



Appendix I

Survey of Northern Air Operators

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Western Economic
Diversification Canada

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de l'Ouest Canada



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A. Survey Overview

The number of flight schools in northwest Canada has dwindled in the last 10 years. Seeing a need, the College of New Caledonia is proposing a two-year aviation diploma program on its Vanderhoof campus. To assess the current need for commercial pilots and gauge the mindset of those currently operating aviation businesses in northwest Canada, the College of New Caledonia conducted a survey of air operators listed on the Transport Canada Air Operator list for 2008. The capture area for this survey included northern BC (north of Bella Coola and 100 Mile House), the Yukon, southeast Alaska, western Northwest Territories (NWT), and northwest Alberta. The delineation of the capture area was chosen because of the shared northern lifestyle within the five regions and the similarities of air operations and geography there vs. the operators and geography elsewhere in Canada. Although the capture area is vast, pilots in northwest Canada frequent the same limited number of airfields and interact with the same businesses supporting these airfields. Thus, they operate within the same Northern Pilot Network as their contemporaries and trade information accordingly.

An attempt was made to contact all valid survey respondents by phone to participate in the study throughout January and February 2009. At the time of the survey, a total of 134 companies were registered with Transport Canada in the capture area, specializing in fixed-wing (aeroplane) operations and/or rotary (helicopter) operations. Of this number, 120 companies were found to be valid contacts (not associated with a disconnected phone number or a duplicate or partner of another company already listed). Some companies declined to participate, others asked the survey be emailed to them, and others were unavailable after repeated contact attempts. In the end, 41 full surveys were completed, for a total respondent rate of 34% for the non-random, non-probability sample survey. In addition to those completing the survey, eight operators partially filled out surveys, sent emails, or called to discuss issues facing northern aviation. With the supplemental input, a total of 49 companies provided some form of feedback after being contacted, for a total response rate of nearly 41% for the survey capture area.

Air operators were asked to voluntarily identify themselves, in an effort to track responses, but were not required to do so. Operators from all regions within the capture area responded to the survey with northwest Alberta having the highest response rate (66%), followed by northern British Columbia (43%), southeast Alaska (36%), western Northwest Territories (29%), and the Yukon (25%). The response rate from northwest Alberta surpassed that of the local northern British Columbia region, with the response rate from southeast Alaska closely behind that of northern British Columbia, in comparison to the remaining two regions (Yukon and NWT).

Respondents were asked about the creation of the proposed program and how it might benefit them as Northern Air Operators. Response rates may indicate a level of interest in a potential Vanderhoof program in each of the regions from the capture area, or they may be a consequence of sample size.

Table 1 provides a summary of the survey response totals per region.

Subsequent sections provide key results from the survey. The validity of values near 50% is unknown due to the sample size of the non-random population.

Table 1: Northern Air Operator Survey - Response Summary

Region within Survey Capture Area	# Companies listed on Transport Canada Operator List	# of Invalid Companies (out of business, disconnected phone, or is duplicate of another company)	# Presumed Valid Companies	# of Complete Surveys	Percentage Surveys Complete	# of Partial Surveys and Emails/Phone calls with Advice	Provided some form of feedback (Complete Surveys, Partial Surveys, Emails)	Total Response Rate
Northern BC*	55	1	54	20	37.04%	3	23	42.59%
Yukon**	22	2	20	5	25.00%	0	5	25.00%
SE Alaska**	19	5	14	3	21.43%	2	5	35.71%
West NWT	20	6	14	4	28.57%	0	4	28.57%
NW Alberta*	18	0	18	9	50.00%	3	12	66.67%
REGIONAL TOTALS	134	14	120	41	34.17%	8	49	40.83%

Notes:

*Anonymously completed surveys = 2, one from BC and one from Alberta

**One anonymous partial survey from Yukon or SE Alaska

Phone Calls = 2, one from BC and one from Alberta (neither caller completed the survey)

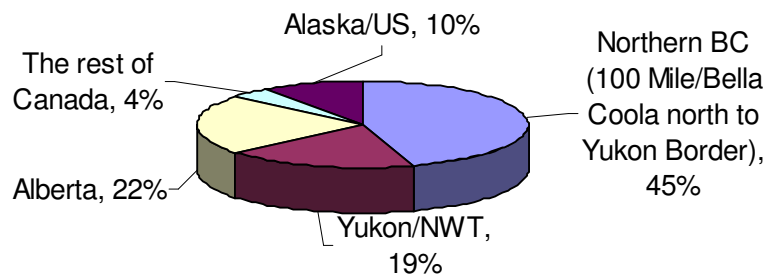
B. Company Operations

Air operators in northwest Canada vary from fixed-wing to rotary with specializations in bush, float, survey, commuter, cargo, fire and rescue, medevac, and corporate air services. No two operations are alike and the number of pilots employed often varies with the contracts won from season to season. Respondents were asked basic questions regarding their operations to assess the current industry.

Primary Operating Area

When asked, “**In which geographic area do you primarily operate?**”, 45% of survey respondents indicated their primary operating area was northern BC, while 22% stated Alberta, 19% stated the Yukon/NWT, 10% stated Alaska/US, and four percent stated their primary operating area was rest of Canada. No respondents stated their primary operating area was international. (Figure 1)

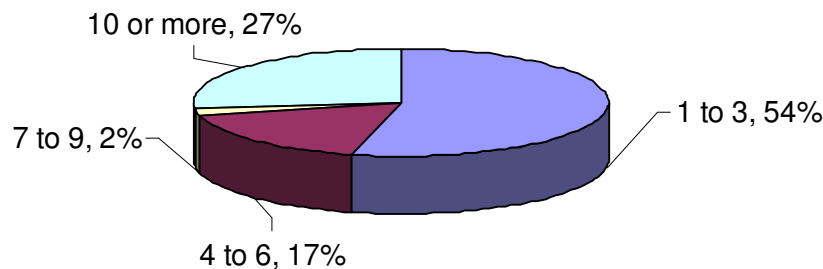
Figure 1: Geographic Operating Area



Number of Pilots Employed

When asked, “**How many pilots do you currently employ?**”, 54% of survey respondents indicated they currently employed one to three pilots, while 17% indicated four to six, two percent indicated seven to nine, and 27% indicated they employed ten or more pilots. (Figure 2)

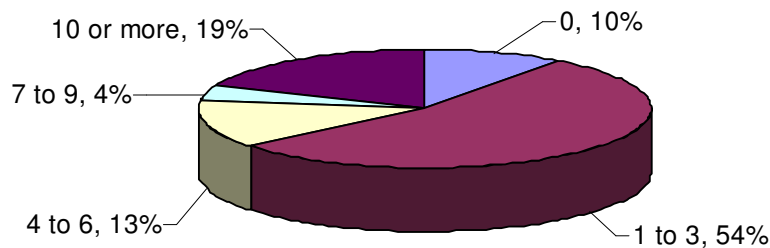
Figure 2: Number of Pilots Employed



Of the 27% of respondents who indicated they employed ten or more pilots, the number of pilots they reported employing ranged from ten to sixty. One operator stated he/she employed twenty fixed-wing pilots and sixty rotary pilots.

Because flying in the north can be very seasonal for some sectors, respondents were also asked, “**How many pilots do you currently have employed who work year round/full-time equivalent?**”. Ten percent of the respondents indicated they did not employ any year round/full-time pilots, while 54% employed one to three, 13% employed four to six, four percent employed seven to nine, and 19% employed ten or more. **(Figure 3)**

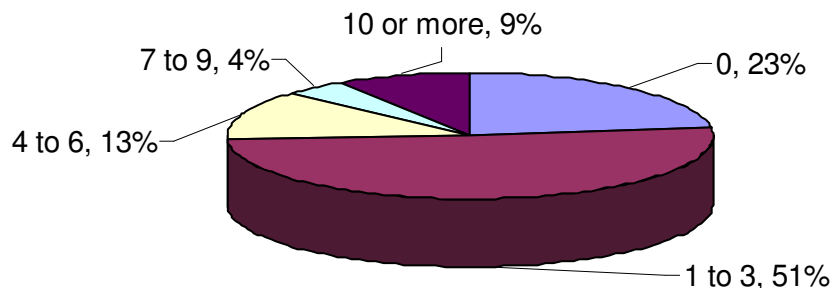
Figure 3: Number Year Round/Full-Time Pilots



Of the 19% of respondents who indicated they employed ten or more full-time pilots, the number of pilots they reported employing ranged from ten to eighty plus.

As a comparison, respondents were asked “**How many seasonal/part-time pilots do you currently employ?**”. Twenty three percent of respondents indicated they did not employ any seasonal/part-time pilots, while 51% employed one to three, 13% employed four to six, four percent employed seven to nine, and nine percent employed ten or more seasonal/part-time pilots. **(Figure 4)**

Figure 4: Number of Seasonal/Part-Time Pilots

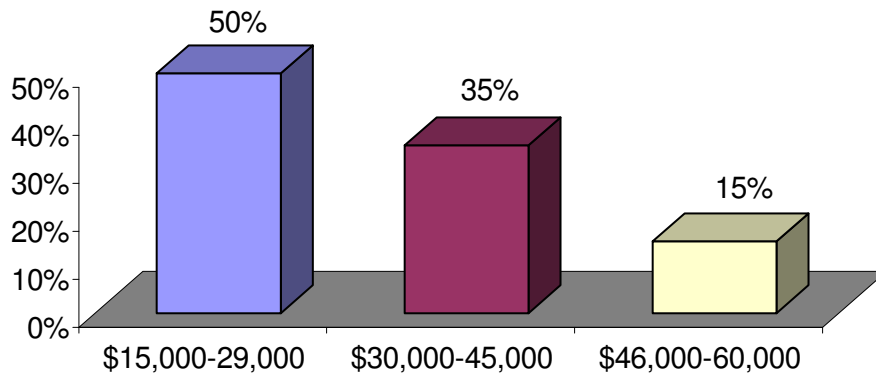


Of the nine percent of respondents who indicated they employed ten or more seasonal/part-time pilots, the number of pilots they reported employing ranged from ten to twenty plus.

Wage Range for New Pilots

When asked, “**What is the average wage range you offer a new pilot with little to no experience in your operation?**”, 50% of respondents indicated a range of \$15,000-\$29,000, 35% indicated \$30,000-\$45,000, and 15% indicated \$46,000-\$60,000. **(Figure 5)**

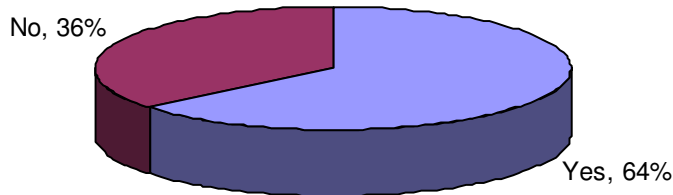
Figure 5: Average Wage Range for New Pilot with the Operation



Supply and Demand

When asked, “**Do you feel the supply and demand of new pilots in your region is adequate?**”, 64% of respondents felt it was, while 36% felt it was not. **(Figure 6)**

Figure 6: Supply and Demand for New Pilots



The 36% of respondents who felt the supply and demand for new pilots in their region was inadequate indicated the following:

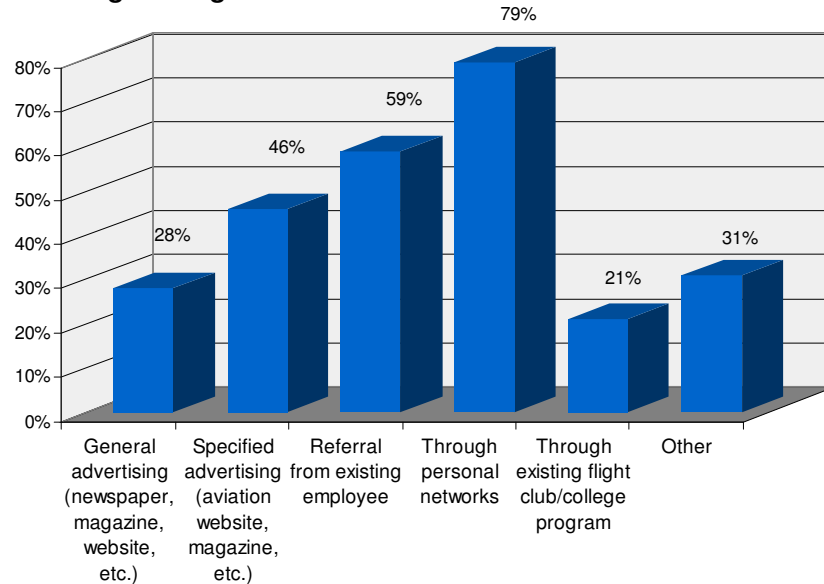
- *Geographic location is a limiting factor for hiring; population density and seasonal employment also contribute;*
- *There are not enough pilots applying from rural areas;*
- *There is a great demand in the north for experienced pilots with 1000+ hours and not so much of a demand for low-time pilots. For every 30-40 pilots who apply, maybe one has the experience needed for bush flying. In addition, there are very few new pilots interested in bush flying, and its demands;*
- *Insurance company standards and risk assessment for unseasoned pilots are a limiting factor. New pilots do not have the flight time and no cost effective way to build it. Today's insurance brokers do not want to take the risk with rookie pilots looking to fly commercial.*

Recruiting Strategies

Respondents were asked, “**Generally speaking, how do you recruit new pilots to your company?**” and were asked to indicate all strategies that applied to their operation. Personal networks were utilized by 79% of respondents, referrals from an existing employee were utilized

by 59% of the respondents, specialized advertising (aviation magazines/list serves and websites) was utilized by 46% of respondents, general advertising (newspapers, magazines and community websites) was utilized by 28% of respondents, and an association with an existing flight club or college was utilized by 21% of respondents. Thirty one percent of respondents indicated they also recruited in other ways. **(Figure 7)**

Figure 7: Recruiting Strategies

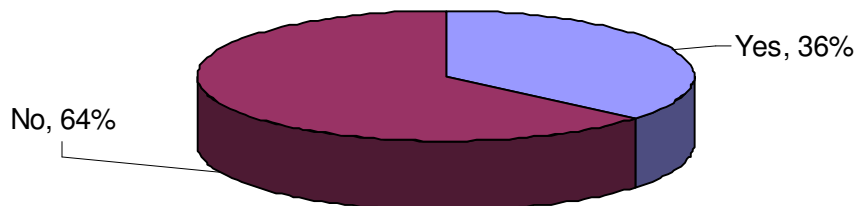


The respondents who stated they recruited in other ways indicated they received cold calls and emails, as well as hits to company websites by applicants.

Incentives

When asked, “**Do you offer any incentives or bonuses for new pilots to join your organization?**,” 64% of respondents answered “no”, while 36% answered “yes”. **(Figure 8)**

Figure 8: Incentives or Bonuses



Those who answered “yes” to this question indicated they offered incentives in the form of housing/accommodations, moving costs, higher wages than competitors, flight time in new aircraft, an end-of-season bonus, the use of aircraft for limited personal use, company vehicles, room and board, and training in loading and confined spaces. One operator stated he/she used a gradual incentive package, offering specialized training the first year, a pay incentive the second year, an aircraft-type incentive the third year, and endorsements the fourth year.

Summary of Company Operations

- The primary operating area for survey respondents in the capture area was northern BC, followed by Alberta, Yukon/NWT, Alaska and the rest of Canada
- The typical number of pilots employed by respondents was one to three, followed by ten or more, then four to six, and seven to nine. The number of year round/full-time pilots employed by survey respondents was one to three, followed by ten or more, then four to six, and seven to nine. Ten percent of respondents reported employing no full-time pilots. The number of seasonal/part-time pilots employed by respondents was one to three, followed by four to six, then ten or more. Twenty three percent of respondents reported employing no seasonal pilots.
- The typical wage range respondents reported for new pilots was \$15,000-\$29,000, followed by \$30,000 to \$45,000, and \$46,000 to \$60,000.
- Current supply and demand for new pilots in the capture area was seen as adequate by the majority of respondents. Those who did not feel it was adequate stated geography and lifestyle in their region was often the reason for low applicant numbers, while others stated pilots applying for jobs in the north often needed 1000+ hours of flight time before insurance would cover them.
- The typical recruiting strategies used by respondents in the capture area were personal networks, followed by referrals from an existing employee, specialized advertising (aviation website/list serve, magazine, etc.), general advertising (newspaper, magazine, website, etc.), and through a relationship with an existing flight school/college program. Some respondents also stated they hired successful candidates through cold calls, emails, and hits to company websites.
- The majority of respondents indicated they did not use incentives or bonuses in their recruiting process. Those who indicated they did use incentives or bonuses offered incentives in the form of housing/accommodations, moving costs, higher wages than competitors, flight time in new aircraft, an end-of-season bonus, the use of aircraft for limited personal use, company vehicles, room and board, and training in loading and confined spaces. One operator stated he/she used a gradual incentive package, offering specialized training the first year, a pay incentive the second year, an aircraft-type incentive the third year, and endorsements the fourth year.

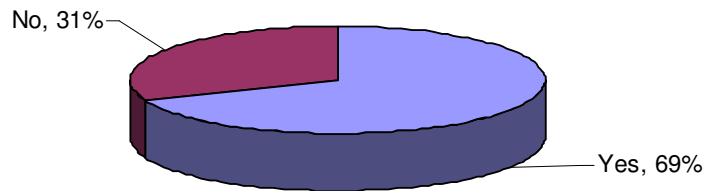
C. Five-Year Planning

One of the objectives of the Northern Air Operator Survey was to gauge how operators viewed the current economic downturn and how it might affect the aviation industry in northwest Canada. To that end, respondents were asked to disclose how many pilots they might be hiring over the next one-two years, as well as the next three to five years.

Hiring Anticipation in the Next One to Two Years

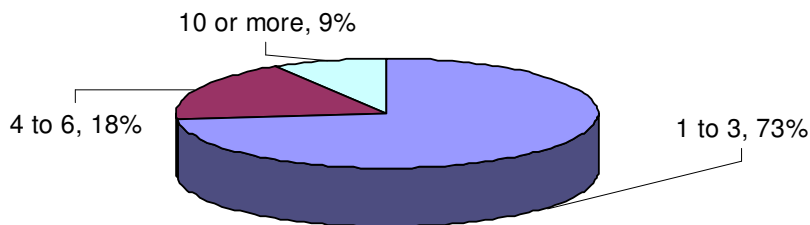
When asked, “**Do you anticipate hiring pilots in the next one to two years?**”, 69% of respondents anticipated they would be hiring, while 31% did not. **(Figure 9)**

Figure 9: Hiring Anticipation in the Next 1-2 Years



Of the 69% of respondents who anticipated hiring pilots in the next one to two years, 73% anticipated hiring one to three pilots, 18% four to six, and nine percent anticipated hiring ten or more. **(Figure 10)**

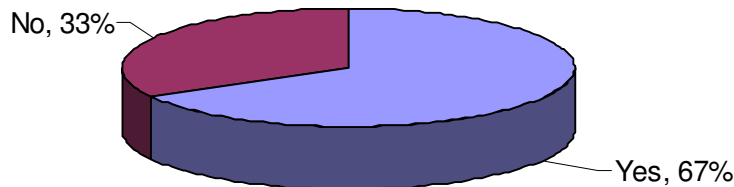
Figure 10: Number of Pilots in the Next 1-2 Years



Hiring Anticipation in the Next Three to Five Years

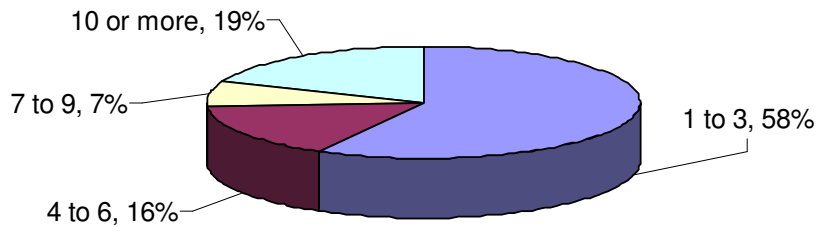
When asked, “**Do you anticipate hiring pilots in the next three to five years?**”, 67% of respondents anticipated they would be hiring, while 33% did not. **(Figure 11)**

Figure 11: Hiring Anticipation in the Next 3-5 Years?



Of the 67% of respondents who anticipated hiring pilots in the next three to five years, 58% anticipated hiring one to three pilots, 16% anticipated four to six, seven percent anticipated hiring seven to nine, and 19% anticipated hiring ten or more. **(Figure 12)**

Figure 12: Number of Pilots in the Next 3-5 Years



Summary of Five-Year Planning

- The majority of respondents anticipate hiring pilots in the next one to two years. The majority of those who anticipate hiring would hire one to three pilots, followed by four to six pilots. A few respondents anticipate hiring ten or more pilots in the next one to two years.
- The majority of respondents anticipate hiring pilots in the next three to five years, roughly the same number as those who would hire in the next one to two years. The majority of those hiring in the next three to five years anticipate hiring one to three pilots, followed by four to six pilots. More than double the respondents anticipate hiring ten or more pilots in three to five years than they did in one to two years, and a few others anticipate hiring seven to nine pilots during that time.

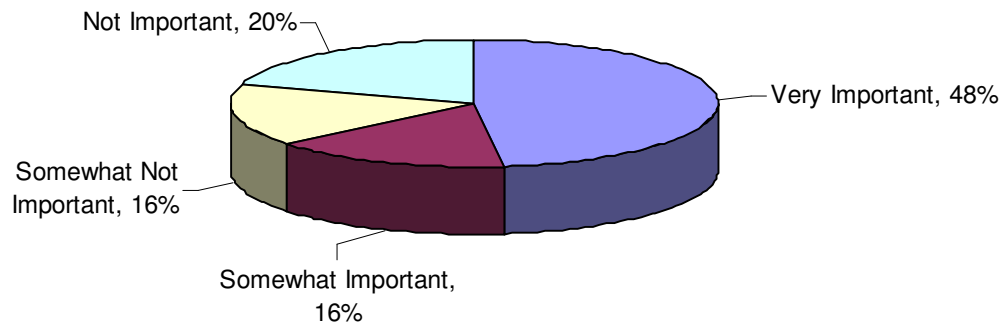
D. Difficulties in Hiring and Retention

The current supply and demand of pilots in the capture area is seen by some operators to be influenced by geography and lifestyle in their region. To obtain a clearer picture and help determine if this perception is that of many or only a few, respondents were asked questions regarding their hiring practices and the retention of their current employees.

Barriers to Recruiting in the North

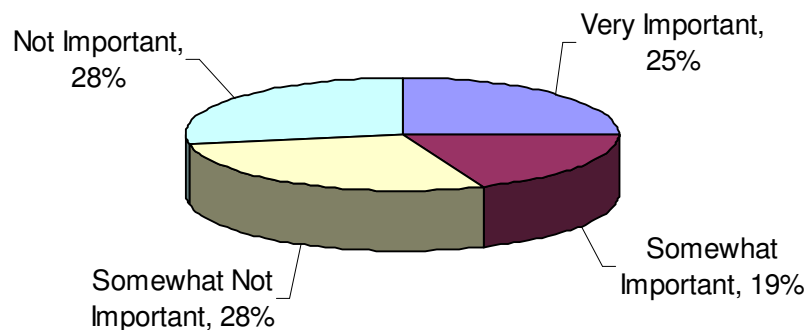
Respondents were asked to rate how important of a role certain barriers have played in recruiting new pilots to their operations. With regards to **“the geography of the area (too remote, too dangerous)”**, 48% indicated it was a very important barrier to recruiting pilots to their operations, 16% stated it was somewhat important, 16% stated it was somewhat not important, and 20% stated it was not a barrier to recruiting pilots to their operations. **(Figure 13)**

Figure 13: Geography of the Area as a Recruiting Barrier



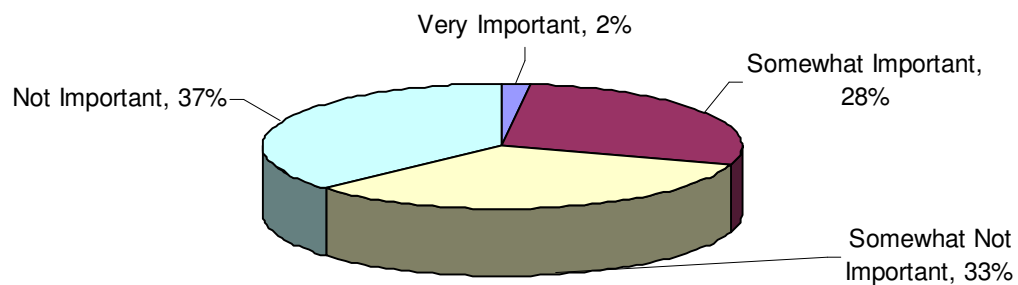
With regards to **“the harsh winter climate”**, 25% indicated it was a very important barrier to recruiting pilots to their operations, 19% stated it was somewhat important, 28% stated it was somewhat not important, and 28% stated it was not a barrier to recruiting pilots to their operations. **(Figure 14)**

Figure 14: Harsh Winter as a Recruiting Barrier



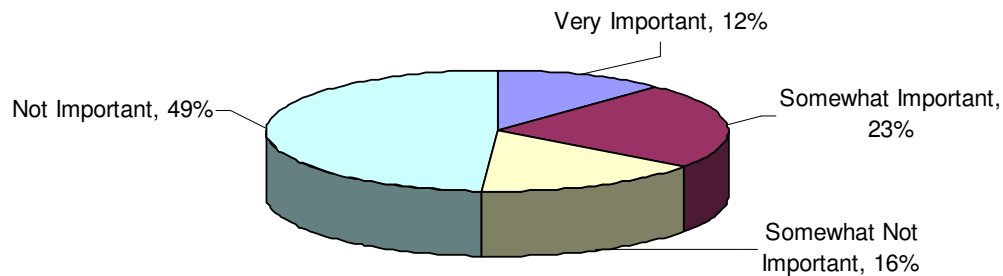
With regards to **“low wages”**, two percent indicated it was a very important barrier to recruiting pilots to their operations, 28% stated it was somewhat important, 33% stated it was somewhat not important, and 37% stated it was not a barrier to recruiting pilots to their operations. **(Figure 15)**

Figure 15: Low Wages as a Recruiting Barrier



With regards to “**lack of opportunity to advance**”, 12% indicated it was a very important barrier to recruiting pilots to their operations, 23% stated it was somewhat important, 16% stated it was somewhat not important, and 49% stated it was not a barrier to recruiting pilots to their operations. **(Figure 16)**

Figure 16: Lack of Opportunity to Advance as a Recruiting Barrier



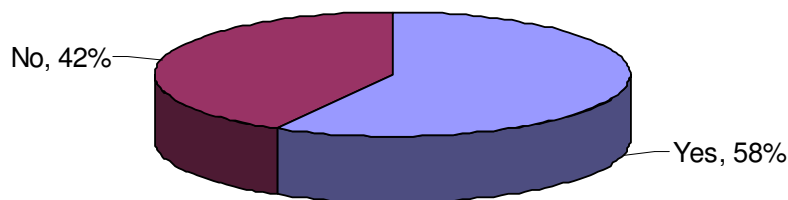
Respondents were asked if there were any other issues they felt played an important role as a barrier to their recruiting process and they stated following:

- *Pilot aspirations- they do not want to work for a small company;*
- *Fewer contracts for fixed-wing operations;*
- *Over-regulation by Transport Canada;*
- *Provincial contracts (forestry, oil, gas) that require higher-time pilots and more experience.*

Changes in Hiring Criteria

When asked, “**Have you experienced shortages in finding qualified pilots to the point where you found it necessary to change your hiring criteria?**”, 58% of respondents answered “yes”, while 42% answered “no”. **(Figure 17)**

Figure 17: Necessary to Change Company Hiring Criteria



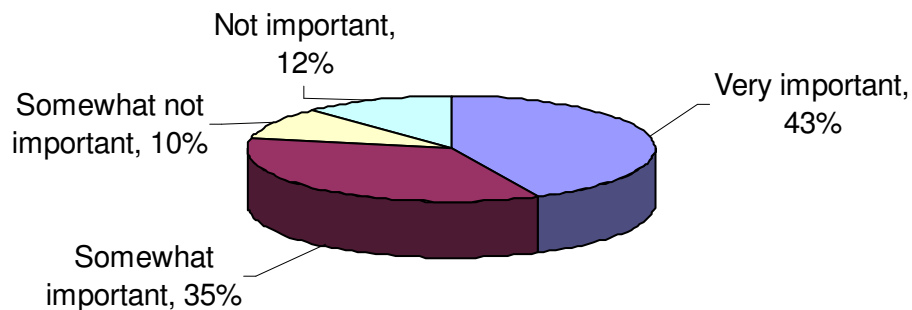
Those who answered “yes” to this question elaborated by stating they had:

- *Reduced the minimum flight hours required for some positions;*
- *Began to hire lower-time pilots and trained them in-house to the level needed;*
- *Hired pilots from overseas;*
- *Increased the pay for the position offered;*
- *Changed the type of aircraft to be flown based on the level of pilots and engineers recruited.*

Challenges in Retaining Adequately Qualified Pilots

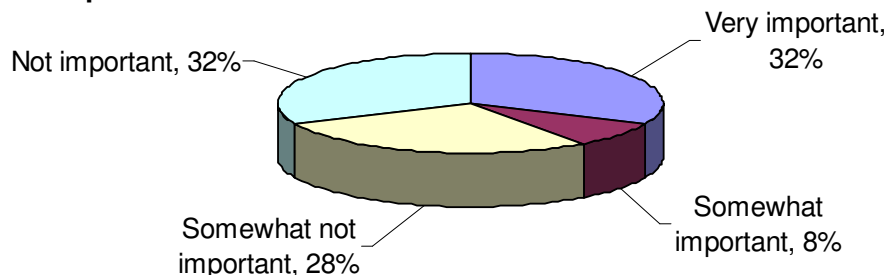
Respondents were asked to rate how important of a role certain factors have played in retaining adequately qualified pilots to their operations. With regards to the “**satisfaction with the wages they earn**”, 43% indicated it played a very important role in retaining adequately qualified pilots, 35% stated it was somewhat important, ten percent stated it was somewhat not important, and 12% stated it was not an important factor in retaining adequately qualified pilots to their operations. (Figure 18)

Figure 18: Importance of Pilot's Satisfaction with Wages



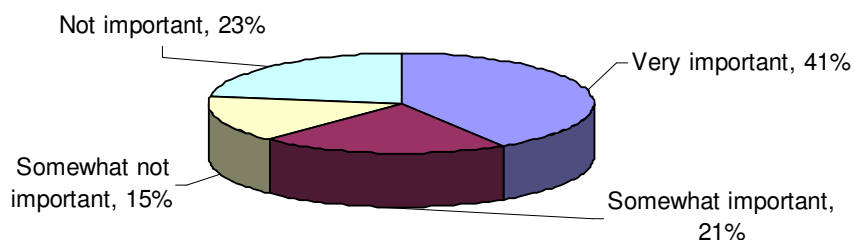
With regards to “**satisfaction with insurance coverage**”, 32% indicated it was a very important factor in retaining adequately qualified pilots, eight percent stated it was somewhat important, 28% stated it was somewhat not important, and 32% stated it was not an important factor in retaining adequately qualified pilots to their operations. (Figure 19)

Figure 19: Importance of Pilot's Satisfaction with Insurance



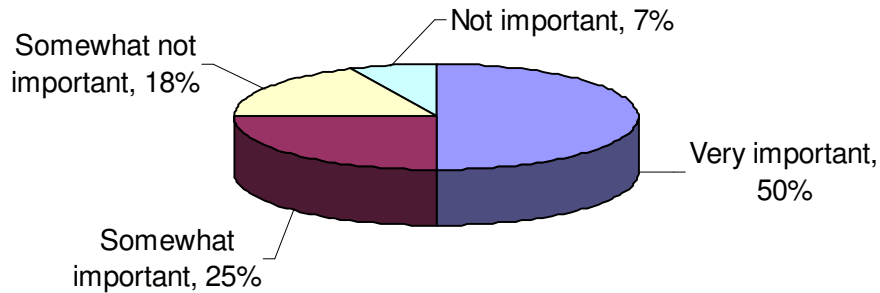
With regards to “**competition from other operators who offer a higher wage once pilots log enough hours**”, 41% indicated it was a very important factor in retaining adequately qualified pilots, 21% stated it was somewhat important, 15% stated it was somewhat not important, and 23% stated it was not an important factor in retaining adequately qualified pilots to their operations. (Figure 20)

Figure 20: Importance of Competition from Higher Wage Offers



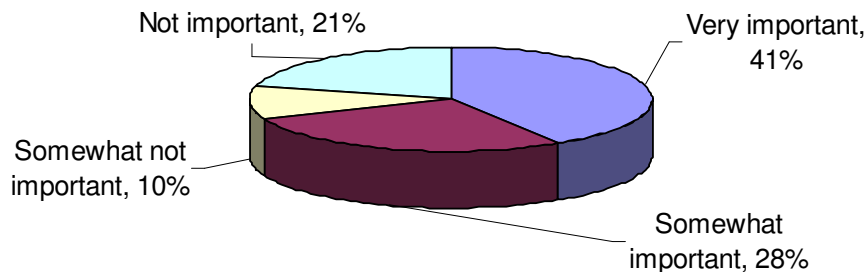
With regards to “**opportunities with larger operators who offer more variety in clientele and work location**”, 50% indicated it was a very important factor in retaining adequately qualified pilots, 25% stated it was somewhat important, 18% stated it was somewhat not important, and seven percent stated it was not an important factor in retaining adequately qualified pilots to their operations. **(Figure 21)**

Figure 21: Importance of Opportunities Offering More Variety



With regards to “**quality of life issues (housing, amenities, social contacts, etc.)**”, 41% indicated it was a very important factor in retaining adequately qualified pilots, 28% stated it was somewhat important, ten percent stated it was somewhat not important, and 21% stated it was not an important factor in retaining adequately qualified pilots to their operations. **(Figure 22)**

Figure 22: Importance of Quality of Life Issues



Respondents were asked if there were any other factors they felt played an important role in retaining adequately qualified pilots and stated the following:

- *Better scheduling and crew rotation offers from larger companies;*
- *Offers from locales where pilots have the ability to maintain social and family life by flying shorter tours;*
- *Dangerous mountain conditions in the north/bush;*
- *Quality of aircraft, crew vehicles, and hangars;*
- *Stable work environment;*
- *Offers to fly new aircraft;*
- *Lack of amenities in the bush.*

Summary of Difficulties in Hiring and Retention

- Over 60% of respondents stated the geography of their region played a very or somewhat important role as a barrier in recruiting new pilots to their operation.

- Just over half of respondents stated they did NOT think the harsh winter climate of their region played an important role as a barrier in recruiting new pilots to their operation.
- Seventy percent of respondents stated they did NOT think low wages played an important role as a barrier in recruiting new pilots to their operation.
- The majority of respondents stated they did NOT think the lack of opportunity to advance played a role as a barrier in recruiting new pilots to their operation.
- Issues respondents felt did play an important role as a barrier in their recruiting process included: pilot aspirations, fewer contract opportunities for fixed-wing operations, over-regulation by Transport Canada, and ministry and oil contracts that require higher-time pilots and more experience.
- Over half of the respondents stated they had found it necessary to change their hiring criteria in order to find qualified pilots to work for their operation. Those who had changed their hiring criteria indicated they had reduced the flight hours required for the position advertised, they hired more low-time pilots and trained them in-house, they hired from overseas, they increased pay for the position advertised, and they changed the type of aircraft to accommodate the skill level for which they could recruit.
- The majority of respondents stated a pilot's satisfaction with the wages they earned was a very or somewhat important factor in retaining adequately qualified personnel.
- Just over half of respondents stated a pilot's satisfaction with insurance coverage was NOT an important factor in retaining adequately qualified personnel.
- The majority of respondents stated competition from other operators who offer a higher wage once a pilot logs enough hours as a very or somewhat important factor in retaining adequately qualified personnel.
- The majority of respondents stated opportunities with larger operators who offer more variety in clientele and work location played a very or somewhat important role in retaining adequately qualified personnel.
- The majority of respondents stated the importance of quality of life issues (housing amenities, social contacts, etc.) played a very or somewhat important role in retaining adequately qualified personnel.
- Other factors respondents felt play an important part in retaining adequately qualified personnel included: scheduling and crew rotation opportunities from larger companies, offers from locales where pilots have the ability to maintain social and family life, dangerous mountain conditions in the north/bush, quality of aircraft, crew vehicles, and hangars, stable work environment, offers to fly new aircraft, and lack of amenities in the bush.

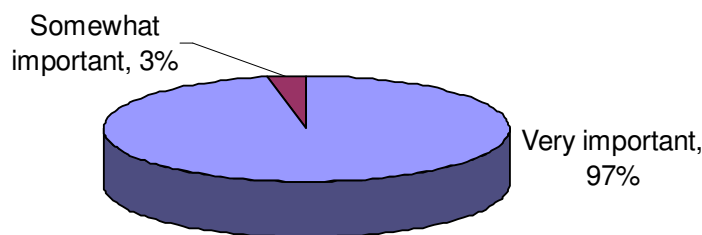
E. Pilot Qualities

To get an idea of what Northern Air Operators are looking for in applicants seeking employment with their companies, respondents were asked about basic qualities of those applying for work, and how important of a role each played in their hiring decisions. Operators were also asked about factors affecting the career advancement of a pilot and how important of a role certain issues played in a pilot advancing his/her career and being a successful contributor in the aviation industry once he/she was hired.

Basic Qualities

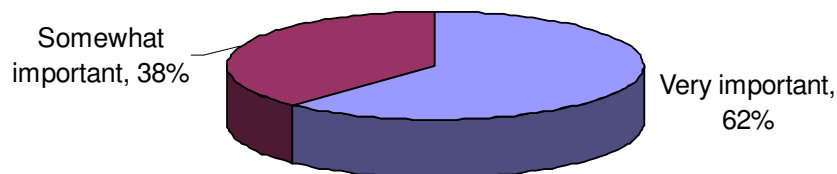
Respondents were asked to rate how important of a role an applicant's "**overall general attitude**" played in affecting his/her career. Ninety seven percent of respondents indicated it played a very important role when hiring a new pilot for their operation, while three percent stated it was somewhat important. **(Figure 23)**

Figure 23: Importance of Overall General Attitude



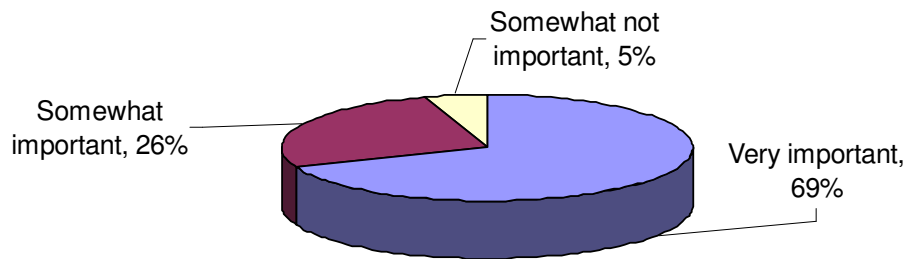
With regards to "**interpersonal and communication skills**", 62% indicated it played a very important role when hiring a new pilot for their operation, while 38% stated it was somewhat important. **(Figure 24)**

Figure 24: Importance of Interpersonal and Communication Skills



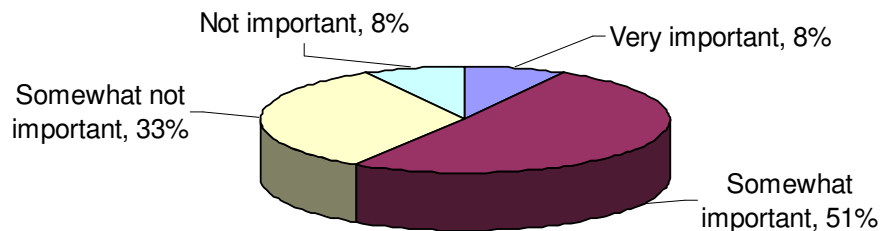
With regards to an applicant's "**potential compatibility with the company's culture**", 69% indicated it played a very important role when hiring a new pilot for their operation, 26% stated it played a somewhat important role, and five percent stated it was somewhat not important when hiring a new pilot for their operation. **(Figure 25)**

Figure 25: Importance of Compatibility with Company Culture



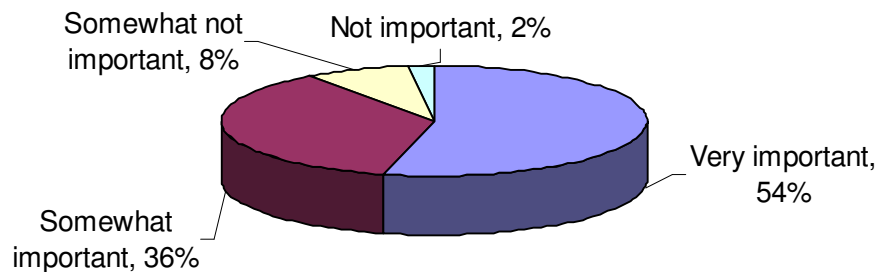
With regards to the importance of an applicant's **"educational background"**, eight percent indicated it played a very important role when hiring a new pilot for their operation, 51% stated it was somewhat important, 33% stated it was somewhat not important, and eight percent stated it was not important when hiring a new pilot for their operation. **(Figure 26)**

Figure 26: Importance of Educational Background



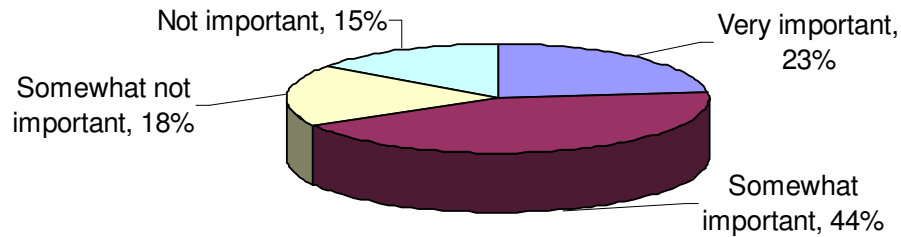
With regards to the importance of **"the number of hours logged"** that an applicant showed when applying for a position, 54% indicated it played a very important role when hiring a new pilot for their operation, 36% stated it was somewhat important, eight percent stated it was somewhat not important, and two percent stated it was not important when hiring a new pilot for their operation. **(Figure 27)**

Figure 27: Importance of Number of Hours Logged



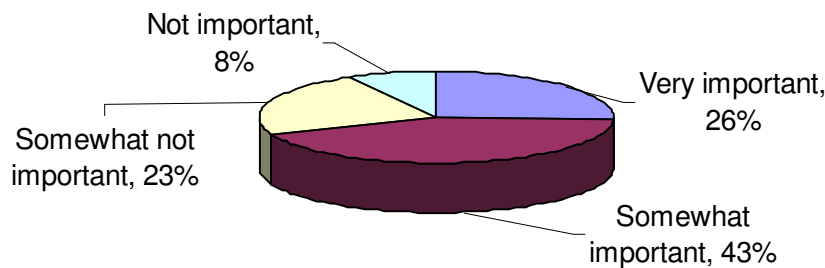
With regards to the importance of the applicant's **"familiarity with the operation's geographic area"**, 23% indicated it played a very important role when hiring a new pilot for their operation, 44% stated it was somewhat important, 18% stated it was somewhat not important, and 15% stated it was not important when hiring a new pilot for their operation. **(Figure 28)**

Figure 28: Importance of Familiarity with Geographic Area



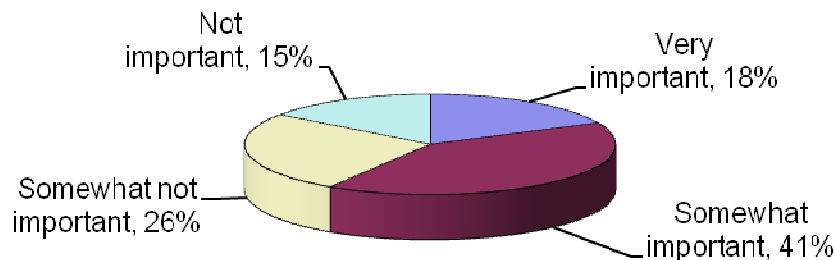
With regards to the importance of the applicant's **"familiarity with the lifestyle in the region the operation primarily operates"**, 26% indicated it played a very important role when hiring a new pilot for their operation, 43% stated it was somewhat important, 23% stated it was somewhat not important, and eight percent stated it was not important when hiring a new pilot for their operation. **(Figure 29)**

Figure 29: Importance of Familiarity with Lifestyle in Region



With regards to the importance of the applicant's **"familiarity with the latest technology"**, 18% indicated it played a very important role when hiring a new pilot for their operation, 41% stated it was somewhat important, 26% stated it was somewhat not important, and 15% stated it was not important when hiring a new pilot for their operation. **(Figure 30)**

Figure 30: Importance of Familiarity with Latest Technology



Respondents were asked if there were any other factors they felt played an important role when hiring a new pilot for their operation and stated the following:

- *Willingness to put in extra effort*
- *Maintenance skills*
- *An interest in the type of work the operation conducts*
- *Work ethic and drive to work on other things on a day when there is no flying*

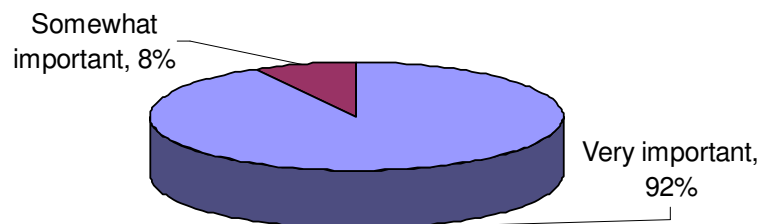
- *Eagerness and readiness to learn*
- *Desire to stay for a minimum of three years and a desire to learn*
- *Appearance and ability to get along with a variety of customers*
- *Professionalism, especially in stressful situations*
- *A good safety record*
- *Willingness to take direction and an open to learning*
- *Must know or have willingness to learn on a variety of aircraft*
- *Adaptability/flexibility*
- *A good attitude along with good judgment and decision making skills*
- *Willingness to apply themselves and take direction*
- *Ability to troubleshoot*
- *Willingness for recurrent training*

One operator stated he/she would rather hire a lower time pilot who is willing to adapt than a higher time pilot set in his/her ways and not willing to adapt.

Factors Affecting Career Advancement

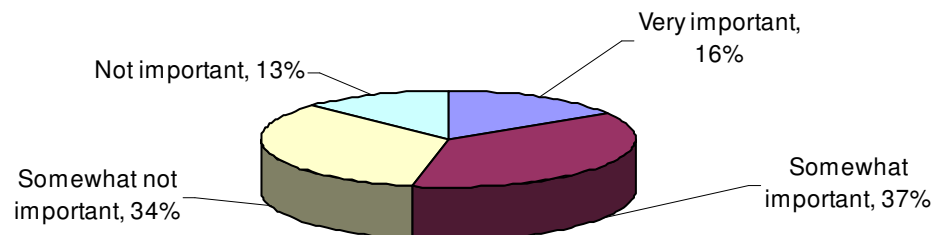
Respondents were also asked to rate how important of a role certain factors played in affecting career advancement for new pilots. With regards to the employee's **"personal initiative"**, 92% indicated it played a very important role in affecting the career advancement for new pilots, while eight percent stated it was somewhat important. **(Figure 31)**

Figure 31: Importance of Personal Initiative Affecting Advancement



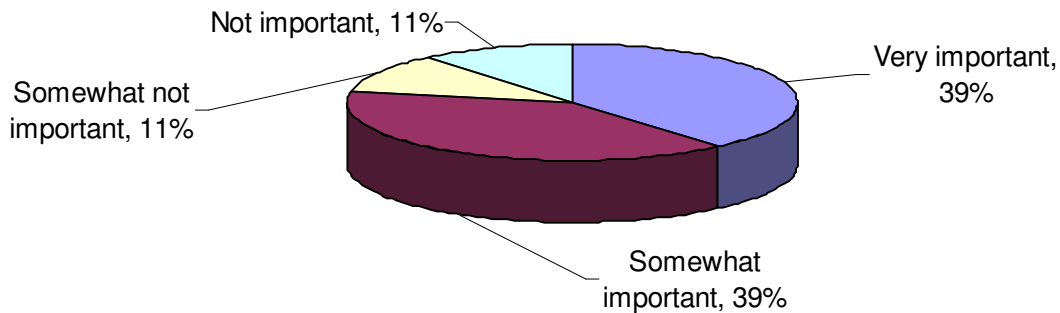
With regards to the importance of **"living wage' positions available"** for employees, 16% indicated it played a very important role in affecting the career advancement for new pilots, 37% stated it was somewhat important, 34% stated it was somewhat not important, and 13% stated it was not important in affecting the career advancement for new pilots. **(Figure 32)**

Figure 32: Importance of "Living Wage" Positions Available



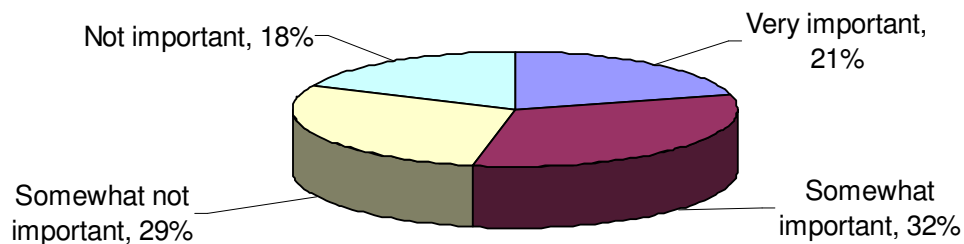
With regards to an employee's **"lack of opportunity to log more hours"**, 39% indicated it played a very important role in affecting the career advancement for new pilots, 39% stated it was somewhat important, 11% stated it was somewhat not important, and 11% stated it was not important in affecting the career advancement for new pilots. **(Figure 33)**

Figure 33: Importance of Logging More Hours



With regards to a **"lack of access to a facility where a pilot could upgrade or acquire new skills"**, 21% indicated it played a very important role in affecting the career advancement for new pilots, 32% stated it was somewhat important, 29% stated it was somewhat not important, and 18% stated it was not important in affecting the career advancement for new pilots. **(Figure 34)**

Figure 34: Importance of the Access to an Upgrade Facility



Respondents were asked if there were any other factors they felt played an important role in affecting career advancement for new pilots and stated the following:

- *Lifestyle/seasonality of work*
- *Client/customer requirements for high-time pilots (usually insurance influenced)*
- *Competition among pilots during layoffs*
- *Safety management of the company*
- *General decline in the economy and competition in the industry*
- *Family commitments*
- *Lack of grooming opportunities for junior pilots*
- *Readiness to work*
- *Hours and lifestyle*
- *Lack of movement in senior positions can prevent advancement to new hires*

One respondent also noted age and weight can be a problem that affects career advancement, as an operator might have limited flexibility around a 40+ year old pilot who weighs 300+ lbs and operates helicopters that can only take a 500 lb load.

Summary of Pilot Qualities

- The applicant's overall general attitude was nearly unanimous among respondents as playing a very important role during the hiring process.
- The applicant's interpersonal and communication skills were also viewed as somewhat to very important to all respondents.
- The applicant's potential compatibility with the company's culture played an important role during the hiring process for all but five percent of respondents.
- The applicant's educational background was seen as very or somewhat important to 58% of respondents, while 41% said it was somewhat not important or not important at all when considering a candidate for employment.
- The applicant's number of hours logged was somewhat to very important to 90% of all respondents, while only ten percent said it was not important.
- The applicant's familiarity with the operator's geographic area was important to a majority of northern operators.
- The applicant's familiarity with the lifestyle in the operator's region was also important to a majority of northern operators.
- The applicant's familiarity with the latest technology was important to over half of the respondents.
- An employee's personal initiative was seen by over 90% of respondents as playing an important role in his/her career advancement.
- The ability of an employee to hold a position with a "living wage" was viewed by just over half of respondents as playing a very or somewhat important role in affecting a pilot's career advancement.
- The opportunity for an employee to log more hours was seen by 78% of respondents as playing an important role in affecting his/her career advancement.
- The opportunity for an employee to have access to an upgrade facility was seen by just over half of respondents as playing an important role in affecting his/her career advancement.

F. Training Preferences

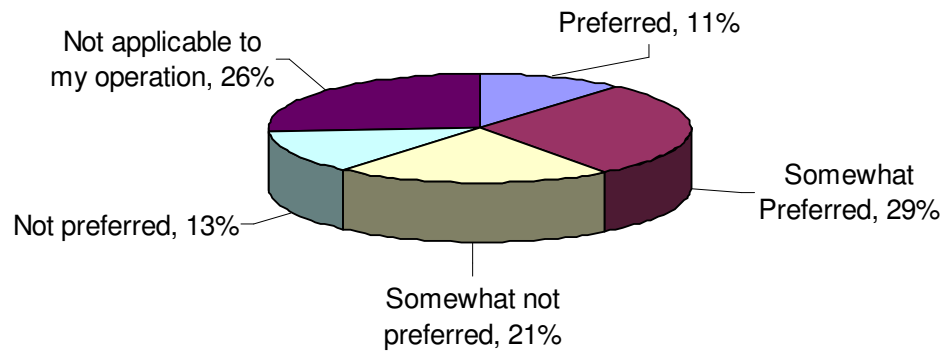
To get an idea of the training Northern Air Operators are looking for in applicants seeking employment with their companies, respondents were asked about specific types of training they

preferred, and whether or not they had seen any training skills become deficient in applicants during recent years. Respondents were also asked to share their thoughts on two-year aviation diploma programs vs. traditional flight school training.

Specific Training Preferred

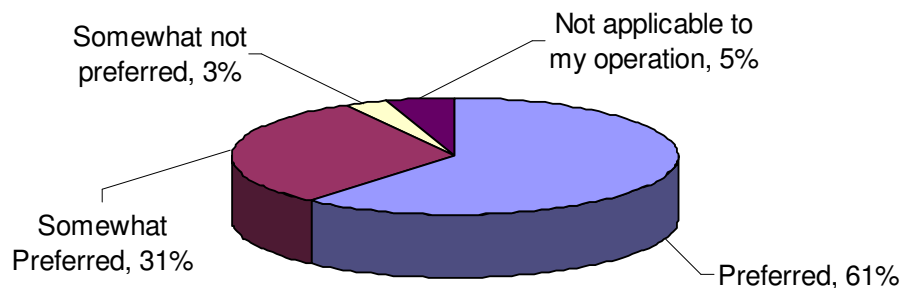
Respondents were asked to rate three statements with regard to the type of cockpit training they felt were important for new pilots to possess when joining their operation. With regards to an applicant **“trained on the most up-to-date technology available to the industry, such as a ‘glass cockpit’/moving map display”**, 11% of respondents preferred their applicants be trained on the most-up-to-date technology, 29% stated it was somewhat preferred, 21% stated it was somewhat not preferred, 13% stated it was not preferred, and 26% stated it was not applicable to their operation. **(Figure 35)**

Figure 35: Cockpit Training-Glass Cockpit/Moving Map Display



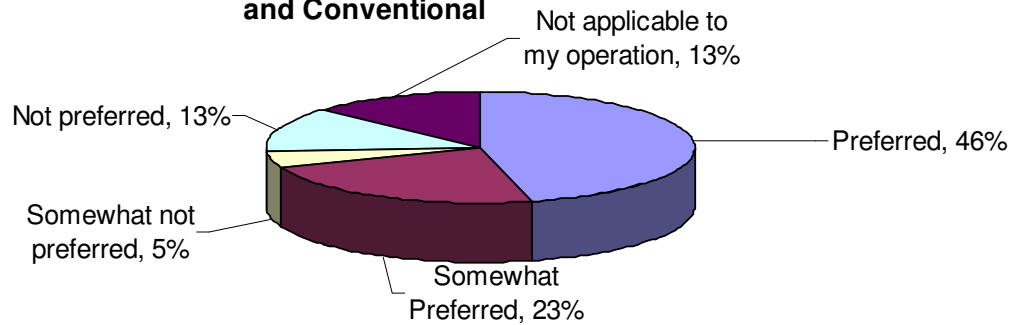
With regards to an applicant **“trained on a conventional cockpit panel, so as to enhance pilotage and dead reckoning skills”**, 61% of respondents preferred their applicants be trained on a conventional cockpit, 31% stated it was somewhat preferred, three percent stated it was somewhat not preferred, zero percent stated it was not preferred, and five percent stated it was not applicable to their operation. **(Figure 36)**

Figure 36: Cockpit Training- Conventional



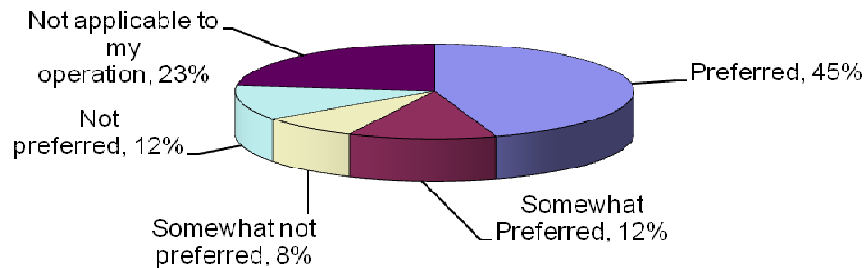
With regards to an applicant **“trained on the most up-to-date technology (such as a ‘glass cockpit’/moving map display), and on a conventional cockpit panel”**, 46% of respondents preferred their applicants be trained on a glass cockpit/moving map display and a conventional cockpit, 23% stated it was somewhat preferred, five percent stated it was somewhat not preferred, 13% stated it was not preferred, and 13% stated it was not applicable to their operation. **(Figure 37)**

Figure 37: Cockpit Training- Glass Cockpit/Moving Map Display and Conventional



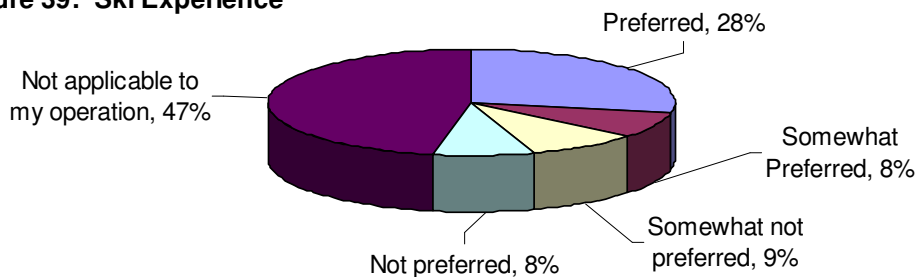
Respondents were asked to rate the types of specific experience they feel is important for new pilots to possess when joining their operation. With regards to **“float experience”**, 45% of respondents stated they preferred new pilots to have float experience, 12% stated it was somewhat preferred, eight percent stated it was somewhat not preferred, 12% stated it was not preferred, and 23% stated float experience was not applicable to their operations. **(Figure 38)**

Figure 38: Float Experience



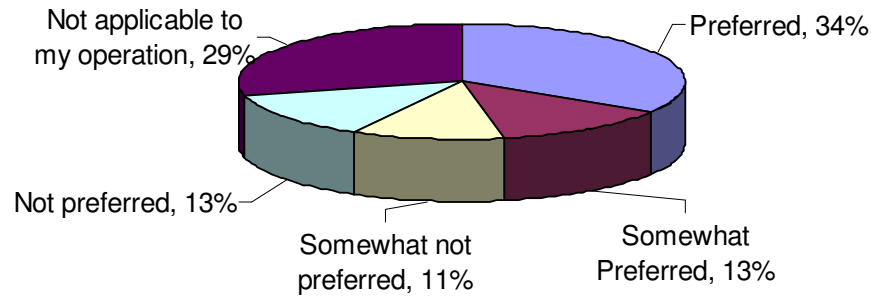
With regards to **“ski experience”**, 28% of respondents stated they preferred new pilots to have ski experience, eight percent stated it was somewhat preferred, nine percent stated it was somewhat not preferred, eight percent stated it was not preferred, and 47% stated ski experience was not applicable to their operations. **(Figure 39)**

Figure 39: Ski Experience



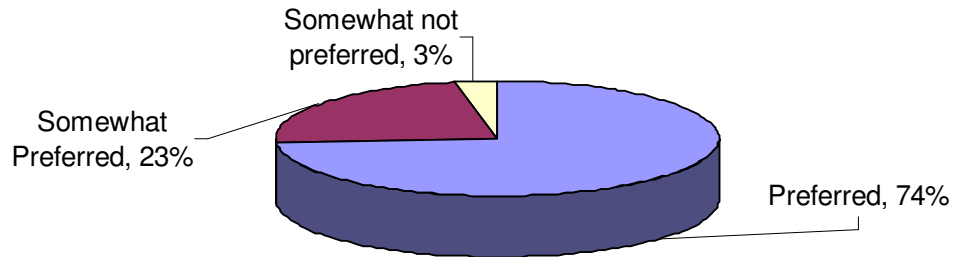
With regards to **“coastal experience”**, 34% of respondents stated they preferred new pilots to have coastal experience, 13% stated it was somewhat preferred, 11% stated it was somewhat not preferred, 13% stated it was not preferred, and 29% stated coastal experience was not applicable to their operations. **(Figure 40)**

Figure 40: Coastal Experience



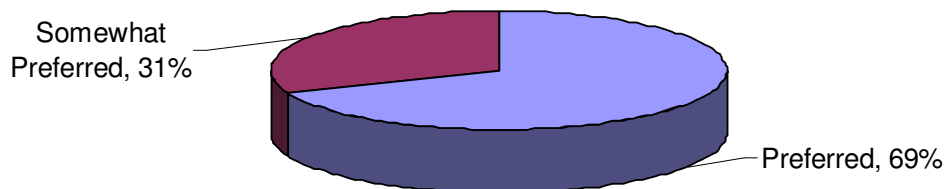
With regards to “**northern experience**”, 74% of respondents stated they preferred new pilots to have northern experience, 23% stated it was somewhat preferred, and three percent stated it was somewhat not preferred. **(Figure 41)**

Figure 41: Northern Experience



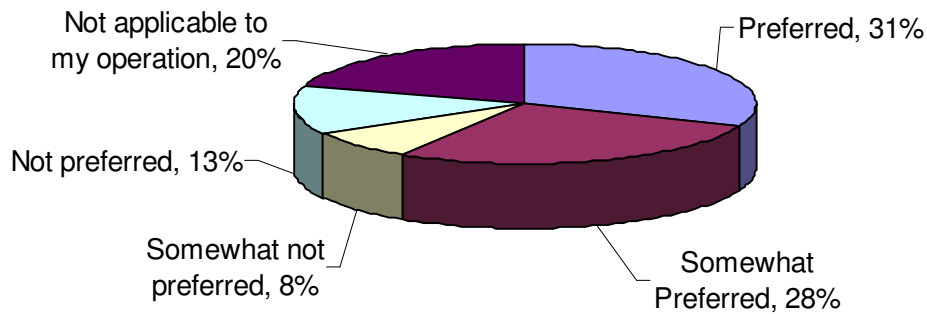
Respondents were asked to rate the types of general skills training they feel is important for new pilots to possess when joining their operation. With regards to “**survival training**”, 69% of respondents stated it was a preferred skill and 31% stated it was somewhat preferred. **(Figure 42)**

Figure 42: Survival Training



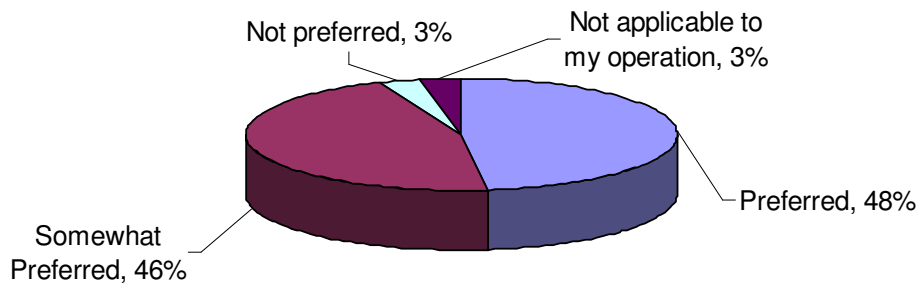
With regards to “**high altitude training**”, 31% of respondents stated it was a preferred skill, 28% stated it was somewhat preferred, 8% stated it was somewhat not preferred, 13% stated it was not preferred, and 20% stated high altitude training was not applicable to their operation. **(Figure 43)**

Figure 43: High Altitude Training



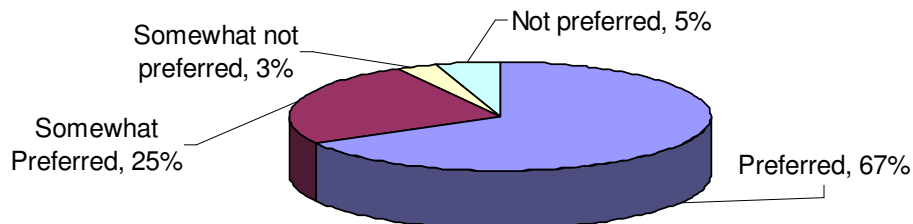
With regards to “**aviation physiology/disorientation awareness training**”, 48% of respondents stated it was a preferred skill, 46% stated it was somewhat preferred, zero percent stated it was somewhat not preferred, three percent stated it was not preferred, and three percent stated aviation physiology/disorientation awareness training was not applicable to their operation. **(Figure 44)**

Figure 44: Aviation Physiology/Disorientation Awareness Training



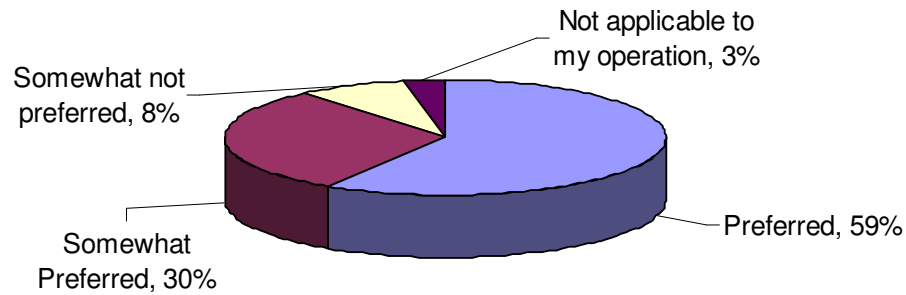
With regards to “**advanced weather training**”, 67% of respondents stated it was a preferred skill, 25% stated it was somewhat preferred, three percent stated it was somewhat not preferred, and five percent stated it was not a preferred skill. **(Figure 45)**

Figure 45: Advanced Weather Training



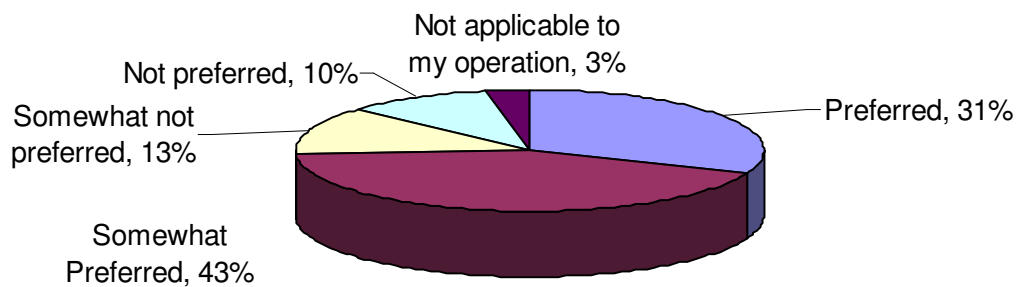
With regards to “**mountaineering/advanced geography training**”, 59% of respondents stated it was a preferred skill, 30% stated it was somewhat preferred, eight percent stated it was somewhat not preferred, zero percent stated it was not preferred, and three percent stated mountaineering/advanced geography training was not applicable to their operation. **(Figure 46)**

Figure 46: Mountaineering/Advanced Geography Training



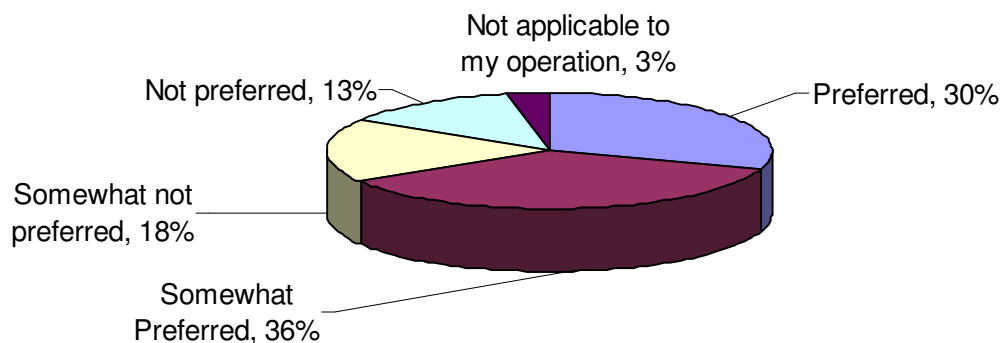
With regards to “**psychology of human behavior training**”, 31% of respondents stated it was a preferred skill, 43% stated it was somewhat preferred, 13% stated it was somewhat not preferred, ten percent stated it was not preferred, and three percent stated psychology of human behavior training was not applicable to their operation. **(Figure 47)**

Figure 47: Psychology of Human Behavior Training



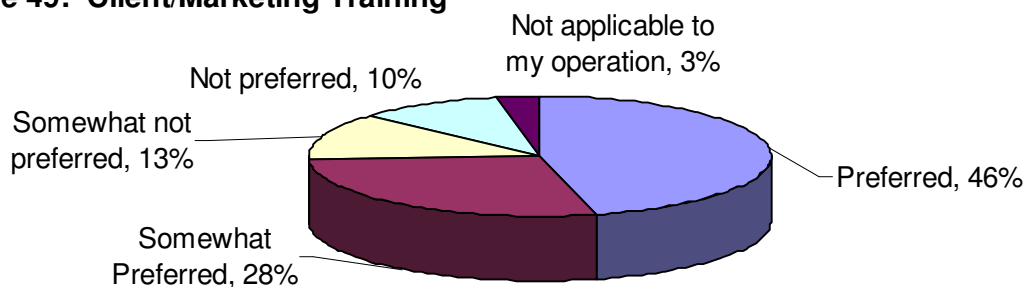
With regards to “**business/revenue training**”, 30% of respondents stated it was a preferred skill, 36% stated it was somewhat preferred, 18% stated it was somewhat not preferred, 13% stated it was not preferred, and three percent stated business/revenue training was not applicable to their operation. **(Figure 48)**

Figure 48: Business/Revenue Training



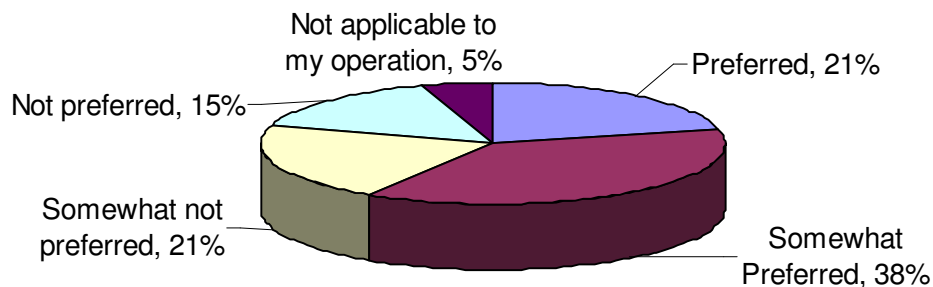
With regards to “**client/marketing training**”, 46% of respondents stated it was a preferred skill, 28% stated it was somewhat preferred, 13% stated it was somewhat not preferred, ten percent stated it was not preferred, and three percent stated client/marketing training was not applicable to their operation. **(Figure 49)**

Figure 49: Client/Marketing Training



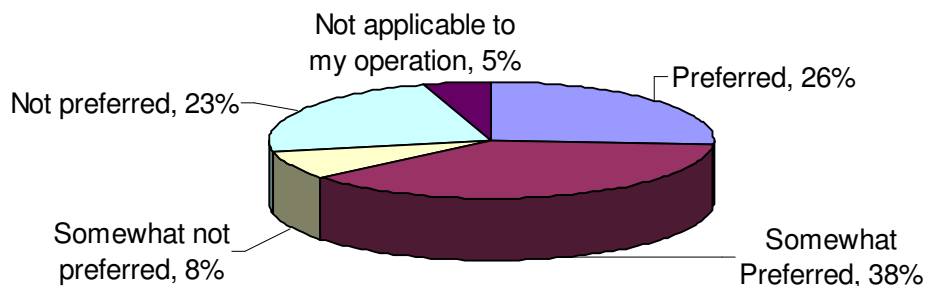
With regards to “**aviation law training**”, 21% of respondents stated it was a preferred skill, 38% stated it was somewhat preferred, 21% stated it was somewhat not preferred, 15% stated it was not preferred, and five percent stated aviation law training was not applicable to their operation. (Figure 50)

Figure 50: Aviation Law Training



With regards to “**Transport Canada audit training**”, 26% of respondents stated it was a preferred skill, 38% stated it was somewhat preferred, eight percent stated it was somewhat not preferred, 23% stated it was not preferred, and five percent stated Transport Canada Audit training was not applicable to their operation. (Figure 21)

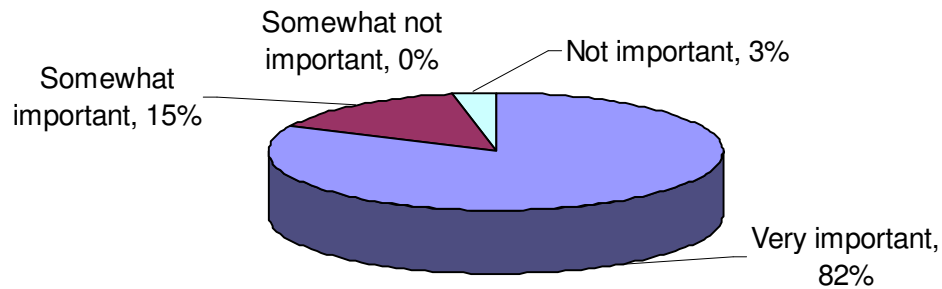
Figure 51: Transport Canada Audit Training



To get a feel for the overall roundedness operators are seeking in pilots, respondents were also asked to rate how important certain statements were in their day-to-day operation. With regards to the statement, “**New pilots in my operation need to think on their own, especially when it comes to making the ‘go’ or ‘no go’ decision with regard to weather.**”, 82% of respondents stated this was very important in their day-to-day operation, 15% stated it was

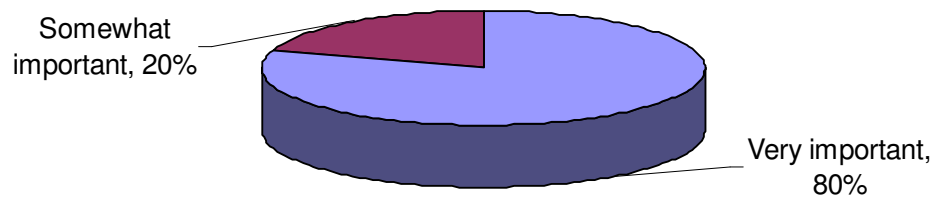
somewhat important, zero percent stated it was somewhat not important, and three percent stated this was not an important statement in their day-to-day operations. (Figure 52)

Figure 52: New Pilots Need to Think on Their Own for "Go/"No Go"



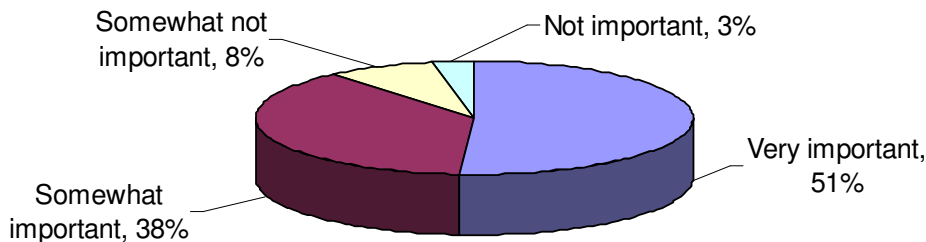
With regards to the statement, **"New pilots in my operation need to be self motivated and possess a 'do-it-all' attitude from cleaning the hangar to piloting the aircraft."**, 80% of respondents stated this was very important in their day-to-day operation, and 20% stated it was somewhat important. (Figure 53)

Figure 53: New Pilots Need "Do-It-All" Attitude



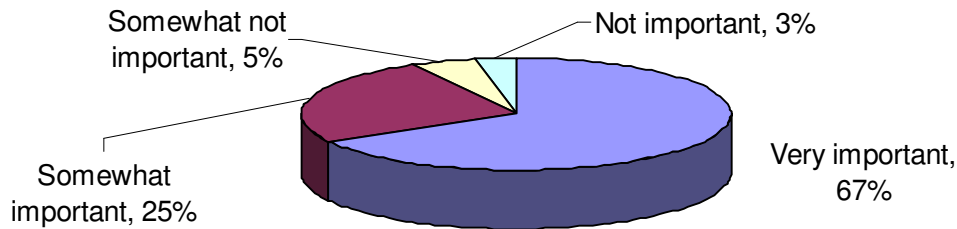
With regards to the statement, **"New pilots in my operation need to possess decision-making abilities with regard to managing people."**, 51% of respondents stated this was very important in their day-to-day operation, 38% stated it was somewhat important, eight percent stated it was somewhat not important, and three percent stated this was not an important statement in their day-to-day operations. (Figure 54)

Figure 54: New Pilots Need Decision Making Abilities - People



With regards to the statement, **"New pilots in my operation need to possess decision-making abilities with regard to operational logistics."**, 67% of respondents stated this was very important in their day-to-day operation, 25% stated it was somewhat important, five percent stated it was somewhat not important, and three percent stated this was not an important statement in their day-to-day operations. (Figure 55)

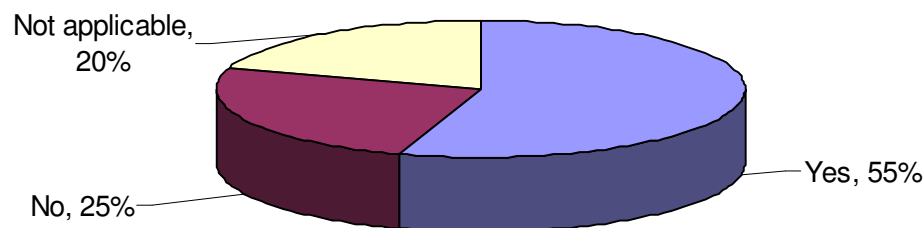
Figure 55: New Pilots Need Decision Making Abilities - Logistics



Deficiencies

Respondents were asked “**In your hiring experience as an operator during the last five years, are there any areas in which you feel new pilots seem to be deficient or lacking?**”. Fifty-five percent of respondents felt there were areas in which pilots seem to be deficient or lacking, 25% did not, and 20% stated it was not applicable to their operations. (Figure 56)

Figure 56: Pilot Deficiencies During the Last 5 Years?



Of the 55% who indicated they did observe areas of deficiency for pilots they hired during the last five years, respondents stated:

- *Their knowledge of how a business is run is lacking and they also lack initiative.*
- *They lack self motivation, possibly because they feel insecure when they are first hired. One has to build that into them, and try not to take any away they already have.*
- *Work ethic, logic, and maturity. Many of the younger pilots figure they are owed a living instead of earning one. Not all are like that, but enough to notice*
- *Attitude!*
- *Navigating by map and compass, and decision skills for flying or not flying in marginal weather.*
- *Decision-making skills, independence, and enthusiasm. Also rating their own skill level – they are usually way-off and cocky.*
- *They can fly an airplane, but they don't know exactly what the machine can do. They will correct with flaps, when they should correct with the rudder.*
- *Need to have some practical training and know what to do when they aren't flying!*
- *Reality of the job and the demands which come from it.*
- *There is a definite lack in what to expect at a bush operation, bush experience, poor / low weather experience. It seems that a lot of instructors lack bush experience, having only ever flown themselves in controlled airspace, off paved runways, and in good weather.*

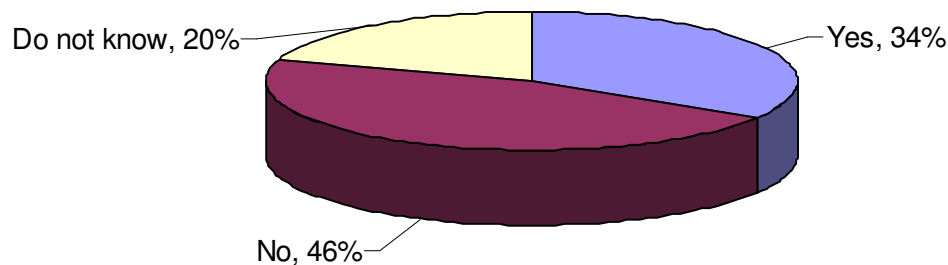
- *Too many have come from the "what's in it for me" rather than what can I do for the company. Flight school college programs seem to turn out pilots who expect to fly jets right away.*
- *Common sense. Pilots need enough sense to ask if they aren't sure about something and don't go out without asking at all. Situational awareness is real. Are you aware of what you are doing? Will you wreck the equipment if you don't know?*
- *Operational skills such as slinging, sloped landings, poor visibility flying.*

A couple of operators stated they are seeing lack of demeanor at work and the ability to take personalities and situational clashes out of the picture. These operators felt new pilots need to be more accepting and not worry about things being perfect while being professional and adaptable.

Diploma vs. Non-diploma

Respondents were asked if they thought there was **“any advantage in hiring new pilots who have at least a two-year aviation diploma and commercial pilot's license vs. those who just have a commercial pilot's license”**. Thirty four percent felt there was an advantage in hiring the pilot with the two-year aviation diploma, 46% felt there was not, and 20% did not know. (Figure 57)

Figure 57: Advantage of 2-Year Diploma vs. Regular Commercial Pilot's License?



The 34% of operators who felt there was an advantage in hiring an applicant with a two-year diploma and a commercial pilot's license over hiring an applicant with just the commercial pilot's license stated the following:

- *A diploma shows initiative, and says a lot about the individual person. Any program that a student knows will cost \$75,000+ shows they are committed, and the education aspect shows they want to be in aviation long term.*
- *The people with diplomas seem to be more intent on what they are doing and their skill levels are better. Also, operators have a hard time insuring new pilots and if they have a formal education it is better with the insurance companies.*
- *The diploma applicants have the intelligence to go through school, the ability to learn, and probably a better theoretical background than the others.*
- *Although a diploma will not replace the need for lots of flight hours in a commercial company, diploma applicants possess more in-depth knowledge right across the curriculum.*
- *A pilot with the diploma is a better all-around pilot with a more defined base in their training.*

- *Hopefully the diploma indicates the applicant has better communication skills, better computer and business skills and is more familiar with technology in general, and is probably more mature than the others.*
- *They would have more experience than the typical pilot doing a six month program.*
- *Those with diplomas would likely be more professional and would likely advance to a higher level in a shorter time than those without diplomas.*
- *Business communications, company representation and dealing with client, and marketing training are usually part of the diploma program, as are time management, basic organizational management, computer skills, and general accountability. Also awareness of professional conduct and a sense to know to keep personal stuff personal is part of the training with the diploma curriculum.*

One respondent added he/she would like to see a syllabus from the applicants with diplomas who apply to his/her operation.

Summary of Training Preferences

- The great majority of respondents state they preferred applicants to have conventional cockpit training, while a small number did not really prefer it, or it was not applicable to their operations.
- A majority of respondents stated a combination of glass cockpit/moving map display and conventional cockpit training was preferred, but training in only the glass cockpit/moving map display was either not applicable or not preferred by the majority of respondents.
- The majority of respondents state float training was preferable when hiring a new pilot, but 22% stated float training was not applicable to their operations.
- Just over one third of respondents state ski experience was preferable while nearly half of respondents stated it was not applicable to their operations.
- Nearly half of respondents stated some preference for coastal experience, while nearly one-third said it was not applicable to their operations.
- A vast majority of respondents state some preference for northern experience when hiring a new pilot for their operation.
- All respondents showed some preference for survival training when hiring a new pilot.
- A majority of respondents state some preference for new pilots to possess high altitude training, while one-fifth state it was not applicable to their operations.
- A great majority of respondents state a preference for new pilots to possess aviation physiology/disorientation awareness training, advanced weather training, mountaineering/ advanced geography training, psychology of human behavior training, and client and marketing training.
- Over half of respondents state a preference for new pilots to possess business/revenue training, aviation law training, and Transport Canada audit training.

- Nearly all respondents agreed the statement, “New pilots in my operation need to think on their own, especially when it comes to making the ‘go’ or ‘no-go’ decision with regard to weather”, was an important statement with regard to their operations.
- All respondents felt new pilots need to be self-motivated and possess a “do-it-all” attitude from cleaning the hangar to piloting the aircraft.
- The vast majority of respondents stated new pilots in their operations need to possess decision-making abilities with regard to managing people and operational logistics.
- Over half of respondents feel there are areas in which new pilots seem to be lacking or deficient. The other 20% state it was not applicable or they did not know.
- Only a third of respondents feel there is an advantage in hiring applicants with a two-year diploma over those with traditional flight school training. Twenty percent did not know how they felt on this issue.

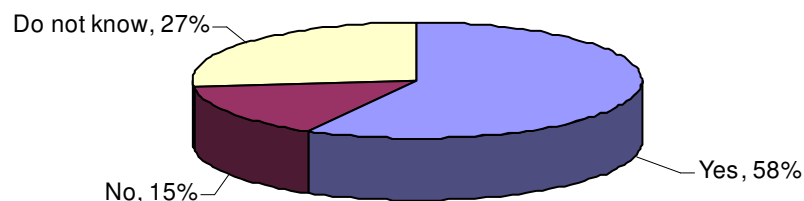
G. Potential Program

The overall goal of the Northern Air Operator Survey was to try and ascertain what operators are facing when it comes to aviation in northwest Canada. Because the number of flight schools in northwest Canada has dwindled in the last 10 years, respondents were also asked about the creation of a two-year aviation diploma program in Vanderhoof, BC and how it might benefit them as Northern Air Operators. Respondents were also asked what type of program they would like to see offered in Vanderhoof if the program became a reality.

Graduates from Potential Program

Respondents were asked, “**If a new two-year diploma program was available for commercial pilots in Vanderhoof, BC, would you consider hiring graduates from such a program?**.” Fifty eight percent stated “yes”, 15% responded “no”, and 27% stated they “did not know”. (Figure 58)

Figure 58: Hiring of Grads from Potential Program



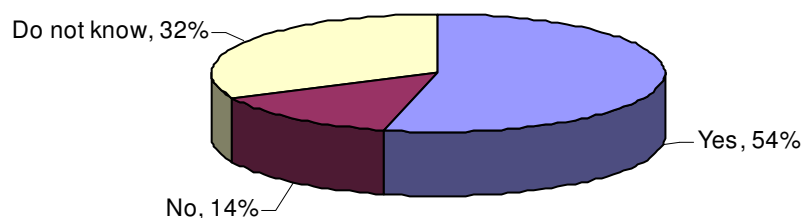
The 15% of Northern Air Operators who indicated they would NOT consider hiring grads from a potential two-year diploma program in Vanderhoof stated the following reasons for their answer:

- *We need more seasoned pilots who are more experienced and specialized for the work we do.*
- *New pilots have low time. Ministry requires 1000 + hrs for the work we do. I hire older "resident/local" pilots on a per flight hour basis.*

- *The decision is not mine really. Insurance companies require my pilots have a lot of hours before they work for me.*
- *Pilots need a lot of experience flying in the bush here.*
- *I operate a small company that does specialized work, so I am the only pilot I employ.*

Respondents were asked, “**Do you see any potential advantage to you as an aviation employer in having a new two-year commercial pilot's diploma program in Vanderhoof, BC?**.” Fifty-four percent stated “yes”, 14% responded “no”, and 32% stated they “did not know”. (Figure 59)

Figure 59: Advantage in Potential Vanderhoof Program



The 54% of Northern Air Operators who indicated they DID see a potential advantage in having a new two-year commercial pilot's diploma program located in Vanderhoof, BC stated the following:

- *It would be tailor-made for the north and I would give first dibs on hiring to anyone from the north. It would be a good pool of potential employees.*
- *It's very close to me and I could get to know the students before I would hire them and know their skill levels.*
- *I think it would bring more pilots in from the north which would be an advantage to me in the long run.*
- *The school would weed out riff raff and I wouldn't have to. It would eliminate all the people who just think they can walk in.*
- *Vanderhoof will probably attract northern people.*
- *The students are exposed to the remoteness of the north.*
- *Since the program is in the north, new pilots would most likely have a better understanding of the uniqueness of the job opportunities in the north. They would be more prepared than someone say coming out of the Prairies.*
- *Anything like that WILL help the industry, as long as people who go into it know it is a HARD industry and a tough career choice.*
- *It would be good to take a person under your wing and train them to fly even better in the north, if they are taught to fly in the north initially. They would use all the density/altitude training they could, rather than just the same altitude around the prairies.*
- *If there were two identical people, I would pick the one with more northern experience, especially if you are doing floats, skis, survival. I would take a diploma person over one without. I would prefer to see coastal diploma.*
- *If you can set up a camp scenario where guys stay out for a week and have to heat a helicopter with fire, that would have some real world application to my operation.*
- *That's a good place to learn with nearby mountains.*

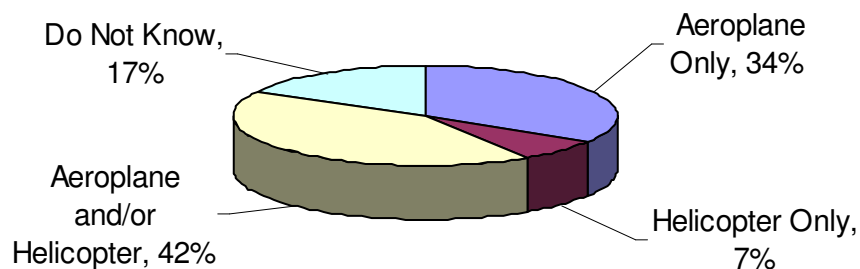
- *Somebody from the northern background is used to the remoteness, rather than the city setting of Vancouver.*
- *There would be new pilots looking for work who are familiar with our geographical area of operation and who may be interested in staying in the north.*
- *Near mountains and would get a guy used to a smaller town rather than a city. Also would get them weather experience. No Starbucks there so it would be like here.*

Type of Program Preferred

Respondents were asked, **“If a two-year diploma program for commercial pilot training were to begin in Vanderhoof, BC which type of program would you most like to see?”**

Thirty-four percent stated a preference for fixed-wing/aeroplane, seven percent stated a preference for helicopter, 42% stated a preference for aeroplane and/or helicopter, and 17% did not know what they would prefer. (Figure 60)

Figure 60: Type of Program



Northern operators who indicated a preference for a fixed-wing/aeroplane program stated the following:

- *We like fixed wing and there is not enough call in some areas to base helicopters.*
- *I think it's a waste of time to train helicopter pilots right now. I know five helicopter pilots who can't get a job right now. Helicopter pilots need so much time per aircraft and the oil companies need them to have a lot of time before hiring them.*
- *Offer options to bush route (floats and skis) or airline route (IFR environment) and instructor possibility. Too hard to do both airplane and helicopter.*
- *Traditionally, fixed-wing is cheaper to afford.*
- *It's generally much easier for a new pilot to find a fixed wing job.*

Northern operators who indicated a preference for a helicopter program stated the following:

- *Airplane and helicopters are so different. I would like to see the program dedicated to one or the other, because the emergency procedures for landing each are so different. If you try to land a helicopter like an airplane you die.*
- *Flying airplanes to helicopters is apples to oranges. Weather, navigation, etc. are similar, but aerodynamics, some air law and the aircraft themselves are completely different*

Northern operators who indicated a preference for a fixed-wing/aeroplane and helicopter program stated the following:

- *They would get the best of both worlds and learn new skills which would make better pilots.*

- *If a student is serious, he/she should have a good understanding of fixed wing AND rotary*
- *It widens the possibilities for the students. Helicopter pilots and fixed wing pilots usually have different outlooks in life, however.*
- *From the pilot's point of view he has more opportunity to get in to the industry and will broaden his employment choices.*
- *I think the ground school and theory is identical, from there the person can decide from that point after getting some experience as a student.*
- *We have hired helicopter pilots from fixed-wing side and some of that info has been beneficial to helicopter operation.*
- *There is a huge demand for helicopters here. Helicopter pilots don't do navigation well, but fixed wing pilots must learn this so they can land, they also have better technical experience.*
- *Specialization is wonderful, but it would be good to have everyone in the same classes for the first year, learning all the basics, then branch out.*
- *Students don't know what they want at first. I wish I would have had the opportunity to do both. I did my IFR on a fixed wing, but I never got my fixed-wing license, wish I had because I could have used it for something.*
- *I feel there is a distinct advantage to having a fixed-wing first, navigation and radio.*
- *It's the most flexible. And people with helicopter interest would go that way and the fixed wing the other way. Regardless of who is funding it, the cost seems more manageable.*
- *There are more opportunities and money in helicopters as a lot of government and industry are using more and more. If my son was choosing I would steer him toward helicopter. Although, for the person with a passion for fixed-wing, a training facility in the north would benefit everyone.*
- *For the good of the town and the college. It would increase your market and distinguish yourself from your competitors.*

Summary of Potential Program

- The majority of respondents state they would consider hiring graduates from a two-year diploma program in Vanderhoof. Those who said they wouldn't, stated they needed more experienced/seasoned pilots for their operations. Twenty eight percent of respondents did not know if they would consider hiring graduates from a Vanderhoof program.
- The majority of respondents state they saw a potential advantage as Northern Air Operators in having a two-year commercial pilot program in Vanderhoof, BC. A third of respondents did not know if it would be advantageous to them.
- A third of respondents preferred a fixed-wing program, under half preferred a fixed-wing and helicopter program, less than ten percent preferred a helicopter program, and just under twenty percent did not know what type of program they would prefer.

H. Final Thoughts from Survey Respondents

Respondents who completed the survey were asked if there were any other comments they would like to add. Responses were varied, and often reflected thoughts the survey questions provoked within those who completed the survey.

The following are a number of the respondents' additional thoughts. Spelling corrections and the clarification of abbreviations have been made where necessary. References to specific companies and schools has been deleted.

There are many different paths to take in aviation. You can work at a larger company, and once off the ramp (one to two years) you can advance quickly. But I feel the more valuable route (and sometimes harder to land) is to start out at a smaller company where you can start logging PIC (pilot in command) as soon as possible. There is no replacement for being out there making decisions on your own. The one thing that I strongly feel is lacking in flight schools /flight training is a lack of preparing new pilots for their first job. A lot of pilots' first job will be at a small charter operation in the north / remote area, flying and making decisions on their own. I feel there is a lack of experience from the instructor's side in regards to operating on gravel airstrips and in remote areas. And most of the pilots do not know how to fly in poor weather. 3sm (statute miles) is legal VFR (visual flight rules) (2sm below 1000 feet in uncontrolled airspace), and it will be expected for pilots to be able to fly in those conditions. It is amazing how many pilots come out of flight school never having flown in anything but beautiful weather. It is not to teach them to go out and fly in bad weather, but to recognize bad weather, to avoid it, and to know how to get out of it...and, more importantly, so that bad weather does not overwhelm them when they do encounter it.

We've had the best luck with farm kids or students who grew up in the north. They discover if they are going to make it, they have to work remotely for at least half a year for the first few years. At first the city kids like that, but then the new wears off and they realize they have to pay their dues if they want to get hours and advance. Some just don't make it. I think a college program should tell them the first week there are roughly 2000 hours to work each year and a good year will have them flying 500 hours, so for the other 1500 hours they are doing something else. If you tell them, there are fewer surprises.

The other experience I would like to see pilots get is mountain-flying experience. This is important for helicopter commercial pilots in the north and we all train from within, but it wouldn't hurt if the school could make it part of the curriculum.

Insurance is crippling operators here. There are a lot of variables in the north. We need float fliers who can deal with mountain and high lakes with low air density. We don't want pilots who only have experience flying low wings off an air strip in the prairies for the last 20 years. As for technology, we like it when we have pilots who have new training, as they can teach us on that front. Bush pilots love what they do, it is a hard life. Helicopter pilots live rough and are happy when you offer them anything. This is the new bush pilot, so helicopter training IS NEEDED here in the north. Two-year diploma pilots aren't usually looking for bush jobs, but the diploma shows they can commit. Diploma pilots we see here in the bush usually come from farm stock, and they are used to adverse conditions and not afraid of work. It's also important they have good verbal and written skills. The biggest

thing is young pilots are too green to "respect" the weather and geography here, so we make it our commitment to help them learn that respect, and not just turn them loose to fly.

The biggest thing is, colleges need to train people to be proficient in paperwork, ramp operations, etc., and train them to be professional while doing it. If your program can show a benefit of having a diploma, then OK. If not, it is just a piece of paper and I can train them myself and make sure they have a solid background. Whoever you have do the training, it needs to be someone who has experience, not someone who just teaches! It would be good if they could write their chief pilot exam and an air operations exam.

If you can make more of a northern theme or bush theme you might compete against other colleges better. Also on the age ranges for the pilots I employ, I have the 25-35 year olds, but then I also have the 55+ guys. Nothing in between really.

I would say you need to avoid turning into a puppy mill. A lot of schools put out twice as many pilots as they should, they teach the bare minimum of what Transport Canada requires just to take the students' money. They don't turn out that many pilots who are worth anything. Make sure you turn out PILOTS not people with a commercial license who will never use it because they don't have the passion. As far as a degree, I think it is OK to have one, but the instructors make it or break it. That said, if I could go back now, I would like to get some of the training they get with the degrees. HIA (Hobby Industry of America) in Anaheim was offering courses before the last conference...operations courses, marketing, accounting, cost analysis. There are 20 older guys like me who would take this kind of training if you offered it. We need the business content, so aim your program toward that and market that piece.

As far as anything else to add to the survey, I see a lot of arrogance with some of the students who have just gotten their commercial license and that isn't a really good trait to have in the north when every body knows everybody.

The airline industry is a sin wave, with cyclical ups and downs. The diploma thing is good and bad. I can't say all people without them are bad, or all with them are good. I really look at their personal experience and their work ethic. Experience is SO needed with new pilots. One school stopped letting their students fly with other operators during their non-instruction time in the summer, because students were building hours and not paying as much. That's not a good model. You need to let students get as much flight time as they can, regardless if they are paying you for all of it or not! Mainly new grads are city kids who are looking to fly a learjet the first day, rather than learning everything else there is to learn-paperwork, ramp ops, etc. My only complaint about another school's grads is they seem to be a bit rigid for the north. They have them trained for the airline-type life with their uniforms and procedures. Maybe back off that just a bit, not a

lot, to make it a bit more like working for a northern operation. And, don't train them all on glass cockpits. I get diploma students who are trained on glass cockpits and I often have to retrain them for a Navajo! I can take one to two new pilots with 250 hours in a typical year, but I have more and more contracts that need more hours, so I can't take too many low-time grads. The hiring HAS changed in the past few years. Pilots who normally would have been fired in their first couple of jobs have made it up the chain because companies are so desperate for experience, they are hiring people who they know are human resource problems. It used to be these people would wash out because no one would put up with them, but now they are getting jobs simply because they have the hours.

As for the diploma, if it is APPLIED, then fine. It needs to be hands-on with on-the-job training and real world scenarios. As for offering Advanced Weather Training, yes, but be warned students are frightened of this. Still, I say train them. As for the Mountaineering course, don't make it mandatory curriculum, make that one an add-on. I was a chief pilot for a large company, now I run a flight school and I hire the low-hour guys. I can tell who has what it takes and who doesn't. I did my training at a govt. funded school in Ontario and they screened students when I was there, but now because of funding they got to the point they couldn't turn anyone away. Beware of this when it comes to funding tying your hands. You have to screen, not everyone has what it takes.

After doing basic business courses with students, maybe do a second year on helicopter business and how different it is than charter fixed-wing. Talk about how helicopters play a large role in logging and mining and how quickly that changes - important to know the sector to know how to refit machines and serve industry. Having that first hand knowledge and usage makes a guy a much better pilot. Time is money, but there are natural resources to consider. Most early pilots have no clue what role helicopters play in natural resource development, if you can give them an idea of real-world applications, they will be so far ahead of other students from other diploma programs. It is valuable to the student, especially if he wants to get into management.

You need to structure your program the same way northern operators operate. You need hands-on experience and the reality of what the job really is. Your school needs to develop a reputation for producing top quality graduates for the north and show how that is different than the grads from elsewhere.