



Skills Oracle 2009/10

Employer Satisfaction Survey: Headline Findings

June 2010

The Cogent Skills Oracle

“Skills benchmarking for the Cogent Sector to support workforce planning”

During 2009 Cogent implemented ‘Skills Oracle’, a unique, online project surveying, over time, a significant and consistent sample of employers in each of the Cogent industries. The project collates annual returns from a large employer panel, via a web based questionnaire, to generate primary Labour Market Intelligence (LMI).

This in turn will lead to:

- a **skills ‘ftse’** – an index that is a barometer of skills in the sector
- a **skills benchmark** – a collective measure against which employers can assess their skills position in relation to other companies
- a **skills voice** – a report of measures and opinions, supported by a body of evidence from a substantial and consistent expert panel of employers

The survey generates two distinct outputs. Firstly, it provides Cogent with valuable LMI not captured by national data sources, which will provide sector skills data through factsheets and extended reports. Secondly, those completing the survey receive a bespoke benchmarked analysis against returns for their industry. This will then enable companies to:

- identify ‘Hot Spot’ areas – for example, of excellence or, conversely, under provision
- identify areas of similarity and difference within the industry, and across the Cogent footprint
- identify areas where new and improved business processes can be implemented



1.0 Summary

The 2009 Skills Oracle Survey is the first large-scale online survey from Cogent, and marks the beginning of an annual review of the sector's skills supply and demand, through direct engagement with employers. As part of the process of continual monitoring and improvement the Skills Oracle Survey was subsequently evaluated. This was divided in two parts:

- Part 1: An evaluation of the online Skills Oracle Survey
- Part 2: An evaluation of the Employer Benchmarked Reports

Of those that took part in the survey, 58%¹ contributed to the evaluation of the Skills Oracle. The headline findings are as follows:

The Online Survey

- 80% of employers agreed that the content of the survey was appropriate
- 87% of employers agreed that the questions in the survey were easy to answer
- 79% of employers agreed that there was nothing missing from the survey
- 80% of employers agreed that the survey was easy to complete
- 100% of employers agreed that they prefer to complete online surveys compared to other methods (for example, telephone survey, postal survey, interview etc)

Benchmarked Reports

- 88% of employers were either very satisfied or satisfied with the overall presentation of their benchmarked report
- 76% of employers were either very satisfied or satisfied with the relevance of the information presented
- 72% of employers were either very satisfied or satisfied with the benchmarked analysis
- 84% of employers were either very satisfied or satisfied with the quality of the research presented
- 92% of employers agreed that the benchmarked reports either met or exceeded their expectations

¹ 40 employers contributed to the evaluation of the Skills Oracle



2.0 Evaluation of the online Skills Oracle Survey

Following the Skills Oracle Survey, those that took part were asked to comment on the content, flow and format of the online survey (figure 1 & 2). The feedback gathered from employers will be used to inform the future development of the 2010 online Skills Oracle Survey.

Figure 1: Content and Flow of the online Survey

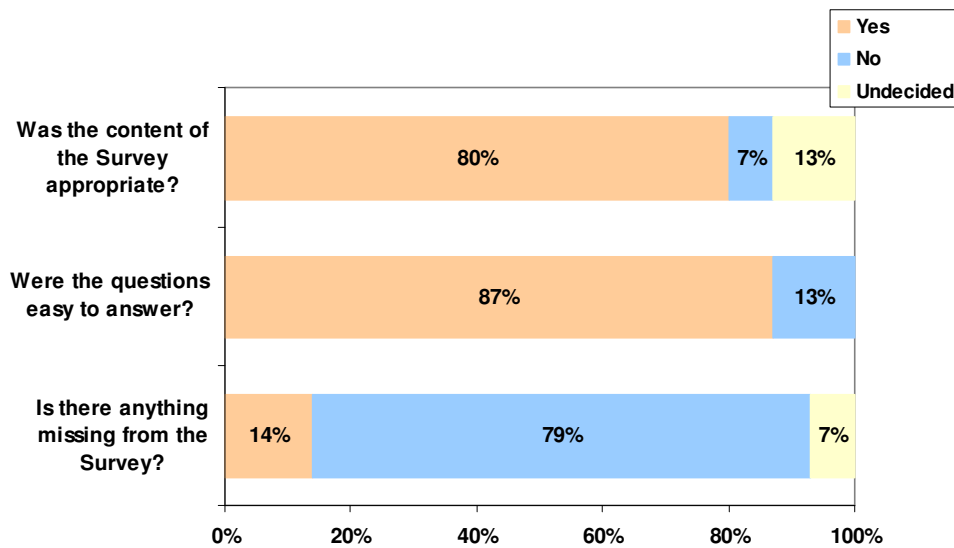
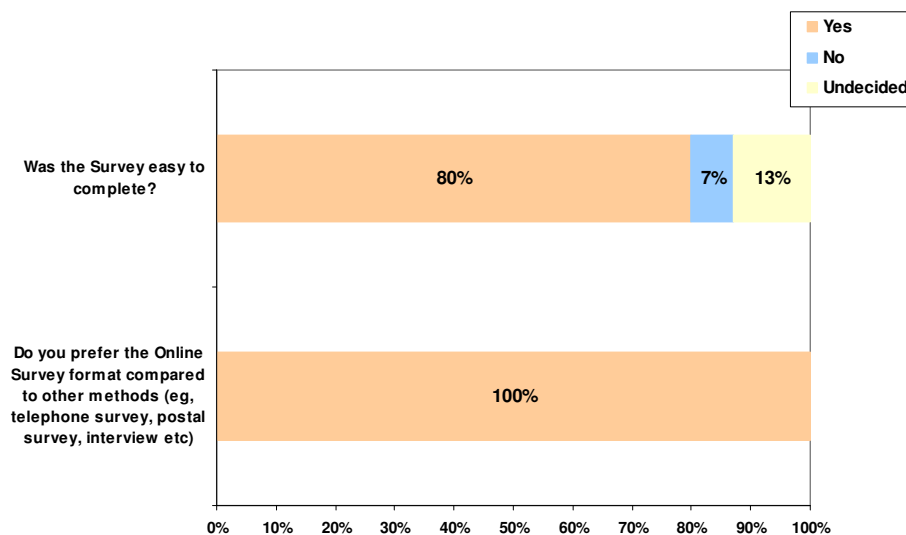


Figure 2: Survey Format



Recommendations

Employers were asked to highlight any suggestions or recommendations they had for future Skills Oracle surveys. Generally employers were satisfied with the Skills Oracle Survey but made valuable suggestions regarding streamlining of questions and prior warning of the survey start. Employers found Skills Oracle briefings at industry meetings and Advisory Councils beneficial. Recommendations that will enhance the data gathering and reporting processes will be implemented in the next survey.



3.0 Evaluation of the Employer Benchmarked Reports

All 69 employers that took part in the Skills Oracle Survey received a bespoke company benchmarked report. Each report portrayed the company results alongside their industry and the Cogent sector.

As was the case for the survey itself, once each employer had received their report, they were asked to complete a short satisfaction survey. Findings can be seen below (figure 3 & 4). Feedback gathered on the benchmarked reports will be used to inform the development of future bespoke company analysis.

Figure 3: Level of Satisfaction

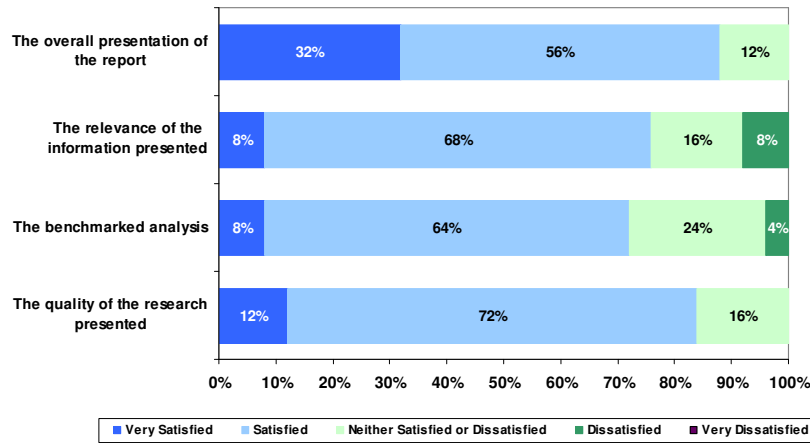
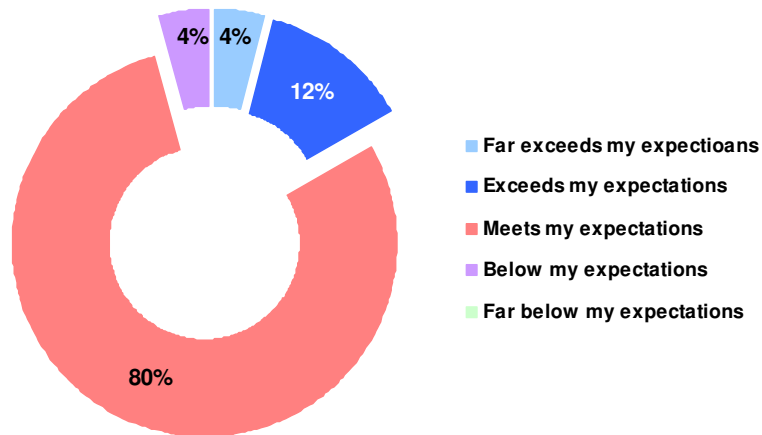


Figure 4: Employer Expectations



4.0 Concluding Comments

In the main the Skills Oracle 2009/10 was a huge success and was well received by employers. The Skills Oracle has set a high standard for gathering primary Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) across the Cogent footprint and has provided a strong base for the direction of primary research for Cogent in the future.

The intelligence gathered via the Skills Oracle will support the LMI extracted from National Data sources to support Cogent in feeding through to skills products and services, and influencing Government Policy on behalf of employers. The robust Cogent research engine underpinned by primary and secondary data will enable Cogent to highlight industry skills needs, training needs and investment trends, as well as developing trend analysis and supporting future scenario and action planning.

In response to the comments made by employers, for 2010 Cogent will streamline the questions presented in the Skills Oracle Survey. The status of the project will continue to be presented at each Industry Advisory Council, to ensure employers are aware of the progress of the Skills Oracle and to ensure they have ample warning of when the fieldwork will be delivered. All employers invited to take part in the 2010 Survey will be made aware of the intended outcome of the research and will have access to all of the current Industry Reports on the Cogent website. Cogent will continue to work with employers to ensure that the benchmarked reports continue to meet the highest expectations, ensuring that the presentation, relevance and quality of Cogent research continues to be well received and highly valued across the sector.



5.0 Useful Links

Skills Oracle webpage:

<http://www.cogent-ssc.com/research/Oracle.php>

Skills Oracle reports:

Science Based Industries:

<http://www.cogent-ssc.com/research/Publications/SkillsOracleReportfortheScienceBasedIndustriesMay2010.PDF>

Chemicals:

http://www.cogent-ssc.com/research/Publications/Skills_Oracle_Chemicals_Report_June_2010.PDF

Pharmaceuticals:

http://www.cogent-ssc.com/research/Publications/Skills_Oracle_Pharma_Report_June_2010.PDF

Nuclear:

http://www.cogent-ssc.com/research/Publications/Skills_Oracle_Report_for_Nuclear_May_2010_FINAL.PDF

Petroleum:

http://www.cogent-ssc.com/research/Publications/Skills_Oracle_for_Petroleum_May_2010_FINAL.PDF

Polymers:

<http://www.cogent-ssc.com/research/Publications/SkillsOracleReportPolymersJune2010.PDF>

Skills Oracle Information Sheet:

<http://www.cogent-ssc.com/Publications/Oracle.pdf>



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