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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Please Mind The (Skills) Gap**

*The Emerging Workforce Study from Spherion Reveals Workers Feel Insecure About Their Job Skills, Career Advancement*

**ATLANTA – July 14, 2015** — For years, employers have struggled with finding qualified workers. However, new findings from the 2015 Emerging Workforce Study (EWS) commissioned by Spherion Staffing reveal workers feel they are sorely lagging behind in their job skills. These results underscore a new skills gap story from the worker's perspective that will affect the future of the workforce. The study was conducted online by Harris Poll among 225 U.S. human resource managers and 2,027 employed U.S. adults (aged 18+).

"What's unique about the Emerging Workforce Study is that we capture and examine the perspectives of the workplace from both the employer and worker points of view," said Spherion Division President Sandy Mazur. "We've known that employers have been dealing with the skills gap issue for a long time. But, with this new data capturing the average worker's perspective, we know this issue is on track to become a critical threat to economic success."

According to this year's EWS, nearly half of all employers (48 percent) see finding qualified/skilled workers as a top human resource concern in the next few years, and 62 percent of employers are more worried about a talent shortage today, as compared to one year ago. But, the study also reveals workers' insecurities and lack of confidence when it comes to their job skills. More than one-third of workers (35 percent) find it hard to find the time to keep their skills up-to-date, and 29 percent of workers feel their current level of job skills are outdated and leave them at risk in terms of furthering their career.

Because of this uncertainty, workers also feel their current skill sets will hinder their career advancement. One-third (33 percent) of workers believe their current job skills fall short of what will be required for future positions, and 36 percent of workers don't feel their current job skills will help them attain a promotion today.

So who's to blame for the skills shortage among workers? It depends on who you ask. Thirty-five percent of workers agree that they worry a lot about falling behind in acquiring new skills that will be needed in the future. Thirty-one percent of workers don't feel they have been trained adequately enough by their employer, and only 33 percent of them say that the training and career development opportunities in their organization are excellent/good. Additionally, 76 percent of workers agree that an employer should be responsible for providing a clear career development path for its employees.

But if you ask employers, they think they are taking the steps needed to ensure their workers are well-equipped to do their jobs. According to this year's EWS, 77 percent of employers have put more training and development programs in place to increase retention. And, only 24 percent of employers find the cost to keep workers trained for future skill needs and requirements extremely or very challenging.

Worth noting is that workers and employers largely agree on the top skills that will be required for employment in the next five years. Workers believe problem-solving skills (51 percent), strategic thinking skills (31 percent) and evolving technology expertise (30 percent) are essential to have. Similarly, many employers agree with problem-solving skills (47 percent) and strategic thinking skills (34 percent); however, they cite team-building skills, the ability to understand and interpret data and evolving technology expertise as equally important skills that should be required in a job (all at 25 percent).

"It's obvious that there's a disconnect between workers and employers in the workplace when it comes to the skills gap," said Mazur. "Workers and employers must take joint responsibility for closing the skills gap. Workers should

understand where businesses are headed and what skills they'll need to help close the gap, while employers should examine their workers' skill levels to focus on training that will be helpful and useful for them. This type of training also has long-lasting impacts on the workforce, including greater retention, engagement and a more positive impact on business success."

For more than 18 years, the Emerging Workforce Study has tracked the shifting opinions and attitudes of workers and their employers in the context of ongoing social and economic events. The 2015 Emerging Workforce Study examined the state of the workplace and perspectives from workers and employers on themes such as recruitment, attraction, employee engagement, retention, social media use, customer service, work/life balance trends, the multi-generational workforce and HR concerns.

### **Methodology**

The 2015 Emerging Workforce Study was conducted online within the United States by Harris Poll on behalf of Spherion from March 20-April 13, 2015 among 225 human resource managers. Results were weighted as needed to reflect the composition of U.S. companies, based on company revenue. An online survey of 2,027 employed adults, ages 18 and older, was also conducted by Harris Poll on behalf of Spherion from March 17-April 7, 2015. Results were weighted as needed for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income to represent the target population. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

### **About Spherion**

Spherion Staffing Services is a leading recruiting and staffing provider that specializes in placing administrative, clerical, customer service and light industrial candidates in temporary and full-time opportunities. As an industry pioneer for more than 68 years, Spherion has sourced, screened and placed millions of individuals in virtually every industry through a network of offices across the United States. Spherion offers companies a unique combination of personalized customer service supported by a global staffing leader. Last year we helped more than 3,000 clients find the right talent to meet their workforce goals. Each local office is individually owned and operated by a team of staffing specialists who are known throughout the community, well-acquainted with your business and supported by a strong network of talent. As one of the fastest growing industries, Spherion is actively expanding into new territories, with more than 75 franchise markets available. To inquire, visit [www.spherion.com/franchise](http://www.spherion.com/franchise). To learn more, visit [www.spherion.com](http://www.spherion.com).

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