

The Oakville Chamber of Commerce Advocacy Survey

- Final Report -

Prepared For:



Prepared By:



Bramm Research Inc.
Better Information. Better Solutions

The Oakville Chamber of Commerce Advocacy Survey

Background and Objectives

This report presents the preliminary findings of a recent survey conducted by the Oakville Chamber of Commerce. Our immediate next step will be to work with the Chamber to extract additional information from the findings e.g. we will be looking at the results based on size of organization etc.

The objective of the survey was to obtain input into advocacy work undertaken by the Oakville Chamber. The preamble to the survey stated the objectives as follows:

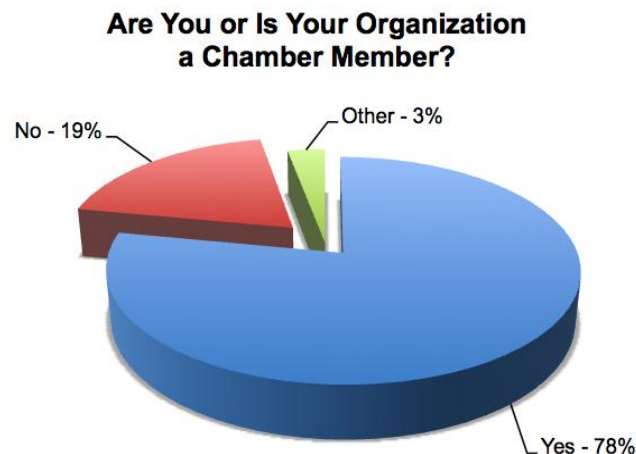
“The Oakville Chamber of Commerce has been the voice of business in Oakville since 1949. We work closely with our members to advocate on their behalf to all levels of government on issues that matter to business in our community. Completing this brief survey will help us better serve our membership in that advocacy work.”

Method

This survey was conducted online. Invitations and reminders were emailed to an Oakville Chamber list consisting of approximately 4,000 (+/- 5%) email addresses. The survey was also promoted at various Chamber events. At these events, paper copies were made available to attendees. Responses from these questionnaires were then input into the online form.

The survey collection period ran from May 26th to June 17th. In that time period we obtained information from 245 respondents. Based on this number of responses, the results are deemed to be accurate within +/- 6.3%, 19 times out of 20.

The chart below shows the breakdown of responses.



The Oakville Chamber of Commerce Advocacy Survey

Question #1. Which of the following best describes your business? If you work for an organization with locations outside of Oakville, please just consider your Oakville location when answering the following questions.

Sole proprietor, no employees, work out of my home	20%
Sole proprietor, no employees, rent/own commercial space	4%
1-5 employees	31%
6-50 employees	24%
51-100 employees	4%
100+ employees	13%
Other, please specify:	8%

Comparisons

There are no meaningful differences in this case between Chamber members and non-members.

Question #2. Indicate the sector in which you operate. Please choose all that apply.

Agriculture & Resource-based	2%
Construction	7%
Manufacturing	12%
Wholesale Trade	5%
Retail Trade	12%
Finance & Real Estate	19%
Healthcare & Social Services	12%
Educational Services	8%
Business Services	29%
Other, please specify:	27%

Comparisons

There are no meaningful differences here between Chamber members and non-members. However, looking at this by employee size shows differences.

1-50 employees top 3	Business services – 33% Other – 27% Finance and real estate – 18%
50+ employees top 3	Other/Healthcare – 25% each Financial/real estate – 20% Manufacturing – 15%

Question #3. What attracted your business to Oakville? Please choose all that apply.

Business has always been in Oakville	43%
Close to family	29%
Location i.e. proximity to your customer base	24%
Where business opportunity existed	19%
Resources i.e. access to a skilled workforce	5%
Transportation i.e. availability of Oakville based public transit	2%
Cost of doing business	2%
Other, please specify:	15%

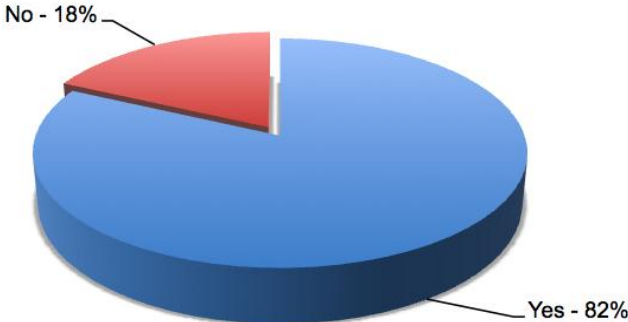
Comparisons

“Always been there” is the top reason for all segments (ie., members, 1-50 employees and 50+ employees), with large members less concerned about the business being close to family and more concerned about proximity to their customers.

Member top 3	Always been there – 44% Close to family – 32% Location – 25%
1-50 employee top 3	Always been there – 42% Close to family – 35% Location – 26%
50+ employee top 3	Always been there – 44% Location – 25% Other – 22%

Question #4. Would you advise a colleague to set up a business in Oakville and/or relocate an existing business to Oakville?

Would Advise Colleague to Set-Up/Relocate Business to Oakville?



Comparisons

Large members are slightly less inclined to recommend Oakville compared to other segments and the overall responses (82%), though the numbers for all segments are still rather high.

Members	Yes – 84% No – 16%
1-50 employees	Yes – 83% No – 17%
50+ employees	Yes – 81% No – 19%

Question #5. In your view, what are the most important issues for Oakville business over the coming 5-10 years? Please choose all that apply.

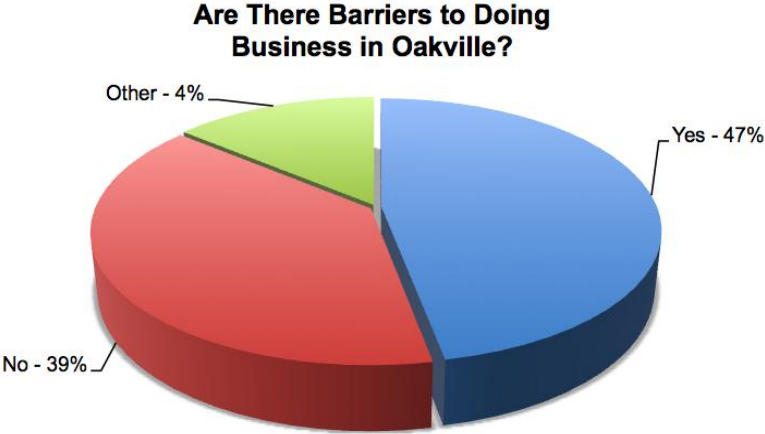
Economic development	55%
Taxes	51%
Business permitting/planning	44%
Transportation	30%
Municipal By-Laws	28%
Development charges	27%
Skilled workforce	26%
Town Hall's fiscal management	26%
Use of land zoned for commercial/industrial development	23%
Environment i.e. air quality	22%
Tourism/Visitor attraction	16%
Other, please specify:	12%

Comparisons

The overall numbers show that the top three identified barriers are economic development (55%), taxes (51%) and business permitting/planning (44%). Members and small members map against those overall findings. However, large members are comparatively more concerned about economic development, permitting and planning and development charges than other segments.

Member top 3	Econ Development – 58% Taxes – 54% Permitting/planning – 48%
1-50 top 3	Econ Development – 54% Taxes – 54% Permitting/planning – 44%
50+ top 3	Econ Development – 63% Permitting/planning – 57% Dev charges – 43%

Question #6. Are there barriers to doing business in Oakville?



Comparisons

Looking at all respondents, 47% said there were barriers to doing business in Oakville, with 39% saying there were no such barriers. This aligns with the findings of members and small members. Compared to these segments, large members are much more likely to believe there are barriers to doing business in Oakville.

Members	Yes – 49% No – 37%
1-50	Yes – 44% No – 41%
50+	Yes – 72% No – 24%

Question #7. What are the barriers to doing business in Oakville. Please choose all that apply. You may also use the comment box to include barriers that may not be on this list.

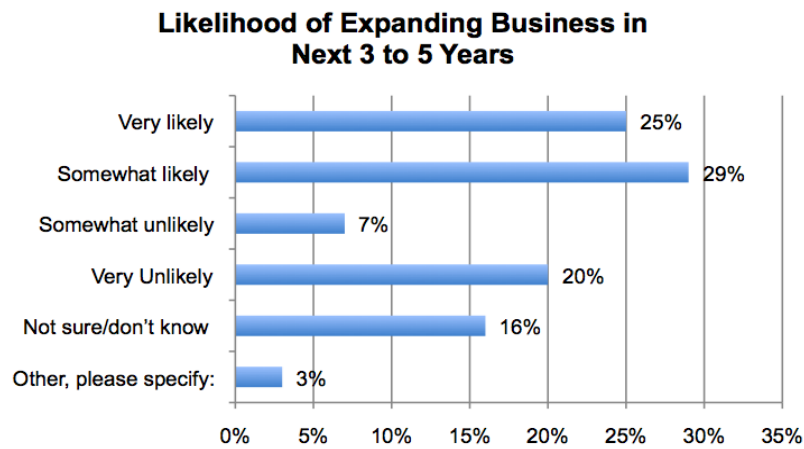
Business licensing/permitting issues	41%
Municipal By-Laws	40%
Business taxes	34%
Development charges	32%
Transportation	31%
Growth restrictions	24%
Use of land zoned for commercial/industrial development	19%
Skilled workforce	16%
Other, please specify:	21%

Comparisons

The overall findings show that business licencing/permitting (41%), municipal by-laws (40%) and business taxes (34%) are the top three identified barriers. Again, this matches with responses from members and small members. Large members see by-laws and development charges as the top two barriers, followed by licensing and permits.

Member top 3	Licensing/permits – 43% By-laws – 43% Taxes – 37%
1-50 top 3	Licensing/permits – 40% By-laws – 37% Taxes – 36%
50+ top 3	By-laws – 57% Dev charges – 57% Licensing/permits – 48%

Question #8. How likely are you to expand your business within Oakville in the next 3-5 years?

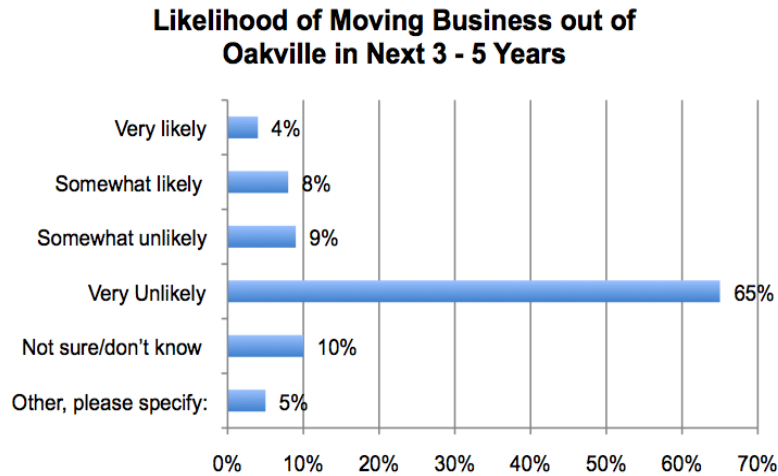


Comparisons

The overall survey shows that 54% of respondents are very likely or somewhat likely to expand within Oakville in the next 3-5 years, with 27% very unlikely or somewhat unlikely to expand in that same time frame. Compared to those numbers, members are slightly more likely to expand versus large members who are measurably less likely to expand.

Member	Very likely or somewhat likely – 60% Very unlikely or somewhat unlikely – 24%
1-50	Very likely or somewhat likely – 56% Very unlikely or somewhat unlikely – 27%
50+	Very likely or somewhat likely – 45% Very unlikely or somewhat unlikely – 28%

Question #9. How likely are you to move your business out of Oakville over the next 3-5 years?



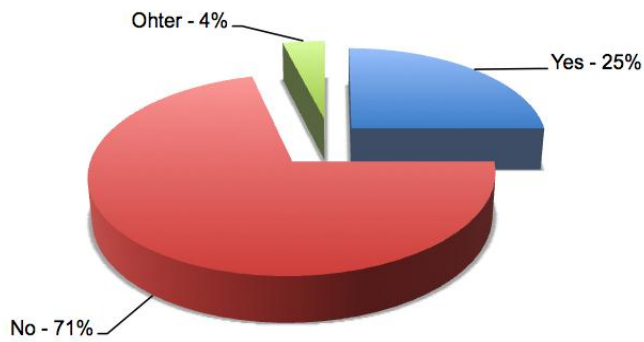
Comparisons

The overall survey shows that 12% of respondents are very likely or somewhat likely to move out of Oakville in the next 3-5 years, with 74% very unlikely or somewhat unlikely to leave in that same time frame. Members and small members align with those overall responses, with large members more of a “flight risk”.

Member	Very likely or somewhat likely – 10% Very unlikely or somewhat unlikely – 77%
1-50	Very likely or somewhat likely – 9% Very unlikely or somewhat unlikely – 77%
50+	Very likely or somewhat likely – 13% Very unlikely or somewhat unlikely – 62%

Question #10. Does your organization have dedicated resources devoted to advocacy, government relations and/or policy development?

Existence of Resources Dedicated to Advocacy, Government Relations and/or Policy Development?



Comparisons

Not surprisingly, the majority of large members have dedicated government relations resources, while the vast majority of small members do not.

Members	Yes – 25 No – 71%
1-50	Yes – 18% No – 78%
50+	Yes – 64% No – 36%