

# Clarington Green Community Strategy:

## Business Report

### ***Prepared for:***

*Economic Development Office Clarington  
Board of Trade*

*And*

*The Community Planning and Design  
Branch Planning Services Department*



### ***Prepared by:***



**December 2006**

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# M e t h o d o l o g y   &   L o g i s t i c s

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## **Study Sample**

- A total of 75 randomly selected business owners/managers from the Municipality of Clarington were interviewed by telephone between the days of December 1<sup>st</sup> to December 10<sup>th</sup> 2006.

## **Logistics**

- Initial calls were made between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Subsequent callbacks of no-answers and busy numbers were made on a (staggered) daily rotating basis up to 7 times until contact was made. In addition, telephone interview appointments were attempted with those respondents unable to complete the survey at the time of contact. If no contact was made at a number after the seventh attempt, the number was discarded.

## **Survey Method**

- The survey was conducted using computer-assisted techniques of telephone interviewing (CATI) and random number selection. A total of 20% of all interviews were monitored and the management of Oraclepoll Research supervised 100%.

## **Confidence**

- The margin of error for the residential sample is +/- 11%, 19/20 times.

# Executive Summary

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## Top of Mind Issues

Respondents were first asked what they considered to be the most important issue facing Clarington at this time.

Top Issues	
Attracting commercial / industrial business	<b>19%</b>
Overdevelopment / Urban growth / Urban sprawl	<b>15%</b>
<i>Don't know</i>	<b>12%</b>
Planning for the future / appropriate building	<b>9%</b>
Taxes	<b>5%</b>
Support for local business	<b>5%</b>
Traffic	<b>4%</b>
Environment / Green space	<b>4%</b>
Parking	<b>4%</b>
Government support / involvement	<b>3%</b>
Education / lack of schools	<b>1%</b>

There was a split among businesses surveyed between those that favor attracting new business to the area (19%) and those that feel that there has been too much growth (15%). Other issues included having proper planning for the future (9%), concern over taxes (5%) and having more support for local businesses.

**Benefits**

Respondents were asked what they considered to be the top benefit of operating a business in Clarington.

Top Benefits	
The community / the people	<b>25%</b>
The growth / the development	<b>20%</b>
<i>Don't know</i>	<b>15%</b>
Proximity to Toronto	<b>9%</b>
Small town feel	<b>8%</b>
Location	<b>7%</b>
Proximity to amenities / services	<b>5%</b>
Quality of life / lifestyle	<b>4%</b>
Not having to go to Toronto	<b>3%</b>
Cost of living	<b>1%</b>
Lack of big box stores	<b>1%</b>
Good labour pool	<b>1%</b>

One quarter (25%) of respondents named the people and the community as being the biggest benefit, followed by 20% that stated the areas growth and development, 9% the proximity to Toronto, 8% the small town atmosphere and 7% its location.

## Improvements

Businesses were questioned as to what improvements could be made to make Clarington a more business friendly environment.

Top Improvements	
<i>Don't know</i>	<b>19%</b>
Less municipal restrictions / red tape	<b>12%</b>
Promotion of business in the community	<b>9%</b>
Improvement of the downtown core	<b>8%</b>
Roads / maintenance / signage	<b>8%</b>
Planning department improvements / more business friendly	<b>7%</b>
Lower taxes	<b>5%</b>
Support local / small business	<b>5%</b>
Reduce development fees	<b>4%</b>
Provide networking opportunities	<b>4%</b>
Fund / promote arts & culture	<b>4%</b>
Traffic flow	<b>3%</b>

A total of 19% were unable to name an improvement that could make Clarington more business friendly, but of those with an opinion 12% named less red tape, 9% the promotion of the community, 8% improvements to the downtown, 8% improved roads and 7% having the planning department being more business friendly.

## Top of Mind Challenges

Respondents were also asked what they felt was the most important challenge facing Clarington as its population continues to grow.

Challenges	
Balance infrastructure / services and growth	<b>20%</b>
Traffic	<b>12%</b>
Balancing development / urban growth / urban sprawl	<b>8%</b>
Balance of residential and commercial	<b>8%</b>
Roads / maintenance / widen roads	<b>7%</b>
Preserving green space	<b>7%</b>
Employment	<b>5%</b>
Attracting commercial / industrial business	<b>5%</b>
Taxes	<b>4%</b>
Lack of business development	<b>4%</b>
<i>Don't know</i>	<b>4%</b>

Having infrastructure needs and municipal services keep up with growth in the community was named by 20% of Clarington businesses, while 12% said resolving traffic issues and 8% cited each of having a balanced approach to development while controlling sprawl as well as having a mix of residential and commercial development.

## Environment Issues

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with each of the following statements related to environmental issues.

	Total agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Total disagree	Don't know
Clarington should become a leader in environmental issues and become the greenest community in Ontario.	79%	12%	9%	0%
This business actively participates in recycling programs in my community.	75%	13%	11%	1%
I am aware of global warming and the limited sources of energy (oil, gas) and the implications to the future of my business.	71%	20%	9%	0%
I am willing to pay more for products that are environmentally friendly.	55%	35%	11%	0%
I would support having a central resource center in Clarington to access information on energy and environment programs.	52%	24%	24%	0%
I'm aware of the environmental issues in my community.	43%	39%	19%	0%
Clarington is doing a good job at protecting the environment and promoting the energy conservation.	29%	47%	15%	9%
I am aware of the various types of energy conservation programs that are currently available for businesses.	23%	43%	33%	1%

A total of 75% of Clarington businesses surveyed actively participate in recycling programs. There was strong buy-in from almost eight in ten (79%) businesses with respect to having Clarington being a leader on environmental issues in Ontario and 71% claim to be aware of global warming and its implications to their future.

A small majority would be willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products and would support having a resource centre to access information on energy and environmental programs. However, there is low awareness of conservation programs available and low agreement that Clarington is doing a good job at protecting the environment.



## Importance of Environment Issues

Respondents were then asked to rate the level of importance of each of the following environmental issues.

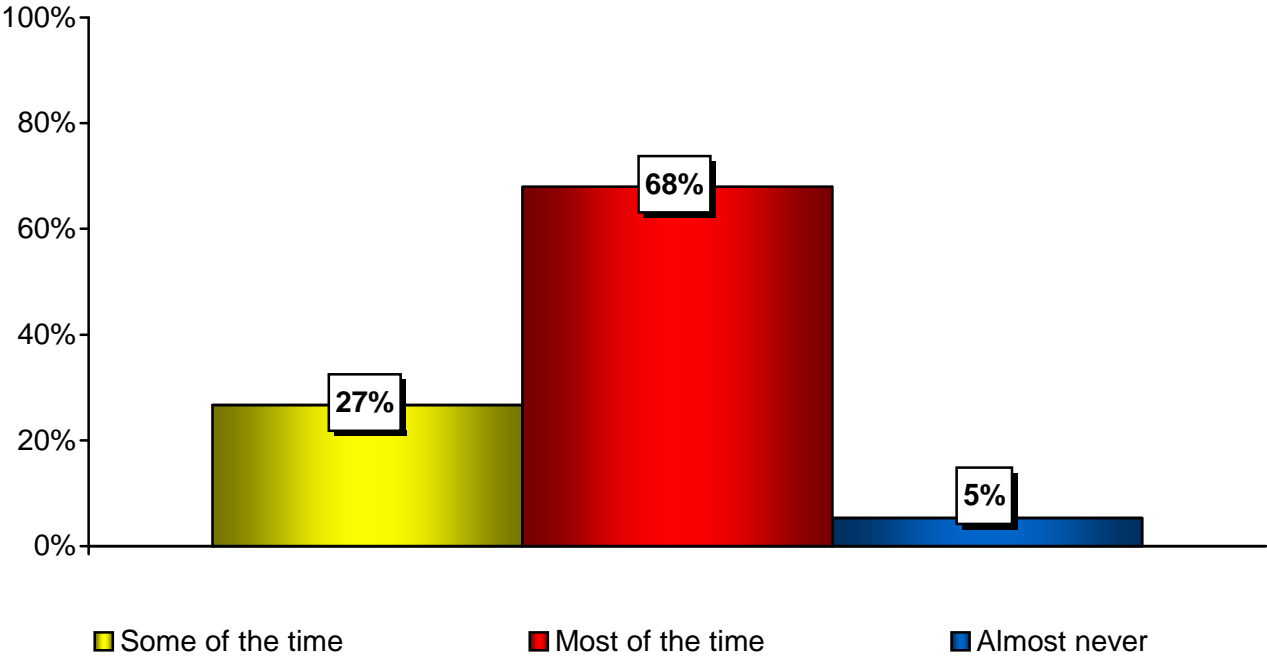
	Total Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Total Unimportant	Don't know
Ensuring clean air	99%	1%	0%	0%
The protection of ground water sources (including rivers, streams etc)	93%	5%	1%	0%
Ensuring buildings (e.g. commercial, residential, industrial, and municipal) are constructed with environmentally friendly materials and built with the highest energy efficiency standards	91%	5%	4%	0%
Having public transit within Clarington and to other parts of the Region	90%	5%	4%	0%
Having recycling programs	87%	13%	0%	0%
Buying locally grown foods and products	84%	15%	1%	0%
Having walking and bike lanes / trails	83%	13%	4%	0%
Preserving agricultural lands in our community from development	83%	11%	7%	0%

A high level of importance was placed on all areas and especially for ensuring clean air.

# Saving Energy

Businesses were asked about how often they take energy efficiency measures or ways of saving energy into consideration.

*" How often would you say that you have taken energy efficiency measures or ways of saving energy into consideration at your business to reduce energy usage?"*

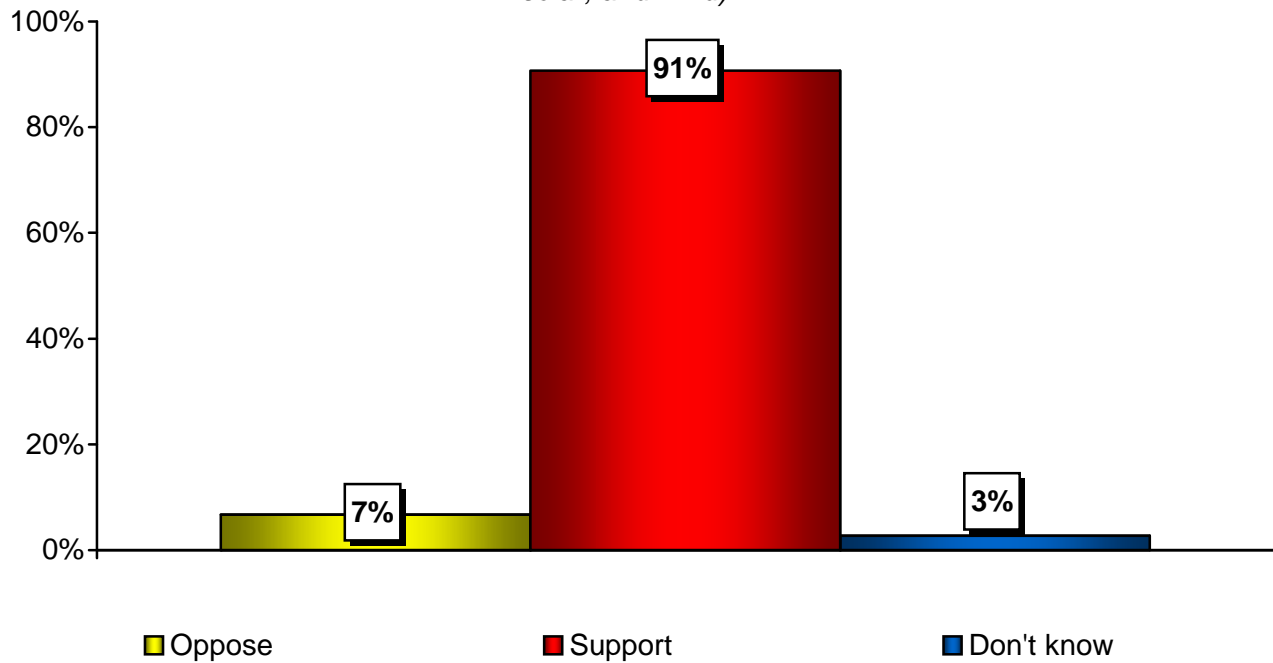


Almost seven in ten businesses or 68% take energy conservation measures or ways of saving energy into consideration most of the time, 27% some of the time while a low 5% said that they almost never take them into consideration.

## Investment of Funds

Businesses were asked about their support or opposition to the following.

*" Would you support or oppose the municipality if it were to invest more funds to become more energy efficient and to include environmental design features in municipal buildings (green roofs, renewable sources of energy like solar, and wind)??"*



A strong 91% of Clarington businesses surveyed would support the Municipality if it were to invest more money to become more energy efficient.

# Results by Question

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**Q1. From the perspective of your business, what in your opinion is the most important issue facing Clarington at this time?**

	Valid Percent
Valid Attracting commercial / industrial business	18.7
Over development / Urban growth / Urban sprawl	14.7
Don't know	12.0
Planning for the future / appropriate building	9.3
Taxes	6.7
Support for small businesses	5.3
Local economic development/job creation	5.3
Balance of infrastructure / services	5.3
Traffic	4.0
Environment / Green space	4.0
Parking	4.0
Nuclear plant	2.7
Government involvement	2.7
Education / lack of schools	1.3
Roads / maintenance	1.3
Public opinion, meetings and input	1.3
Shortages of physicians	1.3
Total	100.0

**Q1b. From your business perspective, what would you consider the top benefit of operating a business in Clarington?**

	Valid Percent
Valid	
The community / the people	25.3
The growth / the development	20.0
Don't know	14.7
Proximity to Toronto	9.3
Small town feel	8.0
Location	6.7
Proximity to amenities / services	5.3
Quality of life / lifestyle	4.0
Not having to go to Toronto	2.7
Cost of living	1.3
Lack of big box stores	1.3
Good labour pool	1.3
Total	100.0

**Q1c. From a business perspective, what improvement could be made in Clarington to make or create a better business friendly environment?**

	Valid Percent
Valid	
Don't know	18.7
Less municipal restrictions/red tape	12.0
Promotion of the business in the community	9.3
Improvement of downtown core	8.0
Roads / maintenance / signage	8.0
Planning department improvements/more business friendly	6.7
Lower taxes	5.3
Support local/small business	5.3
Reduce development fees	4.0
Provide networking opportunities	4.0
Fund / promote the cultural sector more	4.0
Traffic flow	2.7
Better communication / technology	2.7
Better transportation (buses etc)	2.7
Better training of work force	2.7
Preserve the environment	2.7
Need more doctors	1.3
Total	100.0

**Q2. What do you feel is the most important challenge facing Clarington as its population continues to grow?**

		Valid Percent
Valid	Balance infrastructure / services and growth	21.3
	Planning/Balancing development/Growth /Sprawl	13.3
	Traffic	12.0
	Balance of residential and commercial	8.0
	Roads / maintenance / widen roads	6.7
	Preserving green space	6.7
	Employment	5.3
	Attracting commercial / industrial business	5.3
	Lack of business development	5.3
	Taxes	4.0
	Don't know	4.0
	Transportation	2.7
	Education / lack of schools	1.3
	Health services	1.3
	Crime	1.3
	Agricultural preservation	1.3
	Total	100.0

Q3. *What suggestion do you have to assist the Municipality deal with this growth related challenge?*

- Don't know (17)
- Put more responsibility on the Clarington region and less on funding from federal government
- Inner ring and outer rings of the community
- Encourage more corporations to locate in this region
- Look at the way the streets are going towards the highways, have the downtown grow a little more out
- A straight forward planning decision as to where things are going in the future
- Having meetings with a mixture of business, for team-management meetings so the town can get everyone's perspective
- More access to transit in the smaller communities with smaller buses to reduce costs
- Attract more business
- Invest a lot of money in economic development
- We attract business into Clarington, but the bureaucracy puts up roadblocks
- Contact other business to join the community
- Traffic lighting system for pedestrians
- They have to be both more firm and demanding of developers
- Lock things in, so that it can't be negotiated every year, so that a greenbelt is a greenbelt for a designated period of time
- Not to hold too much back, because you can't stop it
- Have 2 one-way highways, like they do in Oshawa
- Infrastructure should be in place before the growth, think before you build
- Restriction on the growth where building new homes
- Reduce the tax for small town business
- When builders are planning, leave some original trees and park spaces
- Setting up a committee to review plans
- All businesses have a duty or obligation to assist the municipality any way they can
- Better effort at welcoming new businesses
- Allow the planning department more freedom/authority to impose imagination on developers
- Lower taxes
- Starting a mini mall
- Use the board of trade and business people to drive that function
- Look at what is being built out there in regards to residential (may not be needed)
- More focus on the people and business already there
- Make municipality planning and economic development business friendly
- For the government not be an obstacle to development
- Advertise to the new people moving into the community, small business is the key the growth in the area
- Concentrate to bring in new business
- Better signs
- Be more proactive
- To keep going
- Less focus on residential expansion more on industrial and commercial
- Developing a long term plan (10 years) instead of a four year plan
- Inspire outsourcing of new corporations to come to town
- Make it easier for businesses to set up shop
- Bicycle paths to connect the whole town
- More information in the newspapers
- Tighten up spending until they get a better handle on what they are doing
- We need somebody to pin point the issues, and people will follow a good leader
- Better policing
- It's up to them to designate an area and develop it
- Ensuring that the growth of Clarington and the infrastructure are working together
- Need more commercial base, encourage new business development
- New roads

- Council that give us the chance to communication, council should drop in talk to the people
- Having the planning department more user friendly
- Hire transportation consultants, highway 57 needs to be handled more efficiently
- Put some more doctors on
- Keep having big events like midnight madness in the downtown
- Need more employment closer to home
- Long term planning
- Keep the box store away
- Planning and development in the area, surveying and speaking to local businesses to input on how to better the situation

**Q4. What environmental issue do you feel is the most important one facing Clarington at this time?**

		Percent
Valid	Don't know	22.7
	Preserving green space	17.3
	Air pollution / quality	9.3
	Garbage / littering	9.3
	Recycling	8.0
	Nuclear development	8.0
	Pollution (general)	5.3
	Pollution caused by St Mary's Cement plant	5.3
	Waste management / disposal	4.0
	Water pollution / quality	4.0
	Conservation / alternative methods	4.0
	Protection of the environment	1.3
	Human fertilizer being sold to local farmers	1.3
	Total	100.0



Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements using a scale from one strongly disagree to five strongly agree.

**Q5a. I'm aware of the environmental issues in my community.**

		Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	8.0
	Disagree	10.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	38.7
	Agree	21.3
	Strongly agree	21.3
	Total	100.0

**Q5b. I am aware of global warming and the limited sources of energy (oil, gas) and the implications to the future of my business.**

		Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1.3
	Disagree	8.0
	Neither agree nor disagree	20.0
	Agree	24.0
	Strongly agree	46.7
	Total	100.0

**Q6. This business actively participates in recycling programs in my community.**

		Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	6.7
	Disagree	4.0
	Neither agree nor disagree	13.3
	Agree	20.0
	Strongly agree	54.7
	Don't know	1.3
	Total	100.0

**Q7. Clarington should become a leader in environmental issues and become the greenest community in Ontario.**

		Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2.7
	Disagree	6.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	12.0
	Agree	20.0
	Strongly agree	58.7
	Total	100.0

**Q8. I am willing to pay more for products that are environmentally friendly.**

		Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	8.0
	Disagree	2.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	34.7
	Agree	29.3
	Strongly agree	25.3
	Total	100.0

**Q9. Clarington is doing a good job at protecting the environment and promoting the energy conservation.**

		Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	8.0
	Disagree	6.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	46.7
	Agree	17.3
	Strongly agree	12.0
	Don't know	9.3
	Total	100.0

**Q10. I am aware of the various types of energy conservation programs that are currently available for businesses.**

		Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	20.0
	Disagree	13.3
	Neither agree nor disagree	42.7
	Agree	17.3
	Strongly agree	5.3
	Don't know	1.3
	Total	100.0

**Q11. I would support having a central resource center in Clarington to access information on energy and environment programs.**

		Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	6.7
	Disagree	17.3
	Neither agree nor disagree	24.0
	Agree	26.7
	Strongly agree	25.3
	Total	100.0

From the perspective of your business (including your employees and yourself) of Clarington how important are each of the following to you? Please use a scale from one not at all important to five very important.

**Q12. Having recycling programs.**

		Percent
Valid	Neither important nor not important	13.3
	Important	9.3
	Very important	77.3
	Total	100.0

**Q13. The protection of ground water sources (including rivers, streams etc).**

		Percent
Valid	Not important	1.3
	Neither important nor not important	5.3
	Important	13.3
	Very important	80.0
	Total	100.0

**Q14. Having walking and bike lanes / trails.**

		Percent
Valid	Not important	4.0
	Neither important nor not important	13.3
	Important	26.7
	Very important	56.0
	Total	100.0

**Q15. Ensuring clean air.**

		Percent
Valid	Neither important nor not important	1.3
	Important	8.0
	Very important	90.7
	Total	100.0

**Q16. Preserving agricultural lands in our community from development.**

		Percent
Valid	Not at all important	2.7
	Not important	4.0
	Neither important nor not important	10.7
	Important	20.0
	Very important	62.7
	Total	100.0

**Q17. Buying locally grown foods and products.**

		Percent
Valid	Not important	1.3
	Neither important nor not important	14.7
	Important	22.7
	Very important	61.3
	Total	100.0

**Q18. Ensuring buildings (e.g. commercial, residential, industrial, and municipal) are constructed with environmentally friendly materials and built with the highest energy efficiency standards.**

		Percent
Valid	Not at all important	1.3
	Not important	2.7
	Neither important nor not important	5.3
	Important	34.7
	Very important	56.0
	Total	100.0

**Q19. Having public transit within Clarington and to other parts of the Region.**

		Percent
Valid	Not at all important	1.3
	Not important	2.7
	Neither important nor not important	5.3
	Important	25.3
	Very important	65.3
	Total	100.0

**Q21. If you were planning to select a new location for your business, how important would its energy efficiency and other environmental features (environmentally friendly construction materials) factor in your decision making?**

		Percent
Valid	Not at all important	5.3
	Not important	8.0
	Neither important nor not important	26.7
	Important	32.0
	Very important	25.3
	Don't know	2.7
	Total	100.0

**Q20. How often would you say that you have taken energy efficiency or ways of saving energy into consideration at your business to reduce energy usage?**

		Percent
Valid	Some of the time	26.7
	Most of the time	68.0
	Almost never	5.3
	Total	100.0

**Q22. Would you support or oppose the municipality if it were to invest more funds to become more energy efficient and to include environmental design features in municipal buildings (green roofs, renewable source of energy solar, wind)?**

		Percent
Valid	Support	90.7
	Oppose	6.7
	Don't know	2.7
	Total	100.0

We are nearing the end of our survey and we would just like to remind you that all information will remain confidential and will be used for statistical purposes only.

**Q23. What is the main activity of this business at this location?**

		Percent
Valid	Other retail business	18.7
	Commercial services	18.7
	Personal services	14.7
	Food stores, restaurants, bars	9.3
	Finance	6.7
	Movies, entertainment, museums and gardens	6.7
	Insurance, real estate and investment trusts	5.3
	Hotel, boarding houses, camps and other dwellings	4.0
	Other manufacturing industries	2.7
	Electricity, gas and sanitary services	2.7
	Automobile dealerships and gas stations	2.7
	Repairs	2.7
	Construction	1.3
	Agriculture and fisheries	1.3
	Communications	1.3
	Social And Human Service Organizations	1.3
	Total	100.0

**Q24. In total, how many employees are there at this location?**

		Percent
Valid	1 to 4	44.0
	5 to 9	21.3
	10 to 19	13.3
	20 to 49	9.3
	50 to 99	6.7
	100 to 249	1.3
	500 employees or more	2.7
	DNK/DNA	1.3
	Total	100.0

**Q25. What is your job description?**

		Percent
Valid	Owner / Partner	44.0
	President / Vice-president	21.3
	Manager / Assistant Manager	13.3
	Director / Project Manager / Analyst / Consultant	6.7
	Administrator / Department Head / General Manager	2.7
	Appraiser / Sales Agent	2.7
	Coordinator / Distributor	1.3
	Accountant / Controller / Treasurer	1.3
	Architect	1.3
	Hair-stylist	1.3
	Lawyer	1.3
	Realtor	1.3
	Signs designer	1.3
	Total	100.0

**Q26. Where is your business located?**

		Percent
Valid	Bowmanville	62.7
	Courtice	8.0
	Orono	8.0
	Newcastle	14.7
	Rural	6.7
	Total	100.0

**Q27. Gender**

		Percent
Valid	Male	58.7
	Female	41.3
	Total	100.0