

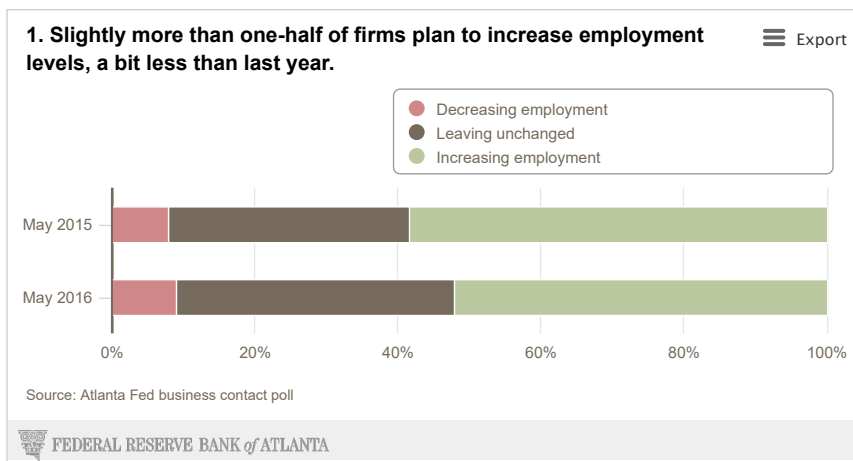
Employer Perspectives on Southeast Labor Market Conditions in Eight Charts

July 20, 2016



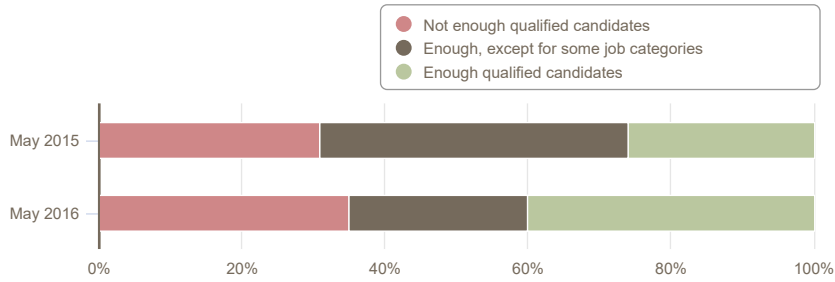
Do employers plan to increase staffing levels? Is hiring hampered by a lack of qualified candidates? Are wage cost pressures mounting? These are the types of questions that Federal Reserve economists grapple with when trying to gauge labor market conditions. To better understand what is happening in our local labor market, the Atlanta Fed conducted a poll of its business contacts from May 9 through May 20. The survey asked firms across the Southeast about their hiring plans, availability of qualified candidates for openings, hiring standards, employee retention and ability to attract new hires, associated wage trends, part-time staff, and outlook for growth. We received more than 450 responses, representing a wide variety of business types.

May 2016 Survey Participant Characteristics [\(click to view\)](#)



2. Finding qualified job candidates has become less of a widespread issue.

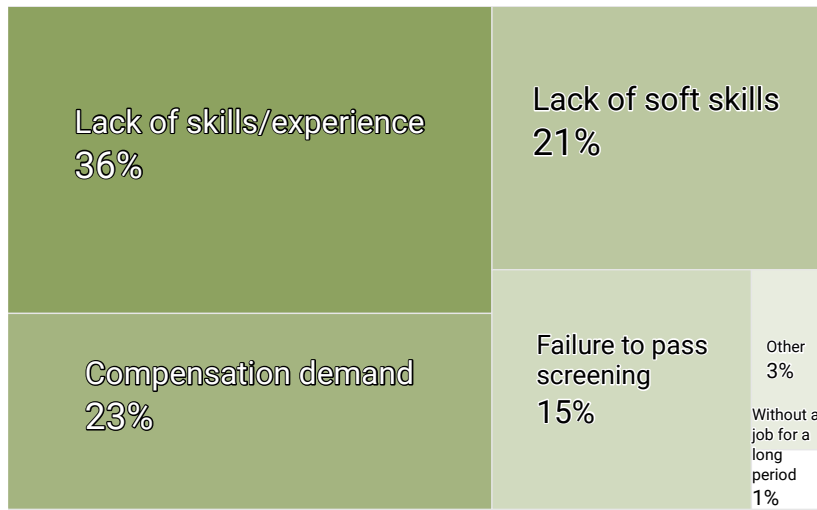
Export



Source: Atlanta Fed business contact poll

3. Of those experiencing at least some difficulty finding qualified candidates, more than a third said that applicants did not have the specific skills or experience needed.

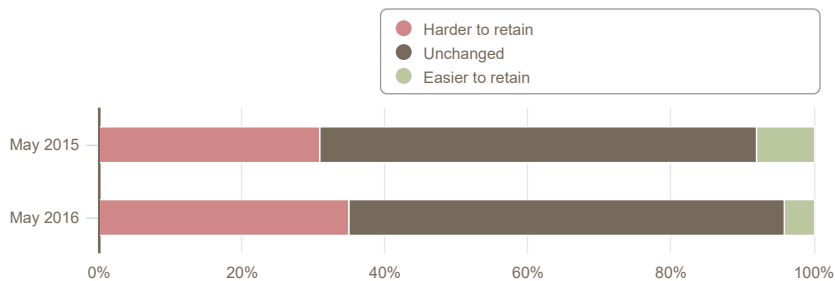
Export



Source: Atlanta Fed business contact poll

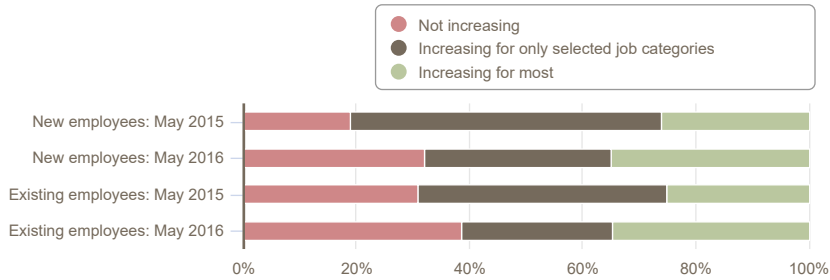
4. It's become somewhat more difficult to retain employees.

Export



Source: Atlanta Fed business contact poll

5. Increases in wages are a bit less prevalent than last year but more broad-based across the workforce. Export

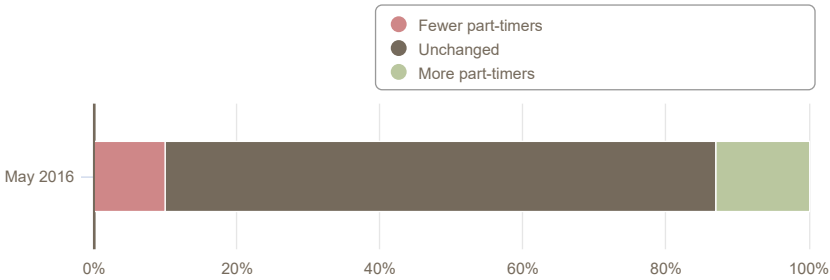


Source: Atlanta Fed business contact poll



Interestingly, several participants at our spring Human Capital Advisory Council meeting noted that attracting and retaining employees has become less about the wage and more about nonwage benefits including healthcare, flexible scheduling, time off, opportunities for development, higher pay later, and more employee engagement.

6. Most firms have not changed their use of part-time staff over the past year. Export

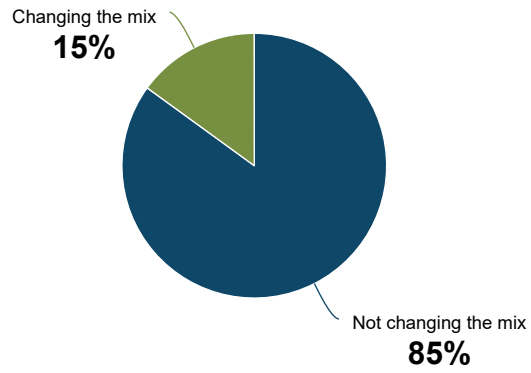


Source: Atlanta Fed business contact poll

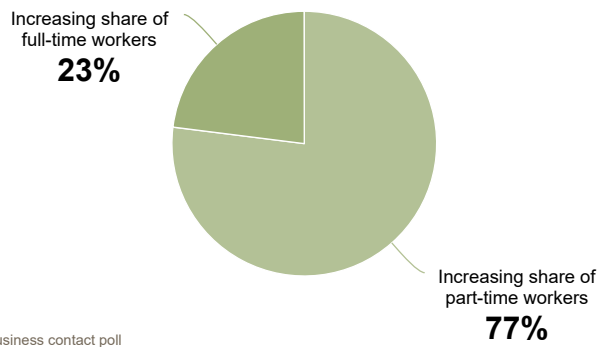


7. But looking ahead, some plan to use more part-timers.

Export



Among those **changing the mix** of part-time and full-time workers at their firm:



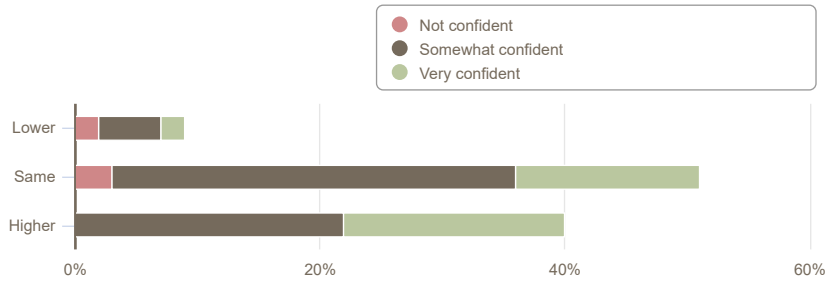
Source: Atlanta Fed business contact poll

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK of ATLANTA

Note that commonly cited reasons for shifting the workforce toward more part-time in the future include managing spikes in demand, attracting new employees, the Fair Labor Standards Act, and the Affordable Care Act.

8. Relatively few businesses anticipate a near-term slowdown in their performance, and most are reasonably confident about their outlooks.

Export



Source: Atlanta Fed business contact poll

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK of ATLANTA



Whitney Mancuso
Senior Economic Research Analyst



Shalini Patel
Director, Regional Economic Information Network