



Future Skills
Centre

Centre des
Compétences futures



Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie
Commission de planification de la main-d'oeuvre de Grand Erie

Retail Trade:

Quality of Work in Grand Erie 2023



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Retail Trade

According to WPBGE's 2022 workforce survey, 14% of job seekers in Grand Erie indicated they were looking for work in the retail trade sector.

In 2023, the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie conducted a study to assess quality of work in local workplaces.

25 retail trade businesses were surveyed. The results showed:

Top benefits offered by retail trade employers:

1. Skill development/**training opportunities during working hours** – **88%**
2. **Fixed working hours** – **80%**
3. **Recognition** for outstanding work and/or length of service – **76%**
4. Annual (or more frequent) **pay raises based on performance/merit** – **72%**
5. **Protocol/policies for employee grievances** – **68%**
6. Skill development/**training opportunities outside working hours** – **64%**
7. Annual (or **more frequent**) **job performance assessment** – **60%**
8. **Mentorship/Career pathways** coaching/guidance – **60%**
9. **Flexible job structure**/order of responsibilities (i.e. employees can decide the order in which they want to complete their tasks) – **56%**
10. Annual (or more frequent) **pay raises based on inflation** – **56%**



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Top benefits being considered by employers:

1. Annual (or more frequent) pay raises based on performance/merit
2. Skill development/training opportunities during working hours
3. Health related benefits (e.g. medical/dental coverage)
4. Job rotation opportunities (e.g. employees switch responsibilities every few months)
5. Financial support for skill development/training/education (e.g. paying for courses)

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When businesses were asked about barriers to better supporting quality of work:

60% said they had financial constraints

32% said they were unable to free up the time to offer additional training/coaching

28% said they were unable to hire more staff to distribute workload

20% said they had too many competing priorities

16% said they lacked of awareness about where to find the appropriate resources/supports



28% of retail trade businesses indicated they cannot consider offering any more benefits/quality of work supports.

Best Practices:

“Customer service is huge for us. **We try to train how to answer the phone and what to do if somebody has questions and if you can't answer** the questions, how to handle them. And it's not always an inherent quality in people to handle customer service, but **we know they'll be good in time**, they just need to be helped along.”

Best Practices:

“We don't worry about sticking to the strict rules around time off once you've worked with us for one year.

Our employees can have as many holidays as they want reasonably, as long as they're covered, give us notice and are respectful of other people's time.”

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Best Practices:

“We invest a lot in employees and they say ‘I can't believe that you guys have done this, thank you so much.’ Because we're not talking about subsidies; it's free training for them. Yes, **it benefits all of us with our needs, but we also know that that these are their long-term goals.”**

Best Practices:

“Often, we’d rather train somebody with no skills. As long as their attitude is there to work, then we could teach them. Sure, it takes a little bit longer, but **it allows us to ensure they have the skills we want in an ideal employee.”**

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Best Practices:

“A few years ago, **we adopted our own student program**, through which high school students were hired part-time and worked with a student leader to learn the job and develop work ethic. We thought that **this was a great way for us to be able to give back to the community.**”

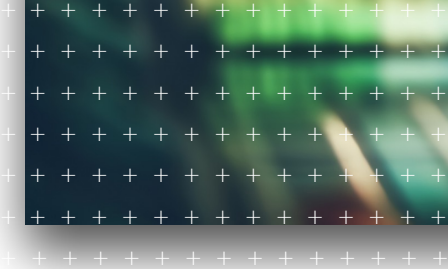
Best Practices:

“One of our biggest tasks that we're going to be taking on in 2023 is mentoring and **encouraging our existing leadership to be able to provide constructive feedback and encouraging criticisms.**”

Best Practices:

“Everybody should have people cross-trained and in preparation for the worst-case scenario.”

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Resources:

Retail Council of Canada: www.retailcouncil.org

Human Resources Professionals Association: www.hrpa.ca

Canadian Marketing Association: www.thecma.ca

Canadian Professional Sales Association: www.cpsa.com

Retail Merchants Association of Canada: www/rmacanada.com