

**MAINE MARINE TRADE ASSOCIATION**

# Summary of Survey Findings and Action Plan for Maine Marine Trade Association



**Summer 2003  
Marine Trade  
Businesses**

# PROJECT SUMMARY

With its thousands of miles of pristine coastline and seemingly limitless inland water bodies Maine provides outstanding opportunities for boating enthusiasts. It follows, therefore, that a strong boating industry should be an important part of the boating scene. Maine is home to hundreds of marine-related businesses including boatbuilders, boatyards, marinas, boat and motor dealers, sailmakers, naval architects, dock and float builders and many others. The Maine Marine Trade Association (MMTA) represents more than two hundred of these firms and serves as the industry's advocate with the legislature and regulatory agencies. The Association also has a long history of helping its members meet the educational/training needs of its workforce.

In the spring of 2003 MMTA was invited to take part in the PrecisionWorks grant that was developing specialized employee training programs for a number of industries engaged in precision manufacturing. Driven by a sense that training just for the sake of training wouldn't necessarily provide a benefit to its members, MMTA's Board of Directors agreed to participate in a Business Visitation Program (BVP) with the Maine Department of Labor. The goal of the survey would be to identify specific training needs so that programs designed by PrecisionWorks would meet the actual needs of the industry.

In August of 2003 a group of partners formed to design the survey and target potential participants. A master list of 439 companies was pared down to a core list of 149 firms. One hundred and twenty-five firms were contacted and a total of ninety-seven (97) were ultimately interviewed. Most of these interviews were conducted in person by volunteers from a number of agencies and organizations. This process marked the first time such an intensive approach was used by the Association to survey its members.

The information gleaned as a result of this program will be used in a number of ways:

- First and foremost, needed training programs will be developed and delivered
- Business trends will be noted and tracked
- Survey participants will be offered access to services.

In addition, general business information and business planning information will be used to help further MMTA's mission to promote the growth and prosperity of the Marine Industry in Maine; to foster cooperation among Marine Businesses with outside industries; to encourage and assist with sound environmental practices in the marine industry.

The successful implementation of this Business Visitation Program would not have been possible without the help and support of a number of individuals and organizations. The Maine Marine Trade Association would like to recognize and express its gratitude to the following:

**BVP Subcommittee:** Fortune, Inc.; Pemaquid Marine; Yankee Marina and Boatyard PrecisionWorks, The Center for Workplace Learning at the University of Southern Maine; The Maine Jobs Council; The Centers for Women, Work and Community, Coastal Enterprises, Inc.; Composite Technology Center and the Maine Department of Labor.

**Other BVP Partners:** Maine Department of Economic and Community Development; Training Resource Center; Maine CareerCenters, Coalition for Workforce Development, Adult Education, Training Development Corporation, Western Maine Community Action and Coastal Economic Development.

Even with the hard work of all of our partners, none of this would have been possible without the Maine Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Employment Services (BES). The enthusiastic and dedicated staff at BES were not only responsible for the mechanics of the project, but their skill, determination and good humor helped complete this project in record time without sacrificing quality. We are extremely grateful for their service.

# SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS

The primary goals of the Maine Marine Trade Association (MMTA) industry survey were to:

- Identify the needs of businesses in the marine trade industry and coordinate linkages with appropriate business services including workforce development resources, technical assistance, and business counseling;
- Find out about immediate and anticipated training needs of the industry; and
- Collect information about the state of the marine trade sector in Maine to better understand how the MMTA can position itself to support the industry.

One hundred and twenty-five (125) marine trade businesses statewide were contacted for inclusion in the survey sample. Of these, ninety-seven (97) completed the survey resulting in a 77% return rate.

An overall profile of the respondents shows that:

- Ninety-eight percent (98%) said their headquarters were here in the State of Maine.
- Eighty-three (83) were Corporations, eight (8) were Limited Liability Corporations, four (4) were Sole Proprietorships and two (2) were Partnerships.
- Of those interviewed, 62% were Owners, 19% were Managers, 8% were CEO/Presidents, 5% were Personnel Officers and 6% were Others.

Over four hundred and fifty (450) referrals were generated from the businesses interviewed statewide. These referrals included requests for information and assistance on Apprenticeship, the Governors Training Initiative, developing business and marketing plans, environmental regulations, succession planning, finding new capital, safety training, the Made in Maine program and many others. The referrals were processed through a network of state and local organizations that provide these business assistance services.

# COMPANY INFORMATION

**“Is Maine the headquarters for your business?”** (Table 1)

- Yes 98%
- No 2%

**“Form of Business”** (Table 2)

- Corporation 86%
- Partnership 2%
- Sole Proprietorship 4%
- Limited Liability Corporation 8%

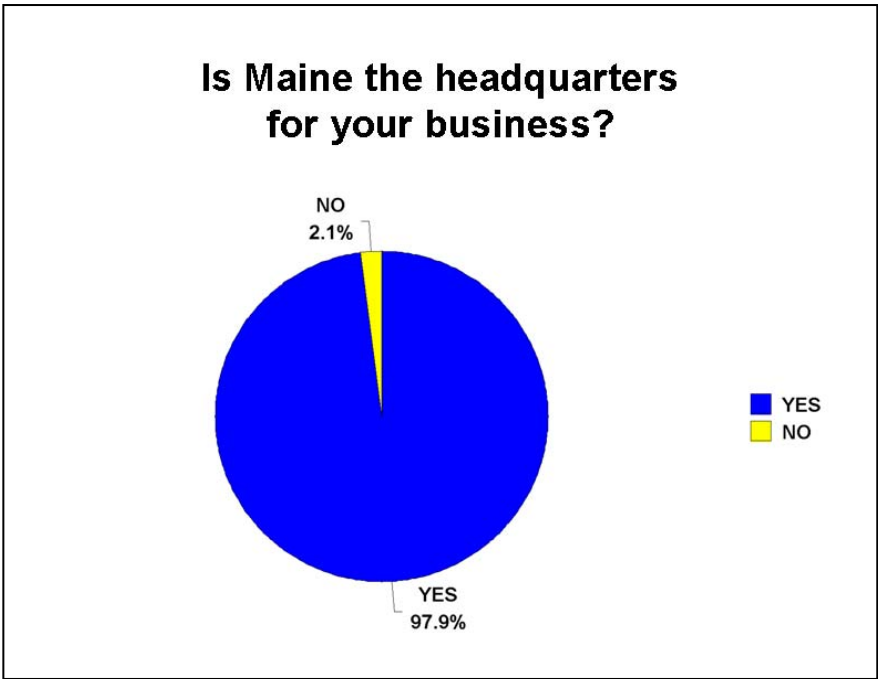


Table 1

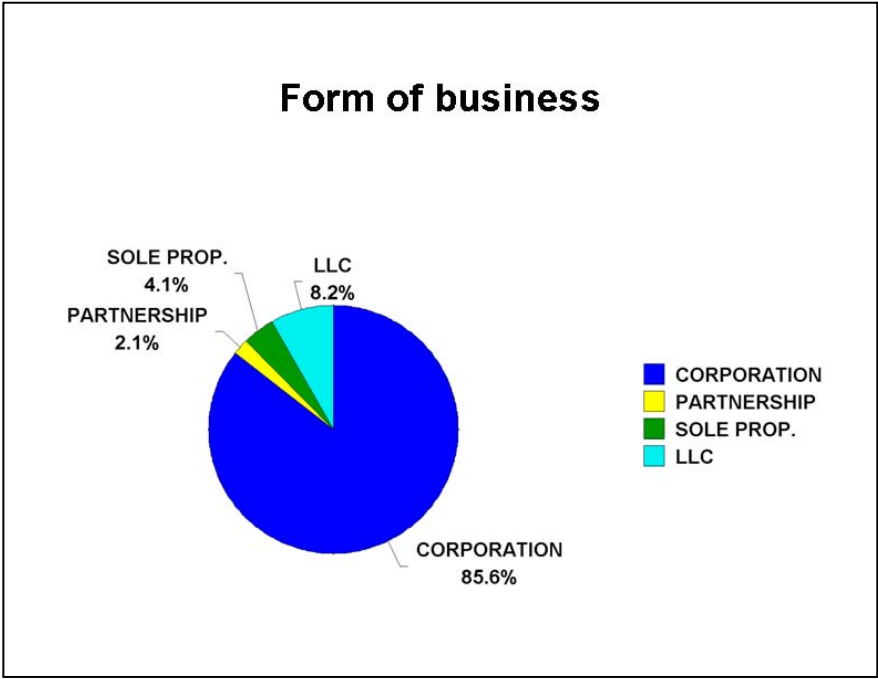


Table 2

# **RETENTION AND EXPANSION**

**When asked “Are you planning to expand your business?” (Table 3)**

- 65% responded “Yes”
- 33% responded “No”
- 2% had no response

Of the 63 businesses responding “Yes” to planning to expand, 23 requested assistance with their plans.

**When asked “Choose the most critical areas you business plans to focus on in the next five years in order to remain competitive.” the top seven choices were: (Table 4)**

- Employee Skill Development
- Customer Service
- Marketing
- Workplace Safety
- Quality Assurance
- Expanding Operations
- Expanding Workforce

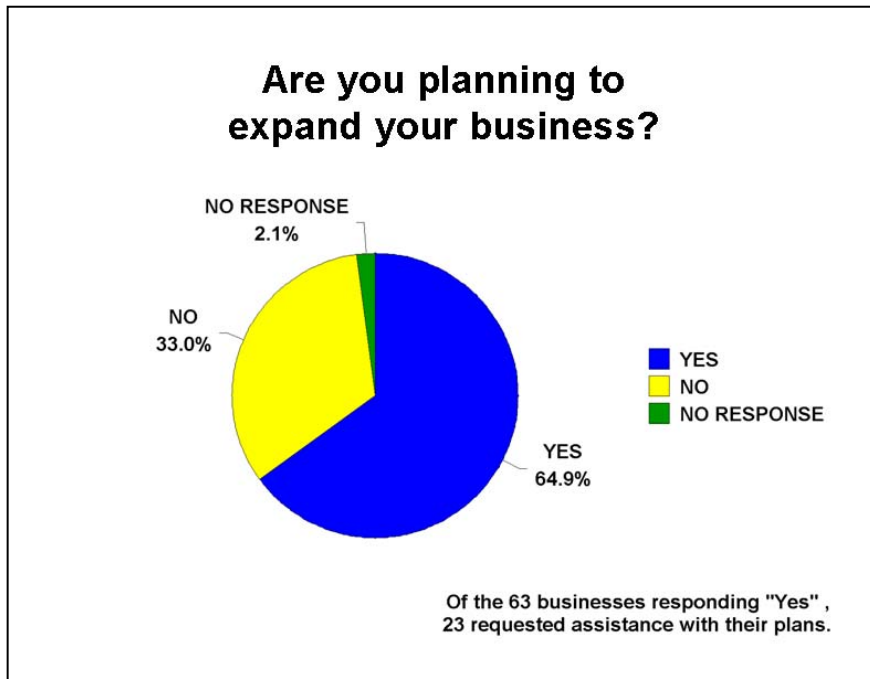


Table 3

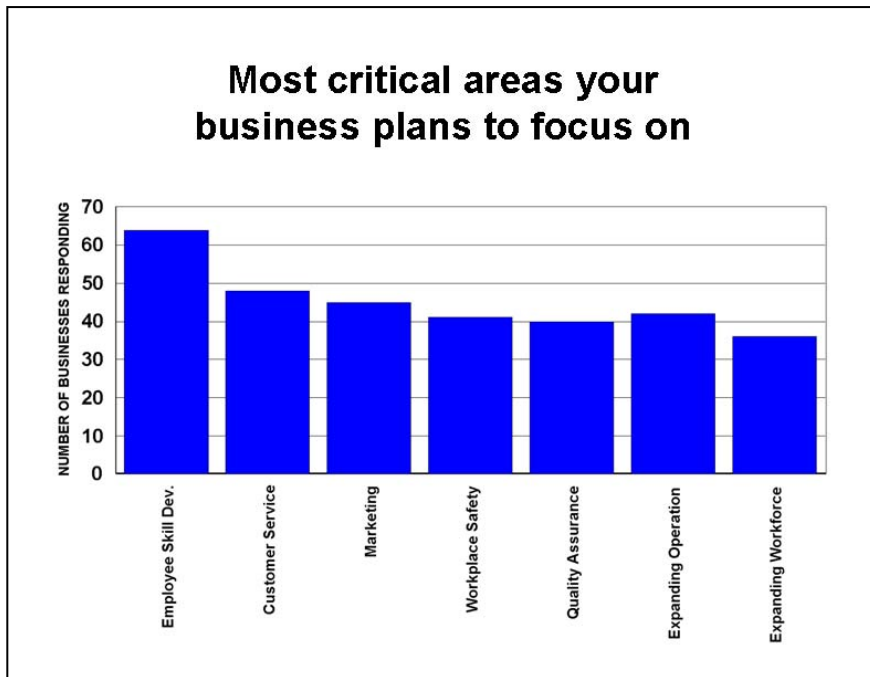


Table 4

**“Does your company have a formal business plan?”** (Table 5)

- 33% responded “Yes”
- 66% responded “No”
- 1% had no response

Of the 64 businesses responding “No” to having a formal business plan, 25 requested assistance with developing one.

**“Does your company have a marketing plan?”** (Table 6)

- 34% responded “Yes”
- 66% responded “No”
- 0% had no response

Of the 64 businesses responding “No” to having a marketing plan, 30 requested assistance in developing one.



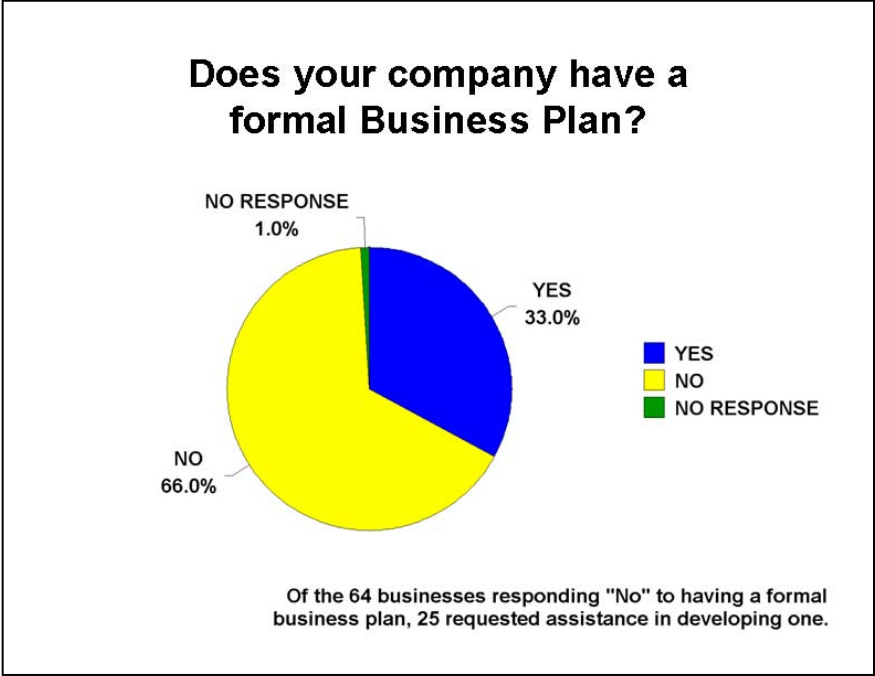


Table 5

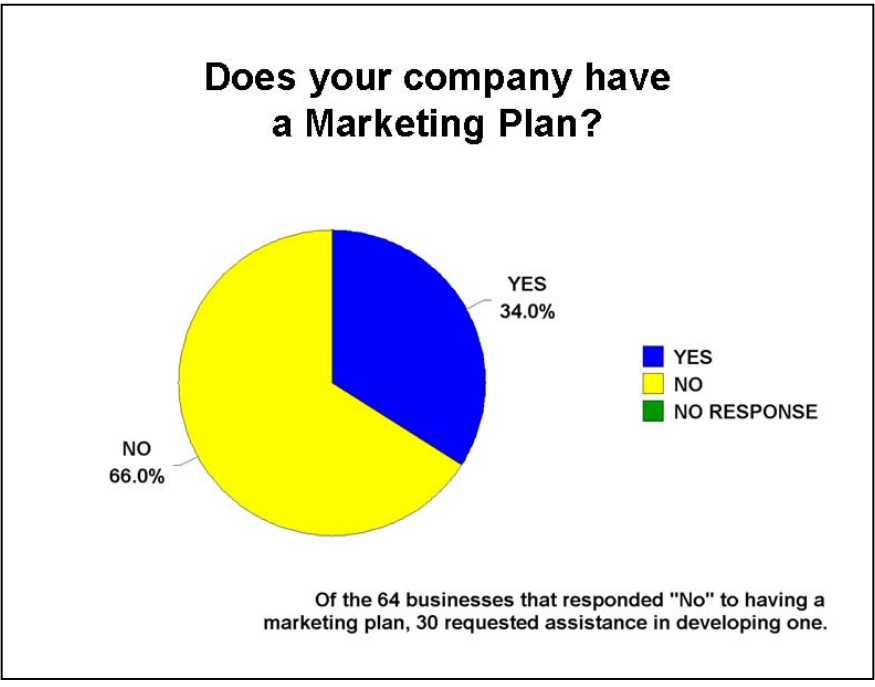


Table 6

# SALES

**“Please indicate whether your sales have increased, decreased or remained the same for the last four years.” (Table 7)**

1999	48% indicated sales increased 11% indicated sales decreased 27% indicated sales remained the same 10% indicated not applicable 4% had no response
2000	59% indicated sales increased 7% indicated sales decreased 25% indicated sales remained the same 6% indicated not applicable 3% had no response
2001	66% indicated sales increased 10% indicated sales decreased 19% indicated sales remained the same 3% indicated not applicable 2% had no response
2002	59% indicated sales increased 20% indicated sales decreased 20% indicated sales remained the same 1% indicated not applicable 0% had no response

**When asked about this year’s sales; (Table 8)**

- 49% expected sales to increase
- 21% expected sales to decrease
- 30% expected sales to remain the same

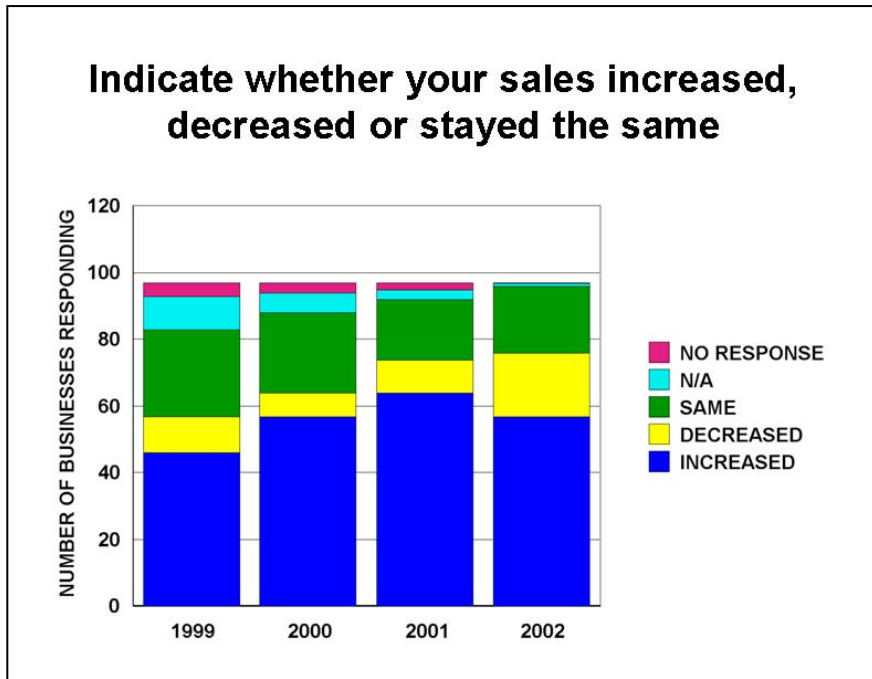


Table 7

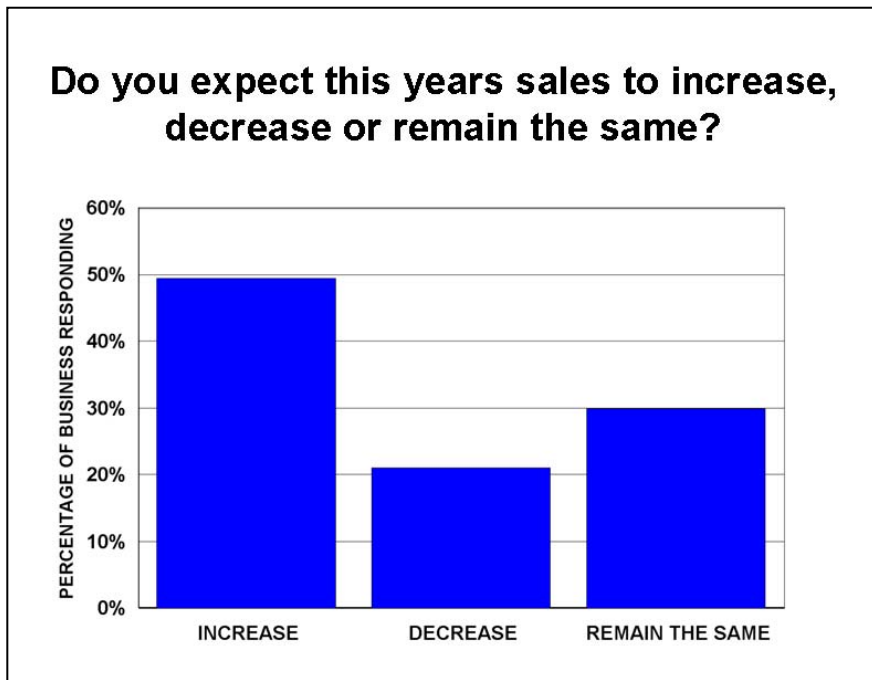


Table 8

## EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

**“Does your company have difficulty in recruiting or retaining employees?”** (Table 9)

<b>Recruiting</b>	72% responded “Yes” 26% responded “No” 2% had no response
<b>Retaining</b>	25% responded “Yes” 72% responded “No” 3% had no response

Of the 70 businesses responding “Yes” to having difficulty recruiting, 65 indicated “Lack of qualified applicants” as the reason for the difficulty.

**“Has your business ever used any of the following for training?”**  
(Table 10)

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Adult Education	19	78
Governor’s Training Initiative	8	89
CareerCenters	9	88
Maine Apprenticeship Program	9	88
Maine Quality Centers	1	96
School to Work Programs	21	76
Vocational Education – Secondary	11	86
Technical College	18	79
Maine Manufacturers Extension Partnership	1	96
Maine Marine Trade Association	41	56



Table 9



Table 10

**“What skills will you be looking for in new employees?” (Table 11)**

- Teamwork 63%
- Technical Skills 62%
- Problem Solving 58%
- Verbal Communication 56%
- Customer Service 54%
- Skilled Non Management 48%
- Math Skills 48%
- Critical Thinking 44%
- Reading Skills 43%
- Writing Communication 42%

**“What specific occupational skills will you be looking for in the next two years?”  
(Table 12)**

- Engine Repair 59%
- Systems Installation 53%
- Carpentry 44%
- Fiberglass Repair 44%
- Composite Fabrication 34%
- Top Coat Application 31%
- Joiners 29%



Table 11

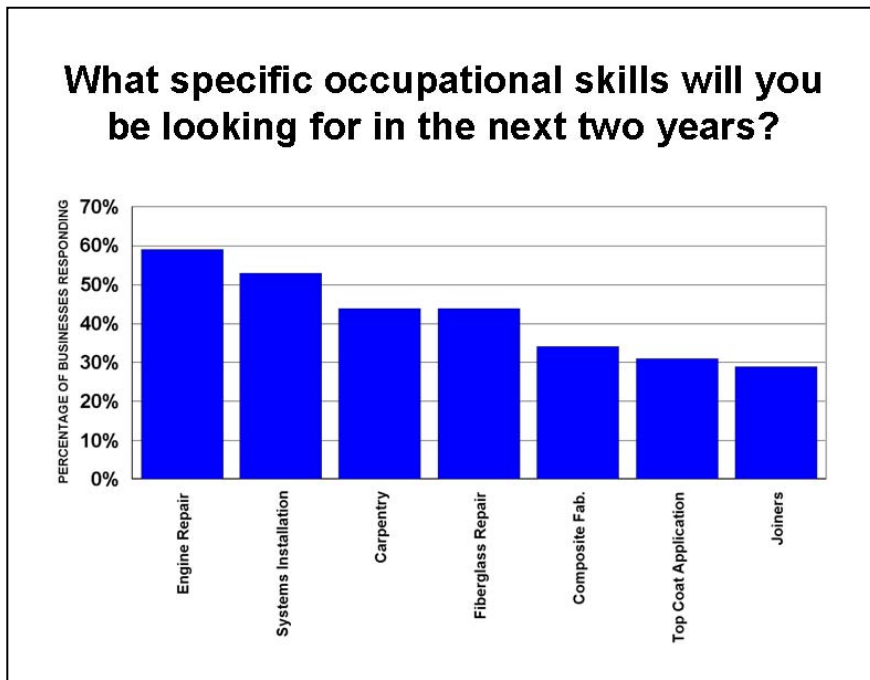


Table 12

**“Does your business support employee education/development programs?” (Table 13)**

- Yes 77%
- No 20%
- No Response 3%

**“What is the best time of year for your employees to attend training?” (Table 14)**

- Spring 1%
- Summer 16%
- Fall 14%
- Winter 69%



### Does your business support employee education development programs?

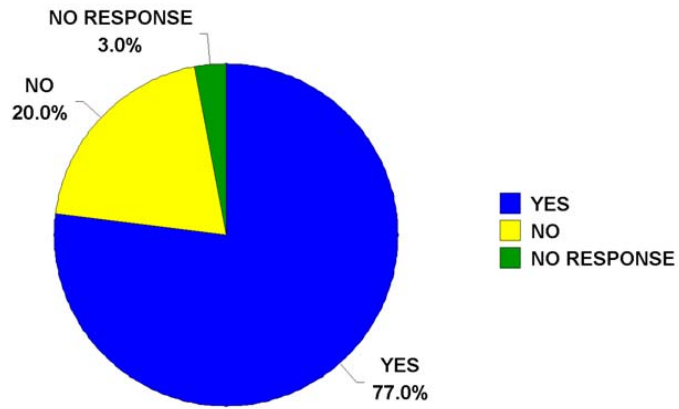


Table 13

### What is the best time of year for your employees to attend training?

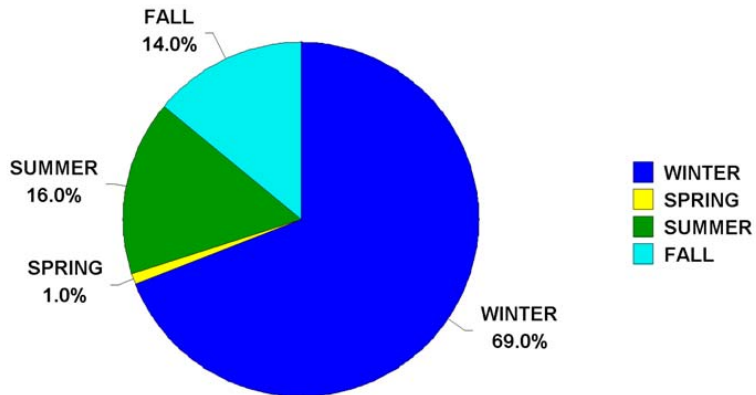


Table 14

**“What is your biggest concern for your business?”**

- The Economy
- Finding New Employees
- Regulatory Issues
- Seasonal Nature Of Business

**“What one thing could MMTA do for your business or the marine trade industry in Maine?”**

- Help With Insurance Costs
- Workforce Training
- Advocacy In Augusta
- Promoting Maine As A Boating Destination

**“Would you be interested in completing a survey concerning insurance?” (Table 15)**

- 85% responded “Yes”
- 13% responded “No”
- 2% had no response

**Would you be interested in completing a survey concerning Insurance?**

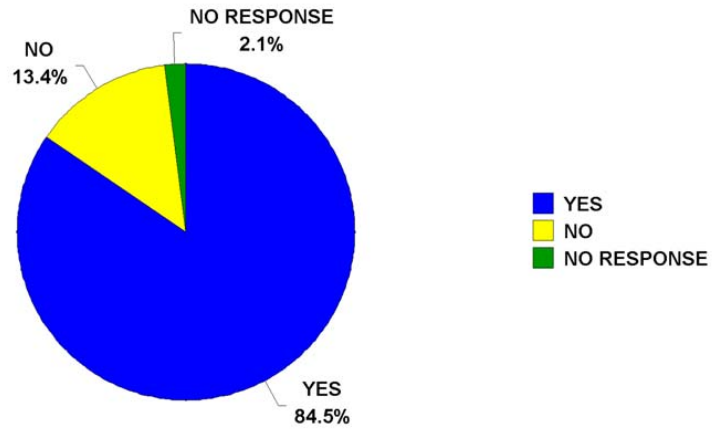


Table 15

# MARINE TRADE SURVEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey results have surfaced several key areas of focus for business and workforce development in the marine trade industry. The following recommendations are clear priorities of those employers surveyed and work plans are being developed to begin addressing these concerns.

1. **Make business services available** to the industry and Maine Marine Trade Association members. The survey indicated that the following areas are of immediate interest to marine trade employers:
  - Marketing plans
  - Business plans
  - Assistance with expansion efforts

Over four hundred and fifty (450) requests for information and assistance were generated by completers of this survey and are being processed by representatives from the Department of Economic and Community Development, Department of Labor, USM Center for Workplace Learning and various other agencies.

2. **Expand the skills of workers** in the marine trades industry.
  - Develop resources for delivery of training at accessible locations in Maine through educational partnerships with training providers around the state.

Survey respondents indicated an immediate need for specific technical training, such as engine technician certification, marine carpentry and fiberglass repair, as well as nontechnical training including teamwork, problem solving and customer service.

3. **Develop the pool of qualified workers** in the industry through an Apprenticeship program.
  - Establish a Maine Marine Trade Association sponsored Apprenticeship Program in partnership with the Department of Labor.
  - Link existing company apprenticeship programs with the Department of Labor apprenticeship system.
4. **Seek to offer health and business insurance** for Maine Marine Trade Association member businesses.
  - The MMTA will collect information that will be provided to prospective Insurance carriers who may be able to provide coverage at a lower cost . Eighty five percent (85%) of the businesses completing this survey were interested in participating in a follow-up insurance survey.
5. **Establish Maine Marine Trade Association in the role of advocate for the industry**, increasing the visibility of the marine trade industry with policy makers.