

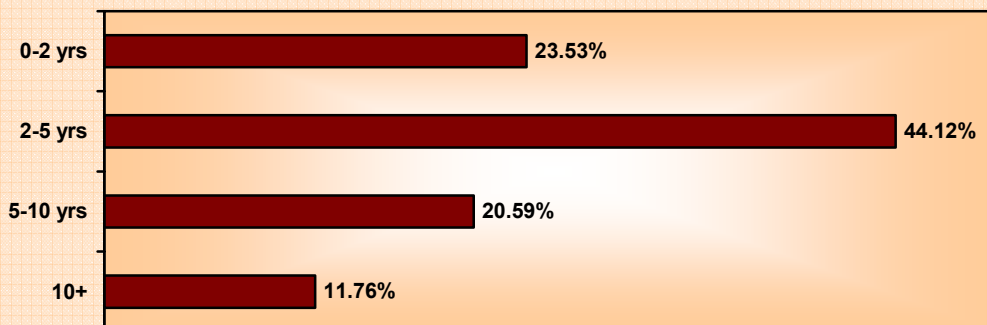
## Temporary Staffing Industry Trends

Recently, **RadSciences Group** surveyed traveling technologists to determine the marketability of contract staffing services within our organization. While contract services remain abundantly available to hospitals seeking such a service, we have observed a noticeable slump in the contract staffing industry during 2004. We believe this trend has two primary causes: increasing costs and unpredictable service. Even travelers themselves report greater uncertainty, and more are willing to consider permanent opportunities.

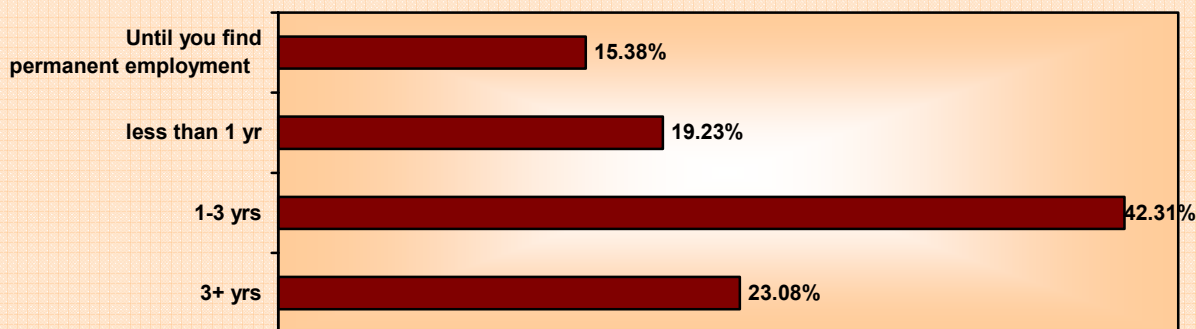
In a recent survey, the American Hospital Association (AHA) reported a national vacancy rate for Radiologic Technologists (RTs) hovering around 15 percent. Indeed, finding enough techs has been a struggle for some hospitals. During the late 1990s, industry analysts officially declared an RT shortage that mirrored that of nursing. As recently as three years ago, things were booming for RTs in terms of demand and compensation packages. Today, however, in markets such as Phoenix, AZ; Dallas, TX; and Las Vegas, NV; Radiologic Technologists seem to be facing challenges finding full-time employment. Many accept PRN positions as a way to get their foot in the door and build credibility with an employer while waiting for a full-time position to become available.

The following temporary staffing survey was conducted by **RadSciences Group** in the month of January 2005, and all “travelers” were contacted at random. This group of respondents is composed of Computed Tomography Technologists, Mammographers, Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists, Nuclear Medicine Technologists, Radiologic Technologists, Radiation Therapists, Ultrasound Sonographers and Vascular Technologists.

### 1. How many years have you (or did you) work as a traveler?



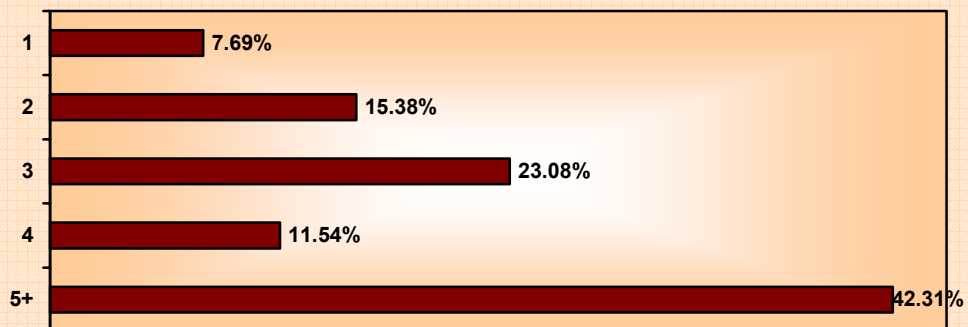
### 2. If you are currently working as or seeking employment as a traveler, how long do you plan to accept contract assignments?



### 3. When was the last time you worked as a traveler?



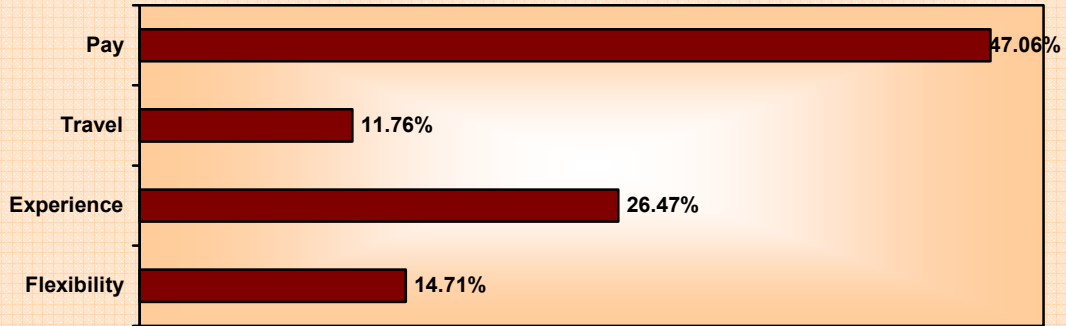
### 4. How many staffing firms do you currently work with?



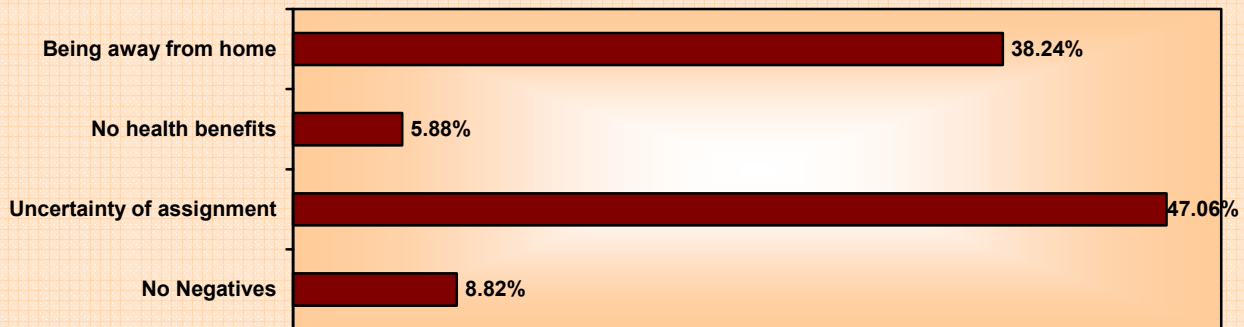
A significant change from 2003 to 2004 was the increased number of travelers that called **RadSciences Group** seeking full-time employment. While a few of the travelers we surveyed said they love what they do and will not seek a permanent position, most respondents said they would continue working as a traveler for a few more years only to “pay off” debt or to get ahead financially and then re-evaluate their options. The majority of those surveyed had worked as a traveler at some point last year; however, about 24 percent of those respondents worked their last assignment and had taken a permanent position in 2004. It is also notable that a little more than 42 percent of the travelers surveyed use five or more staffing firms, suggesting that they are reacting to the demand of the industry and unavailability of assignments.

From an administrator’s point of view, it may come as no surprise that cost ranks as the most significant drawback when administrators consider temporary staffing. By comparison, hospitals using permanent staffing companies showed little to no change in the amount of money invested in recruitment services. Perception is a key issue, and the math is simple. If you can pay a \$10,000 recruitment fee and hire a full-time employee, why hire a temporary agency and pay them \$70/hour for a contractor unless absolutely necessary? In less than 4 weeks, you have spent more money and still have not resolved the long-term staffing issue. An overwhelming majority of hospital administrators believe that temporary coverage simply costs too much. The balance, as most are beginning to discover, comes when comparing temporary staffing expenses with the value a technologist brings to the organization.

**5. What is the most positive aspect of working as a traveler?**



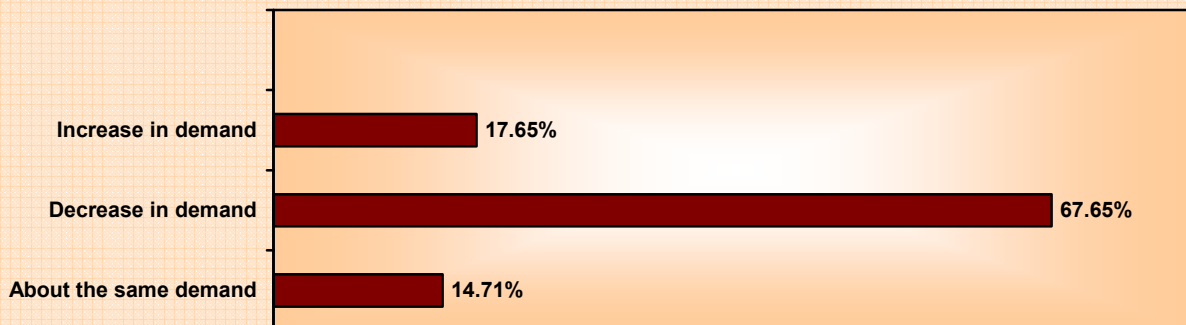
**6. What is the most negative aspect of working as a traveler?**



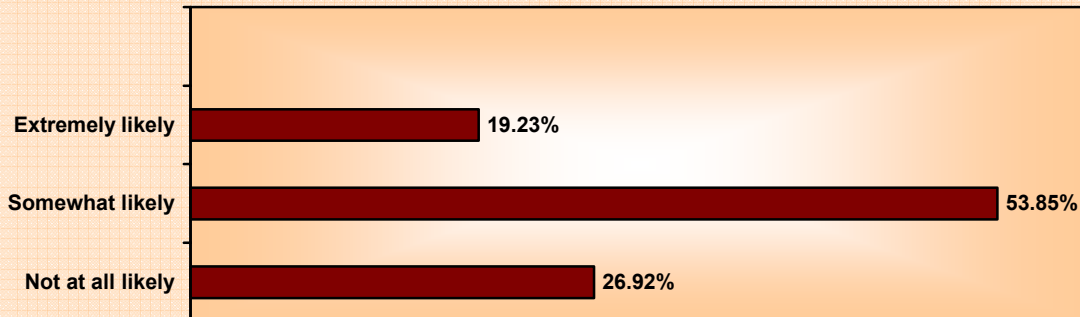
As a result of the contract staffing slowdown, travelers report fewer assignment options. In a 2002 survey, 18 percent of travelers cited uncertainty as a drawback. In 2003 that figure doubled. The study also revealed a significant increase in the number of travelers now interested in a permanent position.

In the survey we conducted, we found that nearly half the respondents felt that the uncertainty of their next assignment was the most highly rated downfall of working as a traveler. However, 47 percent of those surveyed did not hesitate to say that pay was the most positive aspect and is what motivates them to take their next assignment.

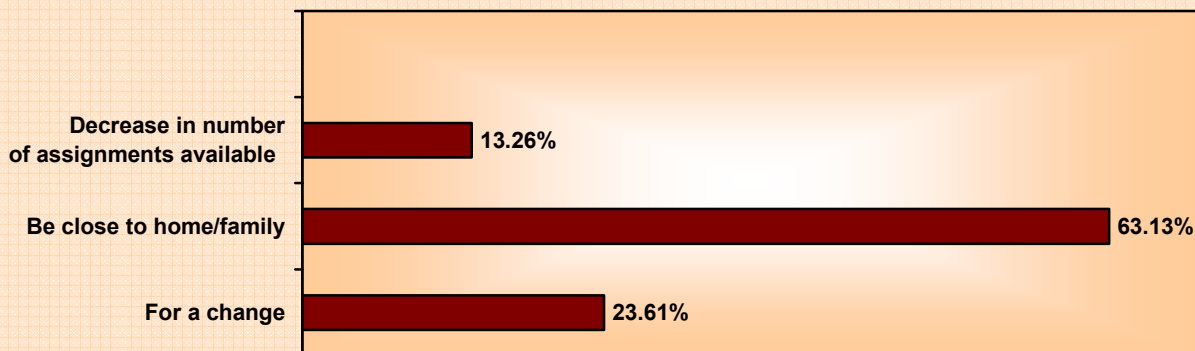
**7. In reference to the demand for your services over the past two years, would you say there has been an...**



**8. If you are currently working as or seeking employment as a traveler, how willing are you to consider permanent employment opportunities in the next year?**



**9. If you no longer work as a traveler, why did you decide to stop working as a traveler?**



An overwhelming 67.7 percent of those surveyed felt the temporary staffing industry demand has decreased over the past two years, and more than half of the respondents said they are somewhat likely to consider permanent employment opportunities this year; yet, many added that the organization and compensation package for such employment would have to be a strong “fit” before they would accept a permanent position this year.

When former traveling technologists were asked why they stopped working as a traveler, over 63 percent said it was due to wanting to be close to home or family. This is probably no surprise since more than a third of respondents said the most unappealing aspect of working as a traveler was being away from home, which ranked just second behind uncertainty.

The dip in demand for travelers could be a result of hospitals' expanded recruitment and retention programs. Many facilities have been offering generous perks to techs in order to keep them on staff, and a noticeable increase in wages over the past two years has helped retention efforts of many facilities. Additionally, there has been a surge in the enrollment levels of radiography programs. The American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT) reported a 12.3 percent increase in student numbers for 2001. In fact, most programs reached capacity that year. However, the same ASRT survey noted a 21.7 percent dropout rate among radiography students. Unfortunately, this is a trend that had been developing for several years and has been adding to the overall staffing dilemma.

## **SUMMARY**

While traveling RT jobs seem to be less available than in recent years, the demand for technologists specializing in ultrasound, cat scan and MRI seems to have not been hit as hard. While the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimates approximately 39,000 jobs will open up for RTs during the next 10 years, we continue to receive numerous requests from RTs seeking opportunities to cross-train to other modalities.

As hospital recruiters continue discussing ways to attract and retain good employees, travel technologists will continue to feel uncertain about where their next assignment will come from. While there will always be a need for contract technologists, over time, most experienced travelers may find the piece of mind, benefits and increased security of a permanent job something to consider.

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