

Welcome to 2010

The Lancashire Business Survey is an annual project benchmarking key issues for businesses in Lancashire. It offers businesses a voice into government at the highest level locally and regionally.

We are approaching you, as one of Lancashire's leading companies, because we believe your input into our in-depth survey of the county's 'commercial DNA' is important to the creation of a more business-friendly environment.



The survey is being carried out by a partnership of private sector lobby group Downtown Preston in Business, accountancy and business advisory firm Moore and Smalley LLP, Forbes Solicitors, Northwest Development Agency, Business Link Northwest, marketing communications consultancy Freshfield, and digital communications consultancy Soap Media.

We are collating detailed information from some 500 of Lancashire's foremost businesses to capture opinions, experiences and insights at ground level. This research will provide a valuable tool for strategic planning across the Red Rose county.

We absolutely guarantee that all data submitted will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. In no circumstances will we publish any information that could lead to the identification of your business by a third party.

As a respondent you will receive a copy of the final report when it is published early autumn. Please see our website www.lancashirebusinesssurvey.co.uk for ongoing announcements.

All manually completed questionnaires must be sent to Tracey McKenna: Lancashire Business Survey, Downtown Preston in Business, Camden House, 2 Camden Place, Preston, Lancashire PR1 3JL. Email tracey.mckenna@downtowninbusiness.com.
Deadline for entries: September 3rd, 2010.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Frank McKenna,
Chairman of Downtown Preston in Business

Sponsors



1.0 Company information

Company name _____

Contact name _____

Title _____

E-mail address _____

Please tick the sector(s) that reflect your company's main activities

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural | <input type="checkbox"/> Retail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building and construction | <input type="checkbox"/> Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food and drink | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure | <input type="checkbox"/> Wholesale |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other – please name |

2.0 Financial data

2.1 What was the turnover of your company in the last financial year?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Over £500m | <input type="checkbox"/> £10m-£25m |
| <input type="checkbox"/> £200m-£500m | <input type="checkbox"/> £5m-£10m |
| <input type="checkbox"/> £100m-£200m | <input type="checkbox"/> £2m-£5m |
| <input type="checkbox"/> £50m-£100m | <input type="checkbox"/> £1m-£2m |
| <input type="checkbox"/> £25m-£50m | <input type="checkbox"/> Under £1m |

3.0 Sales performance (please express as a percentage figure)

3.1 Sales performance in the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months?

_____ %

3.2 How has your pre-tax profit figure performed in the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months?

_____ %

4.0 New government and confidence

4.1 Do you think a Conservative Lib Dem coalition government will be good for business?

- Yes No
 We would have been better with Labour

4.2 What is the main priority for the new government?

- Improve budget deficit Review voting process
 Hold off cutbacks to maintain recovery

- 4.3 Should the Northwest Development Agency remain?
- Absolutely Should be culled as part of cutbacks
- Should be trimmed down Not sure what it really does

- 4.4 What is your view on rapid public sector cutbacks?
- Wholly necessary Need to wait a year
- Will cause double-dip

- 4.5 How would you sum up the previous government?
- Created a better economy Caused the recession
- Reckless / overspent Too much red tape
- Should have saved during the good times
- Saved the global markets

- 4.6 Which policies will best aid recovery?
(tick more than one if appropriate)
- Government spending Doing nothing
- Nationalisation if necessary Financial support for business
- Targeted tax breaks Tighter regulation
- Cut backs Other (please state)

- 4.7 When do you think there will be an economic upturn?
- End of 2010 5-6 years
- 1-2 years 7-10 years
- 3-4 years 10 years +

- 4.8 What caused the recession?
(tick more than one box if appropriate)
- US property market UK government
- US government UK banks
- US banks UK media
- Credit culture Other (please state)

- 4.9 How confident would you be about making a major business investment in the next 12 months?
- Very confident Not confident at all
- Moderately confident

- 4.10 What are the most critical issues facing businesses?
(Please rank in order of importance, 1-5)
- Cashflow (creditors/debtors) Funding
- Keeping current customers Confidence
- Winning new customers

- 4.11 How has your business been affected by the recession?
- Hugely Holding our own
- A lot Not at all - still growing

- 4.12 Which Lancashire theme would best serve the business world?
- Look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves
- Save for a rainy day Turnover for vanity profit for sanity

5.0 People and Training

- 5.1 Has your headcount changed in the last 12 months?
- Increased Decreased
- No change

- 5.2 Do you expect headcount to change in the next 12 months?
- Increase Decrease
- No change

- 5.3 What are your principal obstacles when recruiting staff?
- Lack of skills Remuneration
- Transport/location Red tape
- Adverse perception of your industry or sector
- Other factors (please state)

- 5.4 What type of training is available to your staff?
(please tick more than one box if appropriate)
- Vocational Job specific
- Managerial Technical
- Day-release Mandatory (eg health & safety)
- Professional qualifications Commercial
- Leadership

- 5.5 In your opinion, how well is the education system (schools, further and higher education) preparing people for the workplace?
- Very well Poorly
- Adequately

- 5.6 Please indicate how you believe education could better equip young people for the workplace

- 5.7 Have you cut back on training during the recession?
- Yes No
- No, we have increased our spend

6.0 Funding and support

6.1 What funding sources have you used in the last 12 months?
(Please tick all that apply)

- Own profits Bank loan/overdraft
 Public sector grant funding Venture capital
 Private investors Share issue
 Other

6.2 Which bank do you use?

6.3 Has the recession affected your overdraft or loan facilities?

- Yes No

6.4 Has your relationship with your bank changed as a result of the recession?

- Deteriorated Improved
 Not changed

6.5 What is your view towards the use of management information?

- Essential – always had it and used it
 Only create it for the bank's use
 Started using it since the recession
 Don't have any, don't need it

6.6 In the last three years have you applied for public sector grant funding?

6.7 If so, what type?

- R&D grant Capital investment grant
 Other (please state)

6.8 Are you aware of the funding options available through the public sector, such as Business Link Northwest?

- Yes No

6.9 Are your professional advisors based in:

- Lancashire Manchester
 Liverpool London
 Other (please state)

6.10 Do you believe that the professional advisors in Lancashire can provide the same level of advice as Manchester based firms?

- Yes No

7.0 Red tape and legislation

7.1 To what extent has your business suffered from increased red tape and regulatory changes?

- A great deal Nothing
 A small amount

7.2 How much has legislation cost your business in the last 12 months in fees for professional services and compliance advice?

- A great deal Nothing
 A small amount

7.3 What red tape change would you like to see from the new government?

- Freeze NI increases Extension on Time to Pay scheme

8.0 Local issues

8.1 Should rival authorities support Tithebarn?

- Absolutely – Tithebarn will help the whole county not just Preston
 I can understand their concerns, it could harm other towns

8.2 Do you think the Tithebarn project will happen?

- Yes No

8.3 Would the development of a major retail/commercial centre in Preston damage the East Lancashire economy?

- Yes No

8.4 Has the re branding of East Lancashire as Pennine Lancashire been successful?

- Yes No

8.5 What is Preston City's best landmark?

- Winckley Square Bus Station
 Avenham Park Harris Museum
 The University

8.6 What is your view on Preston Guild 2012?

- A very important event Waste of money
 Not bothered

8.7 How effectively is the regeneration of Blackpool as the UK's favourite resort being managed?

- Excellently Poorly
 Satisfactorily

8.8 What are the most positive connotations of Lancashire as a business location?
(Please list in order of significance)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Major urban centres | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural environment close by |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Labour pool | <input type="checkbox"/> Great Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle of UK for business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of premises | <input type="checkbox"/> Low cost commercial space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work/life balance | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) |
-
-

8.9 Conversely, what are the most negative connotations of Lancashire as a business location? (Please list in order of significance)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 'Behind the times' perception | <input type="checkbox"/> Skills shortage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Remoteness | <input type="checkbox"/> Low value-added manufacturing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Congestion/transport | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult to recruit in rural location |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No 'after five' culture in towns and cities | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) | |
-
-

8.10 How important is Premiership football for our county's clubs

- | |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Essential – puts them on the national map |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't make a difference |

Please complete and send to Tracey McKenna: Lancashire Business Survey,
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Lancashire PR1 3JL. Email tracey.mckenna@downtowninbusiness.com.
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