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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE  
APPENDIX B: TABLE OF CONFIDENCE BOUNDS
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Methodology
Leger Marketing interviewed a random sample of 514 Alberta businesses between November 28th, 2008 and January 15th, 2009 segmented by size and location. To ensure representativeness, the results are weighted by size and geographic area.

Perceived Need for Workplace Education
Alberta employers agree there is a need for improved literacy and essential skills among the Alberta workforce (81%; including 42% strong agreement). The organizations are equally concerned about the essential skills levels of future employees (80%; including 52% strong agreement).

Lower proportions of Alberta employers believe they need to provide more workplace education than is currently offered (67%; including 27% strong agreement) or that their own employees need improved literacy and essential skills (54%; including 24% strong agreement).

In general, those with 100 or more employees provide higher agreement ratings with most aspects relating to the need for workplace education.

Perceived Benefits of Workplace Education
The majority of Alberta employers agree workplace education benefits their organization in many different respects. The organizations particularly rate highly:

✓ Employees’ ability to handle new responsibility (82% agree; 53% strongly)
✓ Employee productivity (80% agree; 43% strongly)
✓ Employees’ ability to implement new change (79% agree; 45% strongly)

Mirroring the agreement for need of workplace education, organizations with 100 or more employees provide higher agreement ratings on the benefits workplace education would bring to their organization.

Specific Skill Areas that Would Benefit the Organization
From the five skill areas they were asked about, 80% or more Alberta employers agree their organization would benefit from improvement in teamwork skills (82%) and verbal communication skills (80%), including 50% who provide strong agreement ratings (6,7, ratings).

Approximately three quarters agree, including one-third that strongly agree, their organization would benefit from improvements to their workforce in basic computer skills, reading and writing, and basic math.

Organizations with 100 or more employees tend to provide higher than average agreement ratings. They particularly perceive benefits from improvement in teamwork, verbal communication skills, and basic computer skills.
The non-profit sector tends to provide lower agreement ratings than other sectors that improvements in skills will benefit their organization.

**Use of Workplace Education**

Half (53%) of Alberta employers indicate they currently provide some type of workplace education programs. Ten percent (10%) of employers have provided a workplace education plan in the past but don’t currently provide one, while 6% plan to offer one in the next 12 months.

One quarter (27%) of the employers do not offer any workplace education programs nor do they plan to offer any in future.

Current workplace education programs are more likely to be in place by organizations with 100 or more employees, than those with fewer employees.

Higher than average proportions of government sector employers currently provide workplace education programs compared to the private sector (74% vs. 50%).

**Attributes of Successful Workplace Education Programs**

More than half (54%) of Alberta employers believe the peer training method is the most successful method of instruction. Lower proportions consider the small classroom method (40%) or one-to-one tutoring (34%) most successful.

Employers with 100 or more employees believe more strongly than average that the small classroom method is the best method of instruction (69% 100+ employees vs. 39% <100).

In contrast with the Private sector (35%), Government (66%) and Non-Profit (66%) sector organizations are more likely to consider the small classroom or group method as the most successful method of instruction.

**Importance of Workplace Education Programs**

Lower proportions than average consider confidentiality of participating workers (71%) and having many workers who have a need for programs (69%), as important for effective workplace education programs. All other factors ensuring success of workplace education are rated important (4,5,6,7) by 85% or more organizations.

Employers with 100 or more employees place higher importance (4,5,6,7 ratings) on positive impact of programs on the organization’s bottom line (96% 100+ employees vs. 90% <100), and having many workers who need the programs (82% vs. 69%).
Partnerships and Family Components

Three-quarters of Alberta employers agree that partnerships with external workplace providers could be beneficial (76%). Similar proportions agree employees are more likely to upgrade skills if their children benefit directly (74%). However, less than half (46%) agree bringing family to learn is a more effective learning method.

Organizations with 100 or more employees provide higher agreement ratings (4,5,6,7 ratings) that partnerships with external workplace literacy providers could be beneficial (86% 100+ employees vs. 76% <100 employees).
1. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Background and Research Objectives

In November 2008, Leger Marketing was contracted by the Centre for Family Literacy to conduct an environmental scan of the Alberta business community, as part of their two-year Workplace Family Literacy Project.

The research was required to explore the current awareness level and interest of employers in being directly involved in supporting the literacy development of employees. The findings will be used by the Centre to develop a plan through which literacy organizations together with businesses would implement a range of family literacy programs in the workplace.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 Sample Design and Data Collection

The research has been designed to be completed in two phases. This report presents the findings of Phase 1. The first phase is a survey of over 500 representatives of Alberta employers. Both telephone and web methodologies were offered to the respondents, to help ensure a random, representative sample.

A list of Alberta businesses was obtained, segmented by size of businesses and also containing at least a telephone number. Experienced Leger Marketing interviewers telephoned a random sample of employers within each size/geographic stratification. For some records, Leger had a specific contact to call, and others a general telephone number. Leger then asked to speak to an executive in charge of literacy programs in the organization. Leger attempted to speak to the most senior person in the organization, and worked downwards until someone who would be involved in the workplace literacy process was willing to complete the survey.

A total of 514 interviews with Alberta businesses were completed between November 28th, 2008 and January 15th, 2009. Results are weighted by size and geographic area to ensure representativeness.

The second phase, which will be initiated once the results of phase one are evaluated, will involve conducting follow-up interviews.

1.2.2 Questionnaire Design

Leger Marketing developed the questionnaire in close consultation with the Centre, ensuring it directly addressed the project objectives and meets the criteria in terms of quality, actionability, project flow, and response rates.

1.2.3 Analysis

The level of accuracy for a survey involving random sampling of 514 businesses is ±4.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. A table of confidence limits is located in Appendix B.
1.2.4 Analysis of Findings

Throughout the questionnaire, a seven-point scale was used for respondents to rate their opinions about family literacy. The rating scale used in the study is:

- Importance: 1 means not at all important, 4 means somewhat important and 7 means extremely important.
- Agreement: 1 means do not agree at all, 4 means somewhat agree and 7 means completely agree.

For the purpose of analysis and discussion, the numerical ratings were consolidated into three groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating on the 1 to 7 scale</th>
<th>Interpretive Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6, 7</td>
<td>These respondents express strongly positive responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, 5</td>
<td>These respondents disclose mid-range responses about a particular factor, or provide a moderately positive response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>These respondents provide negative responses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. DETAILED FINDINGS

2.1 Perceived Need for Workplace Education

All respondents were asked to rate their agreement with statements measuring perceived need for workplace education, using the seven point scale where one means do not agree at all, four means somewhat agree and seven means agree completely.

Alberta employers agree there is a need for improved literacy and essential skills among the Alberta workforce in general (81%; including 42% strong agreement), and that their own organizations are concerned about the essential skills levels of future employees (80%) with a higher level of strong agreement (6,7 ratings) with their concern about the essential skills of their future employees (52%).

Lower proportions, although still majorities, believe Alberta employers need to provide more workplace education than is currently offered (67%; including 27% strong agreement).

When it comes to their own organization, just over half (54%; including 24% strong agreement) agree their own employees need improved literacy and essential skills.

![Fig 1: Need for Workplace Education (Q.1)](image-url)

Alberta employers need improved literacy and essential skills among their workforce. Their organization is concerned about the essential skills levels of future employees. There is a need for Alberta employers to provide more workplace education than currently offered. Their organization needs improved literacy and essential skills among employees.

*(n=514)*

*Less than 1%*
2.1.1 Impact of Employer Size

Compared to smaller employers, those with 100 or more employees provide higher agreement ratings with most aspects for workplace education, including that:

- Their organization is concerned about the essential skills of future employees (89% 100+ employees vs. 83% <100 employees)
- Alberta employers should provide more workplace education (83% vs. 67%)

Fig 1a: Need for Workplace Education (Q.1)
- Employers in Alberta Have Need for Improved Literacy Among Workforce-
  Scale: 1 = Do Not Agree at all 4 = Somewhat Agree 7 = Agree Completely

Fig 1b: Need for Workplace Education (Q.1)
- Your Organization Concerned about Essential Skills of Future Employees-
  Scale: 1 = Do Not Agree at all 4 = Somewhat Agree 7 = Agree Completely

Fig 1c: Need for Workplace Education (Q.1)
- Need for Alberta Employers to Provide More Workplace Education-
  Scale: 1 = Do Not Agree at all 4 = Somewhat Agree 7 = Agree Completely

Fig 1d: Need for Workplace Education (Q.1)
- Your Organization Needs Improved Literacy Among Workforce-
  Scale: 1 = Do Not Agree at all 4 = Somewhat Agree 7 = Agree Completely
2.1.2 Impact of Subsets

A higher proportion of Private sector employers provide strong agreement ratings that their own organization has a need for improved literacy (27% Private Sector vs. 6% Non-Profit)
2.2 Perceived Benefits of Workplace Education

The majority of Alberta employers agree workplace education benefits their organization in many different respects.

The employers particularly agree offering workplace education improves:

- Employees’ ability to handle new responsibility (82% agree; 53% strongly)
- Employee productivity (80% agree; 43% strongly)
- Employees’ ability to implement new change (79% agree; 45% strongly)
- Quality of products and services offered by the organization (77% agree; 47% strongly)

A range of 63% to 75% agree (31% to 40% strongly agree) with other perceived benefits of offering workplace education.

Fig 2: Perceptions About Workplace Education (Q.3)

Scale: 1 = Do not agree at all 4 = Somewhat agree 7 = Completely agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>Strongly agree (6,7 ratings)</th>
<th>Moderately agree (4,5 ratings)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improves employees’ abilities to handle new responsibilities</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improves employee productivity</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improves ability to implement new changes</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improves quality of products or services</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increases organization’s competitiveness</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attracts employees</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improves safety</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improves labour-management relations</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduces employee turnover</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n=514)
2.2.1 Impact of Employer Size

Employers with 100 or more employees provide higher agreement ratings overall on the benefits workplace education to their organization, than those with fewer employees.

For all benefits, the highest agreement rating is provided by one of the three largest employer sizes. At least 60% of organizations with 500 or more employees provide strong agreement ratings (6,7 ratings) that offering workplace education would improve:

- Employees’ ability to handle new responsibility (71%)
- Employee productivity (69%)
- Employees’ ability to implement new change (63%)
- Quality of products and services offered by the organization (60%)

---

Fig 3a: Perceptions About Workplace Education (Q.3)
- Improves Employees’ Ability to Handle New Responsibilities or New Communication Practices-

Fig 3b: Perceptions About Workplace Education (Q.3)
- Improves Employee Productivity-

Fig 3c: Perceptions About Workplace Education (Q.3)
- Improves Ability to Implement New Technology, Production Processes, or Other Changes-

Fig 3d: Perceptions About Workplace Education (Q.3)
- Improves Product or Safety Quality-

---

Scale: 1 = Do not agree at all 4 = Somewhat agree 7 = Completely agree

Don’t Know
Do Not Agree
(1,2,3 ratings)
Fig 3e: Perceptions About Workplace Education (Q.3)
- Increases Organization's Competitiveness-

| Scale: 1 = Do not agree at all 4 = Somewhat agree 7 = Completely agree |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Don't Know       | Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree |
| Total (n=514)  | < 25 (n=172)  | 25-49 (n=87) | 50-99 (n=90) | 100-249 (n=77) | 250-499 (n=40) | 500+  (n=48) |
| 0%   20% 40% 60% 80% 100% |
| 4%   3%   2%   3%   4%   5%   6%   7%   8%   9%   10% |

Fig 3f: Perceptions About Workplace Education (Q.3)
- Attracts Employees to Organization-

| Scale: 1 = Do not agree at all 4 = Somewhat agree 7 = Completely agree |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Don't Know       | Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree |
| Total (n=514)  | < 25 (n=172)  | 25-49 (n=87) | 50-99 (n=90) | 100-249 (n=77) | 250-499 (n=40) | 500+  (n=48) |
| 0%   20% 40% 60% 80% 100% |
| 4%   3%   2%   3%   4%   5%   6%   7%   8%   9%   10% |

Fig 3g: Perceptions About Workplace Education (Q.3)
- Improves Safety-

| Scale: 1 = Do not agree at all 4 = Somewhat agree 7 = Completely agree |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Don't Know       | Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree |
| Total (n=514)  | < 25 (n=172)  | 25-49 (n=87) | 50-99 (n=90) | 100-249 (n=77) | 250-499 (n=40) | 500+  (n=48) |
| 0%   20% 40% 60% 80% 100% |
| 4%   3%   2%   3%   4%   5%   6%   7%   8%   9%   10% |

Fig 3h: Perceptions About Workplace Education (Q.3)
- Improves Labour-Management Relations-

| Scale: 1 = Do not agree at all 4 = Somewhat agree 7 = Completely agree |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Don't Know       | Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree |
| Total (n=514)  | < 25 (n=172)  | 25-49 (n=87) | 50-99 (n=90) | 100-249 (n=77) | 250-499 (n=40) | 500+  (n=48) |
| 0%   20% 40% 60% 80% 100% |
| 4%   3%   2%   3%   4%   5%   6%   7%   8%   9%   10% |
2.2.2 Impact of Sector

Private sector employers provide higher agreement ratings than Non-Profit organizations that offering workplace education would:

- Reduce employee turnover at their organization (66% Private vs. 41% Non-Profit)
- Increase their organization’s competitiveness (78% vs. 51% Non-Profit)

Government employers provide higher agreement ratings that offering workplace education would attract employees to their organization (89% Government vs. 61% Non-Profit).
2.3 Specific Skill Areas that Would Benefit the Organization

When asked for their level of agreement that their organization would benefit from improving five skill areas, 80% or more Alberta employers agree their organization would benefit from improvement in teamwork skills (82%) and verbal communication skills (80%), including 50% who provide strong agreement ratings (6,7, ratings).

Approximately three quarters of Alberta employers agree, including one-third that strongly agree, their organization would benefit from improvements to their workforce in basic computer skills (76%; 38% strongly), reading and writing (75%; 44% strongly) and basic math (73%; 40% strongly).

![Fig 4: Perceived Benefit from Improvement in Skill Areas (Q.6)](image)

Scale: 1 = Do not agree at all 4 = Somewhat agree 7 = Agree completely

(n=514)
2.3.1 Impact of Employer Size

Organizations with 100 or more employees provide higher than average agreement ratings indicating they would benefit from improvements in:

- Teamwork (95% 100+ employees vs. 81% <100)
- Verbal communication skills (90% vs. 80%)
- Basic computer skills (87% vs. 76%)

Also, organizations with 250 or more employees are most likely to strongly agree (6,7 ratings) their organization will benefit from teamwork (67% 250+ employees vs. 52% <250).

![Fig 4a: Perceived Benefit from Improvement in Skill Areas (Q.6) - Teamwork-](image)

![Fig 4b: Perceived Benefit from Improvement in Skill Areas (Q.6) - Verbal Communication-](image)

![Fig 4c: Perceived Benefit from Improvement in Skill Areas(Q.6) - Basic Computer Skills-](image)

![Fig 4d: Perceived Benefit from Improvement in Skill Areas (Q.6) - Reading and Writing-](image)
2.3.2 Impact of Sector

Compared to the Non-Profit sector, a higher proportion of employers in other sectors agree their organization would benefit from improvement in:

- Verbal communication (54% Non-Profit vs. 84% Private sector)
- Reading and writing (52% vs. 89% Government, 78% Private)
- Basic Math (40% vs. 77% Private and Government)
- Teamwork (64% vs. 83% Private)
2.4 Use of Workplace Education by Organizations

Half (53%) of Alberta employers indicate they currently provide some type of workplace education programs. Ten percent (10%) of employers have provided a workplace education plan in the past but don’t currently provide one, while 6% plan to offer one in the next 12 months.

One quarter (27%) of employers do not offer any workplace education programs nor do they plan to in future.
2.4.1 Impact of Employer Size

A higher proportion of organizations with 100 or more employees currently provide workplace education programs for their Alberta employees, than those with fewer employees (77% 100+ employees vs. 52% <100)

Reflecting this difference, organizations with fewer than 100 employees are more likely to not provide any workplace education programs either currently or in future (27% <100 employees vs. 7% 100+)

Table 1a: Use of Workplace Education Programs (Q.4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Employers</th>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (n=514)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are workplace education programs currently being provided to employees</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have been provided within the past, but not currently</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are programs planned to start within the next 12 months</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are no workplace education programs provided or planned</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bold denotes significant differences

2.4.2 Past Use of Workplace Education Programs

Organizations which offered workplace education programs in the past but were not currently offering them were asked to indicate when those programs were most recently in place. Most employers recall offering workplace education programs in the past year (54%) or less than two years ago (25%).

Table 1b: Past Use of Workplace Education Programs (Q.5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employers which have offered programs in the past</th>
<th>(n=45)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within the past 12 months</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 years ago</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 2 and 5 years ago</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 years ago</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4.3 Impact of Sector

- A higher than average proportion of Government sector employers currently provide workplace education programs (74% vs. 50% Private sector)
- A higher than average proportion of Private sector employers have no workplace education programs provided or planned (29% vs. 3% Government sector)
2.5 Attributes of Successful Workplace Education Programs

More than half (54%) of Alberta employers believe the peer training method is the most successful method of instruction. Lower proportions of employers consider the small classroom method (40%) or one-to one-tutoring (34%) most successful.
2.5.1 Impact of Employer Size

Employers with 100 or more employees believe more strongly than average that the small classroom method is the best method of instruction (69% 100+ employees vs. 39% <100).

There are no major differences among the various employer sizes relating to the other methods of instruction.

Table 2: Successful Methods of Instruction (Q.8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Employers</th>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (n=514)</td>
<td>&lt; 25 (n=172)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer training, with workers training other workers</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small classroom or group method</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>38% 46% 49% 68% 70% 77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to one tutoring</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34% 29% 33% 40% 43% 33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4% 3% 3% 1% - -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bold denotes significant differences

2.5.2 Impact of Sector

A higher than average proportion of Government (66%) and Non-Profit (66%) sector organizations consider the small classroom or group method as the most successful method of instruction, in contrast to Private sector (35%).
2.6 Importance of Workplace Education Programs

All employers were asked to rate how important a number of factors are in ensuring success of workplace education. At least 85% of organizations rate most factors important (4,5,6,7 ratings) although lower importance is placed on confidentiality of participating workers (71%) and having many workers who have a need for programs (69%).

Employers consider the most important for effective workplace education programs to be:

- The attitude and motivation of workers (97% important, including 78% very important)
- The support and involvement of employer (95% important including 73% very important)

Employers rate as least important:

- Confidentiality regarding participants (71% important, including 39% very important)
- Having many workers who have a need for programs (69% important, including 33% very important)

![Fig 7: Factors Ensuring Success of Workplace Education (Q.9)](n=514)
2.6.1 Impact of Employer Size

All sizes of employers rate the factors that ensure success of workplace education as important, although to different degrees.

Employers with 100 or more employees place higher importance (4,5,6,7 ratings) on:

- Positive impact of programs on the organization’s bottom line (96% 100+ employees vs. 90% <100)
- Having many workers who need the programs (82% vs. 69%)

Fig 7a: Factors to Ensure Workplace Education Success (Q.9)

Fig 7b: Factors to Ensure Workplace Education Success (Q.9)

Fig 7c: Factors to Ensure Workplace Education Success (Q.9)

Fig 7d: Factors to Ensure Workplace Education Success (Q.9)
2.6.2 Impact of Sector

A higher proportion of non-profit sector employers than private sector rate as important:
- Support and involvement of the employer (100% Non-Profit sector vs. 94% Private sector)
- Attitude and motivation of workers (100% vs. 96%)
- Availability of funding (81% vs. 59%)
### 2.7 Partnerships and Family Components to Workplace Education

All employers were asked to provide their agreement to statements related to partnerships and family aspects of workplace education.

Three-quarters of Alberta employers agree:
- Partnerships with external workplace providers could be beneficial (76%)
- Employees are more likely to upgrade skills of their children benefit directly (74%)

There are mixed opinions whether bringing family to learn is a more effective learning method, with about half (46%) who agree with this component of workplace literacy.

![Fig 8: Family Components of Workplace Literacy Programs (Q.10)](attachment:fig8)
2.7.1 Impact of Employer Size

Organizations with 100 or more employees provide higher agreement ratings (4,5,6,7 ratings) that partnerships with external workplace literacy providers could be beneficial (86% 100+ employees vs. 76% <100 employees).

![Fig 8a: Family Components of Workplace Literacy Programs (Q.10)
Partnerships With External Workplace Literacy Providers Could be Beneficial](chart)

Scale: 1 = Do Not Agree at all 4 = Somewhat Agree 7 = Agree Completely

![Fig 8b: Family Components of Workplace Literacy Programs (Q.10)
Employees More Likely to Upgrade Skills if Children Directly Benefit](chart)

Scale: 1 = Do Not Agree at all 4 = Somewhat Agree 7 = Agree Completely

![Fig 8c: Family Components of Workplace Literacy Programs (Q.10)
Bringing Family to Learn is More Effective](chart)

Scale: 1 = Do Not Agree at all 4 = Somewhat Agree 7 = Agree Completely
2.8 Attitudes towards Literacy

Alberta organizations were read statistics about literacy and asked if the statistic is about the same they would have expected, more than they expected, or less than they expected. The majority of Alberta organizations state the statistic is about the same they would have expected when they hear that:

- Canadian adults who have low literacy are about twice as likely to be unemployed (82% who say it is about the same they expected)
- Sixty-percent of immigrants do not have literacy and numeracy skills to function fully (62%)
- Nearly half of adult Canadians struggle with low literacy (54%)

One-third (34%) of Alberta organizations say that nearly half of adult Canadians struggling with low literacy is more than they would have expected (vs. range of 9% to 19% for the other two statistics).

Table 3a: (Q.2)
Canadian Adults Who Have Low Literacy are about Twice as Likely to Be Unemployed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Total (n=514)</th>
<th>&lt; 25 (n=172)</th>
<th>25-49 (n=87)</th>
<th>50-99 (n=90)</th>
<th>100-249 (n=77)</th>
<th>250-499 (n=40)</th>
<th>500 + (n=48)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About the same</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than you expected</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than you expected</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bold denotes significant differences

Table 3b: (Q.2)
Sixty Percent of Immigrants Do Not Have Literacy And Numeracy Skills To Function Fully

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Total (n=514)</th>
<th>&lt; 25 (n=172)</th>
<th>25-49 (n=87)</th>
<th>50-99 (n=90)</th>
<th>100-249 (n=77)</th>
<th>250-499 (n=40)</th>
<th>500 + (n=48)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About the same</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than you expected</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than you expected</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bold denotes significant differences

Table 3c: (Q.2)
Nearly half of adult Canadians struggle with low literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Total (n=514)</th>
<th>&lt; 25 (n=172)</th>
<th>25-49 (n=87)</th>
<th>50-99 (n=90)</th>
<th>100-249 (n=77)</th>
<th>250-499 (n=40)</th>
<th>500 + (n=48)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About the same</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than you expected</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than you expected</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bold denotes significant differences
2.9 Demographic Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Employers</th>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (n=514)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of employees</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 500 employees</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250-499</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-249</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-99</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-49</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 25 employees</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Organization</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not-for-profit organization</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector, for profit</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization Sector</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial services</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health/Social Services</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources (oil and gas, etc)</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Bold denotes significant differences

*Less than 1% of respondents
**Table 4a: Demographics (Q. D2-D4) Con’t…**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Employers</th>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                       | Total  
|                       | (n=514)            |
|                       | < 25  
|                       | (n=172)            |
|                       | 25-49  
|                       | (n=87)             |
|                       | 50-99  
|                       | (n=90)             |
|                       | 100-249  
|                       | (n=77)             |
|                       | 250-499  
|                       | (n=40)             |
|                       | 500+  
|                       | (n=48)             |

**Level of influence on Workplace Literacy decisions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>&lt; 25</th>
<th>25-49</th>
<th>50-99</th>
<th>100-249</th>
<th>250-499</th>
<th>500+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No influence at all</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little, if any, influence</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some influence</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot of influence</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Annual sales**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>&lt; 25</th>
<th>25-49</th>
<th>50-99</th>
<th>100-249</th>
<th>250-499</th>
<th>500+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $500,000</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500,000 to $1 Million</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1 to 2.5 Million</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2.5 to 5 Million</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5 to 10 Million</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10 to 20 Million</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20 to 50 Million</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50 to 100 Million</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100 to 500 Million</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500 Million to $1 Billion</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $1 Billion</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Office type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>&lt; 25</th>
<th>25-49</th>
<th>50-99</th>
<th>100-249</th>
<th>250-499</th>
<th>500+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branches</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Office</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidiary Head Office</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Site</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Less than 1%

Bold denotes significant differences
3. CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

Alberta employers perceive that there is a need for improved literacy and essential skills in the province, and employers in general should provide more workplace education than is currently offered. Employers are concerned about the essential skill levels of future employees; however, their opinions are mixed regarding whether their own organizations require improved literacy and essential skills at the present time.

Most employers are not surprised when presented with statistics about low literacy leading to greater unemployment or literacy challenges that immigrants face. However, many are surprised to hear that nearly half of Canadians struggle with low literacy.

Employers’ views about the perceived need for improved literacy and their comfort with some of the supporting statistics could make them supportive of specific literacy education efforts. A more surprising statistic might be likely to catch their attention to a greater extent than the statistics they already agree with, although they might also be less likely to trust a statistic that does not fit with their understanding of the current situation in Alberta.

Employers believe there are many different benefits of workplace education, particularly improving employees’ abilities to handle new responsibilities, productivity, ability to implement new changes, and quality of products or services. Other benefits, listed in order of importance, include increasing organizational competitiveness, attracting employees, improving safety, improving labour-management relations, and reducing employee turnover. Emphasizing these benefits would add strength to literacy education messages targeted to Alberta employers.

A wide range of specific skills are perceived to require improvement, most noticeably, teamwork and verbal communication. Basic computer skills, reading and writing, and basic math are also perceived to require improvement. Organizations are likely to feel most supported by workplace education if it addresses the skill areas they believe are most important to improve on. The other skill areas are also motivating to a certain extent, even if they are not the primary focus.

Currently, half of Alberta employers currently provide workplace education programs. Opportunities exist to expand their programs to support a wider range of needs, and to serve an even greater number of employers.

Employers with more than 100 employees express a greater need for improved literacy and essential skills, and these larger organizations are also more likely than smaller employers to currently offer workplace education programs. This may be a reflection of the economies of scale present in larger organizations, which could also be created by smaller organizations partnering with each other or offering programs through a third party organization.

Despite their equally strong recognition of the need for improved literacy, private sector organizations are less likely to offer workplace education programs than government. That may indicate a greater need among private sector firms to put programs in place.

Peer training is perceived to be the most effective form of workplace education, followed by the small classroom or group method. One to one tutoring is the least preferred option of the three, although one third of employers believe this method is the most effective. Organizations with less than 100 employees tend to believe peer training is the most effective means of workplace education, while those with 100 or more employees tend to prefer the small classroom or group.
Employers perceive a number of factors to be important to have in place to ensure success of workplace education, most notably attitude and motivation of the workers, and support and involvement of the employer. Other important factors (in order of importance) are having resources available to provide the training, demonstration of positive impacts on the bottom line, funding, and flexible hours for workers to participate. The least important factors, still considered important to many, are confidentiality regarding the participants, and having many workers who have a need for the programs. Helping organizations ensure these conditions are satisfied, thereby removing the perceived barriers to successful workplace education programs, could help increase the amount of literacy education programming in Alberta.

Most employers perceive there could be benefits to partnering with external workplace literacy providers. Organizations with 100 or more employees are the most likely to see the benefit of this type of arrangement. If looking to approach organizations to establish such partnerships, literacy organizations could target employers of that size as their first priority given the greater probability of success. Alternatively, more education about the benefits of partnerships with external literacy providers could create more widespread support especially if the messages address concerns various sizes and types of organizations face.

While it is perceived that employees are more likely to upgrade their skills if their children directly benefit, opinions are mixed regarding whether learning as a family is more effective. More employer education is needed for organizations to be ready to pursue this type of literacy and essential skills training.
APPENDIX A – QUESTIONNAIRE
Centre for Family Literacy
Questionnaire

IF HAVE NAME: Hello, may I please speak with (insert name)?

IF DON'T HAVE NAME: May I speak to the person who is responsible for the training and development of the employees at ____ (insert name of employer)?

Arrange call back if necessary, ask for person’s name and record name

Hello, my name is __________ calling from Leger Marketing. We’re conducting a study with randomly selected Alberta employers to understand their opinions about education and training in the workplace. Please be assured we are not selling anything. We are only interested in your opinions.

If necessary, read: Please be assured that all information you provide will be kept completely confidential. We are an independent third party that has been retained by the Centre for Family Literacy to conduct this study. Your responses will be presented in consolidated form only, not individually.

The survey takes 8-10 minutes on average. Would you be able to help us out?

Great! Before we start, could you tell me the level of influence you have on decisions regarding possible implementation of education and training programs in your organization in Alberta? Would you say...

No influence at all 1
Little, if any, influence 2
Some influence 3
Lot of influence 4

If 1 or 2:
We’re interested in speaking with the person with the greatest responsibility in this area. Is there someone in your organization who would be more appropriate for me to speak with?

Yes RECORD THEIR NAME, TITLE AND DEPARTMENT________
No PROCEED WITH INTERVIEWING THE PERSON YOU ARE SPEAKING WITH

If someone else more appropriate is available, read INTRODUCTION to them.

Ensure name, job title and department has been recorded (see above)
Our conversation today is on the topic of Workplace Education, which focuses on general literacy instruction such as reading, writing, math and computer skills, as well as specific literacy skills related to the business such as reading technical manuals, and life skills such as how to work with others. These requirements apply to a whole range of employees from those in entry-level positions to those in office settings and highly skilled trades, as well as supervisors and managers.

Other terms for what we mean by workplace education are ‘basic skills,’ ‘essential skills’ and ‘workplace literacy’.

1. Based on the definition I just read to you, please rate your agreement with the following statements related to workplace education. Please use the scale from 1 to 7 where 1 means you do not agree at all, 4 means you somewhat agree and 7 means you agree completely. RANDOMIZE ORDER AND READ

   a. Employers in Alberta have a need for improved literacy and essential skills such as reading, writing, math and computer operation among the workforce
   b. Your organization has a need for improved literacy and essential skills such as reading, writing, math and computer operation among its employees
   c. There is a need for Alberta employers to provide more workplace education than is currently offered
   d. Your organization is concerned about the essential skills levels of future employees

2. I will now read you some statistics about literacy. For each of the statements I read, please tell me if the statistic is... READ SCALE

   a. Nearly half of adult Canadians struggle with low literacy
       1   About the same as what you would have expected
       2   More than you expected; or
       3   Less than you expected;

   b. Sixty percent of immigrants do not have the literacy and numeracy skills to function fully in the Canadian economy
   c. Canadian adults who have low literacy are about twice as likely to be unemployed

3. Using the seven point scale where 1 means you do not agree at all, 4 means somewhat agree and 7 means agree completely, to what extent do you agree that offering workplace education would... RANDOMIZE AND READ

   a. Attract employees to your organization
   b. Reduce employee turnover at your organization
   c. Improve employee productivity at your organization
   d. Increase your organization’s competitiveness
   e. Improve safety at your organization
   f. Improve the quality of your products or services
   g. Improve labour-management relations at your organization
   h. Improve your organization’s ability to implement new technology, production processes or other changes in the workplace
   i. Improve your employees’ abilities to handle new responsibilities or new communications practices
4. Which of the following best describes your organization’s use of workplace education programs for your Alberta employees... READ

1. There are workplace education programs currently being provided to employees
2. They have been provided within the past, but not currently
3. There are programs planned to start within the next 12 months
4. There are no workplace education programs provided or planned
9. Don’t know

ASK 5 IF 4=2 (OFFERED IN THE PAST)

5. As far as you can recall, when was the last time your organization had workplace education programs in place...READ

1. Within the past 12 months
1. 1 to 2 years ago
2. Between 2 and 5 years ago
3. More than 5 years ago
9. Don’t know

ASK ALL

6. Please rate your level of agreement that your organization would benefit from improving each of these essential skill areas, using the 1 to 7 scale where 1 means you do not agree at all, 4 means somewhat agree and 7 means agree completely ... RANDOMIZE AND READ

1. Verbal communication
2. Reading and writing
3. Basic math
4. Basic computer skills
5. Teamwork

ASK 7 IF 4=1 OR 2 (OFFER CURRENTLY OR IN THE PAST)

7. Please tell me whether your organization has ever offered workplace education in these subject areas to your employees ... READ (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY).

1. Verbal communication
2. Reading and writing
3. Basic math
4. Basic computer skills
5. Teamwork
9. Don’t know
ASK ALL
8. What methods of instruction are most successful in your experience? If you have not offered one or any of the programs to your employees, then just answer based on your perception on which program is likely to work best READ (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

1  Small classroom or group method
2  One to one tutoring
3  Peer training, with workers training other workers
9  Don’t know

9. Please rate how IMPORTANT the following possible factors are in ensuring workplace education programs are successful, using the 7-point scale where 1 means Not Important at All, 4 means Somewhat Important and 7 means Extremely Important...

a. Support and involvement of the employer
b. Availability of funding
c. Attitude and motivation of the workers
d. Staff resources available to provide the training
e. Demonstrated positive impacts of the workplace education programs on your organization’s bottom line
f. Having many workers who have a need for the programs
g. Confidentiality regarding who is participating in the programs
h. Flexible hours for workers to participate in the programs

10. Some workplace programs have family components. Using the scale from 1 to 7 where 1 means you do not agree at all, 4 means somewhat agree and 7 means agree completely, to what extent do you agree with these statements? READ IN ORDER

a. Bringing in family to learn together makes workplace learning more effective
b. Employees would be more likely to upgrade their skills if it would have direct benefits for their children
c. Partnership between your organization and external workplace education/literacy providers could be beneficial

Finally, just a few questions for classification purposes

11. What is the approximate number of employees in your organization/ government department, ministry, municipality/ employee union?
If respondent is unclear, confirm we are asking for number of employees overall.

Over 500 employees
250-499
100-249
50-99
25-49
Less than 25 employees
12. Which of the following describes your organization... READ

1  Government
2  Not-for-profit organization
3  Private sector, for profit  ASK Q13

13. In what sector(s) does your organization operate? (ALL THAT APPLY)

1  Communications
2  Construction
3  Education
4  Financial services
5  Health
6  Hospitality
7  Resources (oil and gas, etc)
8  Retail
9  Transportation
10  Utilities
11  Other (specify)______________________________________

14. Gender (RECORD, ONLY ASK ON WEB VERSION)

Male
Female

That concludes my interview. Thank you very much for your time and assistance!

If you have any questions about this interview, you may contact Sharon Skage at the Centre of Family Literacy toll free at 1-866-421-7323.
APPENDIX D – TABLE OF CONFIDENCE BOUNDS
STATISTICAL TOLERANCES

Probability Level: 95% confidence interval (19 times out of 20)

Range of error is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>With a sample size of</th>
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<th>4% or 96%</th>
<th>6% or 94%</th>
<th>8% or 92%</th>
<th>10% or 90%</th>
<th>12% or 88%</th>
<th>15% or 85%</th>
<th>20% or 80%</th>
<th>25% or 75%</th>
<th>30% or 70%</th>
<th>35% or 65%</th>
<th>40% or 60%</th>
<th>45% or 55%</th>
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How to read: If sample is 500 then 4% could be plus or minus 1.7% 19 times out of 20