

What Ontario Business Thinks 2013

Highlights from the OCC's Quarterly Policy Surveys



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All survey data collected between November 2012 and July 2013 by Leger marketing in partnership with the OCC and chambers of commerce and boards of trade across the province.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

With your help, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce launched its Quarterly Policy Surveys (QPS) in 2012-2013. The response from your members has been overwhelming. We've generated nearly 7,000 responses to our surveys, for an average of 1,700 responses per survey. This makes our QPS the largest and most significant survey of business opinion in the province—maybe in the country.

We've put the data gleaned from our surveys to good use. Your members' answers to our questions helped inform *Emerging Stronger 2013*, our pre-budget submission, and our policy reports on alternative service delivery, transportation funding in the GTHA, and the minimum wage. This fall, we'll be releasing reports on the WSIB and the immigration system. Your members' thoughts on those subjects have informed our recommendations.

Your members' responses are also helping determine our future research agenda. We are in the process of writing reports on the College of Trades and the Ring of Fire: two areas that the chamber network have identified as priorities.

This report, *What Ontario Business Thinks 2013*, is intended to provide you with a breakdown of Ontario business opinion on the issues that matter to them.

We've identified the following thematic questions:

- How confident is Ontario business?
- What are the 'hot button' issues and where does business stand?
- What are business priorities and how has the OCC acted on them?
- How serious is the skills gap?

We hope you find this information helpful and that you continue to see the value in responding to and promoting our surveys. With your help, the OCC network will continue to strengthen its voice as Ontario's business advocate.

Thank you for your continued support.



Allan O'Dette
President & CEO
Ontario Chamber of Commerce

HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Participate in the upcoming OCC
Quarterly Policy Surveys:

October | Ontario Business Confidence Index

January | Pre-budget survey

April | Survey on emerging priorities

June | Survey on emerging priorities



**HOW CONFIDENT IS
ONTARIO BUSINESS ?**

Despite slow recovery, business is **relatively confident** in the Ontario economy

How confident are you in the Ontario economy right now?
Percentage of respondents who are confident:

Kitchener-Waterloo businesses most **likely to expand**

In the next five years, will your organization expand, decrease or remain the same? Percentage of respondents whose organization will expand:

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|------------|--|------------|
| Greater London Area | | 36% | | 57% |
| Greater Ottawa Area | | 36% | | 54% |
| Greater Toronto Area | | 48% | | 66% |
| Hamilton-Niagara | | 46% | | 59% |
| Kingston-Pembroke | | 41% | | 58% |
| Kitchener-Waterloo | | 52% | | 72% |
| Muskoka-Kawarthas | | 45% | | 64% |
| North-East | | 50% | | 59% |
| North-West | | 43% | | 65% |
| Stratford Bruce Peninsula | | 43% | | 55% |
| Windsor and Sarnia | | 33% | | 44% |
| Unspecified | | 42% | | 57% |
| Provincial Average | | 44% | | 62% |

N = 2386
Survey Date: November - December 2012

N = 2386
Survey Date: November - December 2012

Large business more likely to expand

In the next five years, will your organization expand, decrease or remain the same? Percentage of respondents whose organization will expand:



Large businesses are more likely to expand in the next five years.

N = 2386
Survey Date: November - December 2012

size of organization by revenue

Labour is the most confident in the economy

How confident are you in the Ontario economy right now?
Percentage of respondents who are confident:

| | | |
|--------------------|--|------------|
| Academic | | 50% |
| Business | | 44% |
| Government | | 52% |
| Labour | | 53% |
| Not for Profit | | 43% |
| Other | | 44% |
| Provincial Average | | 44% |

N = 2386
Survey Date: November - December 2012

Small business is **less confident** in the economy

How confident are you in the Ontario economy right now?
Percentage of respondents who are confident:



The economy appears to have disproportionately affected the confidence levels of smaller organizations.

N = 2386
Survey Date: November - December 2012



**WHERE BUSINESS STANDS ON
THE 'HOT BUTTON' ISSUES**

Survey respondents **supportive** of a minimum wage hike

Do you support an increase in the minimum wage?
Percentage of respondents who are supportive:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Academic Institutions | 63% |
| Automotive | 42% |
| Business Services | 57% |
| Engineering and Construction | 51% |
| Financial Services and Investment | 56% |
| Government | 71% |
| Health Care | 51% |
| Hospitality and Leisure | 52% |
| Information and Communications | 55% |
| Insurance | 55% |
| Manufacturing | 45% |
| Not for Profit | 68% |
| Retail | 29% |
| Technology | 58% |
| Transportation and Infrastructure | 40% |
| Wholesale Trade and Distribution | 59% |
| Other | 59% |
| Provincial Average | 61% |

The sectors most impacted by an increase, such as retail, are the most opposed to a hike.

N = 1207
Survey Date: May 2013

The OCC has released a report urging the government to establish a more predictable way of determining the minimum wage. Visit occ.ca to read the report.

Respondents **in favour** of making Ontario a 'Right to Work' province

What are your views on Right to Work?
Respondents who are supportive:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Academic Institutions | 68% |
| Automotive | 83% |
| Business Services | 81% |
| Engineering and Construction | 87% |
| Financial Services and Investment | 85% |
| Government | 71% |
| Health Care | 81% |
| Hospitality and Leisure | 87% |
| Information and Communications | 72% |
| Insurance | 88% |
| Manufacturing | 90% |
| Not for Profit | 70% |
| Retail | 82% |
| Technology | 83% |
| Transportation and Infrastructure | 91% |
| Wholesale Trade and Distribution | 84% |
| Other | 79% |
| Provincial Average | 80% |

Right-to-Work legislation would allow workers to opt out of their workplace union.

Provincial Average
80% support
12% Do Not Support
5% Neutral
3% Don't Know

N = 2059
Survey Date: January-February 2013

Government **bullish** on WSIB; business less so

Do you think the WSIB provides value to Ontarians?
Percentage of respondents who think the WSIB provides value:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Academic Institutions | 32% |
| Automotive | 23% |
| Business Services | 29% |
| Engineering and Construction | 27% |
| Financial Services and Investment | 35% |
| Government | 51% |
| Health Care | 40% |
| Hospitality and Leisure | 45% |
| Information and Communications | 35% |
| Insurance | 35% |
| Manufacturing | 34% |
| Not for Profit | 38% |
| Retail | 34% |
| Technology | 31% |
| Transportation and Infrastructure | 36% |
| Wholesale Trade and Distribution | 32% |
| Other | 43% |
| Provincial Average | 50% |

Provincial Average above excludes 'neutral' and 'i don't know' responses.

N = 2059
Survey Date: January - February 2013

The OCC is releasing a report that will recommend ways to improve the WSIB's responsiveness to employer needs.

Survey respondents **conflicted** on whether the College of Trades provides value to Ontario business

Do you think the College of Trades provides value to Ontarians? Percentage of respondents who think the College provides value:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Academic Institutions | 46% |
| Automotive | 38% |
| Business Services | 41% |
| Engineering and Construction | 45% |
| Financial Services and Investment | 46% |
| Government | 53% |
| Health Care | 40% |
| Hospitality and Leisure | 58% |
| Information and Communications | 38% |
| Insurance | 57% |
| Manufacturing | 45% |
| Not for Profit | 34% |
| Retail | 39% |
| Technology | 49% |
| Transportation and Infrastructure | 42% |
| Wholesale Trade and Distribution | 50% |
| Other | 48% |
| Provincial Average | 46% |

Those members regulated by the College of Trades have concerns about the college.

Provincial Average
46% Value
23% I Don't Know
19% No Value
12% Neutral

N = 2059
Survey Date: January - February 2013

The OCC is preparing a report that will provide recommendations to improve the College's ability to meet employer needs.

Survey respondents **evenly split** on support for casinos

Should generating greater casino revenue be a priority item for reducing the debt and deficit? Respondents who are supportive of generating greater casino revenue:

Survey respondents **divided** on whether or not to privatize the LCBO

Should privatizing the LCBO be a priority item for reducing debt and deficit? Respondents who are supportive of privatizing the LCBO:

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|-----|--|-----|
| Greater London Area | | 35% | | 42% |
| Greater Ottawa Area | | 39% | | 50% |
| Greater Toronto Area | | 45% | | 38% |
| Hamilton-Niagara | | 38% | | 53% |
| Kingston-Pembroke | | 35% | | 49% |
| Kitchener-Waterloo | | 33% | | 35% |
| Muskoka-Kawarthas | | 40% | | 42% |
| North-East | | 43% | | 43% |
| North-West | | 47% | | 65% |
| Stratford Bruce Peninsula | | 31% | | 38% |
| Windsor and Sarnia | | 46% | | 46% |
| Other | | 43% | | 48% |
| Provincial Average* | | 50% | | 51% |

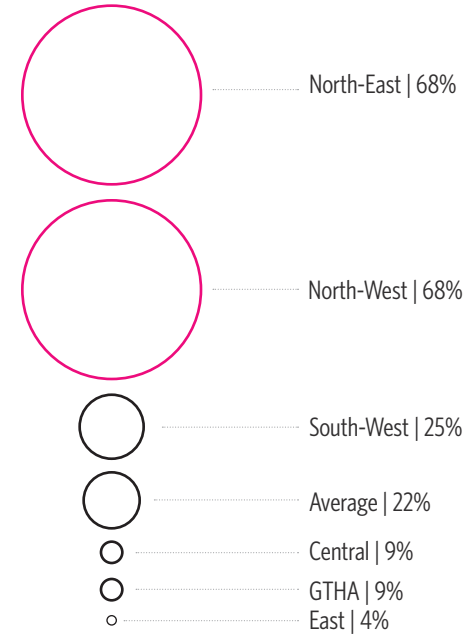
N = 2059
Survey Date: January - February 2013

* excludes 'I don't know' and neutral answers

N = 2059
Survey Date: January - February 2013

Businesses **unaware of the potential** of the Ring of Fire

Will the Ring of Fire benefit your business? Respondents who think the Ring of Fire will benefit their business:



Northern businesses show greater interest in the Ring of Fire.

Provincial Average
61% No Value
22% Value
17% I don't know

N = 1207
Survey Date: May 2013





The OCC will be releasing a report in early 2014 on the economic impact of the Ring of Fire.



**TOP BUSINESS PRIORITIES
AND WHAT OCC HAS DONE**

OCC helps deliver Pooled Registered Pension Plan (PRPP) legislation, as recommended by OCC members

Should the government introduce PRPP legislation? Percentage of respondents who think the government should introduce PRPP legislation:

| | | |
|--------------------|---|-----|
| 50-499 Employees |  | 75% |
| 500+ Employees |  | 74% |
| 1-49 Employees |  | 64% |
| Provincial Average |  | 67% |

PRPPs are pooled, low-cost, professionally managed and transferable pension plans that will provide opportunities to the millions of Canadians who currently do not have a workplace pension plan.

Provincial Average
67% Yes
24% I Don't Know
9% No

N = 1207
Survey Date: May 2013

EMERGING STRONGER 2014

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce has an economic plan for Ontario, called *Emerging Stronger*.

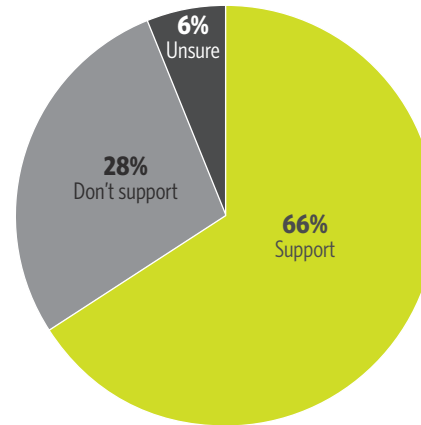
Our plan recognizes that Ontario has all the assets to secure its position as the world's best place to do business, invest, work, and live.

But right now Ontario's economy is struggling. Our finances are faltering. Unemployment is high.

Our challenges are well known. Government has consulted. Experts have weighed in. Everyone agrees it is time to get down to business.

Government pledges to tackle GTHA congestion, as recommended by Ontario Chamber of Commerce members

Do you support the need for new revenue tools to fund transit infrastructure in the GTHA?



Congestion costs the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) \$6 billion in productivity every year.

N = 2059
Note: GTHA respondents only, January-February 2013

So, where do we go from here?

We've done the research. We've heard the experts. We've criss-crossed the province talking to Ontarians. Thousands of businesses have presented real ideas on how we can work together.

Stay tuned for *Emerging Stronger 2014*, where business and civic leaders identify the tangible steps Ontario needs to take to emerge stronger.

As always, the answers to our Quarterly Policy Surveys help inform our economic plan.

OCC on board with businesses' top priorities

Which provincial policy area are you most concerned about?



N = 1121
Survey Date: June-July 2013

The OCC's Emerging Stronger identifies the skills gap as a top public policy priority. Stay tuned for Emerging Stronger 2014 in Winter 2014.

**HOW SERIOUS IS
THE SKILLS GAP ?**

One third of survey respondents have reported difficulty filling a job opening

Has your business had difficulty filling a job opening over the past 12-18 months because you couldn't find someone with the right qualifications? Percentage of respondents who have had difficulty:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Greater London Area | 32% |
| Greater Ottawa Area | 36% |
| Greater Toronto Area | 25% |
| Hamilton-Niagara | 28% |
| Kingston-Pembroke | 33% |
| Kitchener-Waterloo | 24% |
| Muskoka-Kawartha | 30% |
| North-East | 46% |
| North-West | 41% |
| Stratford Bruce Peninsula | 29% |
| Windsor and Sarnia | 26% |
| Other | 27% |
| Provincial Average | 30% |

Respondents from Northern and Eastern Ontario were the most likely to report a skills shortage.

N = 2059
Survey Date: January-February 2013

Respondents are unsure about the Canada Job Grant

How likely is your organization to use the Canada Job Grant? Percentage of respondents who are likely to use the Job Grant:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Greater London Area | 32% |
| Greater Ottawa Area | 30% |
| Greater Toronto Area | 25% |
| Hamilton-Niagara | 40% |
| Kingston-Pembroke | 18% |
| Kitchener-Waterloo | 16% |
| Muskoka-Kawartha | 17% |
| North-East | 44% |
| North-West | 59% |
| Stratford Bruce Peninsula | 28% |
| Windsor and Sarnia | 38% |
| Other | 29% |
| Provincial Average | 30% |

The grant could provide up to \$15,000 per trainee, including provincial/territorial contributions.

Provincial Average
58% Not Likely
30% Likely
12% Unsure

N = 1207
Survey Date: May 2013

Business not using the immigration system to fill skills gap

Has your business used the immigration system for hiring? Percentage of respondents who have not used the immigration system:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Greater London Area | 78% |
| Greater Ottawa Area | 72% |
| Greater Toronto Area | 79% |
| Hamilton-Niagara | 71% |
| Kingston-Pembroke | 71% |
| Kitchener-Waterloo | 97% |
| Muskoka-Kawartha | 88% |
| North-East | 73% |
| North-West | 66% |
| Stratford Bruce Peninsula | 92% |
| Windsor and Sarnia | 81% |
| Other | 75% |
| Provincial Average | 77% |

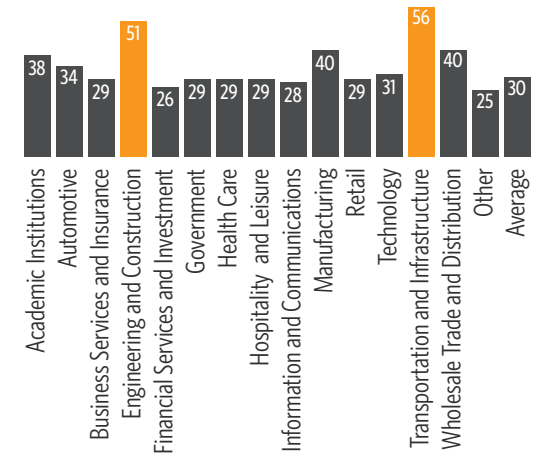
Only 7% of respondents have used the immigration system for hiring purposes.

Provincial Average
(Excludes 'Neutral' and 'Don't Know' answers)
58% Not Likely
30% Likely
12% Unsure

N = 1121
Survey Date: June-July 2013

Business is having difficulty finding people in skilled trades

Has your business had difficulty filling a job opening over the past 12-18 months because you couldn't find someone with the right qualifications? Percentage of respondents who have had difficulty:



Skill shortages were the most prevalent in sectors with regulated workforces.

N = 2059

Survey Date: January- February 2013

Small businesses unsure about value of the Canada Job Grant

How likely is your organization to use the Canada Job Grant? Percentage of respondents who are likely to use the Job Grant:

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| 50-499 Employees | 42% |
| 500+ Employees | 38% |
| 1-49 Employees | 26% |

This may be reflective of the limited resources they have at their disposal.

N = 1207

Date of Survey: May 2013



Survey responses help inform our policy work.
Thank you for distributing our OCC surveys.

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April | Survey on emerging priorities

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