

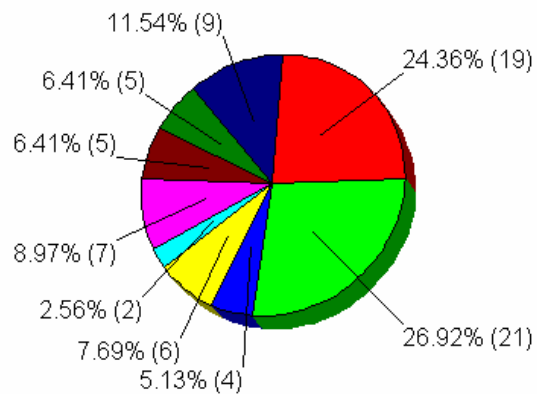
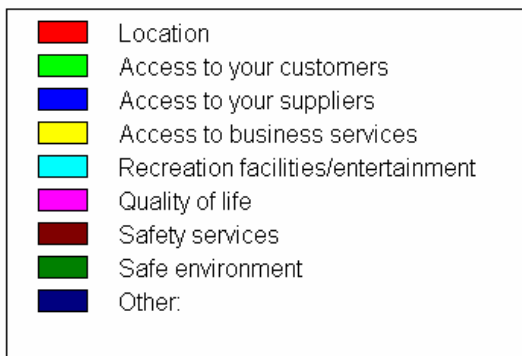
Results: Retail / Service Survey

LOCAL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Overall opinion of Fostoria as a place to do business:

46.15%	Good
38.46%	Average
11.54%	Poor
3.85%	Excellent

Top three (3) reasons for locating or keeping business in Fostoria:



Other reasons included:

- ♦ Family is located here
- ♦ Close to home
- ♦ Wanted to keep business in Fostoria
- ♦ Franchise location

Would participants recommend Fostoria as a place to locate other potential businesses?

Yes	91.3%
No	8.7%

IMMEDIATE needs/concerns that could be addressed by local government and/or local private entities:

- ♦ Better roads / transportation: Overpasses, Loop Road.
- ♦ High cost of property and income tax: higher in Fostoria than in surrounding areas.
- ♦ Attract / Retain local businesses to area: new technologies, diversification.
- ♦ Need consistent procedures / requirements for doing business in Fostoria by city government.
- ♦ More cooperation with City government: working with businesses to improve conditions in Fostoria. Stop public bickering and get focused. We as a community can do a lot if we are all on the same team.
- ♦ Downtown shopping: clothing, dining experience, more retail businesses – walk-in traffic, areas that will draw people to community. Current lack of places to visit downtown.
- ♦ Tax Incentives: given to larger industries (many with larger budgets) but little is done to promote and take care of new, smaller businesses.
- ♦ Improve community image: negative attitudes make it hard to attract prospects, convince them that our community is a good place to live and do business.
- ♦ Improved public/private cooperation.
- ♦ Business retention & expansion tools: easy access.
- ♦ Instilling community pride: instead of focusing on bad news, promote the good that is/has been done.
- ♦ Cost of advertising.
- ♦ Loss of jobs (locally): businesses close and move to other areas, whether it's another state or country. With loss of jobs, retail customer base diminishes and directly impacts business.
- ♦ More hotels/motel, bed & breakfast to accommodate visitors to Fostoria.
- ♦ Better enforcement of property codes.
- ♦ Sources of financing.
- ♦ Parking.
- ♦ Supporting the needs of our youth, academically and socially.
- ♦ Emphasize and promote businesses that are local, affordable, and convenient.

LONG-TERM needs/concerns that could be addressed by local government and/or local private entities:

- ♦ Infrastructure: regularly assessing water lift stations, improving major roadways and building much needed overpasses.
- ♦ Investing in the community: make it more attractive and functional for prospects that are looking to relocate into Fostoria / Quality of Life.
- ♦ Developing a skilled and available workforce: a large pool that prospective businesses can pull from.
- ♦ Downtown revitalization: draw more business to the community by providing vibrant downtown. Many people do retail shopping out of town, not by desire – but by necessity. No place to shop locally for certain things.
- ♦ Public school system: losses due to open enrollment.
- ♦ Concern with regard to the landfill: allowing outside states to dump refuse creating unpleasant odors.
- ♦ City politics.
- ♦ Lower property taxes.
- ♦ Campground, more entertainment, night life.
- ♦ Business retention (keeping local businesses) and attraction of new to the area.
- ♦ Educate parents multiple issues.
- ♦ Ratio of home owners verses home rentals in the community; more alarming is the number of absentee rental owners who do not properly maintain properties.

Cost of doing business in Fostoria, (high, acceptable, or low).

	Acceptable	High	Low:
Building costs (rent):	76.92%	7.69%	15.38%
Corporate taxes:	70.83%	12.17%	
Environmental regulations:	76%	24%	
Health care insurance:	50%	40.91%	
Inventory taxes:	90.91%	9.09%	
Payroll taxes:	73.91%	26.09%	
Property taxes:	66.67%	33.33%	
Public utilities:	70.83%	29.17%	
Workers compensation:	72.73%	27.27%	

Ranking amenities and services in Fostoria:

	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Roads, highways and freeways:		19.23%	34.62%	38.46%	7.69%
Water and sewers:		11.54%	30.77%	57.69%	
Natural gas services:			30.77%	61.54%	7.69%
Telecom services:			34.62%	53.85%	11.54%
High speed Internet access:			23.08%	65.38%	11.54%
Electrical services:			26.92%	65.38%	7.69%
Public transportation:	50.0%	50.0%	12.50%	4.17%	
Air service:	13.04%	52.17%	34.78%		
Health care services (EMS, hospitals, clinics):			34.62%	30.77%	34.62%
School system:	8.33%	16.67%	62.50%	12.50%	
Child care services:		4.17%	70.83%	16.67%	8.33%
Restaurants:	23.08%	46.15%	26.92%	3.85%	
Professional services:		15.38%	61.54%	19.23%	3.85%
Shopping:	23.08%	73.08%	3.85%		
Recreation: cultural activities, entertainment:	26.92%	53.85%	11.54%	7.69%	
Snow and ice removal:		7.69%	42.31%	34.62%	15.38%
Street and sidewalk cleaning:	8.0%	24.0%	32.0%	32.0%	4.0%
Street repairs:	3.85%	19.23%	53.85%	23.08%	
Fire protection:			23.08%	42.31%	34.62%
Police protection:			46.15%	50.0%	3.85%
Business services:	4.0%	4.0%	64.0%	24.0%	4.0%
Hotel facilities:		16.0%	60.0%	16.0%	8.0%
Conference facilities:	8.0%	32.0%	60.0%		

Willingness to pay more to improve the following amenities and services in Fostoria:

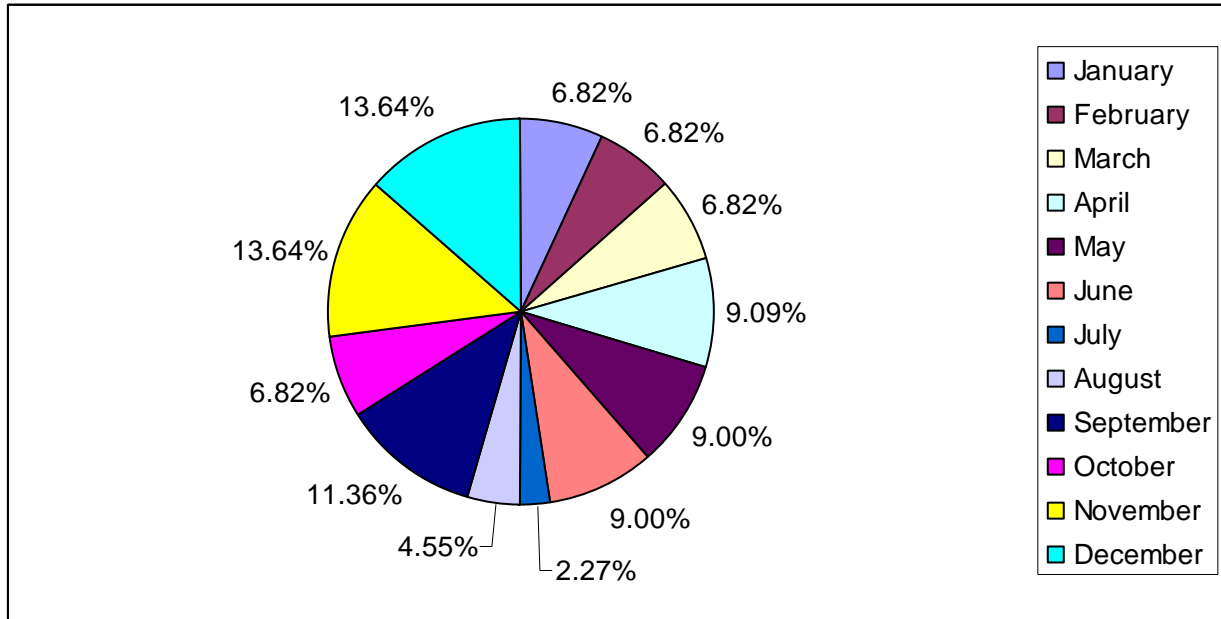
	Yes	No	Maybe
Transportation thoroughfares:	27.27%	22.73%	50.0%
Water and sewers:	50.0%	27.27%	22.73%
Communication services:	45.45%	22.73%	31.82%
Print Media:	40.91%	27.27%	31.82%
Electric utilities:	50.0%	50.0%	.00%
Public transportation:	14.29%	57.14%	28.57%
Health care services (hospitals, clinics):	47.62%	28.57%	23.81%
School system:	52.38%	9.52%	38.10%
Recreation: cultural activities, entertainment:	42.86%	23.81%	33.33%
Senior services:	42.86%	33.33%	23.81%
Snow and ice removal:	35.0%	40.0%	25.0%
Street repairs:	35.0%	35.0%	30.0%
Fire / paramedic services:	35.0%	30.0%	35.0%
Police safety services:	40.0%	25.0%	35.0%

BUSINESS OPERATION

Business typically purchase materials, supplies, and services from suppliers outside Fostoria. When asked if some of these items could be produced locally and profitably, 53.85% respondents answered YES. Types of materials, supplies, or services that could be produced profitably here – rather than having them shipped into the area include:

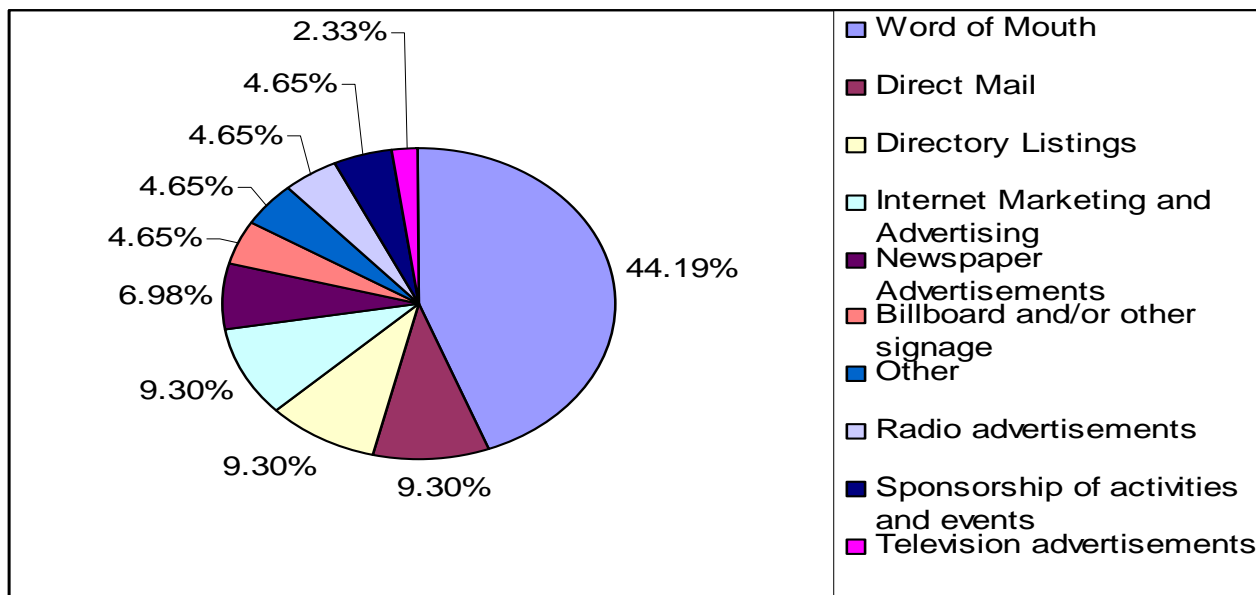
- ♦ Office supplies, copier supplies and copier maintenance
- ♦ Laundry services
- ♦ Building materials, contracting supplies
- ♦ Additional retail, lawn and garden center
- ♦ Specialty stores featuring items built / crafted by local artisans – candles, oils, lotions
- ♦ Would like to see plastics recycled into useful household products or building materials

64% of respondents have a significant increase (in sales) during certain time frames of the year.



- Percentages show November / December sales are highest at 13.64%, followed by September at 11.36%.
- 15.79% of businesses hire additional employees during these busy seasons.
- Less than 20 employees are hired during busy seasons.
- 71.43% of businesses experience slow days of the week and/or times of the day.
- To increase sales during less busy days / hours, some businesses have extended days/hours of operation, advertised more (locally and thru internet), changed product line(s), offered other programs and services.

When asked what the most success form of marketing is for local businesses, responses were:



FUTURE PLANS

At least 50% of respondents have plans to modernize and/or expand their present businesses.

When asked if there were any constraints – participants answered:

No constraints:	22.73%
Need financial assistance:	27.27%
Parking issues:	18.18%
Zoning and building regulations:	13.64%
Insufficient space:	4.55%
Need physical facility planning assistance:	4.55%
Other:	9.09%

Types of modernizations or expansions being considering:

Adding another department, division or business:	25.0%
Parking:	17.0%
Additional floor space:	15.0%
Zoning and building regulations:	15.0%
Expansion into adjacent space:	10.0%
Expansion into another location / same building:	9.0%
Expansion to another building / location:	9.0%

Work would be started:

Between 1-3 years:	63.64%
Between 6-12 months:	18.18%
More than 3 years:	9.09%
Within 6 months:	9.09%

29% of respondents have considered opening another store or office.

- 57% would locate outside this community, but in Ohio;
- 29% would locate elsewhere in the community;
- 14% would locate elsewhere in the county.

Timeline for these openings:

- 71% between 1 – 3 years;
- 14% between 6 – 12 months;
- 14% more than 3 years away from decision making.

Possible constraints:

- Changing market conditions, retirement, zoning and building regulations.

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

Rating the local workforce:	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Quality:	8.33%	50.0%	37.50%	4.17%
Quantity:		50.0%	50.0%	
Availability:	16.67%	41.67%	41.67%	
Stability:	16.67%	75.0%	8.33%	

Ranking current employee training needs:

No training necessary	27.50%
Computer Skills	17.50%
Customer Service Skills	12.50%
Other / work ethic	12.50%
Professional Skills	12.50%
Managerial Skills	10.0%
Basic math / General Skills	7.50%

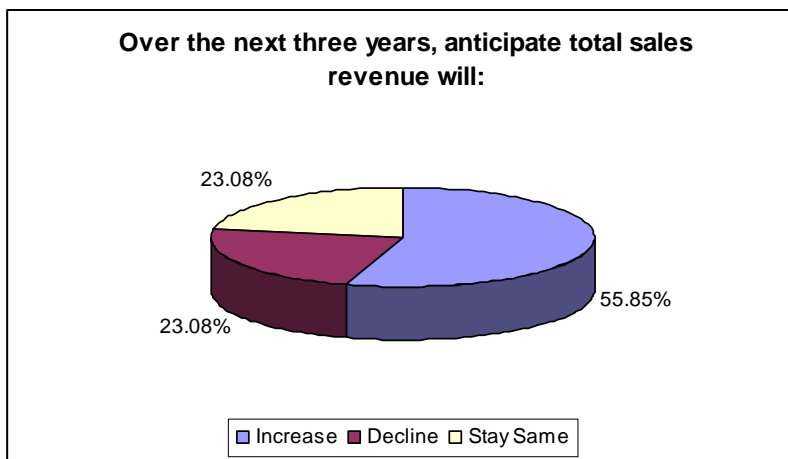
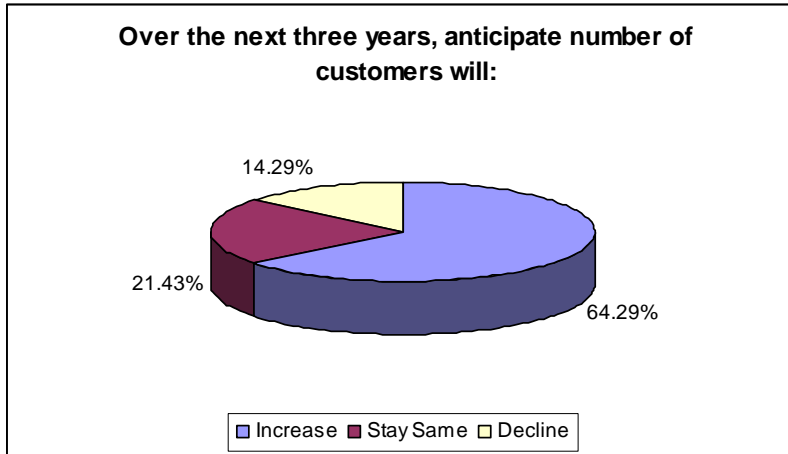
GENERAL INFORMATION

Description of businesses surveyed:

Family owned	23.33%
Not for Profit	30.0%
Privately held company	20.0%
Franchise	10.0%
Branch Office of multi-unit firm	6.67%
Headquarters of multi-unit firm	6.67%
Other	3.33%

Longevity of business at current location:

More than 20 years	40.0%
Between 10-20 years	20.0%
Between 5 - 10 years	20.0%
Between 1- 5 years	12.0%
Less than a year	8.0%



Factors that are believed to impact (increase or decrease) business profits:

- ♦ Aging Population
- ♦ Program Expansions
- ♦ Recruitment of professionals, i.e. Physicians
- ♦ Development of tourist destination
- ♦ Lack of things to do (entertainment) when people do visit
- ♦ Cost of fuel charges
- ♦ Loss of jobs in the community
- ♦ People moving out of the community, shrinking market. Have to have people walking in the door to operate.
- ♦ Increase in number of customers
- ♦ New business plan, roadmap for growth in sales
- ♦ Business owners thinking outside the box
- ♦ Creative incentives to stay / keep retail dollars in the community instead of shopping and doing business in other cities
- ♦ Quality of services being offered
- ♦ Economy
- ♦ Fundraisers, sales / specials

Overall Quality of Life rating for Fostoria:

Poor / Below Average	13.3%
Fair	16.6%
Average	20.%
Good	23.3%
Very Good	26.6%

Quality of Life Comments:

- ♦ Very affordable
- ♦ Average for a community of our size.
- ♦ It would be good to have additional retail and restaurant choices.
- ♦ Overall, Fostoria is a good place to live and do business. It's safe, clean and for the most part – people are friendly.
- ♦ School system needs to improve educational standards.
- ♦ Need a larger department type store (Super K-Mart, Target or Walmart)
- ♦ Quality of life is fine – problem with getting others to move here is due to negative image or reputation. Our community and it's image still need a lot of work.
- ♦ Good, but room for improvement.
- ♦ Fostoria is a good town to live in; it's small town flavor is exceptional.
- ♦ Need to be more open to development and visioning what the community could be if all the players worked from the same script.
- ♦ Downtown needs help; steady decrease in business over the past 5 years. Many store owners cannot survive.
- ♦ We have some good resources, i.e. the YMCA, the hospital, library, etc.

General comments, thoughts and/or suggestions:

- ♦ Need to change the mindset of members in the community, look at what is best for ALL of Fostoria not just what is best for us.
- ♦ I know drawing business is not an easy task. I don't know how WE as a community are going to do it. We are turning into a bedroom community which is sad news for all of us.
- ♦ Too much drama/favorites in city government. Get it fixed.
- ♦ What this community needs most is a steady form of leadership that works well with other local leaders - concentrate on improving relationships, working together and you will be surprised how much this community can get accomplished - together.