25.00%	1	6.25%
Inventory management	9	56.25%	2	12.50%	0	0.00%
Product recommendations	9	56.25%	1	6.25%	0	0.00%
Accounting	7	43.75%	3	18.75%	0	0.00%
Supply chain operations	8	50.00%	2	12.50%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	7	43.75%	3	18.75%	2	12.50%
Application and screening management	6	37.50%	3	18.75%	3	18.75%
Audience segmentation	8	50.00%	2	12.50%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	6	37.50%	4	25.00%	0	0.00%
Idea generation	6	37.50%	3	18.75%	2	12.50%
Process automation	6	37.50%	4	25.00%	1	6.25%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	7	43.75%	4	25.00%	2	12.50%

# **Wholesale Trade**

# 2025 National Business Trends

## Participant Demographics

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Wholesale Trade

Industry	# of Responses	% of Responses
Accommodation & Food Services	0	0.00%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0	0.00%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.00%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.00%
Construction	0	0.00%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Education Services	0	0.00%
Financial & Insurance	0	0.00%
Health Care & Social Assistance	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	0	0.00%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%
Real Estate Rental & Leasing	0	0.00%
Retail Trade	0	0.00%
Services (Except Public Administration)	0	0.00%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.00%
Utilities	0	0.00%
Wholesale Trade	49	100.00%

Company Size	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 to 99	23	46.94%
100 to 249	14	28.57%
250 to 499	6	12.24%
500 to 999	5	10.20%
1,000 or more	1	2.04%

Profit Status	# of Responses	% of Responses
For Profit - Privately Held	48	97.96%
For Profit - Publicly Traded	1	2.04%
Not-For-Profit/Nonprofit	0	0.00%
Public Sector/Government	0	0.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Wholesale Trade

1. I feel the overall U.S. economy in the next 12 months will:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Improve	16	32.7%
Stay the same	22	44.9%
Decline	11	22.4%

2. What phrase best describes your organization's expected business results for 2024 compared to 2023?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	2	4.1%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	20	40.8%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	10	20.4%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	11	22.4%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	5	10.2%
Do not know	1	2.0%

3. What phrase best describes your organization's projected business outlook for 2025 compared to 2024?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significant increase in sales/revenue or budget	4	8.2%
Slight increase in sales/revenue or budget	26	53.1%
Flat sales/revenue or budget	13	26.5%
Slight decrease in sales/revenue or budget	3	6.1%
Significant decrease in sales/revenue or budget	1	2.0%
Do not know	2	4.1%

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business?	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>International competition</b>				
Not at all	36	75.00%	33	68.75%
Mild	9	18.75%	9	18.75%
Serious	3	6.25%	6	12.50%
<b>Competition in general</b>				
Not at all	4	8.33%	3	6.38%
Mild	30	62.50%	30	63.83%
Serious	14	29.17%	14	29.79%
<b>Product obsolescence</b>				
Not at all	35	72.92%	32	66.67%
Mild	11	22.92%	12	25.00%
Serious	2	4.17%	4	8.33%
<b>Changing customer preferences</b>				
Not at all	19	39.58%	15	31.25%
Mild	25	52.08%	28	58.33%
Serious	4	8.33%	5	10.42%



# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Wholesale Trade

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Customer's ability to afford</b>				
Not at all	12	25.00%	12	25.00%
Mild	25	52.08%	27	56.25%
Serious	11	22.92%	9	18.75%
<b>Talent acquisition</b>				
Not at all	14	28.57%	8	16.33%
Mild	18	36.73%	24	48.98%
Serious	17	34.69%	17	34.69%
<b>Talent retention</b>				
Not at all	9	18.37%	7	14.58%
Mild	30	61.22%	31	64.58%
Serious	10	20.41%	10	20.83%
<b>Ability to pay for benefits costs</b>				
Not at all	13	27.08%	11	22.45%
Mild	23	47.92%	19	38.78%
Serious	12	25.00%	19	38.78%
<b>Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries</b>				
Not at all	11	22.45%	9	18.37%
Mild	27	55.10%	26	53.06%
Serious	11	22.45%	14	28.57%
<b>Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations</b>				
Not at all	30	61.22%	27	55.10%
Mild	16	32.65%	17	34.69%
Serious	3	6.12%	5	10.20%
<b>Ability to maintain quality of product/service</b>				
Not at all	36	75.00%	34	70.83%
Mild	11	22.92%	13	27.08%
Serious	1	2.08%	1	2.08%
<b>Cost of materials</b>				
Not at all	9	18.75%	9	19.15%
Mild	28	58.33%	30	63.83%
Serious	11	22.92%	8	17.02%
<b>Cost of equipment</b>				
Not at all	9	19.15%	9	19.15%
Mild	29	61.70%	30	63.83%
Serious	9	19.15%	8	17.02%
<b>Taxes</b>				
Not at all	12	25.53%	13	27.08%
Mild	28	59.57%	23	47.92%
Serious	7	14.89%	12	25.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Wholesale Trade

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Cost of regulatory compliance</b>				
Not at all	16	33.33%	16	33.33%
Mild	22	45.83%	18	37.50%
Serious	10	20.83%	14	29.17%
<b>Technology issues/utilizing the right systems</b>				
Not at all	12	25.00%	10	20.83%
Mild	26	54.17%	23	47.92%
Serious	10	20.83%	15	31.25%
<b>Employee safety</b>				
Not at all	20	41.67%	20	41.67%
Mild	15	31.25%	16	33.33%
Serious	13	27.08%	12	25.00%
<b>Work from home/remote work/hybrid work</b>				
Not at all	32	66.67%	30	63.83%
Mild	11	22.92%	14	29.79%
Serious	5	10.42%	3	6.38%
<b>Inflation</b>				
Not at all	4	8.33%	7	14.89%
Mild	26	54.17%	26	55.32%
Serious	18	37.50%	15	31.91%
<b>Employee engagement</b>				
Not at all	13	27.08%	11	23.40%
Mild	26	54.17%	27	57.45%
Serious	9	18.75%	9	19.15%
<b>Developing future leaders</b>				
Not at all	10	20.83%	7	14.89%
Mild	23	47.92%	25	53.19%
Serious	15	31.25%	17	36.17%
<b>Cybersecurity</b>				
Not at all	4	8.33%	4	8.51%
Mild	21	43.75%	16	34.04%
Serious	24	50.00%	28	59.57%
<b>Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion</b>				
Not at all	34	70.83%	34	72.34%
Mild	13	27.08%	13	27.66%
Serious	1	2.08%	1	2.13%
<b>A.I. technology and platforms</b>				
Not at all	24	50.00%	19	40.43%
Mild	21	43.75%	20	42.55%
Serious	4	8.33%	10	21.28%
<b>Political uncertainty</b>				
Not at all	15	31.25%	16	34.04%
Mild	20	41.67%	18	38.30%
Serious	13	27.08%	14	29.79%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Wholesale Trade

4. In your opinion, how serious are the following challenges to your business? <i>(continued)</i>	Short-Term		Long-Term	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Talent skills gap</b>				
Not at all	10	20.83%	13	27.66%
Mild	31	64.58%	25	53.19%
Serious	7	14.58%	10	21.28%
<b>Unknown challenges</b>				
Not at all	21	43.75%	19	40.43%
Mild	22	45.83%	24	51.06%
Serious	4	8.33%	4	8.51%
<b>Other</b>				
Not at all	27	56.25%	28	59.57%
Mild	5	10.42%	4	8.51%
Serious	2	4.17%	2	4.26%

5. In your industry, what are your top 3 greatest challenges to your business in 2024?	# of "1" Responses	# of "2" Responses	# of "3" Responses	Weighted Score
International competition	2	0	0	6
Competition in general	11	2	5	42
Product obsolescence	0	1	2	4
Changing customer preferences	1	5	1	14
Customer's ability to afford	7	1	2	25
Talent acquisition	4	8	4	32
Talent retention	4	7	2	28
Ability to pay for benefits costs	0	1	3	5
Ability to pay competitive wages/salaries	1	3	6	15
Pay equity concerns/minimum wage regulations	0	0	0	0
Ability to maintain quality product/service	1	0	0	3
Cost of materials	2	6	4	22
Cost of equipment	0	0	1	1
Taxes	0	0	1	1
Cost of regulatory compliance	1	1	0	5
Technology issues/utilizing the right systems	2	3	2	14
Employee safety	0	1	2	4
Work from home/remote work/hybrid work	0	0	0	0
Inflation	4	2	3	19
Employee engagement	0	3	0	6
Developing future leaders	3	1	1	12
Cybersecurity	2	1	3	11
Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion	0	0	0	0
A.I. technology and platforms	0	1	0	2
Political uncertainty	1	0	1	4
Talent skills gap	0	0	3	3
Unknown challenges	0	0	0	0
Other	1	0	1	4

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Wholesale Trade

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	6	12.24%
Slightly less than planned	13	26.53%
As planned	16	32.65%
Slightly more than planned	14	28.57%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	0	0.00%

7. For staffing/hiring in 2024, what was your organization primarily doing?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring/increasing staff levels (includes recalling layoffs, hiring temps or contract workers, and/or hiring new employees)	24	48.98%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	21	42.86%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	4	8.16%

8. For staffing/hiring in 2025, what is your organization primarily planning?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Hiring regular staff	23	46.94%
Utilizing temporary/contingent workers	4	8.16%
Maintaining staff levels and not adding to current staffing levels	19	38.78%
Reducing staff levels by attrition or layoff with no hiring plans	3	6.12%

9. Have you hired for any of these positions in 2024? Are you planning on hiring for these positions in 2025?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
<b>Executive</b>				
Yes	15	31.25%	6	13.04%
No	33	68.75%	40	86.96%
<b>Managerial, Supervisory, and Professional</b>				
Yes	33	68.75%	28	59.57%
No	15	31.25%	19	40.43%
<b>Office, Technical, and Service</b>				
Yes	39	79.59%	34	70.83%
No	10	20.41%	14	29.17%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Union)</b>				
Yes	4	26.67%	2	13.33%
No	11	73.33%	13	86.67%
<b>Production and Maintenance (Non-Union)</b>				
Yes	30	73.17%	26	65.00%
No	11	26.83%	14	35.00%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Wholesale Trade

10. To what extent are your hiring practices/plans due to the following?	% of Responses	# of Responses
<b>Newly created jobs</b>		
All due to this	3	6.12%
Some due to this	29	59.18%
None due to this	17	34.69%
<b>Newly acquired jobs through mergers/acquisitions</b>		
All due to this	1	2.08%
Some due to this	10	20.83%
None due to this	37	77.08%
<b>Replacing due to voluntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	2	4.17%
Some due to this	41	85.42%
None due to this	5	10.42%
<b>Replacing due to involuntary turnover</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	39	79.59%
None due to this	10	20.41%
<b>Replacing due to retirement</b>		
All due to this	0	0.00%
Some due to this	33	70.21%
None due to this	14	29.79%
<b>Replacing due to employee lack of desire to return to the workplace (continue remote/hybrid work)</b>		
All due to this	1	2.13%
Some due to this	10	21.28%
None due to this	36	76.60%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Wholesale Trade

11. How satisfied are you with your current efforts to recruit, onboard, and retain employees?	Recruit		Onboard		Retain	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Not at all satisfied	2	4.08%	2	4.08%	0	0.00%
Somewhat dissatisfied	10	20.41%	7	14.29%	8	16.33%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7	14.29%	11	22.45%	8	16.33%
Somewhat satisfied	22	44.90%	21	42.86%	25	51.02%
Very satisfied	8	16.33%	8	16.33%	8	16.33%

12. Which job groups are the most challenging to you with regards to recruitment, onboarding, and retention?	Recruitment		Onboarding		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Senior management	17	34.69%	3	6.12%	1	2.04%
Middle managers	13	26.53%	5	10.20%	5	10.20%
Professional staff (non-managers)	18	36.73%	6	12.24%	16	32.65%
Skilled production workers	20	40.82%	4	8.16%	12	24.49%
Unskilled production workers	10	20.41%	5	10.20%	14	28.57%
Entry-level office workers	14	28.57%	3	6.12%	13	26.53%
Entry-level non-office workers	6	12.24%	4	8.16%	11	22.45%
Experienced workers (25+ years of experience)	9	18.37%	2	4.08%	3	6.12%
Service workers	7	14.29%	1	2.04%	7	14.29%
Other	3	6.12%	0	0.00%	2	4.08%
None	2	4.08%	6	12.24%	4	8.16%

# 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Wholesale Trade

13. Has your organization implemented any of the following strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	Recruitment		Retention	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Filling jobs with existing staff that lack job skills but have potential to learn/grow	24	48.98%	25	51.02%
Focusing on existing staff retention in jobs where recruitment is difficult	11	22.45%	25	51.02%
Focusing on existing staff receiving additional training/development	10	20.41%	28	57.14%
Adjusting pay ranges upward	21	42.86%	30	61.22%
Broadening candidate search outside of local region	12	24.49%	3	6.12%
Starting/increasing use of social media for recruiting	20	40.82%	2	4.08%
Increasing starting salaries	31	63.27%	8	16.33%
Increasing/enhancing benefits packages	12	24.49%	10	20.41%
Increasing focus on remote work opportunities	4	8.16%	5	10.20%
Partnering with educational institutions to create a curriculum aligned with skill/talent needs	5	10.20%	3	6.12%
Exploring solutions for pay compression issues	1	2.04%	6	12.24%
Shortening the hiring process	8	16.33%	1	2.04%
Moving interviews/training to online/remote meetings	8	16.33%	5	10.20%
Utilizing technology to enhance and streamline processes	9	18.37%	8	16.33%
Conducting candidate experience surveys	3	6.12%	7	14.29%
Using temporary agencies, staffing agencies, or external recruiters	23	46.94%	4	8.16%
Participating in job fairs	11	22.45%	2	4.08%
Building/increasing brand awareness	11	22.45%	8	16.33%
Increasing the use of automation/artificial intelligence (A.I.) to perform tasks or functions	3	6.12%	2	4.08%
Using formal candidate tracking system	10	20.41%	2	4.08%
Other	1	2.04%	0	0.00%

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges?	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Individual incentives	17	34.69%
Team incentives	8	16.33%
Employee referral bonuses	31	63.27%
Year-end bonuses	25	51.02%
Spot bonuses	7	14.29%
Hiring (sign-on) bonuses	13	26.53%
Retention bonuses	6	12.24%
Commissions	15	30.61%
Project bonuses	2	4.08%
Profit sharing	9	18.37%
Hazard bonuses/pay	0	0.00%
Additional PTO	10	20.41%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Wholesale Trade

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>(continued)</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
<i>*Comments in Appendix</i>		
Discretionary 401(k) or retirement fund contribution	9	18.37%
Language premiums	3	6.12%
Other*	1	2.04%

15. What do you think are the top 5 most important factors prospective employees are looking for?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Flexibility in work hours	25	51.02%
Resources to do their job effectively	4	8.16%
Mentoring opportunities	3	6.12%
Competitive/robust health benefits	17	34.69%
Opportunities to connect with others	2	4.08%
Driven by the mission of the organization	4	8.16%
Recognition and reward for good performance	15	30.61%
Ongoing training on new technologies	2	4.08%
Competitive pay	42	85.71%
Good work/life balance	38	77.55%
Opportunities to enhance professional skills	5	10.20%
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	23	46.94%
Current technology	0	0.00%
Remote work opportunities	6	12.24%
Hybrid work opportunities	12	24.49%
A say in decisions about direction for projects	0	0.00%
Regular full-time hours	12	24.49%
Strong organizational culture	10	20.41%
Challenging work	2	4.08%
Diverse workforce	0	0.00%
Vacation/paid time off	17	34.69%
Focus on employee safety	0	0.00%

16. Has it become more or less difficult to hire employees within your industry?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less difficult	3	6.12%
No change	31	63.27%
More difficult	15	30.61%



## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Wholesale Trade

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of internal recruiting resources	0	0.00%
Lack of qualified candidates	12	80.00%
Lack of technical skills	7	46.67%
Lack of soft skills	2	13.33%
Lack of work experience	4	26.67%
Our organization's geographic location	1	6.67%
Market competition/high demand	3	20.00%
Candidates want more pay than we can/will offer	9	60.00%
Candidates are unwilling to work part-time/on call	1	6.67%
Candidates are unwilling to work in the office/in the field	3	20.00%
Candidates want more/different benefits than what we currently offer	1	6.67%
Candidates want more flexibility in work/life balance	1	6.67%
Other *	0	0.00%

18. What is your organization's approach toward remote work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	20	40.82%
Some staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	18	36.73%
Most staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	2	4.08%
All staff work remotely on a regular full-time basis	0	0.00%
N/A, we do not have remote staff	9	18.37%

19. What is your organization's approach toward hybrid work?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Few, if any, staff work on a hybrid schedule	9	18.37%
Some staff work on a hybrid schedule	22	44.90%
Most staff work on a hybrid schedule	6	12.24%
All staff work on a hybrid schedule	2	4.08%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	10	20.41%

20. For hybrid positions, how often do you expect them to work from your workplace?	# of Responses	% of Responses
1 day a week in office (employee's choice)	3	6.12%
2-3 days a week in office (employee's choice)	16	32.65%
4 days a week in office (employee's choice)	5	10.20%
1 day a week in office (pre-set dates)	1	2.04%
2-3 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	10	20.41%
4 days a week in office (pre-set dates)	5	10.20%
N/A, we do not have hybrid workers	10	20.41%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Wholesale Trade

<b>21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws?</b> <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Conducting internal pay audits	20	40.82%
Conducting formal pay equity analysis	8	16.33%
Establishing/updating a formal compensation structure	14	28.57%
Redefining/restructuring jobs	1	2.04%
Outsourcing compensation services to a third-party	3	6.12%
Conducting external compensation analysis' to compare internal positions with the external market	16	32.65%
Adopting compensation software/technology to make processes more efficient	1	2.04%
Exploring solutions for pay equity issues	3	6.12%
Creating/redefining policies	4	8.16%
Increasing supervisory/managerial training on pay equity and hiring decisions	2	4.08%
Improved tracking and documenting of employee pay levels based on justifiable factors (i.e., relevant experience, significant travel, seniority, etc.) to monitor and validate pay decisions	9	18.37%
N/A	10	20.41%
Other *	1	2.04%

<b>22. Do you ask applicants to provide prior pay history on your job application?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	8	16.33%
No	32	65.31%
No, our city/state law prohibits this inquiry	9	18.37%

<b>23. How does your organization conduct employee performance evaluations?</b>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Once-a-year performance evaluations	21	42.86%
Continuous, ongoing feedback system	6	12.24%
A combination of once-a-year performance evaluations and continuous feedback system	16	32.65%
We do not conduct annual or continuous performance evaluations	6	12.24%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Wholesale Trade

24. Which statements describe your organization's actual 2024 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	45	91.84%
Paid lump sum awards	8	16.33%
Paid variable/bonus awards	21	42.86%
Froze or red lined executives' wages/salaries	1	2.04%
Froze or red lined all positions' wages/salaries	1	2.04%
Reduced wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Reduced hours worked	0	0.00%
Uncertain	2	4.08%

25. Which statements describe your organization's projected 2025 wage/salary strategy?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increasing wages/salaries (Merit, General, COLA)	40	81.63%
Paying lump sum awards	9	18.37%
Paying variable/bonus awards	14	28.57%
Freezing or red lining executives' wages/salaries	0	0.00%
Freezing or red lining all positions' wages/salaries	3	6.12%
Reducing wages/salaries	1	2.04%
Reducing hours worked	2	4.08%
Uncertain	7	14.29%

26. Which of the following pay adjustments has your organization made or will make to account for higher wage demands?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Increased starting rates	38	77.55%	26	53.06%
Increased standard wages	21	42.86%	14	28.57%
Updated wage structures/pay ranges	18	36.73%	16	32.65%
Implemented or increased variable pay	0	0.00%	2	4.08%
Temporarily bumped pay	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
None - we have not or will not make any pay adjustments due to higher wage demands	5	10.20%	6	12.24%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Wholesale Trade

27. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to the employer	5	10.20%	7	14.29%
Increase of paid-time-off benefits	8	16.33%	5	10.20%
Invest in new technology	25	51.02%	29	59.18%
Invest in equipment	23	46.94%	24	48.98%
Outsource specific operations or positions (i.e. IT operations, or HR Director position)	2	4.08%	6	12.24%
Increase insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	2	4.08%
Increase or add use of bonuses/profit sharing	3	6.12%	5	10.20%
Increase training budget	9	18.37%	12	24.49%
Increase total rewards communication/education	6	12.24%	12	24.49%
Investing in data security to protect clients' data and integrity	9	18.37%	11	22.45%
Increase recruiting emphasis	5	10.20%	8	16.33%
Pay above market rates	3	6.12%	4	8.16%
Enhance the benefits package	6	12.24%	8	16.33%
Use data analytics to improve business strategy	12	24.49%	13	26.53%
Implement formal employee engagement programs	8	16.33%	11	22.45%
Increase in flexible work arrangements	5	10.20%	3	6.12%
Offer 100% remote work for positions we have not in the past	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer hybrid work for positions we have not in the past	1	2.04%	2	4.08%
Invest in A.I. technology and/or platforms	7	14.29%	9	18.37%

28. Is your organization continuing or planning to implement any of the following measures?	2024		2025	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Shift a larger share of healthcare costs to employees	5	10.20%	12	24.49%
Decrease of paid-time-off benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Hold off on investing in new technology	2	4.08%	1	2.04%
Hold off on investing in equipment	1	2.04%	1	2.04%
Reduce insurance/retirement benefits	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reduce bonuses/profit sharing	4	8.16%	4	8.16%
Reduce training budget	1	2.04%	1	2.04%
Limiting employee travel	9	18.37%	5	10.20%
Hiring freezes	4	8.16%	7	14.29%
Implementing furloughs	1	2.04%	2	4.08%
Reduce workforce (layoffs, etc.)	3	6.12%	2	4.08%
Reduce benefits package	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Reducing or eliminating services or products	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Using A.I. technology to perform specific tasks or work	3	6.12%	4	8.16%
Freezing compensation increases	0	0.00%	3	6.12%
Outsourcing roles or functions	3	6.12%	5	10.20%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Wholesale Trade

29. Is your organization continuing, or planning to implement within the next 12 months, any of the following marketing-related business trends?	Continuing		Planning to Implement	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Including live chat on company website to guide visitors and answer questions	7	14.29%	4	8.16%
Distributing customer surveys to track satisfaction	16	32.65%	6	12.24%
Increasing presence on social media	29	59.18%	10	20.41%
Adding live stream video to connect with customers/clients	5	10.20%	4	8.16%
Investing in digital advertisement tools	18	36.73%	4	8.16%
Partnering with brand influencers	4	8.16%	1	2.04%
Including interactive graphics or videos to website	10	20.41%	4	8.16%
Connecting social media to other marketing tools (Facebook Lead Ads, LinkedIn Lead Gen Forms, etc.)	17	34.69%	6	12.24%
Investing in analytics software/tools to track leads and customers	19	38.78%	8	16.33%

## 2025 National Business Trends

Number of Respondents = 49

Report Cut: Wholesale Trade

30. With the emergence of ChatGPT this year, many organizations have started looking at the function of A.I. in the workplace. Which of the below uses of A.I. is your organization considering or already implementing?	Not Considering		Considering		Implemented	
	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses	# of Responses	% of Responses
Customer service	21	42.86%	11	22.45%	0	0.00%
Website content production	17	34.69%	12	24.49%	4	8.16%
Marketing content production	14	28.57%	15	30.61%	6	12.24%
Other content production	17	34.69%	11	22.45%	3	6.12%
Digital personal assistant	20	40.82%	5	10.20%	2	4.08%
Cybersecurity/fraud management	17	34.69%	10	20.41%	3	6.12%
Customer relationship management	19	38.78%	10	20.41%	0	0.00%
Inventory management	20	40.82%	8	16.33%	1	2.04%
Product recommendations	21	42.86%	6	12.24%	0	0.00%
Accounting	22	44.90%	6	12.24%	0	0.00%
Supply chain operations	22	44.90%	6	12.24%	0	0.00%
Recruitment and talent sourcing	18	36.73%	10	20.41%	1	2.04%
Application and screening management	18	36.73%	8	16.33%	1	2.04%
Audience segmentation	18	36.73%	7	14.29%	0	0.00%
Process improvement	20	40.82%	6	12.24%	0	0.00%
Idea generation	18	36.73%	8	16.33%	2	4.08%
Process automation	20	40.82%	4	8.16%	1	2.04%
Instant messaging (i.e. Chatbots)	18	36.73%	6	12.24%	3	6.12%

# **Appendix**

## 2025 National Business Trends

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	78	7.62%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	28	2.73%
25% reduction in sales		
Acquisitions		
Because the Executives do not want to pay industry standards.		
Budget constraints		
Budget restraints, qualified talent		
Budget tightening		
Business was projected to be flat and we had periods of high spikes in sales that were not anticipated.		
Can not find skilled personnel to fulfill the positions we have open.		
Candidates would go through the interview process, go through the onboarding process, train for about a week or so and then they would not return to work.		
Cannot find quality people to work		
Can't find qualified prospects		
Capital Markets environment has been soft. Less investor movement means we haven't bought as many properties or had as much deal flow so haven't needed to hire.		
Change in shifts and Management.		
Changing plans to self perform work rather than sub-contract out		
Company performance		
Company restructuring		
Competition had challenges which brought us unexpected business		
Customers Cancelled/Delayed Electric Vehicle Programs		
Customers have put orders on hold		
Declining demand in markets we serve directly related to higher cost of borrowing (interest rates) and excess inventory at dealerships.		
Downturn and lack of talent		
Drop in revenue and substantial increases in Federal and states taxes are not allowing us to hire the way we want to.		
Due to customer demands we have paused hiring in many different locations and have opted not to backfill some SGA positions.		
Due to the changing economic climate, especially with the demand for EV fleet charging, we haven't been strategic in our product offering. We were often outbid for projects from larger companies - not because they had better technology, but because their profit margins were bigger and they could discount their product and absorb any downtime. We couldn't compete with that. Also, previous executive team did not manage revenue and profits very well.		
Efficiencies and lack of orders		
Either none of the applicants are qualified or they already have a great job		
Employees cost is too high		
Funds are tight right now, so we have not been rehiring as we lose people. We also haven't filled a couple of positions we had planned to fill.		
Going through unplanned layoffs		
Hard to find right talent		
Hiring additional artistic staff to support our youth music education programs		
Hiring Freeze		



## 2025 National Business Trends

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	78	7.62%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	28	2.73%
Hiring freeze due to finances and increased turnover		
Hiring more bus drivers due to service expansion and driver retention issues.		
Hiring more managers and professionals		
In 2024, we experienced a funding shortfall.		
Increase in business (specific product line growth) at a facility with small number of employees to manage the growth requiring additional headcount.		
Increased demand for product. Sales increase		
Industry slowed down and has not picked up like expected.		
Inflation		
Job cuts that started in October of 2023, then November 2023, then January 2024, and we are facing more cuts as we head to year end. However, we have an uptick in sales as we head into Q1 2025. Most hiring done in 2024 was for technical or office positions (but then those new hires ending being furloughed later); or replacing somebody who left.		
Lack of ability to provide a competitive wage, lack of ability to provide full time remote work option		
Lack of applicants to fill vacancies; most jobs require in-person; unable to offer more competitive wages or bonuses.		
Lack of new work programs		
LACK OF QUALIFIED TALENT		
Lack of qualified candidates		
Lack of sustained business requiring staff reduction		
Liftout of talent		
Loss of revenue due to worst fire in modern American History		
Lost revenue/contracts.		
Lower retention/higher turnover than anticipated		
Lower wages against the marketplace		
More orders		
New contract has allowed us to add additional staff members		
New positions and filling of positions from employees ending employment		
No new business coming in		
Not enough candidates		
One of our industry market segments has taken a considerable downturn and are not filling orders, resulting in a major loss of revenue.		
Ongoing turnover in addition to planned growth has created increased recruitment efforts.		
Our compensation is not up to standards		
Programs have stopped with no warning and never recovered		
Rapid growth in sales leading to a backlog in production.		
Reduction in business caused us to not hire as many employees.		
Reduction in Force; many projects that were awarded have been delayed, experienced a reduction in scope, or were canceled due to our Client's budget reductions.		
Required credentials		
Retirements		
Revenue off track		
Right sizing the organization; ensuring we have only the right people in the right seats.		

## 2025 National Business Trends

6. Has your organization been hiring in 2024 as originally planned? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Significantly less than planned - Why?*	78	7.62%
Significantly more than planned - Why?*	28	2.73%
Sales are down.		
Sales have been below budget so cannot justify the need or cost to hire.		
Shortage of healthcare providers. Also we are not able to provide a competitive wage due to being a non profit. It is a vicious cycle		
Significant drops in revenue and have done a layoff this year to attempt right sizing		
Slow down in business. Not backfilling positions or adding new.		
Slower sales		
The quantity of jobs are not available		
The resource strain to post the job, and sift through the garbage responses, to waisting time on no show interviews, to starting at a competitve wage while honoring longevity of current employees... the time to on board and train is a few months- and then to possibly start all over at any time. its alot		
Turnover		
Unable to attract talents		
Unable to find quality skilled employees		
Unable to find the right skill set for open positions.		
Unexpected growth		
Very high turnover - both short-term and long-term employees have left.		
We are a staffing company and our clients are not hiring with the inflation, employees are hard to find and keep.		
We are extremely slow. Our dealers and distributors have been on a buying freeze since late last year.		
We had more employee turnover in 2023 than expected, so hiring increased		
We had the largest RIF in our history at 17% which was unexpected and unplanned for		
We have a hiring freeze in the last half of 2024 that was not planned		
We have done a great job at keeping our talent.		
We have gone from 80 workers to 30 workers in 2024		
We have laid employees off due to lack of work.		
We have moved mortgage employees into open teller positions instead of hiring		
We have not had a need to hire more employees.		
We jumped on a new opportunity.		
We planned to hire 5-6 in 2024; we're up to 24 and it's September.		
we supposed to bring a new business but that didn't happened		
We've had higher rates of attrition which senior management had not anticipated.		

## 2025 National Business Trends

14. Has your organization implemented any of the following variable pay strategies to overcome recruitment or retention challenges? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Other	23	2.25%
100% ESOP		
Added sick and safe time on top of PTO offering		
Carried interest awards (long term incentive)		
Contribute to employee's HSA account		
Did not implement this year, but are continuing the items checked above.		
Educational Assistance		
ESOP		
ESOP just replaced our Profit Sharing		
Floating Holidays and Break Week		
FSA		
Holiday increases		
Mid Year Adjustments		
Onsite medical, tuition reimbursement, paid holiday week (Christmas)		
Paid Cobra benefits for new employees due to 90 day waiting period		
Promotion, foregoing formalized instruction for on-the-job training.		
PTO		
Relocation bonus		
Rewards---when able to do		
Shift premiums		
Straight time incentive for professionals on billable projects		
Trainer Premium, Lead Pay Premium, Shift Differentials, Weekend Shift Premium (36 hours paid for 40 hours)		
Years of Service \$/hr Wage Increase		

## 2025 National Business Trends

17. Why has it become more difficult to hire employees within your industry? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Other *	21	4.05%
Being a 24/7 organization		
Candidate issues with attendance (tardy, calling in)		
Candidates don't wish to work in manufacturing in our geographic location		
Candidates have limited availability and want to set their own schedule		
Candidates have many options for employment		
Can't pass the pre-employment drug screen		
Cost of job ads increasing rapidly		
Difficult work environment (Steel Foundry), Candidates with poor work history.		
Lack of follow-through, communication, or attendance by candidates during hiring process.		
Lack of college students choosing the field		
Lack of people showing up for interviews, lack of people able to pass a drug test		
Lack of work ethic and wanting to hold down a job		
More employees want the option to work from home within a job position that is not suitable for a work from home option.		
Not very many people in the work pool		
Physical effort requirements		
Since covid, it's really changed the mindset of people returning to work		
Starting schedule is not consistent		
The amount of paperwork that the state requires is growing.		
The impacts of the wildfire, continuous housing crisis/situation, high cost of living etc., is forcing more candidates/employees to move off island.		
We are such a niche part of AEC - no-one goes to school thinking they will become this.		
We primarily serve Korean clients, so we require bilingual employees and we are non-profit social organization.		

## 2025 National Business Trends

21. Given the national spotlight on pay equity, how is your organization minimizing risk and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws? <i>*Comments in Appendix</i>	# of Responses	% of Responses
Other *	16	1.56%
AAP		
AAP		
All employees are treated equally on pay, as we use a salary scale by position and all above State and Federal Minimum wage.		
All entry level starts at the same wage, regardless. Other positions hire to a range, but typical department is 1-5 people, so easy to review.		
Annual review of all salaries		
Creating equity among pay structure with new acquisitions to align with company.		
Not doing anything		
Our CBA defines pay increases and maximums for the length of the contract.		
Reviewing wages internally each time a new employee is hired, compare to current incumbents		
Use HEC pay survey as guide		
Wage Scale		
We are not doing any of these. when we should be.		
WE DO NOT HAVE PAY EQUITY ISSUES		
We have a very structured wage matrix for specific positions. Not much differentiation based on performance or length of service. We take Oregon's Equal Pay pretty literally, some in part due to the annual minimum wage increases		
We use the TEA Survey and the AEC Wage Analysis to compare our wages to the local communities and our industry		
With a PEO they alert to any pay equity issues.		