



Business Walk Finds 90% of Central Okanagan Manufacturers Steady or Increasing

As an additional tool to gather and communicate industry intelligence about the Central Okanagan manufacturing sector, the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC), with assistance from partner organizations, facilitated its Business Walk program to manufacturers on Tuesday, May 28, 2013.

Within a three hour blitz over **30 business leaders** walked door-to-door to **70 manufacturers** throughout the Central Okanagan.

Information gathered during a Business Walk helps capture the pulse of businesses throughout the Region, broadens the business community's awareness of business support agencies and identifies opportunities for the COEDC's Business Enhancement and Site Visitation programming. Civic leaders are able to gain specific provincial and municipal information that enables them to identify barriers to doing business in their respective districts. Member-driven organizations such as Chambers of Commerce and Business Improvement Associations can use the information to tailor their services to the expressed needs of the businesses they serve.

As manufacturing is a vital sector to the regional economy, the May Business Walk aimed to identify common issues experienced by manufacturers in the Central Okanagan, and how the COEDC can partner with business support agencies to assist manufacturers with information and resources that will help them thrive.

Businesses were asked four questions:

- *How is Business?*
- *What do you like most about doing business in the Central Okanagan?*
- *What can be done to help your business thrive?*
- *What specific information would you like to access locally?*

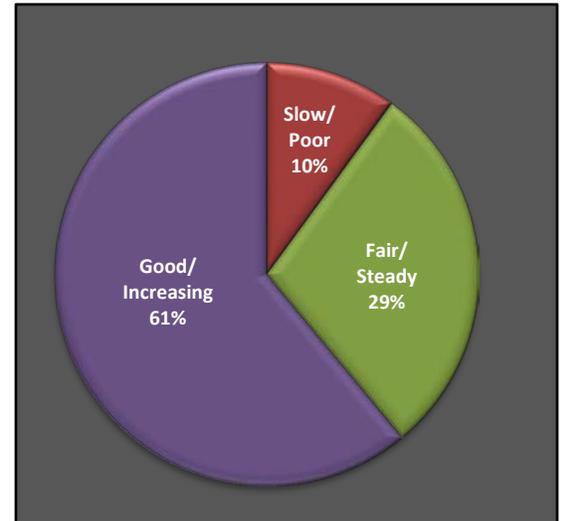
Summary/Results

Seventy manufacturing businesses were surveyed in manufacturing clusters throughout West Kelowna, Kelowna and Lake Country.

Question 1: How is Business?

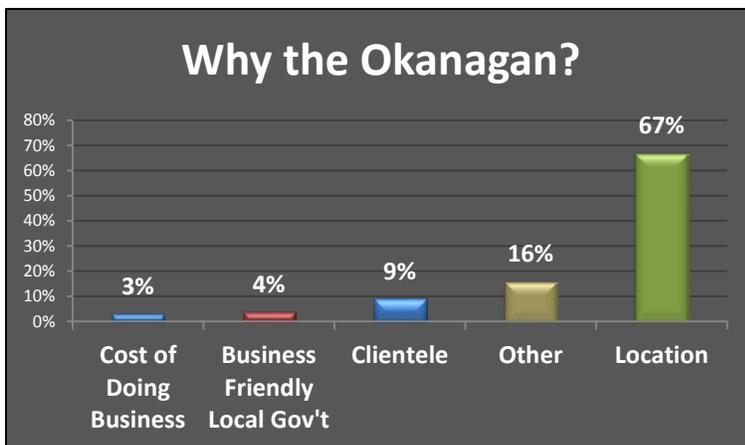
When asked “How is business?” 61% of the manufacturers surveyed responded “Good/Increasing” and 29% rated business as “Fair/Steady” resulting in an overall positive outlook from 90% of the 70 manufacturers visited.

10% of respondents rated business as “Slow/Poor.” Reasons provided included lingering effects of the global recession and issues related to marketing and awareness of their product(s) and sector specialties.



Question 2: What do you like most about doing business in the Central Okanagan?

When asked what they like most about doing business in the Region, the large majority of manufacturers (67%) stated their **location** was what they liked most; the majority stated they are located in the Central Okanagan because owners live/want to live in the Region.

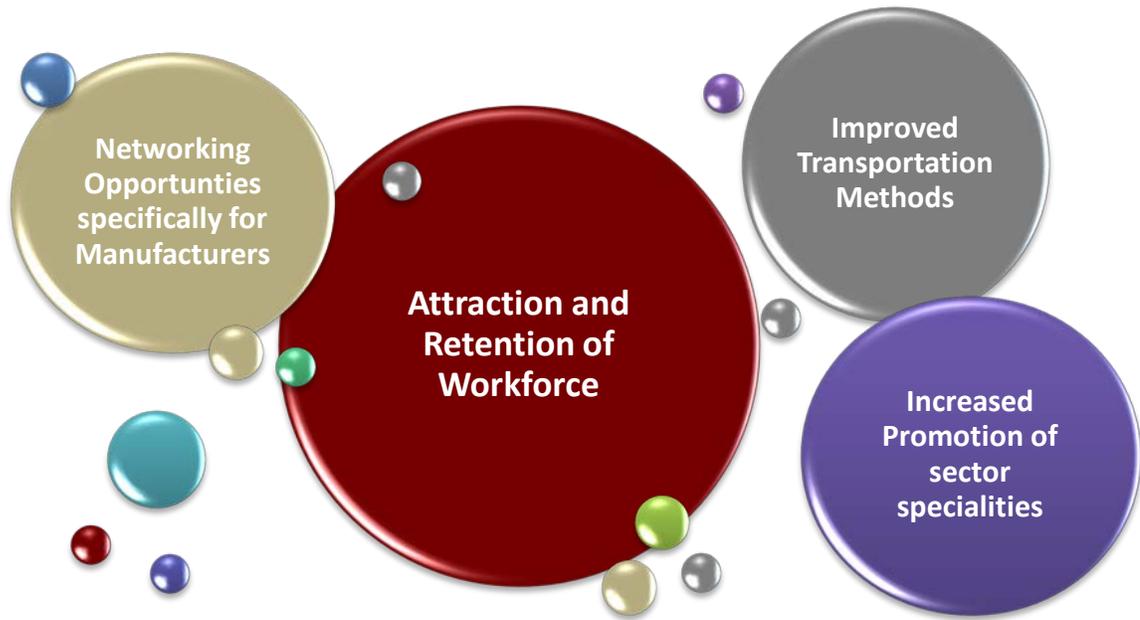


The next most frequent response at 16% included a variety of “Other” factors – most frequently mentioned was the lifestyle associated with living in the Okanagan followed by 9% stating “Clientele” was what made the Central Okanagan attractive.

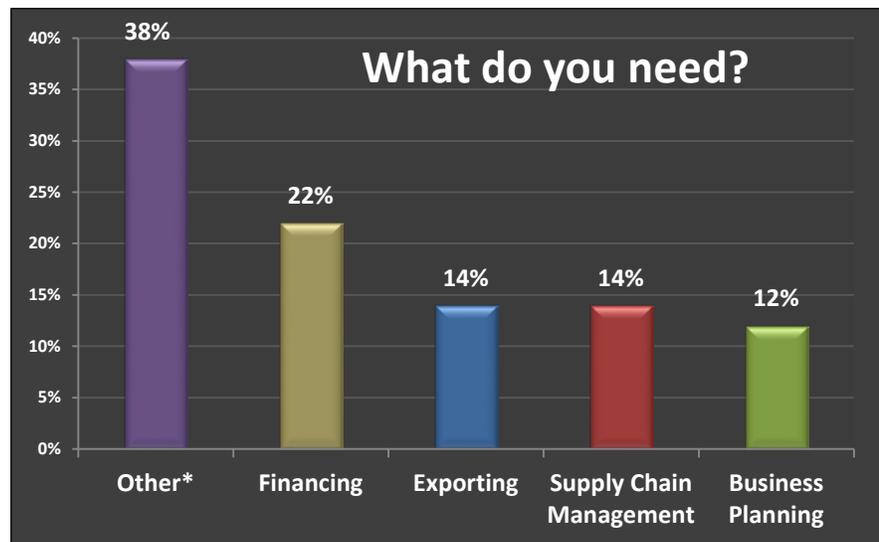
Only 1% responded “Availability of talented labour,” citing challenges related to the attraction & retention of their workforce.

Question #3: What can be done to make your business thrive?

Common themes among businesses surveyed included:



Question #4: What specific information would you like to access locally?



From the provided options a significant number of manufacturers (38%) cited their category of need as “Other”; most commonly stated within this category was the need for **labour market information** to help find employees. Information related to **sales and marketing** was the next most frequently mentioned need.

What's Next?

The COEDC will capture common themes from the walk to develop sector specific Business Enhancement programming. Industry intelligence will be used as one tool within its 2014 strategic planning process.

As part of the Commission's Business Enhancement programming, the COEDC will coordinate follow up, including site visits where needed, to 30 businesses identified as requiring assistance within the next 60 days.

Manufacturing and business support agencies, as well as municipal and provincial representatives will receive Internal communications highlighting regulatory or programming needs of the sector.

As a kick-off to small business month, this information will be used in planning the Region's Business Walk scheduled across the Okanagan Valley on October 1st, 2013.

The 2013 Business Walk to Central Okanagan Manufacturers was made possible by partnerships throughout the region. The Economic Development Commission would like to thank the following:



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