



Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce MB 2008

Membership Survey (bj8jem)

Total surveys taken by organization: **127**

Total surveys in baseline: **47964**

9g Enterprises, Inc

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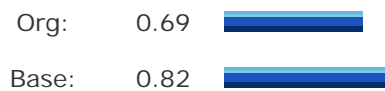
940.748.2600

Business Leadership

Mean:



Standard Deviation:



Advocacy

Mean:



Standard Deviation:



Business Assistance

Mean:



Standard Deviation:

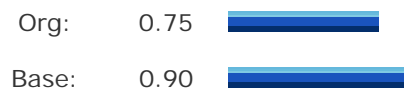


Membership

Mean:



Standard Deviation:

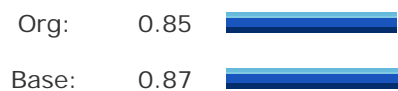


Larger Business Community

Mean:



Standard Deviation:



Community in General

Mean:



Standard Deviation:

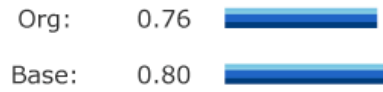


Management

Mean:



Standard Deviation:

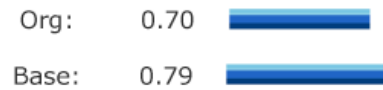


Personnel/Volunteers

Mean:



Standard Deviation:



Infrastructure

Mean:



Standard Deviation:



Base: 0.84 

Top-Level Approach

Mean:

Org: 4.00 

Base: 3.88 

Standard Deviation:

Org: 0.78 

Base: 0.80 

Text Responses

What are the top three issues facing the Chamber?

- 1) Attracting and maintaining members
- 2) THE SLOWING ECONOMY, MEMBERSHIP RETENTION & PROMOTION OF THE AREA IN GENERAL
- 3) I think the Chamber could be more of a presence in the community.
- 4) 1. Helping businesses understand and prepare for the Mount Vernon Downtown Revitalization. 2. Bringing in large, successful businesses (many are EDASC members instead of Chamber members), instead of only the small businesses.
- 5) downtrending economic perceptions flood control
- 6) Recession in the area Buy locally programs Maintaining and increasing membership
- 7) The economy Community Branding
- 8) no answer
- 9) Retaining and adding businesses. Recognition of Mount Vernon for new business rather than neighboring cities. Attracting tourists to the area year round.
- 10) Staying in the 'face' of the business community.
- 11) Advocacy related to flood mapping,
- 12) Membership Development Providing Meaningful membership programs Making Mount Vernon a "business friendly" City

- 13) Have a lunch spot big enough for everyone to meet together: -) The downtown Mount Vernon revamping issues Keeping smaller business happy and feeling included
- 14) New Members, Membership Retention, Growth
- 15) 1. supporting small business in a challenging economic time 2. developing and articulating a clear, strong legislative agenda 3. developing a communitywide consensus and helping the communication process on flood issues
- 16) I have not been a member long enough to know. As a new business I appreciate 1) the directory 2) the networking opportunity and 3) the bulk mail access.
- 17) Hispanic business outreach events. Home office help and support programs, events. Bilingual staff members.
- 18) Retaining members in a slow down.
- 19) Downtown mt Vernon Sustainable growth
- 20) Downtown Mount Vernon Using local members for Chamber business
- 21) no opinion
- 22) Economy Future jobs Flooding, Disasters
- 23) Budget Event Cost
- 24) #1: Current Economic Climate #2: Business environment in the City of MV #3: Calling ourselves a "regional" chamber, but not well represented by community leaders in other cities
- 25) Not really sure
- 26) change in work enviroment in community, change in jobs,
- 27) I don't have a lot of experience with the chamber and can't comment on anything more than perception at this point. For my needs, I wish that the Chamber were more advanced in it's promotion of various businesses within the community via web presence.
- 28) Renewing memberships Continued growth & keeping up with the finances Letting the public know how strong the chamber is in our community
- 29) bringing quality commercial interests to mount vernon participation in revitalization of downtown historic preservation supporting agricultural and tourist business
- 30) 1) Community outreach-informing of what services provided to community by businesses 2) Promoting local business 3) Servicing Business needs proming chamber opportunities
- 31) Reaching the Latino community More bike lanes and pedestrian friendly walks, interurban trail system like Bellingham
- 32) Revitalization of downtown Mount Vernon Proposed Jail project Mount Vernon Expansion
- 33) Keeping ahead of their growth! Businesses moving to Burlington.
- 34) Small business legislative issues Marketing tools/programs for small business development Networking/incentive plans for members
- 35) Legislative issues for small business
- 36) 1.Making and keeping membership relevent to its members, by listening to and observing member challenges, and offering ideas and resources for solutions. 2.Helping to promote a business climate that fosters creativity and greater opportunities for businesses to find a niche and prosper.
- 37) I'm not active in the chamber, but keeping the Mt. Vernon events well circulated and advertised possibly would help.
- 38) I AM UNSURE
- 39) info overload, weakening economy
- 40) growing the city with new businesses.....getting better parking downtown and getting those business to stay open into the evening like the malls do in Burlington....and being more agressive with state

issues that small business need to take action on....

- 41) I am an inactive member
- 42) unsure
- 43) Don't Know
- 44) The downtown Mount Vernon realignment/makeover/flood control The Veterans Community Outpatient Clinic coming to our community (eventually) if they ever get it out of Sedro Woolley now! Traffic
- 45) Growing business opportunities in downtown MV, solidifying the business community, getting more businesses to join and stay in the Chamber.
- 46) business, community, service
- 47) 1. Redevelopment of Downtown- becoming a ghost town 2. Advocate for the City of Mount Vernon to redesign services and adopt a philosophy to aggressively recruit new business. Talk is cheap. Walk the talk. Actively retain existing business 3. Stop the bleeding- retain businesses
- 48) 1. Retaining the same percentage of membership during this economic downturn. 2. The need to focus on diversity to a greater degree.
- 49) government relations do not reflect the chamber as a whole not enough activism
- 50) keeping downtown productive keeping farmland safe from encroachment keeping business coming to the area
- 51) new members/retention of members economy
- 52) time availability for events and projects.
- 53) Choosing events that highlight and help the majority of its members.
- 54) Socially responsible approaches to business and employees that take fair trade and sustainability seriously. How to help Mt Vernon plan proactively for climate change. Including people of all colors/nationalities and businesses owned by people of all colors/nationalities who live in Mt Vernon in the chamber.
- 55) Downtown revitalization Flood - FEMA Economy
- 56) Recruitment of new employers Tracking legislative issues of importance to business Recruitment and retention of chamber members
- 57) Bringing the Hispanic community into becoming more involved Getting more members involved with committees Continuing growth
- 58) I just joined the chamber and not really sure
- 59) Supporting the business community and offering resources during tough economic times. Promoting Mount Vernon and Skagit County regionally, i.e. in Canada, Seattle, Portland, and beyond. Advocating for Skagit County's business community among our elected officials.
- 60) Keeping business in Mount Vernon (i.e. Medical Center Outsourcing to reduce cost) Investigate unethical businesses in Mount Vernon as well as those offering poor products or service. Maybe a "Who Can You Trust" Guide or consumer review catalog. The business expo and Tulip Festival are good tourist draws, maybe work with other chambers and create/define other sources of attraction and market them.
- 61) Needing to work closely with the DBC in activities directed to promote old town.
- 62) Networking opportunities Government regulation of business

What are the three most valuable programs provided by the Chamber?

- 1) Ability to have our insert in the The Chamber Newsletter. Weekly email with Press Releases.
- 2) Networking Support & promotion of businesses

- 3) NETWORKING, PROMOTION & ACCESS TO INFORMATION
- 4) The After Hours networking events are the most fun and I think profitable events hosted by the Chamber! Everyone loves to go to these things and we have personally found new clients through the After Hours events!
- 5) I only utilize Skagit Young Professionals, >6 Degrees, monthly meetings, and the Chamber newsletters (both electronic and mail). I consider these programs valuable, but I've never looked into other programs that the Chamber offers.
- 6) Business communication between each other business Always willing to assist with any problem Keeping us informed local and gov't issues
- 7) Biz Buzz After Hours education
- 8) Biz Buzz After Hours
- 9) Networking opportunities, tourism, and information about our community.
- 10) Biz Buzz Newsletter Directory
- 11) biz buzz, skagit young professionals
- 12) Monthly Meetings Business Buzz Business After Hours
- 13) bizz buzz business networking website and marketing visibility
- 14) The chamber has many good outreach programs and political connections that are of great value
- 15) 1. BizBuzz meetings 2. regular (monthly) membership meetings in general 3. Print and emailed information disseminated on a regular basis
- 16) ditto #31
- 17) Biz Buzz luncheon. B2C News letter, website Welcome basket.
- 18) Gov. Affairs SYP
- 19) Biz Buzz Lunches
- 20) networking visiting other businesses, grand openings business expo
- 21) Biz Buzz, newsletters, after hours parties
- 22) Biz Buzz Meetings Internet source
- 23) Networking
- 24) Biz Buzz Email Alerts 4500 Mailer
- 25) 1: Bizz Buzz 2: Visitor's Center 3: Newsletter (paper version)
- 26) Business networking Infomation provider Advertising
- 27) breakfast and after hours
- 28) 1. web 2. directory 3 networking lunches
- 29) After Hours Business resources through new website Continual growth and support of chamber members
- 30) business buzz
- 31) 1) Networking 2) Promoting our community to others outside the region 3) Business development, classes etc...
- 32) Any program which provides information of interest to the business and general community is appreciated. Examples: flood map issues; managing conflict within the workplace; customer service and what it really means; future plans for the city of Mount Vernon. (Many of these have been covered and have been good)
- 33) Chamber luncheons opportunity to display brochures
- 34) Biz Buzz Newsletters
- 35) Networking opportunities

- 36) Bizz-Buzz Luncheons (active) After hours
- 37) Networking opportunities among its members; Learning curves and business building resources; Generating activities beneficial to business and the public
- 38) 1.Business After Hours events, so fellow members can see what the sponsoring businesses are all about. 2.Lively and informative luncheons, including the Biz Buss meetings. 3.The lines of communication to all members, including newsletters, eChat, phone calls, etc, to help people feel and be involved.
- 39) circulating information for businesses to know what services are offered to all members. I'm very impressed with all the help that does exist from your office.
- 40) BUS BUZ & OTHER NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES NEWSLETTER WEB SITE
- 41) community info, connecting folks in community business, promoting our business community
- 42) networking,trade shows.....????
- 43) I am an inactive member
- 44) bizz buzz
- 45) Not Sure
- 46) The informative luncheons affording all businessmen/woman an opportunity to assemble and network once a month.
- 47) Don't know
- 48) 1.Forum for community 2.The voice of business 3.services
- 49) 1. Networking opportunities for the members to interact with other members, and describe and promote their lines of business. 2. Exposing members to the various political individuals among us, and giving them an opportunity to express themselves.
- 50) business development b2c bizz buzz
- 51) member support networking
- 52) networking, lunches, biz buz afterhour events.
- 53) Networking
- 54) Welcoming new businesses to the community Helping business and service people meet each other and network Welcoming people visiting Mt Vernon to our business community and downtown business opportunities, since the office is at Skagit Station
- 55) Biz Buz Being kept abreast regarding political issues. Link with schools to help educate students.
- 56) Regular meetings/programs
- 57) Biz Buz 3 degrees of separation Young professionals
- 58) I just joined the chamber and not really sure
- 59) After hours, bizz buzz
- 60) Networking Opportunities, Operation of the Visitor's Center, Government Affairs
- 61) Promote all downtown businesses
- 62) Biz Buzz After Hours

If you believe the Chamber needs to add or improve programs, which three would be the most important?

- 1) THE CHAMBER NEEDS TO PROMOTE & ACTIVELY SEEK ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEER HELP WITH OFFICE OPERATIONS. NO OTHER SUGGESTIONS.
- 2) After Hours Community Awareness Aid/Assistance options for businesses who are Chamber members.
- 3) I'm not sure.
- 4) Buy locally talk up the members Get members to work with other members Work closely with the city

government

- 5) Small business support/classes
- 6) more emphasis on tourism
- 7) I feel that the Chamber is doing a good job and since I have only been a part of it for a couple of months I do not have an answer yet.
- 8) At Biz Buzz,, Take a little more time to explain items....ie at the April luncheon there were cards for Kristen....w/ all the other stuff on the table...take a moment have the ambassadors hold up the card and then give instructions to sign. It truly is a buzz, take time to get the members' attention---and then say "We have three announcements to make or 27, but it gives the members an idea---"hey, I have to pay attention". I think the fact that Kristen going 'down', the torch was passed to Karen and Teresa and they are doing a tremendous job..we are well served.
- 9) I think the Mount Vernon Chamber should stop competing with the other Chambers. They should work together as they have done in the past. The concept of a "regional Chamber" is not necessary, does not foster a good business climate for Mount Vernon and causes hard feelings with other local Chambers.
- 10) more classes for smaller businesses have leadership classes on a smaller (shorter time) scale do something like the EDASC schmooze fair for the chamber. more mentoring of smaller businesses
- 11) 1. I was not able to answer some of the questions about the internal processes of the Chamber, perhaps more transparency on internal matters would be helpful. (example--a new hire was hired for this reason or reasons, from among a field of __ applicants based on these criteria.)
- 12) I would like to see improvements on the website that allow members to advertise inexpensively. I haven't researched the website as it stands, but it could be an interactive source of business were there links to member sites from the main site and then it would be good to have a report auto generated on how many hits were referred to the various sites. Also if there was a format which allowed members to develop blogs within the format.
- 13) Educatioal programs. Biz support, advice counselors. Business Start up grants, low interest loans. Youth programs, job postings, leads, education, employee rights classes.
- 14) no opinion
- 15) Allow for other sources for supporting: entrepreneurs/funding/angel investors meetings
- 16) I think the chamber does a great job of self-assessing, communicating and improving. But, if I had to choose: #1: Fewer, more focused programs (or perception of such) #2: Better communication within committees (some decisions made from the top-down aren't always communicated well to the "worker bees", which makes it difficult to want to stay engaged) #3: There are so many functions - it seems we're trying to be too much to too many. As businesses struggle, it is difficult to really feel a part of the chamber when there is so much to choose from. You just kind of get lost in it all - we're too small a community to get that feeling from our chamber activities.
- 17) Not sure
- 18) no change
- 19) 1. Web 2. Web 3 Web
- 20) Fewer biz-buzzes. :>) Like to feel that I've learned something valuable in attending chamber.
- 21) Reaching Latinos Bike lanes, make it attractive for people to get out of their cars
- 22) A focus on the needs of non-profits
- 23) Decent food at the Luncheons
- 24) Employee Relations skill resources; Service-related business support and recognition (Food Service, Transportation, Independent Healthcare facilities, etc.); Acknowledging the contributions of churches, non-profit organizations

- 25) N/A
- 26) create more programs that help business grow...possible have move in packages for people that are coming here to get before they get here...I could help them with rentals (busines or personal) as well as housing either for rent or to buy...
- 27) I am an inactive member
- 28) Don't know
- 29) You need to add a Veterans Advisory member to you're staff to work closely with veterans and disabled veterans in support of the upcoming veterans clinic coming to our community. I am certain that Rich Sundance is perfect for that position.
- 30) Don't know what programs they offer
- 31) business health programs
- 32) 1. Focus on question 31, now
- 33) 1. The addition of a Diversity Program needs to be explored, not only for ethnicity, but also for physical limitations, and other needs. How can we serve as a benefit to the general public? 2. The 2010 Olympics Committee needs to become more active, so we're ready when the time is here - is Pete in charge, or responsible, for this?
- 34) business integration into community dealing wiyh hispanic business for the betterment of community membership retention
- 35) programs are there, membership needs to be encouraged to look for them.
- 36) Proactive outreach and inclusion of Mt Vernon business owners of all colors/nationalities in the Chamber and all its functions. Sustainable business practices-- promoting energy efficiency, reducing the carbon footprint of the Valley. Work to preserve and sustain Skagit farmland as an economic base.
- 37) I would like to see emails simplified, more than most of us can read.
- 38) Continue to work with other partners in community -- city, schools, college, etc.
- 39) None
- 40) Unknown
- 41) An expanded tourism focus with attendance at more regional trade shows, an advertising campaign in the North West, and an overall broader focus in driving toursim to this region. This would include partening with other chambers and toursim entities. Given the unique character and setting of Skagit County, I think a better job could be done of driving tourism to this area; especially when considering the cost of travel and the trend of vacationers taking shorter/more local trips.

To the extent the Chamber management, including the Board, needs improvement, what areas are the most urgent?

- 1) I actually don't know anything about the politics, hiring procedures, mission statements, and business policies of the Chamber itself. There is no readily available information on this topic- but I would be interrested to know more.
- 2) I'm not familiar with Chamber management, outside of basic communication to members (which is excellent).
- 3) Getting new members with fresh ideas and keeping the board with new ideas and commitments to the chamber. Relying on same group of people burns them out and they need a refreshment period of time off to get re-charged.
- 4) no answer
- 5) I feel that the Chamber is doing a good job and since I have only been a part of it for a couple of months I do not have an answer yet.

- 6) I think the momentum created is great---don't be afraid to continue to blow your horn. I thought Karen did a great job talking about the 'film crews' in the area....
- 7) I really don't know what kinds of issues are relevant for the board. Since I am in another community, I come to the bizz buzz events and EDASC events, but don't know that much about the inner workings of the chamber at this point. Maybe I should take time to read more :-)
- 8) I think staff is great and the board is always friendly and is doing a great job!
- 9) I think management seems to be doing an excellent job, answer #33 for possible area of improvement, also, some Board members are fantastic in the level and quality of their involvement, some appear to be less committed and involved, certainly in terms of their time.
- 10) I am too new to comment on the management.
- 11) Not sure what you asking. Not familiar with the board or management. Maybe I need to be a little more active. We all need to improve, you may have one of the board members write a article and post it in the newsletter or newspaper.
- 12) no opinion
- 13) This survey seems to be geared to those who fork for and with the Chamber. How would I know the everyday dealings of Chamber volunteers, employees, budgets etc. This survey really served no purpose for me. It's like me asking you questions pertaining to my business and me expecting you to know the answers. I wish I really could have been of some help to you. All in all I think Chambers fit a need in a community but to what end ours does is a mistry. Seems like all of the organized functions is to have a social time with other business' in the area. Thank you Ed Gegen
- 14) Allowing other county funding/investors groups: invite to our meetings to supply what the local Skagit County banks can't
- 15) No Complaints! They have been awesome!!
- 16) The board is great, and I think term limits really solve a lot of most issues that may come up. The staff is really first rate. I am concerned about the "busy-ness" of the leadership. Sometimes more is just more. You're all great, though! thanks for your dedication.
- 17) Not sure
- 18) I'm too new to make any kind of judgement
- 19) I can't comment on management- I haven't seen enough to know
- 20) Continuing to get the general membership involved
- 21) initiate interest in sustainable business practices and proactive planning for climate change and reducing skagit valley's carbon footprint. include all cultures in the valley in chamber outreach and activities.
- 22) working with, not against (adversarial position), other chambers
- 23) Not aware of changes needed.
- 24) I couldn't say
- 25) I do not know.
- 26) Unable to comment; recent membership.
- 27) EVERYONE I'VE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH IS VERY PROFESSIONAL, FRIENDLY, AND HELPFUL. I BELIEVE THE STAFF IS SINCERE AND VERY GOOD AT WHAT THEY DO.
- 28) keeping good people in office that are growth friendly....
- 29) I am an inactive member
- 30) Not Sure
- 31) Everything the Chamber does yields results for the community, I would have to ask just how proactive is the Chamber in reaching outside the box and visiting business owners on their turf?

- 32) Not able to comment.
- 33) do not know
- 34) 1. I don't know of any... possibly consider the thoughts mentioned in #33 above.
- 35) more penalties for missing board meetings consistantly
- 36) Keep your survey to 20 questions or less to respect the participant's time. Make the questions relevant to the participant (i.e. questions regarding your hiring practices are difficult to discern from an outsider...)
- 37) to keep all information coming in a timely fashion.
- 38) Don't think there is any need urgent need for anything, just the regular demands of keeping everything moving forward.
- 39) Unknown
- 40) Integrity of the Mt. Vernon Business sector.
- 41) From my perspective, management is awesome; it's difficult to think of improvement.

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Release Version: 1.0.3