

POWERING UP THE FUTURE

2008 Labour Market Information Study



2004/2008 Employer Survey Comparative Analysis Summary

In 2004, the Canadian Electricity Association commissioned a comprehensive study of the electricity sector's workforce. The findings revealed that the sector is on the cusp of an ominous labour shortage — a conclusion that was validated in a 2008 Electricity Sector Council survey of employers who together represent **87%** of workers in the industry. A recent comparative analysis of the 2004 and 2008 studies further uncovered human-resource trends in the sector. Understanding these trends can help employers anticipate future challenges and set priorities to overcome them.

According to the responses from participants who completed both the 2004 and 2008 surveys, employment rose **10%** over that four-year period. An estimated **88,328** Canadians now work in the power industry.

Rate of retirement a key challenge

Most employees are between 45 and 55 years of age — the legacy of a hiring boom in the 1970s and 80s. As a result, five percent of workers are expected to retire in each of the next five years. In fact, **8.6%** of sector workers are now eligible for full pensions. An additional **33%** of staff are entitled to partial pensions, up from **11%** in 2004.

To compensate for the loss of this older generation of workers, the 2004 Canadian Electricity Association report advised employers to recruit and train staff in advance of expected retirements. Employers listened. They hired double the number of young employees, including more apprentices, co-op students and interns, and set in motion the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next.



The 2008 survey indicates that companies also used the previous four years to create more ethnically diverse workplaces. The number of people from visual minorities in the sector increased by nearly one percent, as did the participation of Aboriginal peoples. Women’s involvement in the sector rose by five percentage points from **24%** in 2004 to **29%** in 2008.

Exhibit 4.2: Representation of Women in Non-Support Occupations in the Electricity Sector

Occupation	2004 % Representation	2008 % Representation*
Managers	11%	11%
Engineers	9%	13%
Trades	4%	5%

A short-term solution

Even while averaging **15** new hires in 2006, companies are not recruiting enough new employees to replace retiring staff. As a result, a particularly high number of contract workers are hired to help fill the labour gap. In 2004, relatively few survey participants answered the questions pertaining to contract workers. Respondents to the 2008 survey, however, were much more aware of their hiring habits. They heeded the Canadian Electricity Association’s advice and established mechanisms to monitor the number of contractors working in the industry.

That year, more than **13,000** workers, representing **27%** of all non-support staff, were employed on short-term bases. In fact, companies turned to the sector’s more than **200** consulting and contracting firms to supply roughly **47%** of workers in the renewable-energy industries, and **42%** of workers for integrated lines of business. Interestingly, far fewer employees in occupations related to traditional transmission (one percent), generation (three percent) and distribution (four percent) were contracted.

Download the complete 2004/2008 Employer Survey Comparative Analysis online at www.brightfutures.ca, or contact the Electricity Sector Council at (613) 235-5540 for additional labour-market information resources.