The main reasons for attracting migrants. In the crisis period, the motives of employers for attracting migrants have remained almost unchanged compared with the previous period, although their primary motive is to save on wages.

The main motives for employment of migrants are the following:

1. The possibility of reducing the payroll.
2. The lack of Russian workers with the required qualifications.
3. A better quality of migrants’ work compared with the Russians.
4. Migrants’ refusal to take off the weekends and vacations, which allows for more work to be done.

Before the crisis, savings on wages occurred mainly from illegal employment or engaging in informal work, as in this case the taxes were paid to the budget and there were no costs for the legalization of migrants. At the same time, there was almost no difference in expenditures on wages of officially registered migrants and Russian workers, although the Russians tended to receive even more (within 180 days after the employment of migrants, employers were obliged to deduct 30 percent income tax instead of 13% as is usual for the Russians). But amid the crisis everybody began to dump employees, including legally registered migrants. On the one hand it led to some increase in competition for jobs with the Russian workers, but on the other hand it allowed many small companies to maintain business and jobs where the Russians worked.

From the statements of employers:

1. —Migrants work not for 8 but for 14 hours. And we are paying for speed and quality. They work with no Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays.
2. —I believe that the wage workers do the work more qualitatively. We employed workers from Russia, from Moscow, but it was work of a completely different quality.
3. —(On labor of the Russians). Not that it is not quite high-quality work, but there can be absenteeism, tardiness, or frequent sick leaves.

The search for foreign workers is mostly carried out through informal channels. The crisis has had almost no impact on the practice of finding foreign labor.

1 Here and below, the gross salary is rounded up to the third digit.
2 According to the Federal State Statistics Service, the average monthly nominal wage in the Russian Federation for the first half of 2009 (the time of our main survey) was 17900 rubles (http://www.gks.ru/gis/tables/UROV-7.htm).
Many employers are constantly attracting the same migrants, so they do not have any problems in this respect. If employees are required (new or for one-time work), then the family relations between migrants are used or the so-called “foremen” are asked.

From the statements of employers:
(1)—He comes to get a job, and when he’s hired, he says: “I’ve got a brother, can I bring him?”, i.e., this is no problem.

(2)—When there is a need for workers for construction, you ask about friends, and they call them quickly, and they come usually within a week.

Advertisements are also published in newspapers and hung in the streets of the city. The Internet is used rarely (only to find highly qualified personnel). Unfortunately, there is almost no demand for public employment service and private employment agencies (only when it comes to highly skilled professionals). Organized hiring of migrants, on which Russian officials rely so much, still exists only on paper.

Legal or illegal recruitment, the employers’ choice. Most employers combine legal and illegal hiring of migrants; legal employment is for those who work for a long time and perform more qualified work, illegal is for migrants employed for one-time work (cleaners, porters, etc.). Sometimes large employers of such workers prefer not to take them on the staff but to use services of companies that hire workers (e.g., a large percentage of businessmen use the services of cleaning companies not to have cleaning personnel on the staff).

From the statements of employers:
(1)—Our military instructor, when he had to urgently clean up the courtyard of the college, took the team at the Yaroslavl highway. He brought them, they did everything quickly, and the cost was very small.

(2)—We were moving from the warehouse and had a whole heap of goods. We hired people for two days, they were paid at the rate. The work that we would have done in a month, they did in three days without meal and smoke breaks.

Employers preferring to hire most migrants officially declare that in recent years the procedure of lawful employment has become far more complex and complain about constant changes in the paperwork order and lack of clarity in law enforcement.

Polls show that this is not the rampant desire of employers to switch to illegal employment, the rate of officially employed changes insignificantly (after all, many employers have started simply to fear huge fines, up to 800000 rubles from the legal people!), but the difficulties associated with the procedures of migrant registration, and in the first place the inability to obtain permissions for work. In Moscow in the six months between the surveys, the proportion of migrants with work permits declined by almost a factor of 2! (Fig. 2).

Migrants who work completely legally (42% on average in Russia) are the ones who had a work permit, a written contract with their employer, and signed the statements for receiving wages (or part of it). A more rigorous definition of this category of migrants, i.e., including only those who get completely “white” wages, have work permits, and written contracts (i.e., the employer pays taxes on the whole amount of earnings of a migrant, not on part), reduces the proportion those of working legally by 31% in all regions and by 21% in Moscow (2009).

Women are more likely to be used by employers in the informal sector than men. On average, 51% of women work with a written contract by region (the same is true for 58% of men) and only 33% receive official salaries (the same is true for 40% of men). Those who come to work not for the first time, and those who are better integrated into the Russian environment are more likely to get more reliable written agreements with employers because they communicate mostly in Russian (Fig. 3).

The lower the level of education of migrants, the more often they confine themselves to verbal agreements with the employers and informal payments of wages, not trying to protect themselves (Fig. 4).

Now employers treat a written contract with migrants more carefully; the idea is that it is not only beneficial to the migrant, but also a kind of a shield for the employer.