



OVRCC MEMBER SURVEY RESULTS

MARCH 2019

Prepared for:
Okemo Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce

Prepared by:
The Center for Research & Public Policy, Inc.



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Moreover, no information regarding these findings will be released without the written consent of an authorized representative of OVRCC.

1 Introduction

Page 4

2 Methodology

Page 5



3 Highlights

Page 6

4 Summary of Findings

Awareness	Page 9
History / Access	Page 9
Reasons for Membership	Page 10
Assessing Chamber Services	Page 10
Importance of Benefits	Page 16
Communication	Page 18
Long-Term Membership	Page 20
Needs	Page 20
Demographics	Page 21

5 Appendix

Page 24

Member Survey
Cross-Tabulations
Survey Instrument
Survey Composite
Former Member Survey
Survey Instrument
Survey Composite

1 INTRODUCTION

The Center for Research & Public Policy (CRPP) is pleased to present the results to a 2019 Member Survey for the Okemo Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce (OVRCC). The survey was designed to collect input from members about OVRCC's programs and services.

The research study included 57 completed survey responses.

The survey was conducted February 26 – March 19, 2019.

The survey included the following areas for investigation:

- **Awareness of OVRCC;**
- **History and frequency of access to OVRCC;**
- **Reasons for joining OVRCC;**
- **Assessments of Chamber services;**
- **Importance of Chamber benefits;**
- **Rating communication from the Chamber;**
- **Service needs from the Chamber; and,**
- **Demographics.**

Section 2 of this report discusses the Methodology used in the study while Section 3 includes Highlights derived from an analysis of the quantitative research. Section 4 is a Summary of Findings from the survey.

Section 5 is an Appendix to the report containing the composite aggregate data, cross tabulations and the survey instrument employed.

METHODOLOGY

Using a quantitative research design, CRPP received 57 completed online surveys from OVRCC members.

Survey development input was provided by the OVRCC Board of Directors and Staff.

Survey design is a careful, deliberative process to ensure fair, objective and balanced surveys. Staff members, with years of survey design experience, edit out any bias. Further, all scales used by CRPP (either numeric, such as one through ten, or wording such as strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree) are balanced evenly. Additionally, placement of questions is carefully accomplished so that order has minimal impact.

All online surveys were conducted February 26 – March 19, 2019. Respondents qualified for the survey if they were a current member of the OVRCC.

All facets of the study were completed by CRPP's senior staff and researchers. These aspects included: survey design, pre-test, computer programming, coding, editing, verification, validation and logic checks, computer analysis, analysis and report writing.

Statistically, a sample of 57 completed surveys has an associated margin for error of +/- 11.7% at a 95% confidence level.

Results throughout this report are presented for composite results – all 57 cases.

Cross tabulations of data were developed and are included with this report. These compare core survey questions by demographic subgroups such as: number of employees, number of years as a member, and type of business.

Readers of this report should note that any survey is analogous to a snapshot in time and results are only reflective of the time in which the survey was undertaken. Should concerted public relations or information campaigns be undertaken during or shortly after the fielding of the survey, the results contained herein may be expected to change and should be, therefore, carefully interpreted and extrapolated.

Each qualified member had an equal chance for participating in the study. Statistical random error, however, can never be eliminated but may be significantly reduced by increasing sample size.

HIGHLIGHTS

ON AWARENESS

Overall, a majority of members, 94.7%, reported being very (49.1%) or somewhat (45.6%) familiar with the OVRCC. Just 5.3% reported being somewhat unfamiliar with the OVRCC.

ON HISTORY / ACCESS

Two-fifths of members (42.1%) are engaging with the OVRCC on a monthly basis while about one-quarter of members are engaging with the OVRCC more often on a weekly basis (24.6%).

ON REASONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

The top four reported reasons members joined the OVRCC included:

- Membership increases my visibility – 77.2%
- My membership helps our regional community – 64.9%
- Helps me / us remain informed locally – 64.9%
- Want customers, business contacts and members of the community to know that my business is part of the Chamber – 64.9%

ON ASSESSING CHAMBER SERVICES

Impressively, the overall opinion of the Chamber is favorable -- 98.2% of members indicated their opinion was very (56.1%) or somewhat favorable (42.1%).

OVRCC characteristics with the highest positive ratings included:

- Leadership (staff and Board of Directors) – 86.0%
- Increasing visibility of member businesses to visitors to the area – 82.5%
- Increasing visibility of member businesses to local prospective customers – 75.4%

More than one-half of members described their relationship with the OVRCC today as a satisfied member (52.6%) while just over one-third of members described their relationship as a loyal member (35.1%). Few described their relationship as an advocate (7.0%).

Impressively, 98.2% of members were very (61.4%) or somewhat (36.8%) likely to recommend the OVRCC to other potential members. The remaining members, 1.8%, were unsure.

Further, over three-quarters of members (78.9%) feel that the OVRCC meets their expectations always (24.6%) or most of the times (54.4%).

In an open-ended format question, members were asked to name OVRCC strengths and areas requiring improvement. The most frequently mentioned of each include:

Strengths:

- Regional marketing, brochures, books, website – 16.8%
- Good leadership / Director – 15.8%
- Communication / keeping informed – 10.5%

Areas for Improvement:

- More mixers / networking / education – 18.8%
- Support / grant opportunities for non-profits – 12.5%
- More events to get all involved – 12.5%
- More cost-effective marketing / PR – 12.5%

When presented with the statement, “I would attribute some of our business growth to our Chamber membership,” almost one-half of members strongly or somewhat agreed (49.1%), while some members somewhat or strongly disagreed (22.8%). Another 28.1% were unsure.

Of those that strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement, “I would attribute some of our business growth to our Chamber membership”, 75.0% were unsure of what percentage of growth they would attribute to the OVRCC while others reported percentages ranging between 5%-65%.

ON IMPORTANCE OF BENEFITS

The Chamber benefits members believed to be the most important included:

- Advocating for business on the local, state and federal levels – 94.7%
- Business listing on the Chamber website – 93.0%
- Business listing in the Regional Guidebook – 82.5%
- The Chamber website – 82.5%

The most frequently cited benefits members have used over the past year included:

- Business listing in the Regional Guidebook – 75.4%
- Business listing on Chamber website – 64.9%
- The Chamber website – 63.2%

ON COMMUNICATION

A large majority of members felt that the communication from the OVRCC was about the right amount (94.7%). Only 3.5% of members felt there was too little. No member suggested “too much”.

Most members reported visiting the Chamber website in the last two years (87.7%). Majorities of members that have visited the website in the last two years agreed with several statements – ranging from 58.3% to 82.0% - regarding the website.

- The content or information needed is available – 82.0%
- I like the graphics or appearance – 80.0%
- It’s easy to maneuver within the website – 78.0%
- I am pleased with customer traffic I know is due to the Chamber Website [*Unsure responses removed from data] – 58.3%

Members were asked to report their preferred method of communication. Email was most preferred (94.7%), followed by phone calls (49.1%) and e-newsletters (42.1%).

ON LONG-TERM MEMBERSHIP

Top reasons members might discontinue their Chamber membership included:

- Business decline or closing – 54.4%
- Can’t afford the level of membership fees – 43.9%
- The Chamber is no longer relevant to our business – 43.9%
- Sense the Chamber is no longer benefitting the community – 43.9%

ON NEEDS

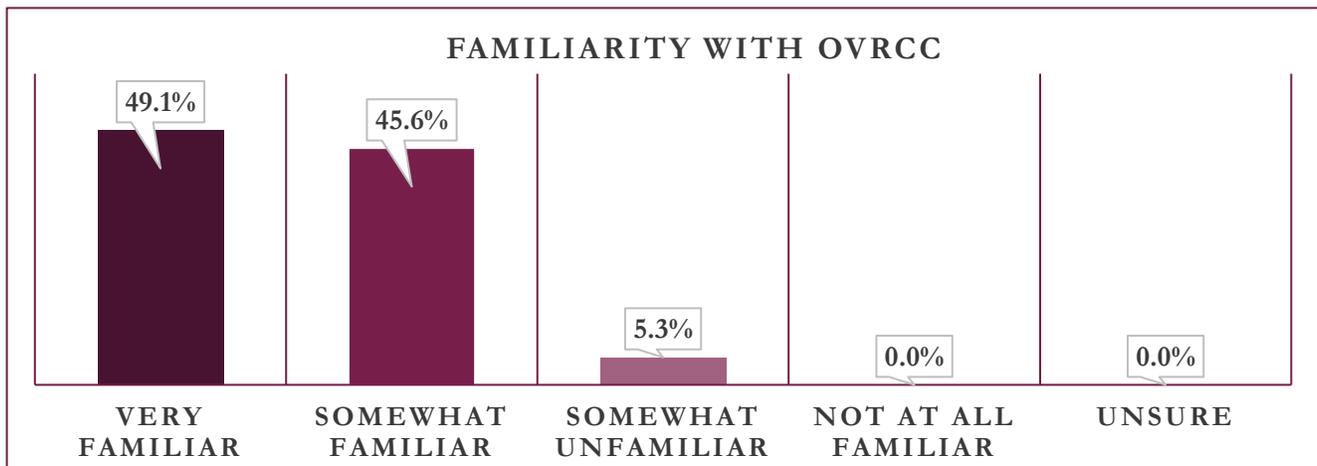
In an open-ended format question, the most frequently named needs members mentioned were the need for marketing training /education from the Chamber (33.3%) and learning more about services (benefits) available (16.7%).

4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Readers are reminded that the narrative throughout this report refers to composite aggregate data from 57 completed member surveys. Text, tables and graphs throughout this report present these composite results.

AWARENESS

Members were asked how familiar they would say they are with the OVRCC. A large majority of members, 94.7%, indicated they were very or somewhat familiar with OVRCC. Just 5.3% of members indicated they were somewhat unfamiliar with OVRCC. Results are displayed in the following graph.



HISTORY / ACCESS

Members were asked which best describes, on average, how often they engage with the Chamber in any form of interaction. The largest group of members, 42.1%, indicated they engage with OVRCC on a monthly basis. Results are displayed in the following table.

ENGAGEMENT WITH OVRCC	PERCENT
Daily	1.8
Weekly	24.6
Monthly	42.1
Quarterly	17.5
Annually	10.5
Never	0.0
Unsure	3.5

REASONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Members were asked to indicate the reason(s) they may have joined or became a member of the Chamber. Members indicated the leading reason was to increase their business visibility (77.2%), followed by that their membership helps the regional community, it helps them stay informed locally, and they want others to know their business is part of the chamber – each at 64.9%.

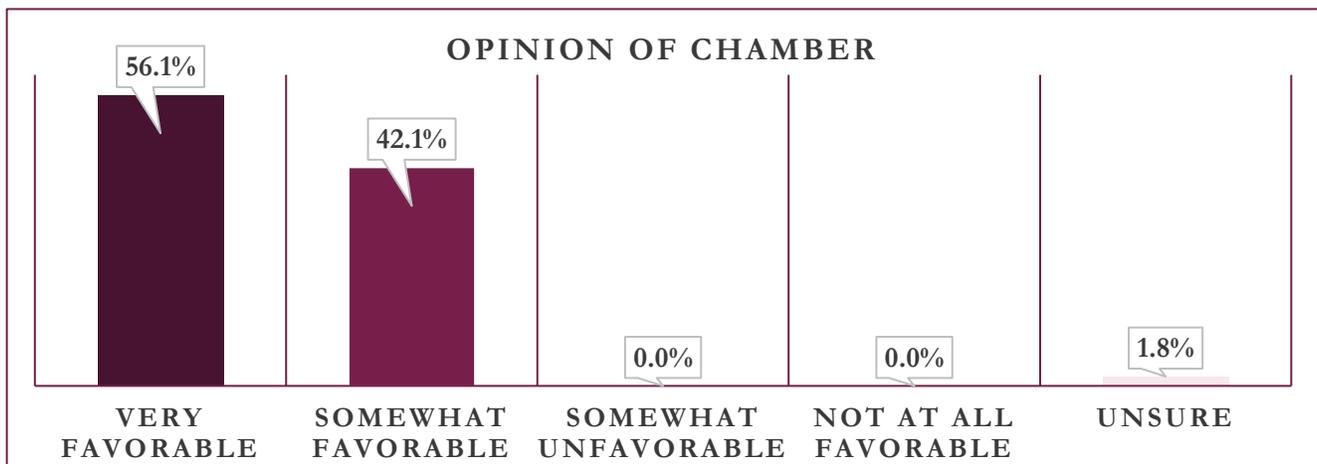
Multiple responses were accepted. The following table holds the cumulative totals in declining order.

REASONS FOR MEMBERSHIP	PERCENT
Membership increases my business visibility	77.2
My membership helps our regional community	64.9
Helps me/us remain informed locally	64.9
Want customers, business contacts and members of the community to know that my business is part of the chamber	64.9
Networking opportunities	56.1
Chamber education and workshop opportunities	35.1
My membership helps other business members thrive	31.6
Chamber events	29.8
Membership increases my business sales	26.3
The value or cost/benefits associated with membership	17.5
The benefits members receive	17.5
Health or other insurance offered	5.3
Other: (Please specify:)	3.5

Other mentioned: Helps community members see what activities are going on.

ASSESSING CHAMBER SERVICES

Members were asked to indicate their opinion of the Chamber overall. A large majority, 98.2%, indicated very or somewhat favorable, while only 1.8% were unsure. Results are displayed in the following graph.

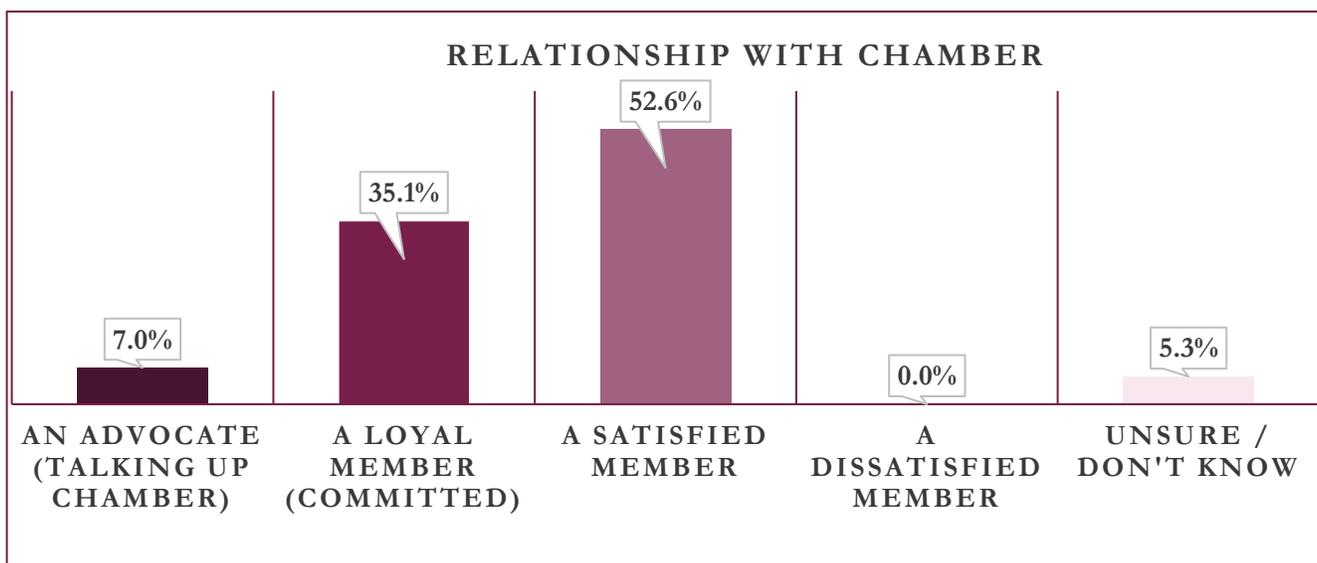


Members were asked to rate the Chamber on several characteristics using a scale of one to ten where one is very good and ten is very poor. Members provided the highest positive rating, 86.0%, for the leadership (staff and board of directors) at OVRCC. Only one-half of members, 50.9%, provided a positive rating for the Chamber spending its resources wisely.

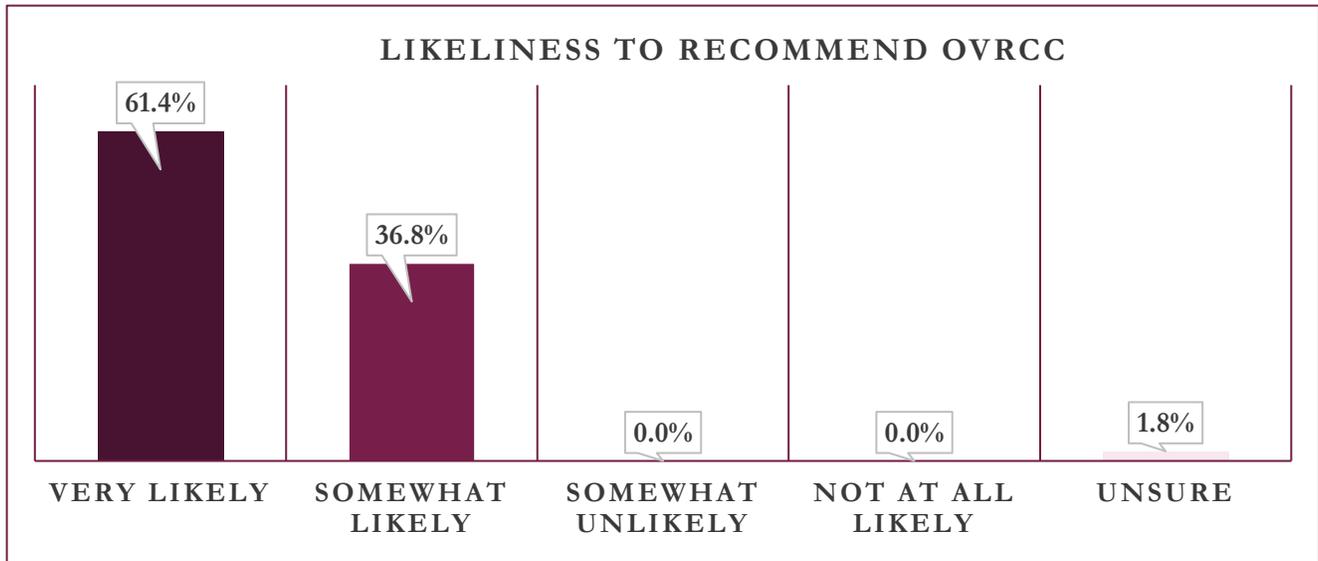
The following table holds the cumulative totals, in declining order, for the positive ratings of each characteristic.

CHARACTERISTICS	PERCENT (RATING 1-4, GOOD)
Leadership (staff and board of directors)	86.0
Increasing visibility of member businesses to visitors to the area	82.5
Increasing visibility of member businesses to local prospective customers	75.4
Providing essential member benefits/programs	68.4
The number of membership benefits available	68.4
The fee for membership	68.4
As a value – membership fee vs. benefits	66.7
Member to member discounts	64.9
Having member benefits that are relevant to my business	52.6
Spending its resources wisely	50.9

Members were asked to describe their relationship with the OVRCC today. Over one-half of members, 52.6%, indicated they would describe themselves as a satisfied member and just over one-third, 35.1%, indicated they would describe themselves as a loyal member (they are committed to a long-term relationship). Others, 7.0%, indicated they were advocates. Results are displayed in the following graph.



Members were asked how likely they would be to recommend the OVRCC to other potential members. A large majority of members, 98.2%, indicated they would be very, 61.4%, or somewhat, 36.8%, likely to recommend the OVRCC. Just 1.8% of members were unsure. Results are displayed in the following graph.



Members were asked how often the OVRCC meets their expectations. Over three-quarters of members, 78.9%, indicated OVRCC meets their expectations always or most of the time. Results are displayed in the following table.

MEETS EXPECTATIONS	PERCENT
Always	24.6
Most of the time	54.4
Sometimes	14.0
Seldom	1.8
Never	0.0
Unsure	5.3

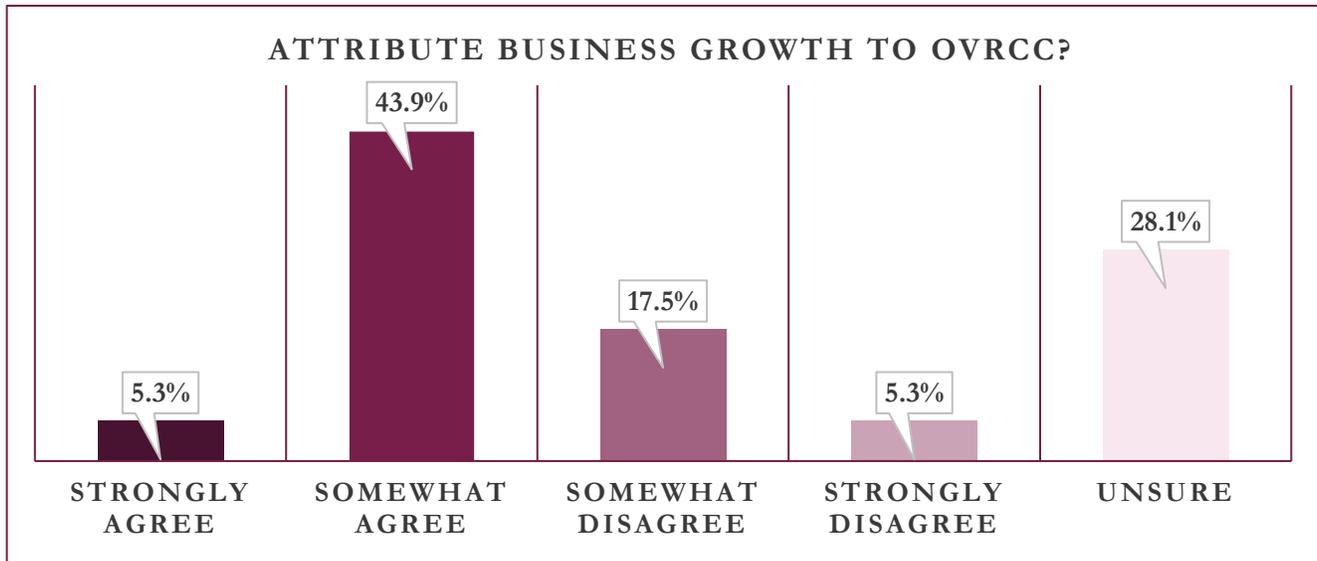
In an open-ended format question, members were asked to indicate strengths that OVRCC has today. Strengths mentioned most frequently included regional marketing (16.8%), leadership / Director (15.8%) and communication (10.5%). Responses are presented in the following table in declining order.

OVRCC STRENGTHS	PERCENT (N= 95)
Regional marketing brochures, book, website	16.8
Good leadership / Director	15.8
Communication / keeping informed	10.5
Visibility	9.5
Networking / mixers / events	9.5
Open to new ideas / opportunities	9.5
Support local / community events	7.4
Good location / visitor center	3.2
Good momentum / implementation	3.2
Professional image / reputation	2.1
Chamber is important to promote business	2.1
Strong membership	2.1
Connect with tourists	2.1
Current / in touch	2.1
Affordable	1.1
Benefits	1.1
Advocating outside of region	1.1
PR opportunities	1.1

In an open-ended format, members were asked to indicate areas for improvements they would suggest for the future. An area for improvement mentioned most frequently included wanting more mixers / networking / education (18.8%). Responses are presented in the following table in declining order.

OVRCC AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	PERCENT (N=32)
Want more mixers / networking / education	18.8
Support / grant opportunities for non-profits	12.5
More events to get all involved	12.5
More cost-effective marketing / PR	12.5
Support all businesses	6.3
Involve participating towns more	6.3
Banner program only for Ludlow businesses	3.1
Increase visibility in peak season	3.1
Timely responses	3.1
More social media	3.1
Broader marketing - New England	3.1
Affordable Health Care	3.1
Winter Carnival	3.1
Some visibility for non-members	3.1
Communication	3.1
More community involvement	3.1

Members were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement “I would attribute some of our business growth to our Chamber membership.” Almost one-half of members, 49.1%, indicated they strongly or somewhat agreed. Over one-quarter of members, 28.1%, indicated they were unsure. Results are displayed in the following graph.



Members that indicated they strongly or somewhat agree that the OVRCC has contributed to the growth of their business were asked by about what percentage their growth was. While three-quarters of members asked were unsure of the percentage of growth, others mentioned growth percentages from 5%-65%.

GROWTH PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY (N)
Unsure	21
5% Increase	2
10% Increase	3
25% Increase	1
65% Increase	1

IMPORTANCE OF BENEFITS

Members were asked to indicate the benefits they **believe are important for the Chamber to offer**. Advocating for business (94.7%) and the business listing on the Chamber website (93.0%) were considered most important, while benefits such as the Golf Tournament (28.1%) and Car and Craft Show (24.6%) were cited as least important.

Multiple responses were accepted. The following table holds the cumulative totals in declining order.

IMPORTANT MEMBER BENEFITS	PERCENT
Advocating for business on the local, state and federal levels	94.7
Business listing on Chamber website	93.0
Business listing in the Regional Guidebook	82.5
The Chamber website	82.5
Public Relations/Social Media service provided for chamber members	78.9
Mixers / Networking events	75.4
Education / Workshops	73.7
Ribbon-cutting ceremonies to announce new chamber members	71.9
Business support (including referrals)	66.7
Participation in Trade Shows	63.2
Banner ads on the Chamber website	61.4
Member-to-member discounts	56.1
Regional events	54.4
Cooperative advertising opportunities	54.4
Member help wanted ads posted on the Chamber website and social media	50.9
Webinars	40.4
The program: Lunch and Learn	38.6
Community Television Program	38.6
Health insurance program	35.1
Golf Tournament	28.1
Car and Craft Show	24.6
Other	0.0

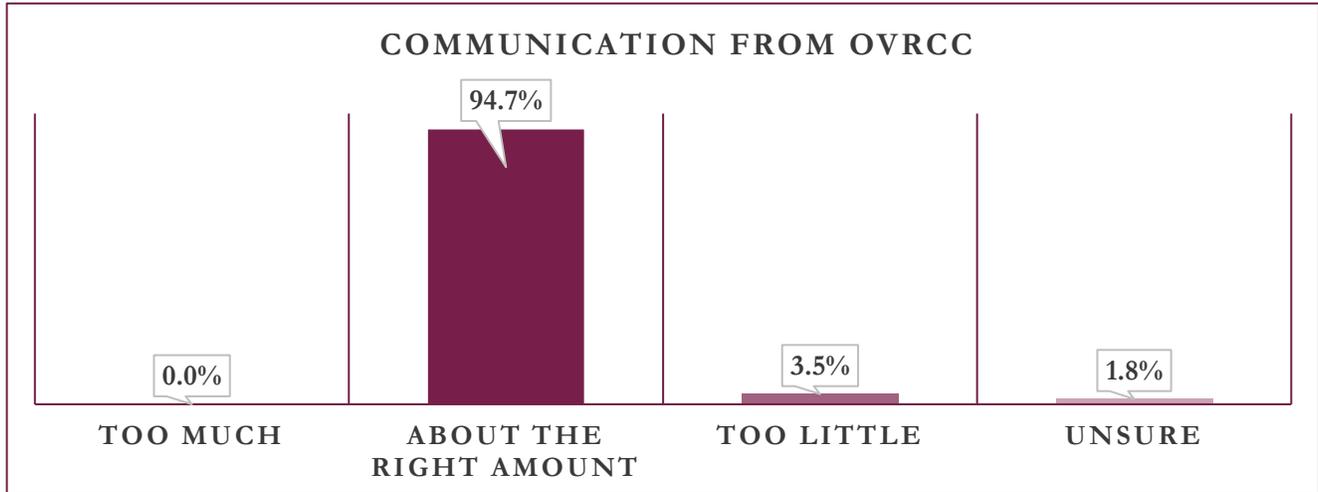
Members were asked to indicate the benefits they **have used over the past year**. Members used the business listing in the Regional Guidebook (75.4%) and the business listing on the Chamber website (64.9%) most frequently. No members indicated they used the webinars or participated in trade shows.

Multiple responses were accepted. The following table holds the cumulative totals in declining order.

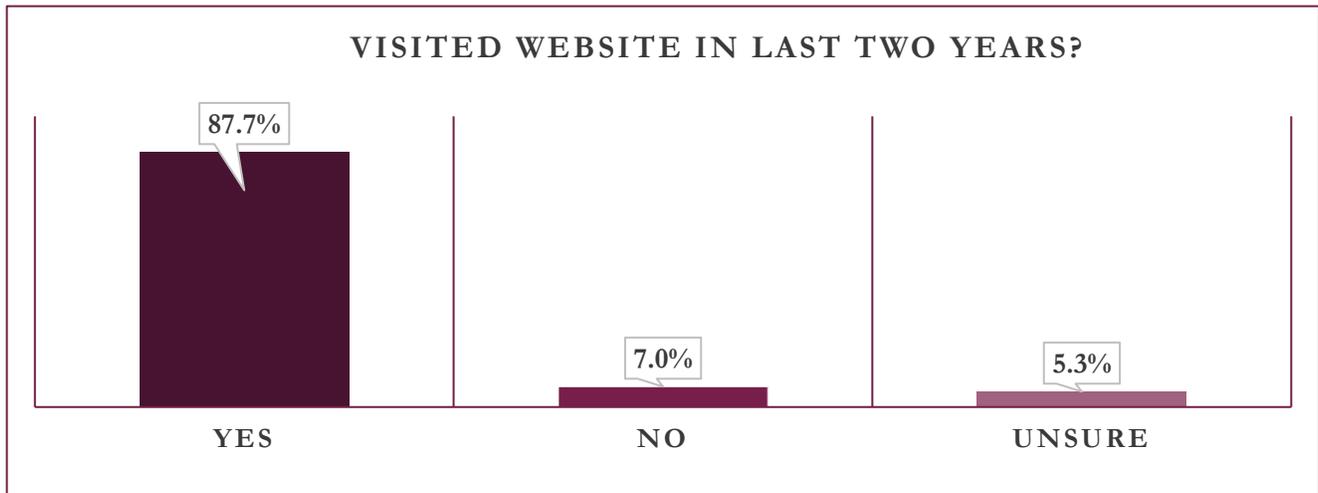
MEMBER BENEFITS USED	PERCENT
Business listing in the Regional Guidebook	75.4
Business listing on Chamber website	64.9
The Chamber website	63.2
Mixers / Networking events	54.4
Member-to-member discounts	31.6
Education / Workshops	31.6
Banner ads on the Chamber website	22.8
Business support (including referrals)	17.5
Ribbon-cutting ceremonies to announce new chamber members	15.8
The program: Lunch and Learn	15.8
Advocating for business on the local, state and federal levels	14.0
Community Television Program	10.5
Public Relations/Social Media service provided for chamber members	10.5
Cooperative advertising opportunities	8.8
Car and Craft Show	7.0
Golf Tournament	5.3
Member help wanted ads posted on the Chamber website and social media	5.3
Health insurance program	3.5
Regional events	1.8
Webinars	0.0
Participation in Trade Shows	0.0

COMMUNICATION

Members were asked to indicate whether communication from the Chamber is too much, about right, or too little. A large majority of members, 94.7%, indicated communication is about the right amount, while only 3.5% indicated it was too little. Results are displayed in the following graph.



Members were asked if they had visited the Chamber website within the last two years. A large majority of members, 87.7%, indicated they had. Results are displayed in the following graph.



Members that stated they had visited the Chamber website within the last two years were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with several statements rating the website. Results are displayed in the following table.

STATEMENT	PERCENT (STRONGLY OR SOMEWHAT AGREE)
The content or information needed is available	82.0
I like the graphics or appearance	80.0
It's easy to maneuver within the website	78.0
I am pleased with customer traffic I know is due to the Chamber Website [*Unsure responses removed from data]	58.3

Members were asked what their preferred method(s) of communication is/are with OVRCC. Members are most interested in email as a preferred method of communication (94.7%).

Multiple responses were accepted. The following table holds the cumulative totals in declining order.

METHOD OF COMMUNICATION	PERCENT
Email	94.7
Phone call	49.1
E-Newsletter	42.1
In-person meetings	31.6
Networking events	22.8
Social media	19.3
Workshops	10.5
Other	0.0

LONG-TERM MEMBERSHIP

Members were asked what might be a reason(s) be for them to ever discontinue their Chamber membership. Members indicated that business in decline or closing would be one of the top reasons for discontinuing (54.4%).

Multiple responses were accepted. The following table holds the cumulative totals in declining order.

REASON TO DISCONTINUE	PERCENT
Business decline or closing	54.4
Can't (couldn't) afford the level of membership fees	43.9
The Chamber is (was) no longer relevant to our business	43.9
Sense the Chamber is (was) no longer benefitting the community	43.9
Sense the Chamber is (was) no longer helping my business bottom line	38.6
The direction, plans and programming of the Chamber	31.6
Chamber benefits decline(d)	15.8
Health of owners	7.0
Other	7.0

Others mentioned included: retirement, wouldn't discontinue (have been a member since 60's), cost is expensive for that they receive.

NEEDS

In an open-ended format question, members were asked what benefits, support or education is needed, but not currently available from the Chamber, that they would recommend it to consider offering. The most frequently named responses are presented in the following table in declining order.

NEEDS	PERCENT (N=12)
Marketing training / education	33.3%
Enlighten business community to services available (including benefits out of town)	16.7%
Networking opportunities	8.3%
Small business advertising	8.3%
More committees	8.3%
Have Chamber play role in business development / recruiting	8.3%
Non-hospitality / food industry support	8.3%
Business owner meetings by industry	8.3%

DEMOGRAPHICS

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: FULLTIME	PERCENT
0-10	82.2
11-20	8.8
21 or more	8.8
AVERAGE	6.3 employees

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: PART-TIME	PERCENT
0-10	88.9
11-20	5.6
21 or more	5.6
AVERAGE	5.1 employees

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: SEASONAL	PERCENT
0-10	88.5
11-20	3.8
21 or more	7.6
AVERAGE	5.0 employees

NUMBER OF YEARS AS A MEMBER (INCLUDING NON-CONSECUTIVE YEARS)	PERCENT (N=36)
0-10	58.3
11-20	27.9
21 or more	14.0
AVERAGE	12.8 years

TYPE OF BUSINESS? (MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED)	PERCENT
Dining	12.3
Shopping	29.8
Lodging	22.2
Recreation / Attractions	14.0
Services / Professional Services	36.8
Not-for-profit	17.5
Farming / Agriculture	10.5
Other	7.0

HEALTH OF BUSINESS CLIMATE IN REGION	PERCENT
Very Strong	12.3
Somewhat Strong	59.6
Somewhat Weak	22.8
Very Weak	3.5
Unsure	1.8

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ABOUT BUSINESS CLIMATE – OPEN ENDED

Seems to fluctuate, but has a good base of businesses with a handful coming and going.

The State needs to become serious about economic development and remove obstacles for growth unless it wants to depend on tourism forever.

State regulation and idealism will increasingly become challenges for any business in Vermont. Few if any policies/programs coming out of Montpelier help to promote business.

Too many sleeping accommodations for no larger increase in number of guests to the area.

We still need a growth in diverse businesses and engaging businesses in all the different towns. Need to support regional events versus just those in your personal town.

RE seems strong, tourism seems strong but locals still are struggling financially. Will be sad to lose the High School next year...and am hoping that does not cause families to move away or never settle here. We have to keep LES and MT Holly School strong and viable. we need young families to move here full time.

I am optimistic about the business climate over the next few years.

Noticed a decline in sales.

I can only speak about my business climate and I feel I should be reaching more clients.

The ski season is strong.

Difficult to attract youthful workers at reasonable wages and high cost of doing business in Vermont.

Relies too heavily on the business from Okemo Mtn. Would be healthy to diversify and attract other types of business. Also, we are in great need of cell and high-speed internet in the area as a number one priority.

So many challenges in this day and age.

Seasonality of business is an issue.

Retail is especially difficult. Chester is a more challenging area than Ludlow.

It is hard to compete with Bromley Mountain next door.

With the Vail takeover, I would think that all businesses in Ludlow have seen incredible growth.

Need More Corporate opportunities.

We felt that the Vail takeover of Okemo brought new visitors to Ludlow this winter which benefits small businesses in town.

Very hard to find employees.

Labor shortages.

Vermont is a tough place to do business, the legislature is not necessarily an advocate for businesses.

5 APPENDIX

INTERPRETATION OF AGGREGATE RESULTS

The computer processed data for this survey are presented in the following frequency distributions. It is important to note that the wordings of the variable labels and value labels in the computer-processed data are largely abbreviated descriptions of the Questionnaire items and available response categories.

The frequency distributions include the category or response for the question items. Responses deemed not appropriate for classification have been grouped together under the “Other” code.

Each frequency distribution includes the absolute observed occurrence of each response (i.e. the total number of cases in each category). Immediately adjacent to the right of the column of absolute frequencies is the column of relative frequencies. These are the percentages of cases falling in each category response, including those cases designated as missing data. To the right of the relative frequency column is the adjusted frequency distribution column that contains the relative frequencies based on the legitimate (i.e. non-missing) cases. That is, the total base for the adjusted frequency distribution excludes the missing data. For many Questionnaire items, the relative frequencies and the adjusted frequencies will be nearly the same. However, some items that elicit a sizable number of missing data will produce quite substantial percentage differences between the two columns of frequencies. The careful analyst will cautiously consider both distributions.

The last column of data within the frequency distribution is the cumulative frequency distribution (Cum Freq.). This column is simply an adjusted frequency distribution of the sum of all previous categories of response and the current category of response. Its primary usefulness is to gauge some ordered or ranked meaning.