

Perspectives of Professionals Changing Careers in a Turbulent Economy

Talent: The Future of Metro St. Louis in the Knowledge Economy – Supplemental Report

June 2011



Contents

Contents.....2

Section 1 Background.....3

Section 2 Survey Respondents.....4

Section 3 Outlook.....10

Section 4 The Job Search Experience.....15

Section 5 Recommendations17

Section 6 Appendix.....38

Section 1 Background

St. Louis and the Great Recession

As was true for most metro areas across the United States, shock waves ricocheted around St. Louis during the Great Recession of 2007-2009. Turmoil that started in national financial and housing sectors reverberated throughout the economy. Many St. Louis area firms quickly re-assessed risk and sought to avoid the worst by modifying business plans, changing product lines, reducing labor costs, reorganizing, merging, or – when all else failed -- closing their doors. Even the strongest firms battened down the hatches in the face of a global economic storm.

The region's labor force was shaken by these events. Between the first quarter of 2008 (when the metro area was at its employment peak) and the first quarter of 2010 (its trough), the St. Louis MSA lost 78,400 jobs – 5.7 percent of its total employment base.ⁱ The St. Louis metro unemployment rate of 9.4 percent in December 2010 was a bit lower (.6 percentage points) than one year earlier, but remained slightly higher than that of many peer metro areas and the U.S. as a whole.

No comprehensive data base exists to quantify all lay-offs that occurred in the region during that period, but the St. Louis RCGA assembled as much information as possible through Missouri and Illinois WARN notices and reports from the local media. This process documented 25,932 lay-offs between 2007 and 2009. All industry sectors were affected, but five of them accounted for 80 percent of the identified lay-offs: manufacturing (47 percent); financial services (11 percent); pharmaceutical / medical (8 percent); transportation / distribution (7 percent); personal services (7 percent). Businesses throughout the metro economy continued to shed workers in 2010. Employment began to expand in the first quarter of 2011, but not at a fast enough pace to significantly reduce elevated unemployment levels.

Impact on the Area's Talent Pool

Numerous studies substantiate the fact that low-income and lower-skilled workers lost jobs disproportionately during the Great Recession. In St. Louis, as in other economic markets, the unemployment rate was highest among individuals with the lowest levels of educational attainment.

It would not be accurate to conclude from such statistics, however, that the adverse impacts of the Great Recession were confined to those without higher education. The RCGA and its economic development partners noticed very early in the downturn that professionals with specialized, in-demand skill sets were also among those losing employment. In particular, a number of early reductions-in-force and business closures displaced experienced information technology professionals who are deemed essential to business attraction and growth in times of economic health. The economic development partners were concerned that the region might lose a significant number of these tech-savvy professionals to other metro regions if steps were not taken to retain and re-engage them in jobs in the region as quickly (and as painlessly) as possible.

BounceBack St. Louis

The desire to retain skilled talent to meet future business demand motivated the creation of a new initiative, BounceBack St. Louis, which was business-led and funded by the Missouri Division of Workforce Development through the Workforce Investment Boards of Saint Louis County and the City of St. Louis. This public-private partnership aimed specifically to connect the transitioning IT workforce with the needs of companies across all industry sectors in the St. Louis market. It took the RCGA into a whole new area of talent development, and it significantly expanded the breadth of services offered through the Missouri Career Center system.

Between late 2007 and the end of 2010, BounceBack St. Louis served more than 2,000 professionals in career transition in the St. Louis market. The program gradually expanded its original IT focus to include professionals in science, engineering, finance, education, and other fields. Through a variety of programmatic activities, the partners got to know our customers well. Among the many lessons learned from them are two that led to the survey described in this report.

- 1) The economy is in a state of continuous change, with sectors restructuring, occupations churning, and in-demand skill sets something of a 'moving target,' at best. Supporting well-educated professionals in finding new work is far more complicated than answering on-line want ads; it often requires reassessing skills and experience, re-training to new demands, and reinventing one's career in response to very dynamic conditions.
- 2) Past recessions and traditional career pathway models do not tell us all we need to know about the route skilled individuals must take to land new opportunity in a 21st Century global economy. Some of the most reliable information about how to support this process must come from the individuals who are 'in the trenches' today, experiencing it themselves.

30 Days of Good Ideas

To capture up-to-date and relevant data about how the St. Louis region can best retain and re-engage talent in the current economy, the St. Louis RCGA and its BounceBack St. Louis partners sponsored a broad survey of dislocated workers. The survey was administered during the month of April 2011, and asked respondents who had involuntarily lost their jobs in the St. Louis market to describe their experiences in career transition and to provide the region with "30 Days of Good Ideas" about how to better support them.

IHS Global Insight, Inc. *Summary of U.S. Metro Unemployment / Employment Forecasts*. Prepared for the U.S. Conference of Mayors 79th Winter Meeting. January 2011.

Section 2 Survey Respondents

Survey Methodology

A 16-question survey instrument was designed by the St. Louis RCGA and posted for on-line administration via Survey Monkey. The questions were intended to gather the perspectives of professionals who had experienced a lay-off in the St. Louis market, emphasizing our interest in 'good ideas' that can be implemented to better support transitioning professionals in the St. Louis market. It was intended that the results of this survey would inform the metropolitan talent development strategy underway with funding from a DOL Regional Innovation Grant and also help shape the future of the BounceBack St. Louis program.

Outreach began on April 1, 2011 with the distribution of an electronic and hard-copy message (see page right). The RCGA and BounceBack St. Louis partners reached out to the target audience through the following means:

- a lead article in the BounceBack St. Louis newsletter and on the www.bouncebackstl.org web site
- an email blast to professionals who received outplacement services through Right Management between 2008 and present day
- an email blast to a St. Louis area listserv maintained by the Missouri Career Centers
- an email announcement to members of the St. Louis Chapter of the BDPA (Black Data Processors Association)
- manned table display at Gateway to Innovation conference in St. Louis
- information made available to directors and job counselors at four Workforce Investment Boards and five area community colleges
- announcements at all events sponsored during the month of April by BounceBack St. Louis and the Initiative for Creative Comebacks
- a brief in the classified "Jobs" section of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*
- announcements on discussion boards for three LinkedIn Groups: St. Louis Job Angels, St. Louis Science Professionals, and St. Louis Chapter of the NAAHR (National Association of African Americans in HR)

Calling everyone who's been up close and personal with the Great Recession.

If you were LAID OFF, DOWNSIZED, MERGED OVER, DOUBLED-UP, OR OTHERWISE PUT OUT BY THE TUMULTUOUS ECONOMY OF THE PAST THREE YEARS, we want to hear from you!

Throughout April 2011, BounceBack St. Louis is sponsoring ...

30 Days of Good Ideas

a survey of folks who've tried to make a good career change in a not-so-good market







We want to know:

- how you're feeling about the economy these days
- what dream job you have in mind
- what worked and what didn't work during your job search, and
- what the St. Louis region needs to do to ensure the success of talented people like you.

This is a really big, community-wide, on-line survey that will close on April 30th. We will release the results and discuss the recommendations at a free event on May 12, 2011.

Don't miss this opportunity to voice your perspective through BounceBack's 30 Days of Good Ideas. Access the survey now at www.surveymonkey.com/s/BounceBack

To sign up now for the May 12th release event or for more information, visit www.bouncebackstl.org

Characteristics of the Survey Respondents

In response to this outreach, a total of 397 individuals completed the survey during the 30 days in which it was open. The charts that follow describe the characteristics of the respondents by occupation, education, employment status, and duration of job search.

Two points are worthy of special mention.

- 1) The survey respondents are much more highly educated than the St. Louis area population as a whole. A full 73 percent of those answering the survey indicated that they have bachelors' or higher degrees – more than twice the percentage reported to the 2009 American Community Survey by St. Louis' working-age population as a whole (32 percent).

For that reason, these survey results should not be construed as representative of the 'typical' displaced worker. Rather, these results provide an important *complement* to what we know about the broader universe of those displaced in the recession. It has a very useful message for public and private officials who are concerned about retaining a high-skill workforce as the economy improves.

- 2) Despite the high educational level of survey respondents, most members of the sample did not find new work quickly. Slightly less than one-third (31.5 percent) landed a new job within six months of a lay-off. More than 21 percent were out of work between 12 and 24 months. Remarkably, 12.3 percent looked for work for more than 24 months. One of every ten respondents indicated that he / she had been 'in and out of several jobs during the past three years.'

This fact speaks to the complexity of talent re-engagement, even for those who are seemingly the best equipped to succeed.

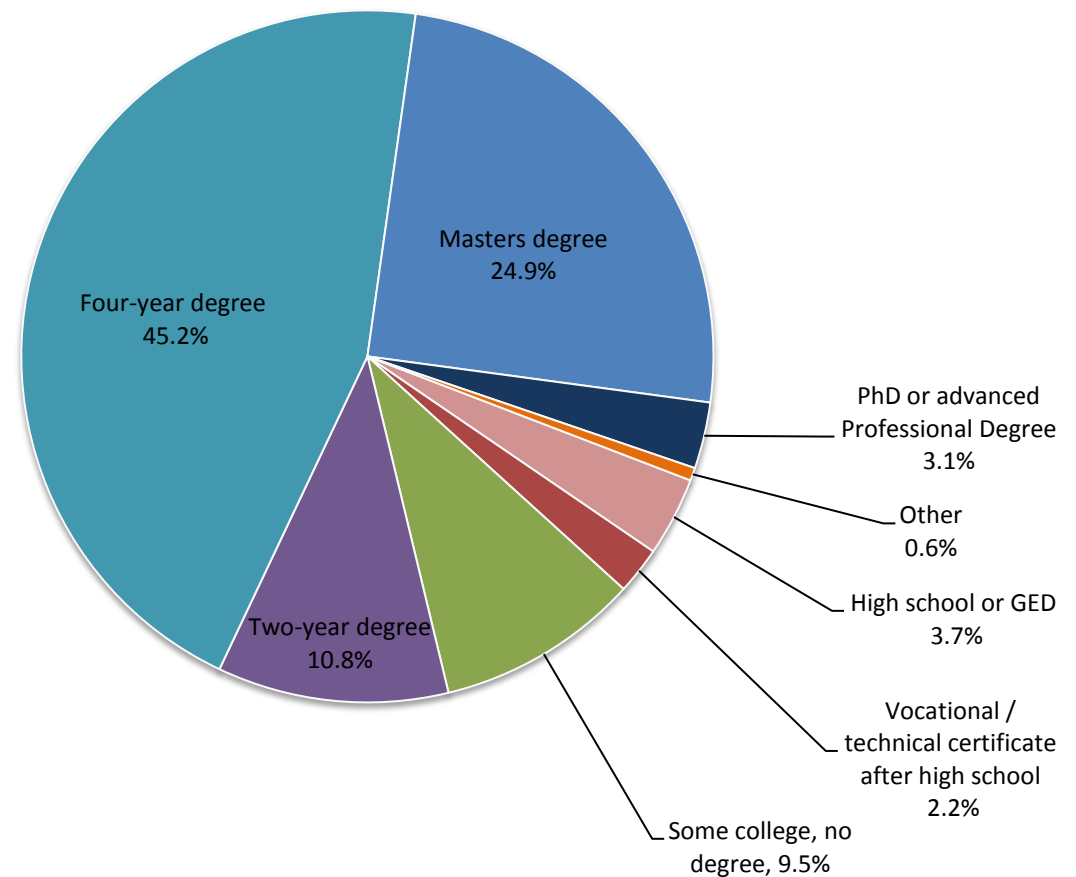
What is your occupation or career interest?

- More than one of four respondents is in a business, finance, or legal occupation.
- Almost one of five is an IT or engineering professional.
- Fewer than six percent identified with the goods producing sector.

Category	Respondents	Percentage of Total
Business, Finance, Legal	85	27.4%
Information Technology, Engineering	58	18.7%
Sales, Marketing, Communications	51	16.5%
Health Science and Healthcare	42	13.5%
Education, Career Development, Counseling	35	11.3%
Miscellaneous	21	6.8%
Goods Production, Distribution	18	5.8%
Total	310	100%

What is the highest level of formal education that you completed?

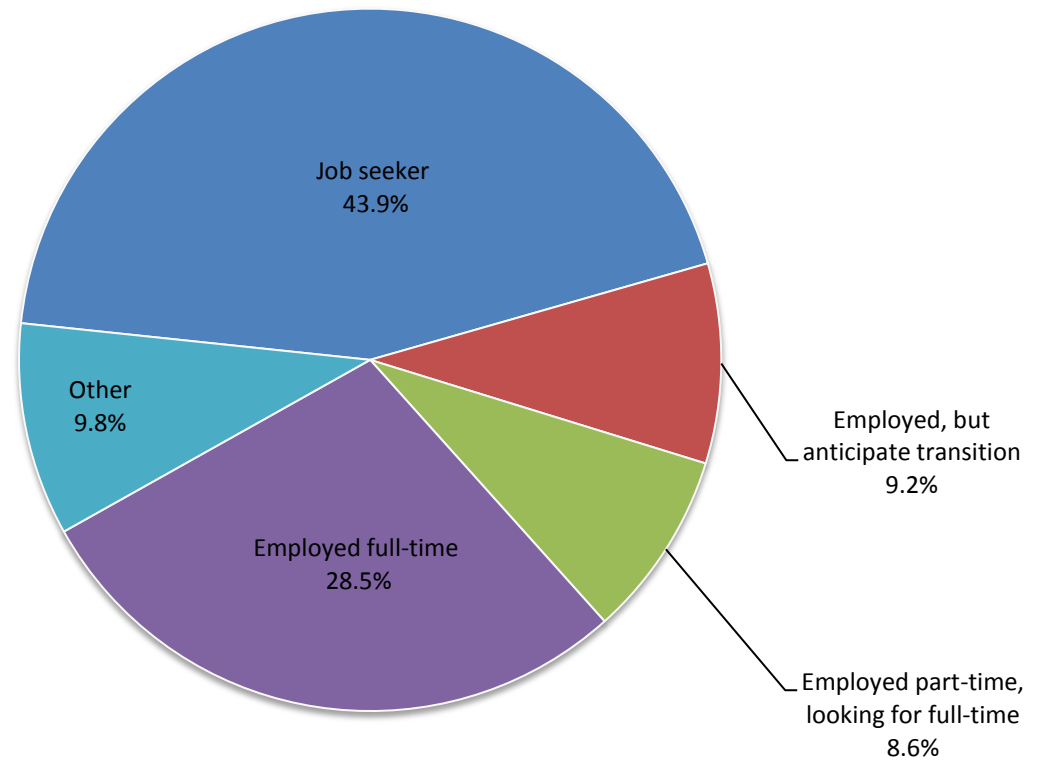
- 375 individuals responded
- 273 respondents (73%) have a BA degree or higher - more than twice that of the general working-age population (32%).
- The percentage of respondents with post-secondary credentials exceeds that of the St. Louis area population as a whole in every category.



Additional details on responses to this question available in the Appendix.

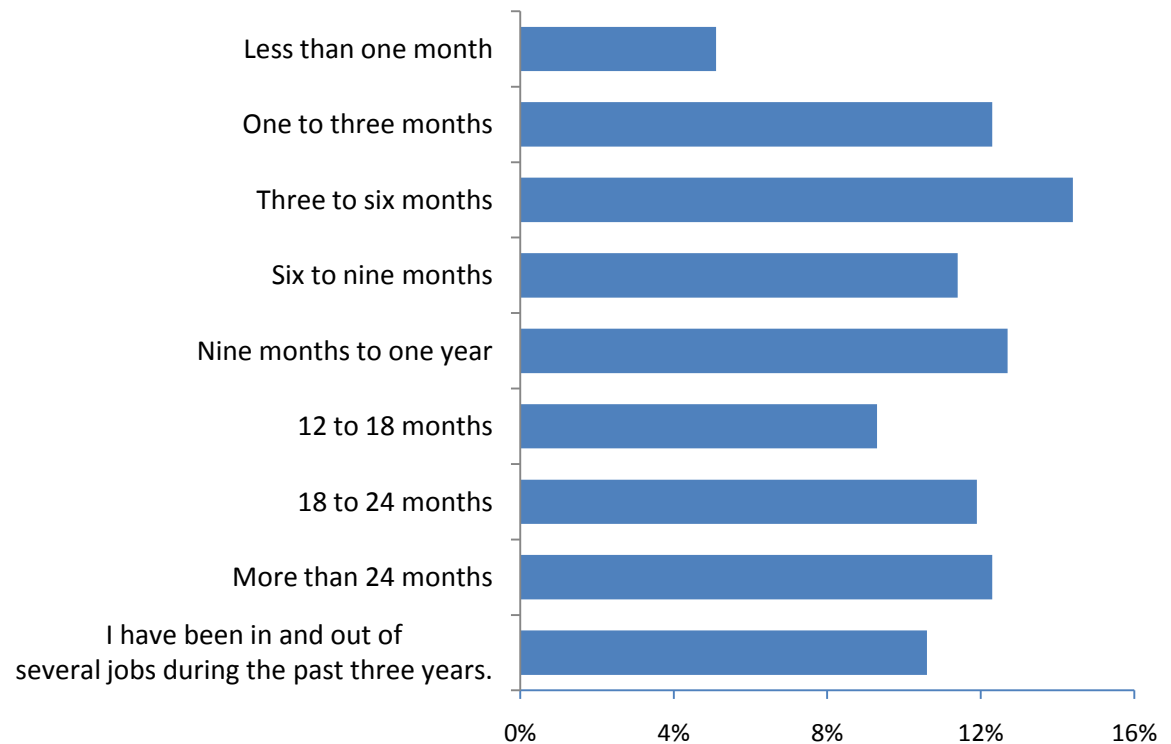
What is your current employment status?

- 326 individuals responded
- Almost 29 percent have landed full-time work, but 62 percent are currently in some stage of career transition.



If you lost a job and landed a new position within the past three years, approximately how long did your job search take?

- 236 individuals responded
- Almost 32% found new work within 6 months of starting their job search, but 34% looked for more than one year.
- One of every ten (10.6%) indicated that they have been in and out of several jobs during the past three years.

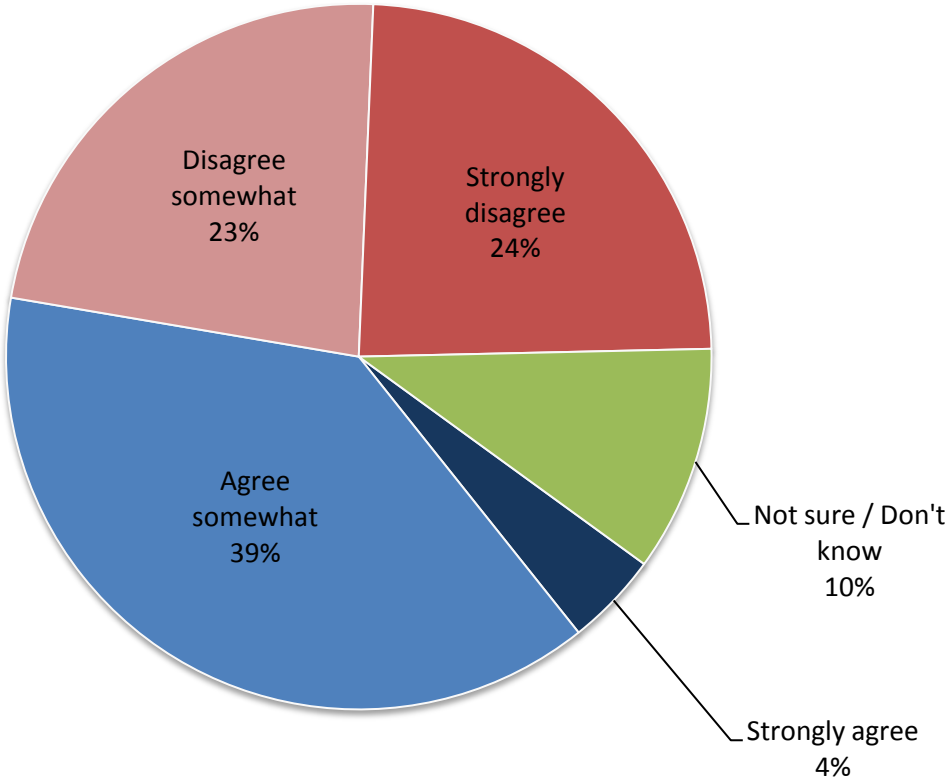


Additional details on responses to this question available in the Appendix.

Section 3 Outlook

Agree or Disagree? The St. Louis economic outlook is better now than it was one year ago.

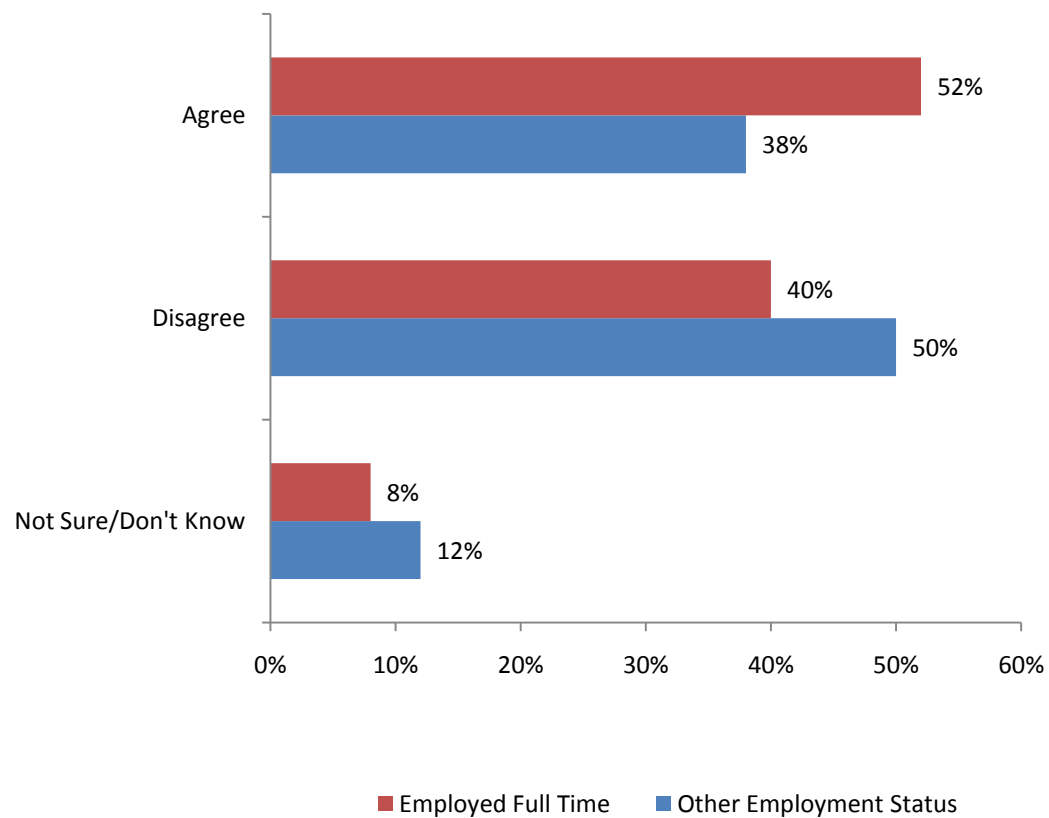
- 396 individuals responded
- 43% of the respondents agree that the economic outlook has improved, while 47% disagree



Additional details on responses to this question available in the Appendix.

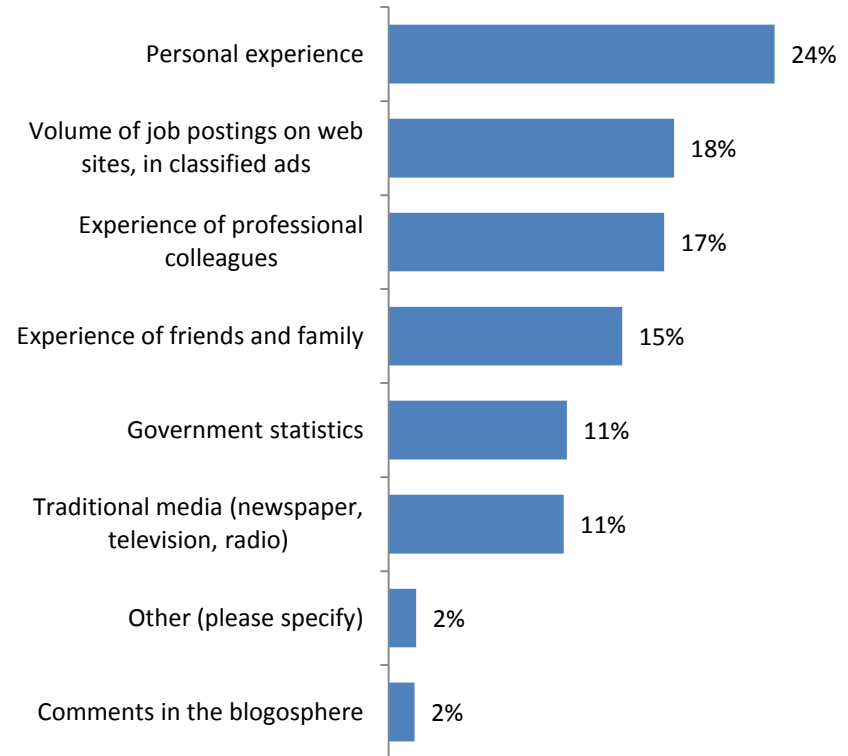
The St. Louis economic outlook is better now than it was one year ago.

- Individuals with full-time jobs are more optimistic about the region's economic outlook than individuals looking to change their employment situation



My perspective about the St. Louis economic outlook is most influenced by . . .

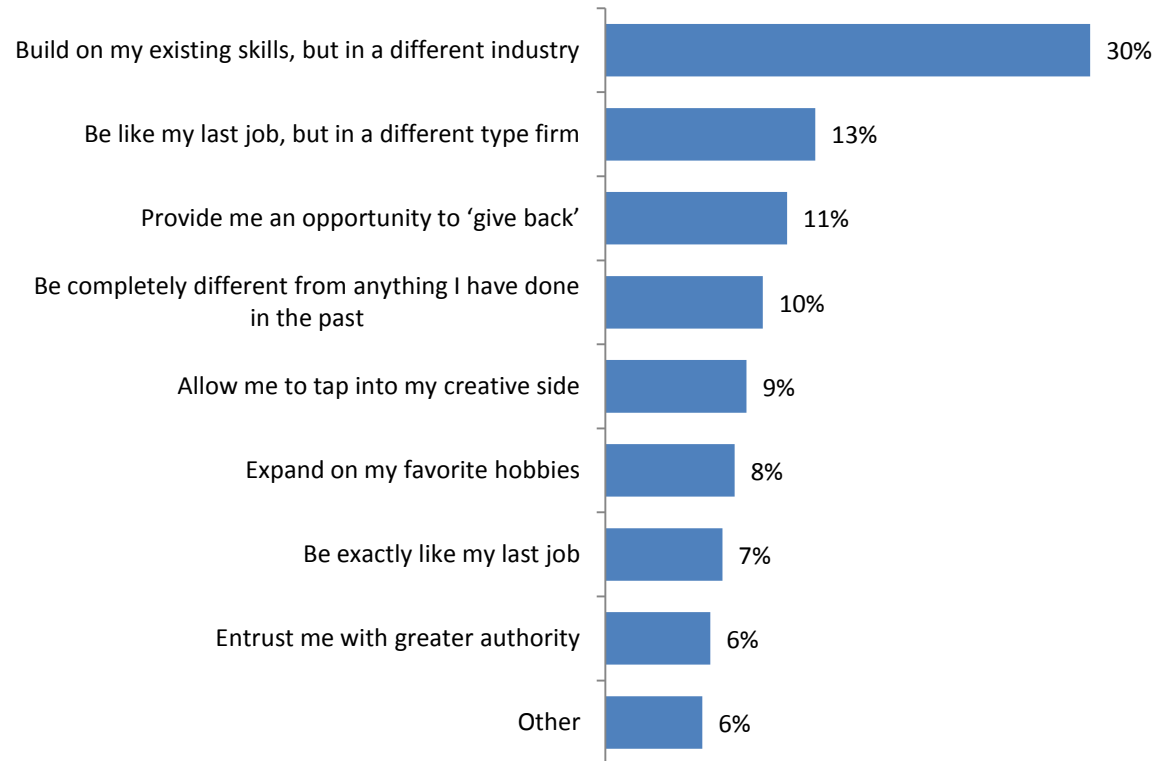
- 392 individuals responded, selecting up to three influences
- Personal experience along with the experience of colleagues, friends and family accounted for 56% of the responses
- Respondents were more likely to gauge the economy by the volume of postings on job boards than by government-issued statistics.



Additional details on responses to this question available in the Appendix.

If I could land my dream job, it would

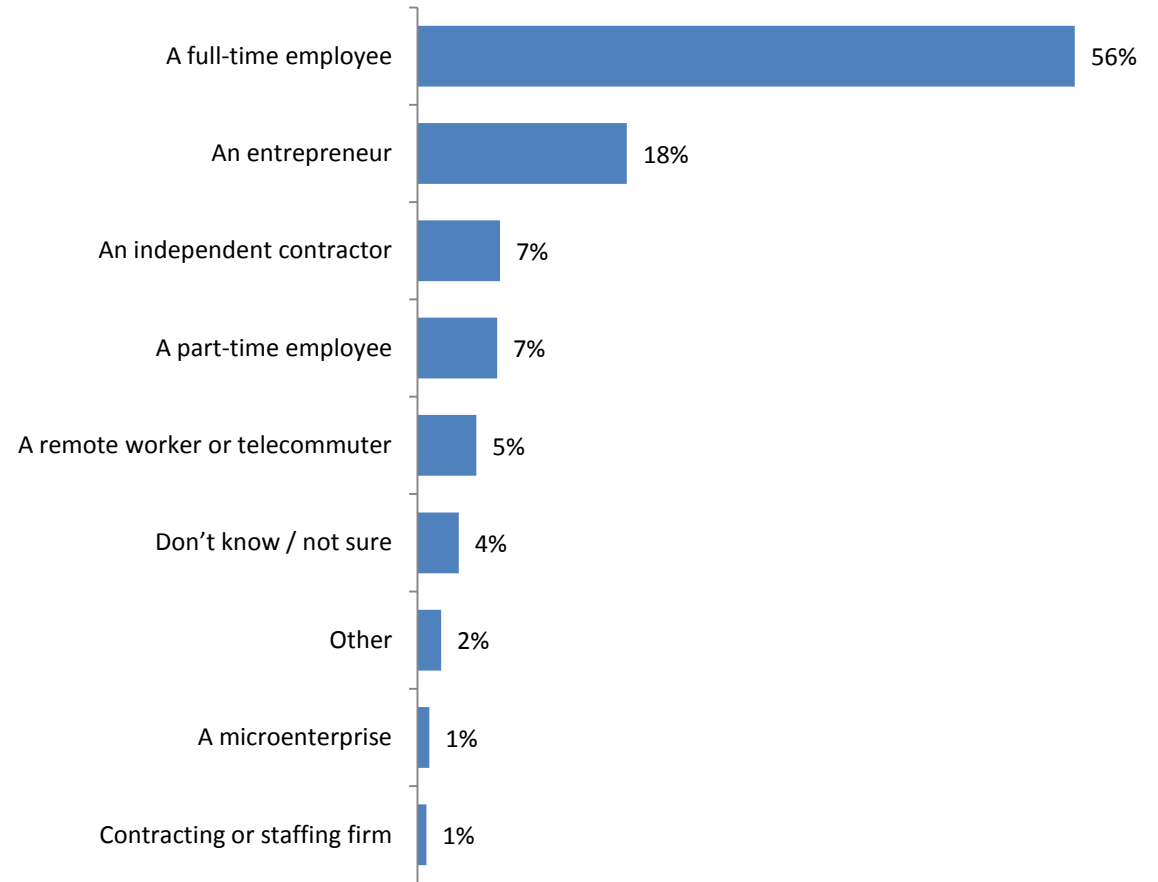
- 378 individuals responded
- Three in ten respondents would like to build on their current skills, but in a different industry
- One in ten would like to do something completely different from what they have done before.



Additional details on responses to this question available in the Appendix.

If I had my dream job, I would be working

- 390 individuals responded
- More than half (56%) would like full-time employment
- Almost one of five (18%) would like to start their own business
- A total of 14% selected one of four occupations that comprise the growing 'contingent workforce': independent contractor, remote worker, or work for a microenterprise or contracting firm.



Additional details on responses to this question available in the Appendix.

Section 4 The Job Search Experience

How important are the following resources to helping you focus on your next career move?

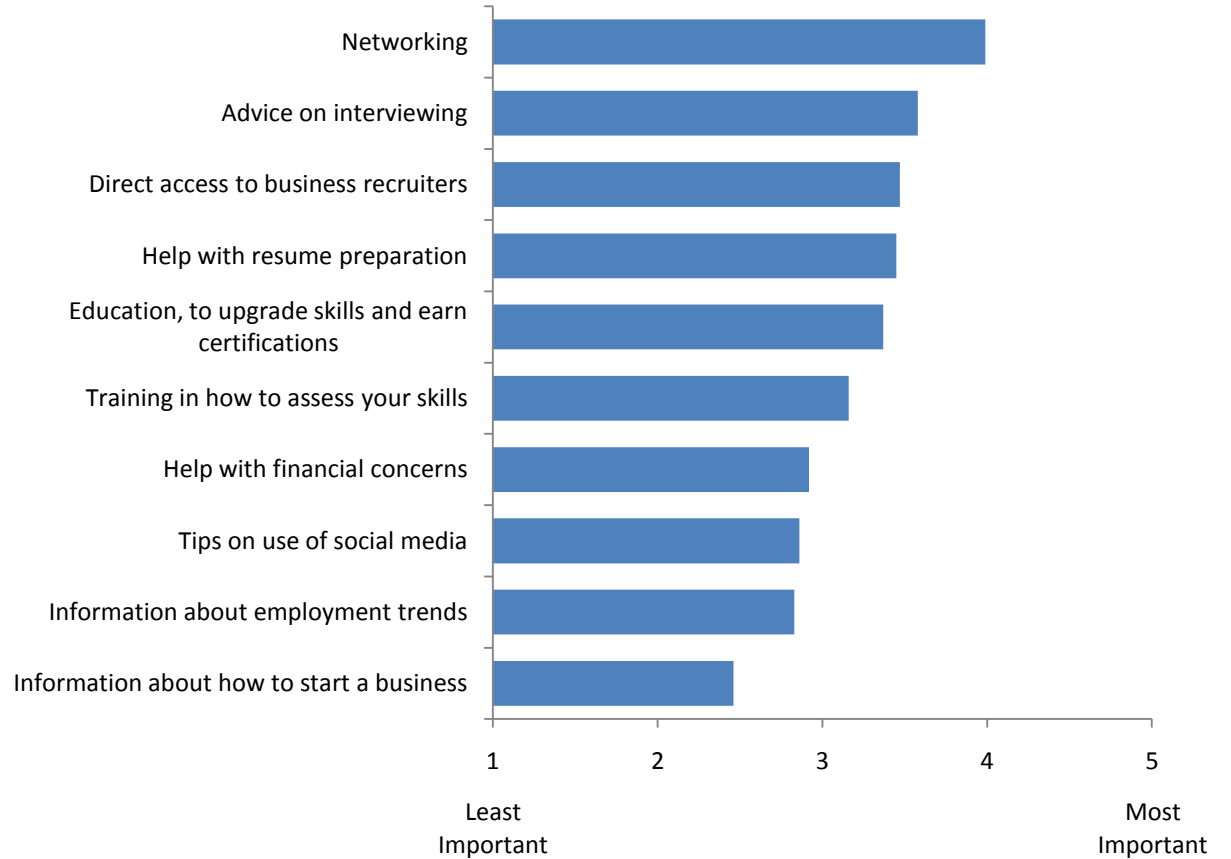
- 362 individuals responded
- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, business contacts and personal self reflection received the highest score (3.8.)
- Friends and family scored higher than more formal career counseling services



Additional details on responses to this question available in the Appendix.

How important are the following services to helping you prepare to achieve your career goals?

- 363 individuals responded
- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important, networking received a score of 4 and advice on interviewing scored 3.6
- Six of the ten choices provided for this question received a rating higher than 3, which was “important.”



Additional details on responses to this question available in the Appendix.

Section 5 Recommendations

Overview

The survey included six open-ended questions that asked respondents to provide recommendations to the region about what we need to do to retain and re-engage talented people in the St. Louis market. The survey form allowed respondents to key in as long a response as they wanted.

The first four of the open-ended questions asked what key stakeholder groups could do “to assist individuals in finding and keeping new work in St. Louis today.” The stakeholder groups referenced were business, professional membership organizations, career centers, and educational institutions. Approximately two-thirds of all survey respondents provided suggestions in response to each of these four questions.

The fifth open-ended question asked “who else needs to be involved in assisting career-changers”? A full 55 percent of respondents had additional stakeholders to suggest.

The sixth open-ended question was the last question on the survey, and it read: “Are there any final suggestions that you would like to offer about how St. Louis can retain and re-engage talented people in work in our regional economy?” The fact that 206 individuals (more than half the respondents) were still writing answers at the end of the survey is testimony to the thoughtfulness and energy they brought to this effort.

Staff of the St. Louis RCGA read each and every one of the 1,466 responses provided to these six questions. We thank our survey respondents for creating such a rich base of hands-on knowledge about the experience of changing jobs in a turbulent economy. To each of you: be assured that we will share the full list of responses with regional and state entities to which the recommendations were directed.

It was not possible to include every response in this report, however. Therefore, the pages that follow present a summary of comments for each question. Our goal was to provide responses that reflect larger themes running throughout the survey, and to emphasize, whenever possible, suggestions that can lead directly to positive action and improvement. We hope that all respondents will recognize -- if not their exact words -- their perspectives and the spirit and direction of their recommendations.

The views and opinions that follow are those of the survey respondents and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the St. Louis RCGA, its partners, or funding agencies.

What is the single most important thing that businesses can do to assist individuals in finding and keeping new work in St. Louis today?



Word cloud computer-generated from response data base.

Recommendations for Business

Keep It Up, Ramp It Up

- There is a lot of talent in St Louis, businesses should recognize this fact.
- Keep and recruit businesses in the St Louis area
- Do not export jobs/work to other countries.
- With all the jobs we have lost in the St. Louis market, the most important thing is job creation. Full time positions, not part time....
- More Permanent positions or Contract to Hire verses Short and Medium Time Contract positions. More one stop source for finding openings for small to medium businesses.
- Create jobs that are flexible and offer health insurance, even if you are a part time employee.
- Engage employees at all levels within an organization. Offer coaching, mentoring or professional development.
- Continue to have relevant professional development and training relate to technology and skills building.
- Be creative with individual's talents so they can be used to their fullest extent
- Provide opportunities for continual updating/upgrading of skills at all levels. My former company only provided these opportunities to a select, chosen few.
- Pay for and encourage professional organization membership.
- Offer career outplacement type workshops once or twice a year to assist employees in evaluating their current skills and develop personal plans for continued career growth
- Promote networking and networking opportunities and skill development to stay current in the job market.
- Reward performance - the job market is picking up and people will go where they are valued, not just where they can find a job.
- Invest in small business.

Consider This...

- Expand workforce when business conditions stretch current staff to the limits.
- Provide adequate and prompt information to individuals concerning future market trends.
- Providing opportunities to meet and speak with hiring managers. Competition is stiff and with so many applications for a single position, many talented individuals don't even get a chance to present and sell themselves in person.
- Provide opportunities for people who are close to a perfect fit. Hire them and teach to the gap in skills.
- Have a long-term perspective and understanding of the value of long-term employees including those that are 60 years old.
- Offer positions similar to internships for people in transition.
- Don't post openings and lead people to believe that they can apply on-line IF the positions are REALLY going to be filled through networks. It's OK to post the positions, but if they're going to be filled through networking, then encourage applicants to network - don't provide an on-line application process that won't be used.
- Don't overlook talent just because they don't have 100% of skills listed as needed for a job. Employers are asking for a lot! Even if the candidate spends the \$ for the new skills who is going to hire them when "entry level" work requires 2 years of experience?
- Give people a chance - Let them work for free [as] an intern to see how they'll do. If you like them give them a paying job, if not, critique their performance so they can improve.
- Focus more on long-term retention of degreed professionals, especially those who are starting in their careers and those over 40 years of age, offer them livable wages, especially for entry-level professional jobs, and encourage more people to stay in St. Louis for their professional careers....

- Hire the motivated individual no matter their age or gender, the individual who has shown a willingness to change and learn new things. Be willing to train new people
- ... make suggestions of other businesses that are hiring when they lay people off
- Have a mechanism for those without experience to get hired and gain requisite experience.
- Being open to the fact that everyone is trainable (they were too!). And second to that is making their on-line application process MUCH easier / shorter, and never immediately sending one a declination e-mail. Weed out first with the questions before making the potential employee go through all the work and time just to find out they do not qualify. That can push people who on the edge, over. People looking for work in this recession are generally down. They put on their happy face at events and in meetings ... but at home doing their job search it can be (and is) very depressing. Have consideration for your fellow man!
- I think that instead of looking for the 'perfect' match, businesses should look for someone with the best culture fit and MOST of the skills they want, then train the person on the skill lacking
- Simplify the application process. Look at entire resume and not trust someone else to do it for them. Put themselves in the job seeker's shoes. They were once there. They need to remember how they felt. They need to be people with feelings instead of just reading a few words of resumes. Finding a job seems to be more about who can write the best resume instead of actual experience and who you really are. It's a resume contest.
- Be realistic in their job descriptions and postings. I have seen many descriptions that no one could fill and postings that come, go away and then return. It makes me wonder if the company is one that I would want to provide value for by working there.
- Post the job. Let people compete. Open up the job market so there are not so many "hidden jobs".
- Have an open house or a day or two where they are interviewing and allow potential employees to come and meet the company hiring.
- Diversity
- Be open to people who say they are willing to take a pay cut to land a position they find challenging or in a different field from which they worked before
- Don't be so dead-set on people with very narrow skill sets. Oftentimes those with broader skill sets, but perhaps a shallower depth all of the skills, can provide a better understanding of the problem(s)/task(s) at hand. Also, don't dismiss a candidate because they are older. They have more experience, a deeper history of work to use for problem solving, etc.
- HR Departments need to consider the whole situation: I have heard that I could not be considered for a position if I had been unemployed for more than 6 months. I have heard that I could not be considered for a position if I were over 50. That's just plain wrong! Take a step back and evaluate how they would like to be treated if they were in the same position.
- A lot of laid off workers lost their homes during the recession, with this in mind it has affected their credit reports many of them had good credit records before losing everything some companies need to take this into consideration before assuming that these people are not trustworthy or honest individuals
- Businesses should allow us to generate product ideas/funding
- Develop a small business clear[inghouse] center to help match employees and employers

Communicate

- Get positive news out to the public.
- Explain what daily life in the office looks like: the people dynamics, the work responsibilities, the learning curve, etc.
- Stop the impersonal "Online Application" process and get back to Face-to-Face meetings with job seekers.
- Respond to applications and resumes submitted online so job seekers don't just think their app went into a black hole and provide internships —maybe unpaid? -- to job seekers hoping to transition to new technologies or new fields

- I believe one of the most important things that a business can do in assisting with employment opportunities is to offer feedback. Tell the candidate why his/her application was not accepted as well as why he/she was not accepted for the position.
- Be honest about employment openings when there are TRULY openings.
- Help companies develop employment applications that are common and are much less redundant. You are asked to write a cover letter, resume, and fill out an on line application which takes up to 8 hours if you include research on the company, the history, its products, programs and community works, only to receive an [automated, 'do not reply' generic message in response].
- Interview applicants face to face and stop eliminating applicants based on software.
- Give the unemployed a chance to prove they are 'job worthy'!
- Help people see themselves as valuable.

What is the single most important thing that professional membership organizations can do to assist individuals in finding and keeping new work in St. Louis today?



Attract Businesses Education
Employers Help Their Members Hiring Companies
Hiring Managers Honest Industry Involved Job
Legitimate Market Networking
Offer Opportunities
Organizations Positions
Profession Promote Resume
Training Understand Unemployed
Members Value

Word cloud computer-generated from response data base.

Recommendations for Professional Organizations

Keep It Up

- Keep on what they are doing -- providing multiple avenues for posting/announcing job openings, sponsoring job fairs, offering workshops for job seekers
- Continue to provide information and mentorship to those seeking it.
- I believe the professional membership organizations are a wonderful tool; although I am finding that when you try to connect, that they just tell you to apply online. Isn't that what we are doing anyway? Not all people do this, but it does happen.
- Professional membership organizations give networking opportunities with EMPLOYED people. These are the people who may be able to help get you in the door.

Ramp It Up

- Expand network and provide business contacts that are held close to the vest.
- Keep the pulse of their field with better tentacles into the business community
- Openly promote their members as "first choice" candidates
- Stay current with today's trends in LMI and hiring. Some organizations are not providing relevant or current information rather they are just becoming social or solicitation events.
- Comb the area for REAL job openings and make those available to its members and other professionals in that particular field.
- Help job seekers by preparing interview candidates with information about the interviewers and their firms.
- Keep them fresh. Help them understand if they need help with their personal presentation, resume, words they choose, etc. and also keep them up-to-date on their knowledge
- Assist in finding positions that are stepping stones to final careers

- Collaborate and network. Offer practical training at affordable rates for those in transition who cannot afford expensive "corporate" rates.
- Encourage the membership who are employed to seek applicants through the organization network.
- It would be great if organizations would post job openings consistently on their websites.
- Know where the jobs are and be sure to direct people appropriately so they are not wasting precious time and gas (gas is so very expensive). It cost me more to travel to training in a week than it does to eat.
- Reduce the high cost of membership to the unemployed. Most companies pay the employee's membership.
- Maintain regularly updated membership directories that out of work members can use to network
- Leverage knowledge of top performers by asking them to share what specific actions they use to find and keep work.
- Open meetings, meetings, training, meetings, training, meetings, training, ...
- Provide honest feedback on resumes, qualifications, appearance, interview skills, etc, all the things employers look for...how to stand out among a large # of applicants
- Provide more one on one individual support- like individual sponsors or "big brother/sister" type of support.
- Keep visible within the community and show some empathy to those who are out of work. Most of us want to work and in a bad way. We have much to offer and will be very grateful when we "land".

Consider This...

- "Adopt" and sponsor someone who is actively seeking a new position. Schedule lunch or coffee meetings between them, the job seeker and a contact from an industry or company the job seeker is targeting.

- After obtaining employment, members share inside job leads and information about the company to find the right fit/type of candidate needed to succeed with the organization. This can be on a LinkedIn group or organization website.
- Attract more businesses to town by touting strong professional membership group.
- Bring hiring managers in to discuss what they are truly looking for in new candidates.
- Create forums where the employed and unemployed can in good faith meet, collaborate and partner to identify new opportunities whether self-employment, new positions, or areas to focus on to enhance skill sets during time in transition.
- Keep them informed of who's hiring and how to apply for the job. Also, professional organizations should assist individuals on how to apply for a government position.
- Learn what organizations are really doing/thinking/planning, then figure out how to collaborate with those organizations in a way that allows those in transition to learn how to 'truthfully' navigate the interview process and determine the best fit going forward.
- Form a small committee...to perform an intelligent assessment of the skills and qualifications of one of their organizations members who is looking for a job, and then provide an executive summary that the job seeker can use as a referral. Better yet, have the committee post it as a "recommendation" of that candidate on Linked In.
- Look at how that field can be enhanced in this St.Louis market with more than one avenue to grow.
- Professional Membership Organizations should develop relationships with the hiring managers, resume screeners (HR) and business leaders. Typically these three areas aren't aligned as far as what's needed in new employees. If Professional Membership Organizations had a relationship with these individuals they would be able to gently inform them about the alignment gaps.
- Scholarships, mentorships, direct contact with employers.

- STOP emphasizing certifications so much and bring more senior executives to meetings to associate with young professionals.

Communicate

- I believe one of the most important things that a professional organization can do in assisting with employment opportunities is to be very candid with the member. Tell the member what is good and bad about his/her presentation (how he/she presents himself/herself).
- Establish a dialog with corporate management. Have meeting at corporate venues.
- Help keep person's self esteem high.
- Help their members and the public understand and communicate the value their profession brings to the workplace.
- Maintain some means of communication ... throughout the community.
- Understand the emotional and psychological side from unemployment to career change.
- Create some sort of platform for those unemployed members or the unemployed of that specific craft to be seen or heard in some positive way.
- Professional organizations should provide a forum for businesses that are looking for candidates a place to advertise the opening for appropriate Talent.
- Discuss the "personality" companies are looking for. For instance, I am outgoing & full of energy. If a company wants a quiet, still person, I will know the job is not for me!
- Understand that luck is when opportunity meets preparation. Professional organizations play an important role for existing members by keeping them engaged professionally even if they aren't actively working in their field. That connection to their profession can be extremely important and keep people prepared to talk about what they did in terms that are still relevant.

What is the single most important thing that Career Centers can do to assist individuals in finding and keeping new work in St. Louis today?



Word cloud computer-generated from response data base.

Recommendations for Career Centers

Keep It Up

- Keep doing what they are doing. Their interview and interviewing class helped a lot.
- KEEP UP THE GREAT WORK
- Keep up their work. I realize their systems have been overloaded and their abilities to serve such large numbers have been difficult. They are limited with their capital to help so many of us.
- Keep on what they are doing -- providing multiple avenues for posting/announcing job openings, sponsoring job fairs, offering workshops for job seekers
- I find that the career centers do a good job. However, if I wanted individual counselling from someone there I have no idea how to go about it.
- Keep emailing us all of the job openings. I appreciate it.

Ramp It Up

- Training, training, training.....I can't say enough about training and make sure they attend. I would give my right hand to have a job that trained me while working.
- Provide skills training to teach those in transition how to network, source information, and present themselves to business contacts.
- Teach people how to network, not just search for job postings.
- [Reinstate the] weekly job search meetings called "Net Club." Those meetings helped me in more ways than almost all other activities I was involved in.
- More help with resumes. Actually help, not just hold workshops and put you on your own. Today this is the most important part of a job search. My resume is obviously not working and I don't know how to change it. I could use hands on help!

- Be more responsive to employment queries and don't assume a "one-size-fits-all" approach works for everyone looking for a job.
- For most job seekers, this is the first place they go. Find a better way to disseminate the information they have available. I only found resources and assistance when speaking directly with a person and I got different answers depending on who I spoke with regarding networking opportunities, training, etc.
- For older worker, assistance with the new ways of looking for a job using online postings and resume writing. Also, practice sessions with how to present oneself as a job seeker, both in appearance and in how to talk about one's experiences and qualifications.
- Hire more people so that you don't have to wait for any great length of time to obtain their services
- Career Centers can/should focus more on getting on-line resumes routed to the respective employers for which applicants are applying.... Increase their staff in order to handle the volume of resumes and applications.
- Be more understanding and quicker with the process of benefits
- Be more aggressive in getting companies to list all opportunities

Consider This...

- Provide clear information on potential openings, for all areas within the economy and support all levels of employment. It seems the Career Centers are very targeted to help only those that are either looking for entry level or blue collar positions. There are not a lot of resources at Career Centers (Government financed) that support individuals with Professional credentials.
- Pay for ... training all the way to graduation
- Make sure their staff is up to date on job openings and not just printing out job announcements. Know before they send you on-line or in person whether that particular company is actually hiring

- Encourage more businesses to locate in STL. We are losing too many companies to other cities.
- Speed up support of training unemployed for new jobs. Use unemployed to help with the training
- Teach candidates to look inside themselves.
- [We] need ... a better way to integrate the job skills of the individual with the various job openings through a more integrated data base.
- I believe one of the most important things that career centers can do in assisting with employment opportunities is to proof the applications and resumes that are sent out from their center. Send a copy of the edited application and resume` to the recipient and encourage him/her to make appropriate changes and then resend to the employer.
- Resume and Interview preparation. Provide candidate company culture and hiring process information. Help the candidate prep for the interview thru mock interviews etc...
- Utilize what they have but don't see - those who are out of work. Bring them in to teach classes, hold seminars, etc. instead of just having us be a sheep going through their process
- Have a "hotline" or "call center" resource to answer questions from the counselors, beyond the scope of reporting last week's job search contacts for unemployment compensation.
- Actual one-on-one counseling with the unemployed. Hold more classes on how to get a resume actually "seen" ... when physical documents are refused and electronic submissions are all that are taken.
- Be an effective liaison between the local businesses and job seekers. Be an effective advocate for job seekers with local businesses. Assist job seekers with getting geared up to conduct an effective job search.
- Help the candidate interpret their O*Net skills in relation to the actual job market. No one did that for me, and I'm not sure if anyone is capable or qualified to do that, but it sure would have helped.
- Resource information aggregation -- there is so much information out there and it would be nice if a small number of sources could put out a fairly comprehensive set of tools, links and event notifications.

Communicate

- Keep in touch with employers as to what is needed....
- Make sure individuals know what the REAL OPTIONS are for employment in St. Louis at any given time -- not make future predictions about which fields might or should be popular based on ... statistics.
- Help job seekers understand the risk of no job ... business HR folks won't touch a person out of work for a year or more -- some bypass anyone out over 6 months. Give advice to filling the blank spots in careers.
- Keep people connected -- getting people out & networking -- Staying positive, the local unemployment office defined me as an atypical client in their office, (being well-educated etc) which made me feel better about using their services, that my situation was only temporary. (a lot less shame involved, my situation was just the reality of a fast-paced world in a bad economy)
- Create in-person opportunities between job seekers and target employers. Too many talented people are not even getting the chance to meet HR recruiters or hiring managers face to face.
- Tell us what we need to hear, both pro and con, not what we want to hear.
- Full transparency of placing people with the right companies to fit their personalities and culture not just telling them, "Hey... there's a job over at this company."
- Create alliances with large companies in the area and ensure they have the most up to date listing of available positions.
- See us as real people, not just statistics. Do not send us to interviews or give us job leads that are well below our skill sets, as you know perfectly well, we will not be given a second look. Send us to specific training for re-training once we have exhausted avenues for routine job searches for our skill sets. Follow up on people when you tell them you will and do not let them just fall through the cracks. This causes despair, additional depression and sometimes feelings of total hopelessness. Be in touch with real organizations that need volunteers, which could potentially lead to real jobs. Do not waste our time or your budget on programs or classes that are really useless to us.

What is the single most important thing that educational institutions can do to assist individuals in finding and keeping new work in St. Louis today?



Word cloud computer-generated from response data base.

Recommendations for educational institutions

Keep It Up

- They try really hard to teach the new people the things that they need to know.....I am in college and really enjoy it.....I love to learn new things.
- Companies respect certificates so educational institutions can continue to offer class tracking to earn certificates.
- Continue alumni events. They are great networking opportunities.
- Continue to offer retraining for other industries.

Ramp It Up

- Provide advanced and up to date courses that keep up with new technologies
- People in transition often times need to update their skills. Offer classes specific to unemployed that teach skills relevant to today's work environment
- Offer specific-industry training. One needs not be required to take a course that has nothing to do with the specific industry he will be working in
- Assist businesses in finding qualified potential employees
- Learn what is really going on outside their institutions so what is taught really translates to what is needed, expected and value by employers.
- Provide more talent specific counseling
- Schedule recruiting workshops and continuing education courses.
- Give individuals thorough instruction about the necessary skills needed to equip themselves for success in any given field of study, so they will be assured of securing the type of work they have studied or trained for.
- Provide "fast path" retraining --- but develop relationships with businesses who can hire newly trained folks

- Less stress on selling their curriculum and more individual support on structuring the training around the seeker's needs to meet their career goals. Less pressure on what's hot today, but more what's going to be hot in the next few years and longer term.
- Don't offer degrees in nonsense disciplines, e.g., sociology, phys ed, art history, etc. Stress engineering, business, mathematics, economics, physics, law.
- Flexible class offerings
- Better tuition assistance.

Consider This...

- They all need to have workforce development programs for the public. Most career centers in colleges will only help you if you are an alumni of that university. They also might get more prospective students if they extended help to the community particularly in this economic environment. Colleges could also offer lower rates to older adults trying to get a Masters degree or a degree for the first time. The military has education benefits - why not people over 50.
- Stop pricing people out of the market. Going to school is WAY too expensive. Make things better - and cheaper (i.e. electronic text books, online learning, more efficient teaching methods). Find new ways to offer assistance.
- Taking more consideration of the area or neighborhood of the clients. Some of us came up poor and are still being held back because of tuition fees and scholarships are hard to come by.
- Offer discounts to folks who are unemployed on their classes & certifications. I know that the state can (and does) subsidize some classes, but us folks usually need more than what the state can help with, and we need financial assistance!

- Educational institutions should be ready to bank on the learner and basing profits on how well they can help a student become an employee and then ... and risk the bottom line on how well a learner is prepared.
- Training based on St. Louis Metro client company needs. Listen to the Voice of Market place and tailor training for those future needs
- On line learning so individuals may learn in a flexible schedule; on-line tutors for support
- Hire engaged and experienced instructors
- Adapt with the times. Why should I take history and English to get a certification for my position? Need short and skilled classes taught by professionals in the industry versus 6 weeks of waste of my time [in] courses which lead to nothing of relevance.
- Offer general personnel classes so graduates understand their general rights when applying for positions
- Educating students on resume, interviewing and networking
- I think it should be a state requirement that thorough and complete job search classes are taken by every student.
- Educate them in new media and technology , teach them not to be afraid of technology, prepare them for a new work areas using technology
- Take a practical approach to people's employment situation and don't suggest long term programs to solve short term problems.
- Direct people to certifications and certificates if they need to true-up or formalize some skills in order to land employment in their field quickly.
- Give free Certification test vouchers or host the tests free to the unemployed.
- Networking events with hiring companies/industries in and out of St. Louis and offer free seminars
- Again, listen to what the applicants are saying; be open to new and innovative ideas often presented by applicants
- Quit calling
- Teach some basics.... good work ethic, positive language, skills to get the job done and how to get there... like connecting people with

companies or having the HR recruiters come in to talk about what they look for and what the hiring managers are looking for.

- Offer new evening courses in line with new technology, create temp positions for teaching sciences, networking events
- I believe one of the most important things that educational institutions can do in assisting with employment opportunities is to offer more mandatory junior and senior level intern positions at secure and rewarding firms.
- Classes. On resumes, job search, interviewing etc. Then short term classes for people who have skills but need to brush up on them. I can't justify \$300 and a whole semester to learn Excel when probably a couple of classes would make me proficient enough to use it.
- Assist more with helping individuals seeking graduate degrees to find scholarships and grants and not just give out information about student loans.
- Keep current on what businesses need and offer programs that correspond to current needs, and integrate experiential education into those programs so that people complete the program with demonstrated experience related to their program.
- Have a mechanism where someone can work and easily go to school at night for instance.
- Provide resource for education/training in order for those of us who are unemployed to be competitive in today's job market. I have been told that these opportunities were limited when it comes to "those of an older age". I have at least 15 years longer to work!
- Educational institutions can tailor their programs but should ensure that artistic and soft skills are supported so that we humans can stay balanced. That can also be an economic support to our creative community.
- The single most important thing that educational institutions can do is to assist their students in getting meaningful and relevant internships. This will give students the experience that they need to get hired.
- Ensure students are well versed in collaboration and business fundamentals so they are prepared to provide value beyond their specific role.

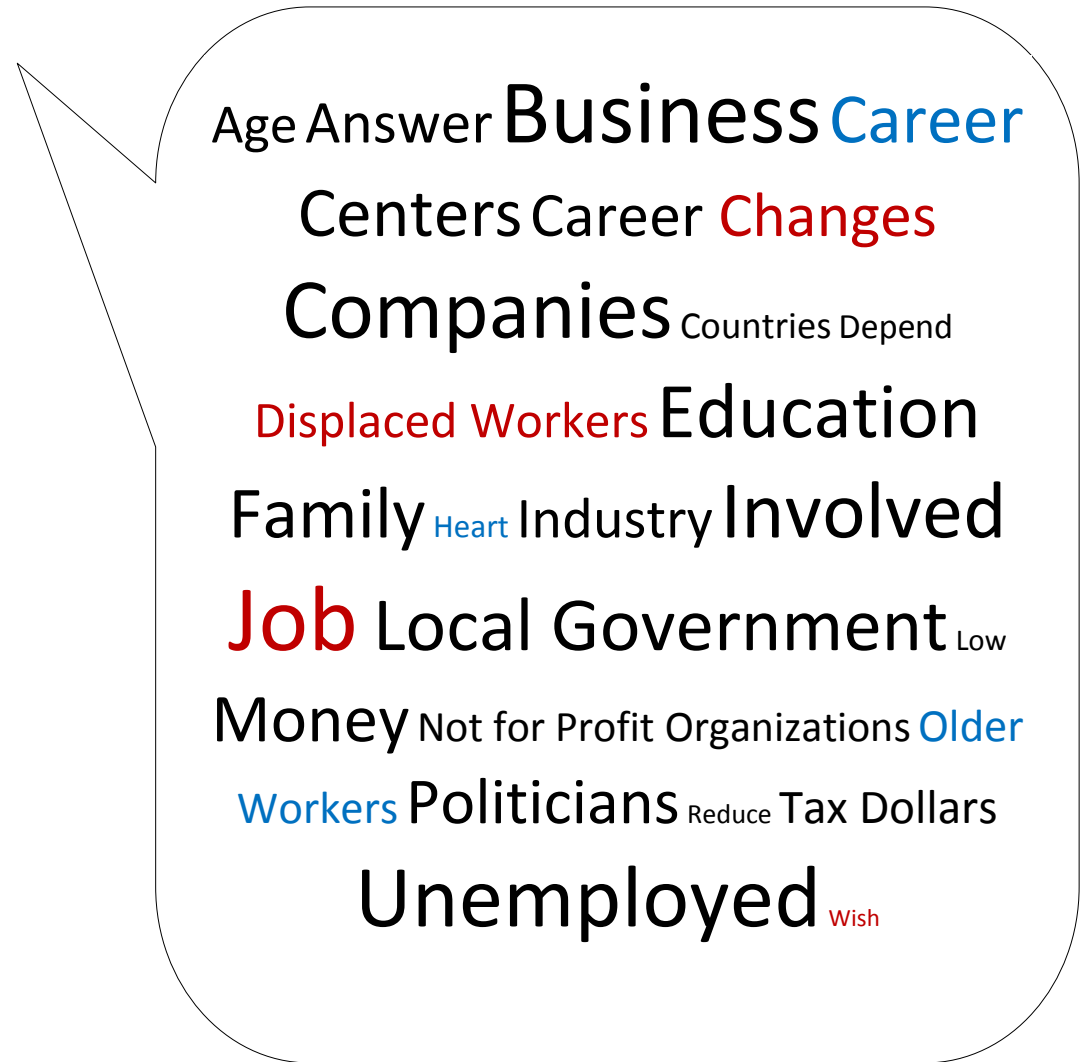
- Find employers who want specific skill sets and design specific course to meet that goal. We can take liberal arts classes outside of work hours.
- Point out what degrees will be sought after in the job market by the time the student graduates, not what's going on now
- Provide more avenues and access to employment when someone is leaving or retiring from a company.
- Work to eliminate the bureaucracy involved in federal and state funded education grants. Make it easier for the unemployed to access quality education opportunities.
- Host monthly job fairs that local company representatives attend and job seekers each make a 10-15 minute presentation to the entire audience highlighting their skills and the target positions they are seeking. Then all attendees share ideas for each presenter on where they might pursue opportunities.
- More career fairs for full-time positions that are specialized to a specific career path. Non-profit, Marketing, industrial, engineering.
- Foster more academia to business incubators to spin off academic innovations into new business opportunities.
- Have relevant coursework that is needed to land a job in the 21st century otherwise St. Louis area, Missouri and the United States will fall behind to the rest of the world that is staying with the cutting edge education.

Communicate

- It's NOT just the education that's important but how institutions can link to businesses to bring newly educated into the job market

- Get educators and business people together on the same page. Have the two meet on a regular set schedule and share their needs and offerings.
- Great preparation in the area of communication: 1) Resume and cover letter writing, 2) Marketing themselves using the 30 second commercial or elevator speech concept, 3) Filling out applications thoroughly and accurately, and 4) Speaking - for interviews and networking.
- Build loyalty to each other among graduates and make it easier to get career information from each other. It is extraordinarily disappointing to spend so much money to earn a degree and then be cut loose by the school.
- Identify and publicize / communicate the programs / help they have that can assist someone in their transition to a new role.
- Set aside counseling sessions with each student with a counselor that has worked for a few years
- They need to be HONEST with students about prospective opportunities in this town and ENCOURAGE students in certain fields to LOOK ELSEWHERE.
- Keep social networks open, offer free attendance to motivational/public speaking with job searches. Offer free resume services, one-on-one counseling. Some places offer, but with the economic strain on the nation's unemployed, it is not enough.
- Communicate with local businesses about recent graduates and soon to be graduates.
- Build stronger relationships with all businesses.
- It would be great if educational institutions would provide alumnae more opportunities to network and connect with employers.

Who else needs to be involved in assisting career-changers in finding and keeping new work in today's St. Louis market, and what should they do?



Word cloud computer-generated from response data base.

Recommendations about Who Else Needs to be Involved

- **Anyone** with a heart and desire to help
 - **Not for profit organizations.** They should provide training and / or scholarships.
 - **Entrepreneurial groups and local/state government groups** that focus on economic development and assist with start up opportunities.
 - All **elected officials** need to get involved. They need to understand that we are not unemployed by choice, but because there are not enough jobs to go around.
 - How about a **mentoring society**?
 - **Current employees.** Create networking opportunities even if positions are not currently available or planned.
 - I strongly encourage anyone in between positions to get involved in other **community organizations** including but not limited to support, religious, or spiritual groups. Any group that meets regularly, shares experiences, provides an opportunity to engage with others and be of service can be invaluable when someone's 'normal' way of providing value to their others (work) has been temporarily interrupted.
 - **Career placement counselors** should be more helpful in helping find jobs
 - Get **schools** involved starting at high-school level.
 - **Financial markets** - better help with distressed families
 - **Companies** might consider apprenticeship programs for highly skilled or newly emerging skill positions
 - **Friends and family** provide moral support and encouragement. Someone must be "Cheerleader" and "Coach" to keep the job seeker going.
 - **Everyone** needs to be involved to help support career-changes. Support is very important.
 - **Vocational counselors** need to provide funding for people to pursue career changes.
 - **Government and civic leaders at all levels** need to understand the impact their decisions, actions, or lack of action have on the job market.
- They need to be more proactive in marketing St. Louis, Missouri, and the US....
- The **state and local political structure** should work to facilitate the entrepreneurial processes and provide incentives for existing businesses to want to operate in Missouri and more specifically St. Louis.
 - **All big industries** who are responsible for lay offs should be asked to have a program of building the networking for their employees, Consideration of laid off workers back to other types of work
 - **Financial institutions** should let loose of funds in the form of low interest loans and scholarships. They should make them easier to get and not be the source of income for them (i.e. the bank shouldn't benefit financially from the loan, but from the community service).
 - **CEO's**- Visit with your current staff, find out who is overworked, and get them help. This will employ more people. Do not tell a potential employee they are over qualified. What is their reason for wanting to work for your company?
 - People need to fend for **themselves**.
 - Really nobody needs to be involved, but **yourself**. It all depends on you and how much you're willing to put into it.
 - **Employment agencies**
 - **Chambers of Commerce** - Encourage their members to post openings on the chamber's web site. It could be a member benefit for the company and a revenue generator for the chamber.
 - **Human resource dept** of companies need to be more open to job applicants
 - **Family** – there might be a program for spouses and partners of career-changers to help them help the job seeker -- what to say or not say.
 - The **US government, state, city/county** need to work together to assist new business with startup funding in terms of easy to apply for loans and grants. We need help with entrepreneur firms that can hire and put the unemployed back to work.

- Our **government** needs to offer more tax incentives for local companies to hire U.S. citizens
- **Federal, state and local governments** to PUT A STOP TO DISCRIMINATION that is going on against people who are unemployed and/or over age of 45-50... IT IS HAPPENING!!
- **Politicians.** They need to make Saint Louis more attractive to companies. They also need to get a handle on crime so companies are not afraid to come or stay in Saint Louis.
- **Local governments** can become more involved, they can advertise what resources their communities have, they can make public positions which are available. They can actively recruit those who live in their communities.
- Our **policy makers** need to take a frank and solid look at the landscape of unemployment here. They need to utilize local talent, that can actually paint a true picture of the scheme of unemployment in this region....
- **Local and regional economic advisory boards** need to maintain, update, follow up current and future economic trends in our region to educate employers, employees, and job seekers to improve economic outlook.
- The **RCGA** could provide successful members as individual coaches to encourage talented but laid off executives.
- **Business owners who are successful** should be looking [at] new people, not just keeping their economy in the black
- The **St. Louis Tourism Commission and the Chamber of Commerce** need to become more involved in helping St. Louis attract new businesses that would employ multiple numbers of people.
- **Small businesses** because they comprise the bulk of hiring and economic growth.
- Recruit the private sector to work with **local operated banks and financial institutions** to develop more programs....
- **Church organizations.** Provide job leads within the congregation
- **Friends, family.** Would be nice if they could pull their contacts together and help locate positions we could apply for instead of just "saying" they know of someone/ thing or giving you the "if I can help let me know" speech without really meaning it
- The **career changers** themselves need to take ownership....
- The **career coaches** in the area do a great job with the volunteer work they do. Company representatives of the larger companies need to get involved
- More assistance from **large St. Louis corporations**; it is in their best interest to see more St. Louis area unemployed get back to work.
- Maybe **alumni organizations or sororities** to get them involved in finding a job and preparing for the interview.
- It's gonna take the entire **United States** to get this countries middle class back to the middle. Maybe more mentor programs and or PAID internships for those not in school anymore? A career do-over internship?
- **Libraries**
- **People from the career they are looking into** who can give them an inside view of how this position will actually be.
- Have the **local and state leaders** go through available job coaching (resume sessions, 20-second speech ETC.) and report their finding[s] to both the governors if it's effective? Have them attempt to get job that they in a career-change situation. Report finding to media and ask what's needed next?
- **Business recruiters** as well as hiring managers.
- Other **community and faith organizations** can contribute by providing support to their members in creative ways that those organizations need to explore considering their own constituents. That could be emergency funds created by flea markets, or providing space for support groups or fairs, or community job bulletin boards. The ideas are to be from those community organizations as they discover them. Rebuilding community must become a priority.
- There needs to be some **new organizations for "underemployed" workers** who need help coping with work pressures and avoiding bad decisions to leave current jobs.
- **Think tanks and universities** to look how to change the paradigm of the cost of unemployment and what specific sectors are being hit at what level. Then determine how the unemployment dollars can be better used.

- **Anyone** who is tired of being unemployed.
- **Local communities/businesses** providing information on the needs of their area. Holding job fairs for that specific community's need.
- **Everyone** -- local municipalities; state government. Do more than talk. Actually work on providing quality job fairs/networks
- **People who have successfully navigated career-changes** (self initiated or otherwise) should have a single place that they can go to volunteer.
- **Volunteers** for mentoring, practice interviews, teaching people how to correctly network to be givers as well as takers and to continue networking after landing a job. Sharing networking contacts that don't fit your job function with other job seekers that it does. For example, IT people that have a Sales and Marketing contact and sharing them with job seekers that are looking for Sales and Marketing positions and vice-versa.
- If I could answer that question, the unemployment rate wouldn't be close to 10%.

Broad Recommendations

- A **collaborative effort** between all those above mentioned. Companies working closely with the Professional Organizations, Career Centers, and Educational Institutes to make sure they know what each other needs and then those organizations can work with the individuals to make sure they have those needs.
- This doesn't directly answer the question, but I would like to see various organizations in the area working together more. There needs to be more transparency, more seamless bridging across organizations, and less competition for valuable resources (i.e., tax dollars). Somehow, we have to create **greater unity**.
- The many organizations should **collaborate rather than compete** - NPO, religious, entrepreneurs, businesses, governments - that profess to have the best interest of the unemployed at heart, fail to make a difference. The need is too great no one avenue/option produces the preferred outcome. As a result the individual must run around the area searching, seeking, hoping for solutions that can be woven into a reasonable path to successful re-employment.
- There needs to be a **partnership** between the local business community (large and small businesses), educational institutions (K-12, technical schools, community college, and universities), contingency agencies (temp agencies, contractors), social services community (family, financial, healthcare, legal, etc.), entrepreneurial community (colleges, financial institutions, government, business), and government (provide leadership and effective allocation of tax dollars to support efforts of the above entities). There needs to be a collaborative effort between all partners to develop a long-term plan for creating real jobs and to promote entrepreneurial opportunities.
- It is **a job for everyone** in public, private, and non profit organizations.
- Take a step back and evaluate **how they would like to be treated if they were in the same position**. I don't want a hand-out; I want a job!

Are there any final suggestions that you would like to offer about how St. Louis can retain and re-engage talented people in work in our regional economy?



Word cloud computer-generated from response data base.

Summary Themes

More than 200 respondents still had suggestions to offer when they reached this, the final question on the survey. Some took the opportunity to repeat and emphasize points they had made in earlier questions. Most, however, waxed philosophical, concluding their submissions with big-picture observations about the St. Louis metro area and our ability to compete in the global marketplace. These observations generally fell under four big categories, which are summarized below.

The region must recognize ourselves as global competitors, and rid ourselves of any remnants of parochial thinking.

- It's not about 'the City,' or 'the County,' or 'Metro East.' We sink or swim together in today's economy, say the survey respondents.
- Where someone went to high school is not important anymore. What *is* important is commitment to the vitality of our community, eagerness to work, readiness to learn, and transferrable skills. Job-seekers wish that they would be judged on the basis of these attributes instead of other characteristics that are more 'superficial.'
- Fragmentation and duplication of services are frustrating to those who use them.

Job creation is essential.

- Survey respondents feel that regional leaders – business and government – should ramp up their efforts to retain corporate headquarters and attract businesses to the area.

- They note that addressing crime and public education challenges must be a part of any regional business attraction effort.
- A favorable business climate with tax and other incentives supporting quality jobs is very important, in the minds of our respondents.
- Entrepreneurs and small businesses are at the heart of re-invigorating our economy. They deserve more attention and support from regional leaders.

Innovation and creativity drive the future... and transitioning professionals want to be a part of that future.

- Many career-changers said that they are looking for opportunities to be creative and apply new ideas to solving problems, but they feel that the St. Louis community is still largely 'closed' and dominated by traditional interests.
- More than one respondent said that they are now looking for work in other markets, for this reason.

Attitudes toward the unemployed talent pool hold us all back.

- Many professionals responding to the survey were 'insiders' with good jobs before the Great Recession hit, and since then, they have become 'outsiders' facing what they consider to be very formidable barriers to getting back to work. They describe these barriers in terms of age, disability, race, unemployment status and 'who they know' (or don't know). They are passionate about their experiences of not being given a chance to prove themselves as individuals.
- They urge employers and regional leaders to see beyond these barriers and recognize them for who they really are and what they can bring to an organization. One respondent said that "when St. Louis openly embraces this concept [of diversity], we will be unstoppable."

Section 6 Appendix

Highest level of attainment	Response Percent	Response Count
High school or GED	3.7%	12
Vocational / technical certificate after high school	2.2%	7
Some college, no degree	9.5%	31
Two-year degree	10.8%	35
Four-year degree	45.2%	147
Masters degree	24.9%	81
PhD or advanced Professional Degree	3.1%	10
Other	0.6%	2
answered question		325
skipped question		72

What is your current employment status?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Job seeker	43.9%	143
Employed, but anticipate transition	9.2%	30
Employed part-time, looking for full-time	8.6%	28
Employed full-time	28.5%	93
Other	9.8%	32
answered question		326
skipped question		71

If you lost a job and landed a new position within the past three years, approximately how long did your job search take?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than one month	5.1%	12
One to three months	12.3%	29
Three to six months	14.4%	34
Six to nine months	11.4%	27
Nine months to one year	12.7%	30
12 to 18 months	9.3%	22
18 to 24 months	11.9%	28
More than 24 months	12.3%	29
I have been in and out of several jobs during the past three years.	10.6%	25
answered question		236
skipped question		161

The St. Louis economic outlook is better now than it was one year ago.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	4.3%	17
Agree somewhat	38.4%	152
Disagree somewhat	23.0%	91
Strongly disagree	24.0%	95
Not sure / Don't know	10.4%	41
answered question		396
skipped question		1

If I could land my dream job, it would		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Be exactly like my last job	7.7%	29
Be like my last job, but in a different type firm	13.8%	52
Build on my existing skills, but in a different industry	31.7%	120
Expand on my favorite hobbies	8.5%	32
Allow me to tap into my creative side	9.3%	35
Entrust me with greater authority	6.9%	26
Provide me an opportunity to 'give back'	11.9%	45
Be completely different from anything I have done in the past	10.3%	39
Other (please specify)		24
answered question		378
skipped question		19

My perspective about the St. Louis economic outlook is most influenced by [select as many as three]		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
statistics from government sources (e.g., unemployment rate, change in GDP, so on)	28.1%	110
volume of job postings on web sites, in classified ads	44.9%	176
reporting in the traditional media (newspaper, television, radio)	27.6%	108
comments in the blogosphere	4.1%	16
experience of professional colleagues	43.4%	170
experience of friends and family	36.7%	144
personal experience	60.7%	238
Other (please specify)		17
answered question		392
skipped question		5

If I had my dream job, I would be working		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
as a full-time employee	57.2%	223
as a part-time employee	6.9%	27
as an independent contractor	7.2%	28
through a contracting or staffing firm	0.8%	3
as a remote worker or telecommuter	5.1%	20
as an entrepreneur	18.2%	71
in a microenterprise	1.0%	4
don't know / not sure	3.6%	14
Other (please specify)		8
answered question		390
skipped question		7

Please rank the following resources from most important to least important in terms of how they are helping (or have helped) you focus on what your next career move should be

Answer Options	Most Important	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Least Important	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
Business Contacts	123	110	60	39	20	9	3.79	361
Community-Based Resources	39	85	98	92	35	8	3.00	357
Friends and / or Family	74	102	79	64	34	7	3.33	360
Professional Membership Organizations	45	87	90	75	39	22	3.07	358
Professional Counselors / Coaches	32	68	81	90	61	25	2.76	357
Personal Self-Reflection	117	105	81	34	14	4	3.79	355
Social Media Networks	35	63	83	93	63	19	2.74	356
Missouri or Illinois Career Centers	29	58	70	76	109	12	2.48	354
Motivational Speakers	15	48	51	70	144	28	2.15	356
Educational and Vocational Institutions	36	49	78	71	86	33	2.62	353
Other (please specify)								8
answered question								363
skipped question								34

Please rank the following services from most important to least important in terms of how they are helping (or have helped) you prepare to achieve your career goals

Answer Options	Most Important	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Least Important	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
Information about employment trends	27	85	96	85	56	6	2.83	355
Training in how to assess your skills	48	101	106	51	45	7	3.16	358
Education, to upgrade skills and earn certifications	83	81	93	55	32	15	3.37	359
Tips on use of social media	33	74	102	79	55	15	2.86	358
Help with resume preparation	73	127	78	44	35	2	3.45	359
Advice on interviewing	77	132	81	43	20	4	3.58	357
Networking	162	93	59	26	18	3	3.99	361
Direct access to business recruiters	80	101	94	37	32	13	3.47	357
Help with financial concerns	56	62	76	69	66	25	2.92	354
Information about how to start a business	29	45	60	63	101	57	2.46	355
Other (please specify)								3
answered question								363
skipped question								34