

Survey tool tested at local job fair

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It's midday on a Thursday. Do you know what your employees are doing?

Despite your best efforts, they may be at a job fair.

At a recent Lancaster County job fair, 326 attendees completed a comprehensive work-force survey, which revealed, among other things, that nearly 60 percent were already employed. Forty-two percent rated their current employer as "pretty good."

Among the other findings:

Of the attendees, the largest group — 24 percent — was between 41 and 50 years old.

Of 230 respondents, 50 percent said their current pay "could be better."

Out with the old ...

The survey was conducted with a new web-driven surveying tool designed to provide instantaneous results. The Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Industry used it to poll attendees at its sixth annual Fall 2000 Job Fair on Sept. 21, and plans to use it again at its upcoming business exposition on Oct. 25 and 26.

Job fair survey respondents wrote their answers by hand,

Please see Survey on page 24

as the chamber's online system was not up and running at the time. After the chamber gathered all the responses, they were entered into the survey analysis program and extrapolated.

- Of 236 respondents, 25 percent said their current hourly pay is between \$8.01 and \$10; 22 percent said they make between \$6 and \$8; and 17 percent reported earning more than \$15;

- Of 300 respondents, an overwhelming

majority — 43 percent — said they want a job that pays more than \$12 an hour; and

- The top three benefits that 326 respondents said they would want in their next job are: health insurance, 63 percent; paid vacation, 57 percent; and career advancement opportunities within the company, 45 percent.

Surprise, surprise

Some answers surprised chamber members and work-force consultant Ira Wolfe, president of Success Performance Solutions. The Leola-based work-force and strategic planning company is marketing the product.

"What shocked the heck out of the chamber and me, too, was that the majority of people looking for jobs were over 40-years-old," said Wolfe, president of Success Performance Solutions. "Another interesting fact we found was that people believe career advancement is more important than saving for retirement."

Success Performance Solutions charges clients \$2,500 for the basic survey package, which includes up to 15 questions, a 30-day survey license, set-up, survey design consulting and customized reporting, Wolfe said.

The survey engine is valuable because it provides immediate findings upon the data's entry, Wolfe explained. Firestone/Bridgestone would have been an ideal client, he said, because the beleaguered tire manufacturer would have learned how best to handle its recent Ford SUV crisis.

"There is no need to hire a consulting company to come in and analyze data for three months, which can be too time-consuming and expensive for the client," Wolfe said. "And the program can create pie charts and bar graphs in no time flat."

Pleased with the "pilot program," Wolfe said there will be two or three computers hooked up to the survey database at the chamber's business exposition so people can respond online.

By the end of the two-day event, the chamber will have gathered all the data. The findings from the exposition and the job fair will be combined and released to the public Nov. 30 during a Lancaster County work-force summit, Wolfe said.

"At the summit, we will be able to provide people with live, up-to-date work-force data for the first time," said Sandi Thompson, manager of the chamber's work-force readiness division. "This new data will enable us to determine if there's a shortage of work force and to identify skill level gaps. Once we do that, we can develop a community plan to address these needs."

Thompson added she hopes to complete a random sampling of between 1,000 and 1,500 people. She plans to survey one of the local school districts and shoppers at Park City Center, Lancaster.

Rodney Cox, president and CEO of InterVey Inc., the dot-com survey company that created the new polling technology, said product users download a designer to create their own survey, which they can view online before publishing it. The user is sent a secure URL to access the data bank and create a survey of unlimited length.

The company is based in Metairie, La., a suburb of New Orleans.

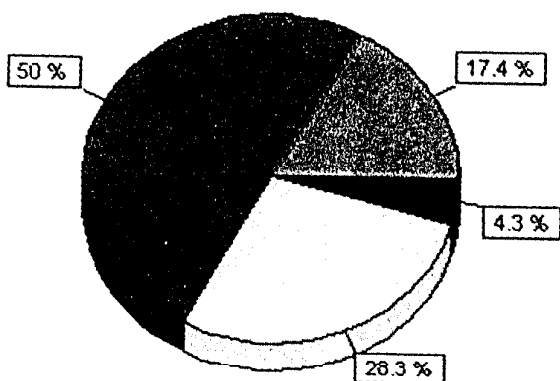
After 30 days, all the clients' stored data is destroyed and the user is eliminated from the server. However, the users can download their stored data into Microsoft Excel and convert it into HTML-language for future use, Cox said.

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*Sandi Thompson,
The Lancaster
Chamber of
Commerce and
Industry*

How would you rate your current pay?

Chart shows responses of 230 attendees.



40	Unacceptable
115	Could be better
65	Acceptable for the job I do
10	Excellent