



Local Retail Businesses & Professional Services Survey Results

2009



May 26, 2009
City of Strongsville

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Mayor Thomas P. Perciak and Councilman Mike Daymut, Chairman of the Economic/Community Development Committee, today announced the completion of the City of Strongsville's Retail Businesses & Professional Services Survey.

Working closely with Ohio State University's Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) Initiative, the purpose of the survey was to determine the value that Strongsville's retail and professional services businesses place on available amenities and services, as well as their satisfaction levels in those areas.

In February of 2009, the Strongsville, OH, Economic/Community Development Committee sent the survey to 816 Strongsville businesses and received 127 completed surveys for a 15.5% return rate (10% is considered good when surveying retail/professional services sectors).

The majority of the survey responses came from the professional services industry, with the health services sector as the leading respondent group. A further review of all the respondents finds that:

- 71% are companies that are independently owned and operated
- 76% lease their operational space
- 68% have been in operation for 11 or more years
- 75% occupy space between 500- 4,000 square feet

The survey results indicated that 92% of respondents would recommend Strongsville as a business location with 89% rating the overall quality of life in Strongsville as good to excellent. In addition, 83% of respondents rate the overall retail/professional business climate in Strongsville as good to excellent, an encouraging rating when considering the overall weakness of the national economy.

The evaluation of City services and amenities showed that the retail/professional business respondents rated the following as high in quality:

- Fire (91%)
- Police (91%)
- Business Services (77%)
- Snow/Ice Removal (76%)

In addition, the respondents rated the following workforce-related amenities and services as high in quality:

- Shopping (92%)
- Strongsville School System (89%)
- Strongsville Recreation Center (89%)
- Health Care Services (88%)
- Child Care Services (77%)

In contrast, the issues of business signage regulations and storefront renovations were rated as areas needing improvement.

In terms of future business changes, 67% of the respondents indicated they have no plans to move, close, or sell their business. Of the 18% that indicated plans to change their location, 71% are planning a move within Strongsville.

The following were the four highest-ranked reasons that respondents have located and remained in Strongsville:

- Access to customers (26%)
- Quality of life (18%)
- Proximity to freeways (15%)
- Proximity to home (14%)

Greg Davis, Director of Ohio State University’s BR&E Initiative, adds insight on Strongsville’s survey process: “Having worked with communities all over Ohio, I continue to be impressed with the determination of community leaders in Strongsville to better understand the business community. They understand the role businesses play in their community and they strive to understand how they can work to help those businesses become more successful, profitable, and contributing members of the community.”

Copies of the survey results will be available to the public at Strongsville’s public library branch, City Hall, the Chamber of Commerce, and at the City’s website (www.strongsville.org). The results have been presented for review to the City of Strongsville Council and to the Strongsville Board of Education.

Retail/Professional Services Survey Task Force

Mayor Thomas P. Perciak

Richard L. Pinkerton, Ph.D, Taskforce Chair & Professor Emeritus, Calif. St University, Fresno

Michael J. Daymut, Co-Chair, Councilman Ward One

Greg Davis, Director, Ohio BR&E Initiative

Eugene P. Magocky, Director of Strongsville Economic Development Department

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Thomas Cooke, Thomas Cooke Photography

Roseann Cyngier, Cyngier Heating & Air Conditioning

Celia McGrath, Olympia Candies

Ron Mowry, Pastor, Strongsville United Methodist Church

Becky Piper, Cruiseone

Steve Shawver, Minuteman Press

Barry R. Zimmerman, Executive V.P., Edgerton Corp.

Survey Overview

Description

The survey was mailed to all retail/professional services organizations within Strongsville to determine the value Strongsville's retail/professional service businesses place on available amenities and services, as well as their satisfaction level in those areas.

Instructions Provided To Respondents

Your participation in this study is important and your response is completely confidential. Your responses will be compiled with responses from others and reported in aggregate form. Answer only those questions with which you feel comfortable and feel free to note comments in the margins.

Respondent Metrics

Businesses Surveyed:.....816

Respondents:.....127

Online Responses:	20
Hardcopy Responses:	107
First Response:	2/11/2009 12:46 PM
Last Response:	4/16/2009 10:57 AM

Response Rate:.....15.5%

Survey Results

The following is a tabular depiction of the responses to each survey question.

Section - 2009 Survey of Local Retail Businesses & Professional Services

1. Where is your business located?

38.9%	49	Strip mall
28.6%	36	Stand alone building
17.5%	22	Office building
14.3%	18	Shopping mall
0.8%	1	Home office

2. Where are most of your primary competitors located?

44.8%	56	Within Northeast Ohio
44.0%	55	Within Strongsville
8.0%	10	Within the United States
3.2%	4	Within the State of Ohio

3. To which category of business do most of your primary competitors belong?

34.1%	42	Independently owned and operated retailer
29.3%	36	Other, please specify:
20.3%	25	Franchise
16.3%	20	Chain store

"Other, please specify:"

To protect the privacy of respondents, list omitted from report

4. Please rank the following characteristics of the retail/service business environment from most important (1) to least important (5) to your individual business success:

Most Important (1)

10.2%	58	Friendly, pleasant environment (e.g., friendly, small town atmosphere, sense of community) #1
4.2%	24	Ease of shopping/walk-ability (e.g., wide sidewalks, convenient automobile access, parking) #1
2.8%	16	Variety/diversity of businesses (e.g., family businesses, national chains, spectrum of offerings) #1
2.1%	12	Local government support (e.g., pro-business orientation, safety services) #1
1.8%	10	Mix of retail and service establishments #1

Very Important (2)

5.3%	30	Ease of shopping/walk-ability (e.g., wide sidewalks, convenient automobile access, parking) #2
4.7%	27	Friendly, pleasant environment (e.g., friendly, small town atmosphere, sense of community) #2
4.6%	26	Variety/diversity of businesses (e.g., family businesses, national chains, spectrum of offerings) #2
3.0%	17	Mix of retail and service establishments #2
2.3%	13	Local government support (e.g., pro-business orientation, safety services) #2

Important (3)

6.8%	39	Variety/diversity of businesses (e.g., family businesses, national chains, spectrum of offerings) #3
5.4%	31	Mix of retail and service establishments #3
3.3%	19	Local government support (e.g., pro-business orientation, safety services) #3
2.6%	15	Ease of shopping/walk-ability (e.g., wide sidewalks, convenient automobile access, parking) #3
1.8%	10	Friendly, pleasant environment (e.g., friendly, small town atmosphere, sense of community) #3

Somewhat Important (4)

7.0%	40	Mix of retail and service establishments #4
4.2%	24	Variety/diversity of businesses (e.g., family businesses, national chains, spectrum of offerings) #4
3.5%	20	Ease of shopping/walk-ability (e.g., wide sidewalks, convenient automobile access, parking) #4
2.5%	14	Friendly, pleasant environment (e.g., friendly, small town atmosphere, sense of community) #4
2.3%	13	Local government support (e.g., pro-business orientation, safety services) #4

Least Important (5)

9.3%	53	Local government support (e.g., pro-business orientation, safety services) #5
4.2%	24	Ease of shopping/walk-ability (e.g., wide sidewalks, convenient automobile access, parking) #5
2.5%	14	Mix of retail and service establishments #5
1.9%	11	Friendly, pleasant environment (e.g., friendly, small town atmosphere, sense of community) #5
1.8%	10	Variety/diversity of businesses (e.g., family businesses, national chains, spectrum of offerings) #5

5. What are your top five (5) suggestions for improving the retail/service business environment?

13.8%	77	Increase patron awareness of the retail/service business options
13.6%	76	Fix and clean up eyesore buildings
12.6%	70	Address problem of empty spaces/vacancy rate
11.1%	62	More or better signage
9.5%	53	Improve streetscape/greenspace
8.4%	47	More merchant cooperation and unity
5.0%	28	Address need for quality employees
5.0%	28	More restaurants and entertainment
5.0%	28	More retail/service diversity
4.8%	27	More or better festivals and events
4.7%	26	Address parking issues
3.2%	18	Develop comprehensive recycling program
3.1%	17	More specialty shops

6. Do you have any suggestions for improving the retail/service business environment that are not listed above?

To protect the privacy of respondents, list omitted from report

7. What do you believe are your top three (3) competitive advantages, in the opinion of your customers?

20.9%	79	Quality products/services
17.2%	65	Longevity/reputation
15.6%	59	Fast, friendly service
13.0%	49	Pleasant business environment, ambiance, decor
11.4%	43	Competitive prices
10.1%	38	Convenient location
5.3%	20	Unique items/private labels
4.8%	18	Convenient hours
1.9%	7	Wide selection/variety of merchandise

8. Are there any other competitive advantages that are not listed above?

To protect the privacy of respondents, list omitted from report

9. On average, how many hours are you open per week?

21.4%	27	61-75
20.6%	26	41-50
18.3%	23	31-40
15.9%	20	76-100
14.3%	18	51-60
6.3%	8	More than 100
3.2%	4	Less than 30

10. What is the gender makeup of your customer base?

51.7%	61	50% female/50% male
28.8%	34	51-75% female
11.9%	14	More than 75% female
7.6%	9	Less than 50% female

11. What age is the majority of your customer base?

62.2%	74	25-44
28.6%	34	45-64
5.9%	7	Under age 18
2.5%	3	65 and over
0.8%	1	18-24

12. Where does the majority of your customer base live?

47.2%	59	Strongsville
45.6%	57	Northeast Ohio
4.0%	5	Other, please specify:
3.2%	4	United States

"Other, please specify:"

To protect the privacy of respondents, list omitted from report

13. Where does the majority of your revenue come from?

50.8%	63	Strongsville
43.5%	54	Northeast Ohio
4.0%	5	Other, please specify:
1.6%	2	United States

"Other, please specify:"

To protect the privacy of respondents, list omitted from report

14. Which of the following classifications best describes your primary business?

21.6%	27	Other, please specify:
15.2%	19	Health services
10.4%	13	Eating place
5.6%	7	Hair salon/barber shop
4.8%	6	Banking and finance
4.0%	5	Apparel
4.0%	5	Educational services
4.0%	5	Jewelry store
2.4%	3	Legal services
2.4%	3	Optical goods store
2.4%	3	Real estate
1.6%	2	Accounting services
1.6%	2	Drinking place
1.6%	2	Grocery
1.6%	2	Hotels
1.6%	2	Printing, duplicating, mailing services
1.6%	2	Recreation services
1.6%	2	Shoe store
0.8%	1	Automotive repair
0.8%	1	Candy, nut & confectionery store
0.8%	1	Churches
0.8%	1	Department store
0.8%	1	Electronics
0.8%	1	Florists
0.8%	1	Hardware store
0.8%	1	Hobby, toy & game shop
0.8%	1	Motor vehicle
0.8%	1	Paint, glass & wallpaper store
0.8%	1	Retail bakery
0.8%	1	Retail nursery & lawn supply store
0.8%	1	Transportation
0.8%	1	Travel agency/tour business
0.8%	1	Variety & general merchandise

"Other, please specify:"

- Boarding Kennel & Grooming
- Brewery/Restaurant/Winery
- Business Systems Software and Consulting
- Clothing alterations
- Coffee Shop
- Custom Window Treatments
- Dental Practice
- Embroidery and Screen printing
- Fitness Studio
- Food Storage Containers
- Funeral
- HVAC
- Insurance (5 comments tallied)
- Masonry/Home Builder
- Medical Spa
- Mental health private practice
- Photography Studio
- Retail Pet Store
- Signs & Wide Format Printing
- Time management/day planners
- Trade Association
- Veterinary Hospital
- Weight Loss

15. How is this business structured?

71.2%	89	Independently owned and operated
12.8%	16	Branch store
10.4%	13	Franchise of multi-unit firm
5.6%	7	Other, please specify:

"Other, please specify:"

To protect the privacy of respondents, list omitted from report

16. How long has your business been in operation?

42.1%	53	More than 20 years
26.2%	33	Between 11-20 years
15.9%	20	Between 6-10 years
14.3%	18	Between 1-5 years
1.6%	2	Less than 1 year

17. How long have you been at your current position within the Strongsville facility?

39.7%	50	More than 10 years
28.6%	36	Between 2-5 years
20.6%	26	Between 6-10 years
7.9%	10	6 months - 1 year
3.2%	4	Less than 6 months

18. How many full-time employees work in your business?

65.0%	76	Less than 5
21.4%	25	5-10
6.8%	8	11-15
4.3%	5	26-50
1.7%	2	16-25
0.9%	1	More than 50

19. How many part-time employees work in your business?

53.5%	53	Less than 5
25.3%	25	5-10
7.1%	7	11-15
7.1%	7	16-25
4.0%	4	26-50
3.0%	3	More than 50

20. What is the size of the space you occupy?

30.9%	38	1,001 to 2,000 square feet
28.5%	35	2,001 to 4,000 square feet
15.4%	19	501 to 1,000 square feet
9.8%	12	4,001 to 8,000 square feet
8.1%	10	More than 10,000 square feet
5.7%	7	8,001 to 10,000 square feet
1.6%	2	Less than 500 square feet

21. Do you own or rent your space? If you own your space, skip the next question.

75.8%	94	Rent
24.2%	30	Own

22. What is your rent per square foot per year?

28.0%	23	\$12.01 - \$15.00
28.0%	23	\$8.01 - \$12.00
22.0%	18	\$15.01 - \$20.00
8.5%	7	\$20.01 - \$25.00
8.5%	7	More than \$25.00
4.9%	4	Less than \$8.00

23. Do you live in Strongsville?

53.7%	66	No
46.3%	57	Yes

24. From your perspective as a businessperson, please rate the overall quality of life in Strongsville:

52.5%	64	Good
36.9%	45	Excellent
9.8%	12	Average
0.8%	1	Poor

25. What is your overall opinion of the City of Strongsville as a place to do business?

48.0%	59	Good
35.0%	43	Excellent
13.8%	17	Average
2.4%	3	Poor
0.8%	1	Very Poor

26. What are your top three (3) reasons for locating or keeping your business in Strongsville?

26.1%	86	Access to my customers
17.6%	58	Quality of life
14.6%	48	Proximity to freeways
14.0%	46	Proximity to home
6.1%	20	Quality of housing
3.3%	11	Lack of competition
3.0%	10	Cost of doing business
2.7%	9	Financial incentives
2.1%	7	Safety services
2.1%	7	Workforce availability
1.8%	6	Access to airport
1.8%	6	Access to business support services (e.g., printing advertising/marketing, financial services, restaurants, hotels, etc.)
1.5%	5	Access to downtown Cleveland
1.2%	4	Recreation facilities/entertainment
0.9%	3	Access to my suppliers
0.9%	3	Local officials

27. Are there any other reasons for locating or keeping your business in Strongsville that are not listed above?

To protect the privacy of respondents, list omitted from report

Section - Please indicate whether you believe the cost of doing business in Strongsville is high, acceptable, or low.

28. Land Costs

53.3%	57	Acceptable
46.7%	50	High

29. Building costs (rent)

56.6%	64	Acceptable
42.5%	48	High
0.9%	1	Low

30. Natural gas aggregation

72.3%	73	Acceptable
26.7%	27	High
1.0%	1	Low

31. Electrical aggregation

77.5%	79	Acceptable
22.5%	23	High

32. Labor costs

85.2%	92	Acceptable
13.9%	15	High
0.9%	1	Low

33. Health care insurance

56.4%	57	Acceptable
43.6%	44	High

34. Workers compensation

68.6%	72	Acceptable
31.4%	33	High

35. Real estate property taxes

64.5%	69	High
35.5%	38	Acceptable

36. Personal property taxes

53.8%	56	Acceptable
45.2%	47	High
1.0%	1	Low

37. City income taxes

61.5%	67	Acceptable
38.5%	42	High

38. Payroll taxes

63.0%	68	Acceptable
37.0%	40	High

39. Sales tax

51.8%	57	High
48.2%	53	Acceptable

40. Internet/Telecom

79.8%	83	Acceptable
19.2%	20	High
1.0%	1	Low

Section - From your perspective as a businessperson, please rate the following operational/infrastructural amenities and services in Strongsville.

41. Local roads & freeway access

48.4%	60	Good
33.1%	41	Excellent
14.5%	18	Average
3.2%	4	Poor
0.8%	1	Very Poor

42. Traffic control

36.8%	46	Good
31.2%	39	Average
16.8%	21	Poor
13.6%	17	Excellent
1.6%	2	Very Poor

43. Water and sewers

49.2%	61	Good
27.4%	34	Average
12.1%	15	Poor
10.5%	13	Excellent
0.8%	1	Very Poor

44. Natural gas services

57.4%	70	Good
32.8%	40	Average
9.8%	12	Excellent

45. Telecom services

54.7%	64	Good
32.5%	38	Average
11.1%	13	Excellent
1.7%	2	Poor

46. High speed Internet access

47.5%	57	Good
33.3%	40	Average
15.0%	18	Excellent
3.3%	4	Poor
0.8%	1	Very Poor

47. Electrical services

55.7%	68	Good
30.3%	37	Average
11.5%	14	Excellent
1.6%	2	Poor
0.8%	1	Very Poor

Section - From your perspective as a businessperson, please rate the following workforce-related amenities and services.

48. Pedestrian walkways

42.9%	51	Good
23.5%	28	Average
16.8%	20	Excellent
12.6%	15	Poor
4.2%	5	Very Poor

49. Public transportation

48.3%	57	Good
33.1%	39	Average
9.3%	11	Excellent
7.6%	9	Poor
1.7%	2	Very Poor

50. Air service

55.0%	61	Good
28.8%	32	Average
11.7%	13	Excellent
2.7%	3	Poor
1.8%	2	Very Poor

51. Health care services (EMS, hospitals, clinics)

50.4%	58	Good
37.4%	43	Excellent
11.3%	13	Average
0.9%	1	Very Poor

52. School system

61.1%	69	Good
28.3%	32	Excellent
8.8%	10	Average
1.8%	2	Poor

53. Child care services

60.2%	62	Good
23.3%	24	Average
16.5%	17	Excellent

54. Restaurants

50.0%	59	Good
24.6%	29	Excellent
21.2%	25	Average
4.2%	5	Poor

55. Professional services

62.6%	72	Good
21.7%	25	Excellent
15.7%	18	Average

56. Shopping

51.3%	61	Good
40.3%	48	Excellent
6.7%	8	Average
1.7%	2	Poor

57. Recreation center

44.3%	51	Excellent
44.3%	51	Good
10.4%	12	Average
0.9%	1	Very Poor

58. Cultural activities/entertainment

43.1%	50	Good
35.3%	41	Average
12.9%	15	Excellent
6.9%	8	Poor
1.7%	2	Very Poor

59. Air Cargo/Shipping

52.7%	58	Good
34.5%	38	Average
10.9%	12	Excellent
1.8%	2	Poor

Section - From your perspective as a businessperson, please rate these other amenities and services.

60. Snow and ice removal

48.8%	59	Good
27.3%	33	Excellent
20.7%	25	Average
3.3%	4	Poor

61. Street and sidewalk cleaning

45.5%	55	Good
28.1%	34	Average
14.9%	18	Excellent
11.6%	14	Poor

62. Street repairs

40.5%	49	Average
36.4%	44	Good
10.7%	13	Poor
8.3%	10	Excellent
4.1%	5	Very Poor

63. Rubbish collection

57.9%	66	Good
21.9%	25	Average
17.5%	20	Excellent
1.8%	2	Poor
0.9%	1	Very Poor

64. Fire protection

48.3%	58	Good
42.5%	51	Excellent
9.2%	11	Average

65. Police protection

45.8%	55	Good
45.0%	54	Excellent
8.3%	10	Average
0.8%	1	Poor

66. Business services

64.1%	75	Good
22.2%	26	Average
12.8%	15	Excellent
0.9%	1	Poor

67. Hotel facilities

43.7%	52	Good
31.1%	37	Average
15.1%	18	Poor
7.6%	9	Excellent
2.5%	3	Very Poor

68. Conference facilities

37.7%	43	Average
36.0%	41	Good
12.3%	14	Poor
9.6%	11	Excellent
4.4%	5	Very Poor

Section - How would you rate the regional MANAGEMENT and STAFF work force (the labor pool)?
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69. Quality (i.e., necessary skills and work ethic)

60.2%	68	Good
24.8%	28	Average
12.4%	14	Excellent
2.7%	3	Poor

70. Quantity

53.1%	60	Good
34.5%	39	Average
8.0%	9	Excellent
3.5%	4	Poor
0.9%	1	Very Poor

71. Availability

49.5%	55	Good
35.1%	39	Average
9.0%	10	Excellent
5.4%	6	Poor
0.9%	1	Very Poor

72. Stability

46.4%	52	Good
35.7%	40	Average
10.7%	12	Excellent
6.3%	7	Poor
0.9%	1	Very Poor

Section - How would you rate the regional LABOR FORCE (the labor pool)?
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73. Quality (i.e., necessary skills and work ethic)

60.0%	69	Good
25.2%	29	Average
7.8%	9	Excellent
5.2%	6	Poor
1.7%	2	Very Poor

74. Quantity

53.5%	61	Good
34.2%	39	Average
6.1%	7	Excellent
5.3%	6	Poor
0.9%	1	Very Poor

75. Availability

51.8%	59	Good
32.5%	37	Average
7.9%	9	Poor
7.0%	8	Excellent
0.9%	1	Very Poor

76. Stability

51.8%	59	Good
28.9%	33	Average
10.5%	12	Poor
7.9%	9	Excellent
0.9%	1	Very Poor

Section - Future plans

77. If you are expanding in Strongsville, do you face any constraints?

18.8%	26	No constraints
15.9%	22	Signage regulations
15.2%	21	Need financial assistance
13.0%	18	Zoning and building regulations
10.9%	15	Need information on city and/or state tax incentives
10.1%	14	Insufficient space in existing building
6.5%	9	Other, please specify:
4.3%	6	Parking issues
3.6%	5	Not enough land for expansion
1.4%	2	Need physical facility planning assistance

"Other, please specify:"

To protect the privacy of respondents, list omitted from report

78. Are you considering moving, closing, or selling this business?

66.9%	79	None of the above (go to question 82)
17.8%	21	Considering moving
10.2%	12	Considering selling (go to question 81)
5.1%	6	Considering closing (go to question 81)

79. If you are considering moving, where would you move?

71.4%	20	Elsewhere in Strongsville
14.3%	4	Elsewhere in Cuyahoga County
14.3%	4	Outside Cuyahoga County, but in Ohio

80. If you are considering moving, why?

37.5%	12	Other, please specify:
15.6%	5	Lease expiration
15.6%	5	Overcrowded facilities
9.4%	3	Changing market conditions
9.4%	3	High taxes
9.4%	3	Lease rate increase
3.1%	1	Transportation problem

"Other, please specify:"

To protect the privacy of respondents, list omitted from report

81. When would you move, close, or sell this business?

47.5%	19	Between 1-3 years
30.0%	12	Within 6-12 months
15.0%	6	More than 5 years
7.5%	3	Between 4-5 years

Section – Over the next three (3) years, do you think the following business factors will increase, stay the same, or decline?

82. Number of customers

50.0%	62	Increase
33.1%	41	Stay the Same
16.9%	21	Decline

83. Sales – Total revenue

54.9%	67	Increase
23.0%	28	Stay the Same
22.1%	27	Decline

84. Profits

44.6%	54	Increase
33.1%	40	Decline
22.3%	27	Stay the Same

85. Number of employees

53.3%	64	Stay the Same
31.7%	38	Increase
15.0%	18	Decline

86. If you expect any of these business factors to increase or decrease, what are the principal reasons for the changes?

To protect the privacy of respondents, list omitted from report

Section – Comments**87. Would you recommend another business to locate in Strongsville?**

91.7%	110	Yes
8.3%	10	No

88. If no, why not?

To protect the privacy of respondents, list omitted from report

89. In the space below, please add any comments.

To protect the privacy of respondents, list omitted from report

90. If you would like to receive a copy of the survey results please list your email address below or email your request to brent.painter@strongsville.org:

To protect the privacy of respondents, list omitted from report