



## NORTH LONDON BUSINESS SURVEY 2009

### Introduction

The second North London Business Survey has been conducted with this document summarising the results. Extensive planning preceded the survey with research into survey methods, best practice through our sister agencies and consultation on questions asked. We chose an e-mail survey as it proved to be more cost effective and easier for companies to respond than the previous year's postal survey. We will continue to send the survey via e-mail as there has been a 67% increase in responses compared to the previous year. 3,500 surveys were sent out for 27th March 2009 to our Connect subscribers and to a selection of businesses by email with an 8<sup>th</sup> May 2009 deadline.

### Analysis

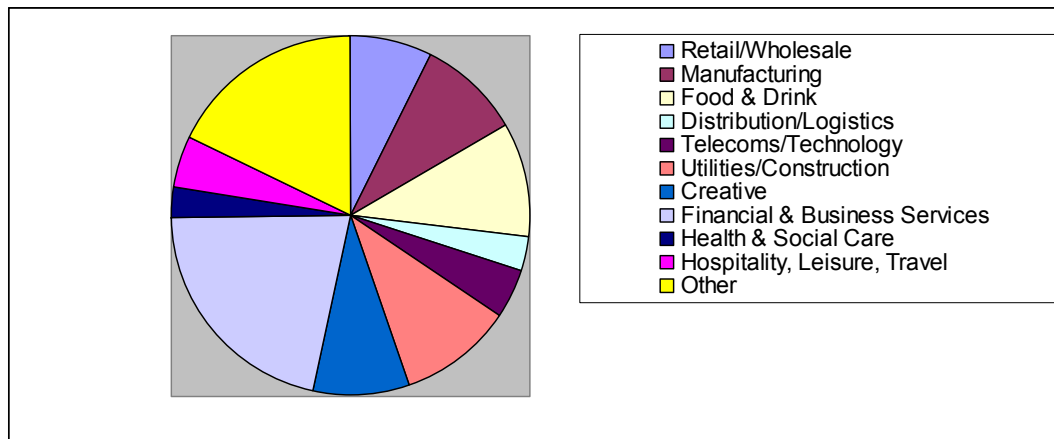
We conducted our results analysis in house, made possible by the nature of our questions posed, the statistics background of NLB staff and efficiency savings. All returned surveys included the recipients contact details which will be used to maintain our databases and to action their responses where follow up is required.

### Results by question

This section writes out each question then monitors the response where it is a tick box response or by summarising with narrative for a free text response.

#### 2. What is the main activity of your business?

Retail/Wholesale	7.5%
Manufacturing	9.3%
Food & Drink	10.3%
Distribution/Logistics	2.8%
Telecoms/Technology	4.7%
Utilities/Construction	10.3%
Creative	8.4%
<b>Financial &amp; Business Services</b>	<b>21.5%</b>
Health & Social Care	2.8%
Hospitality, Leisure, Travel	4.7%
Other	17.8%
Did not specify	0%



These industry categories were chosen to maintain consistency with the NLB CRM system. The level of response is not indicative of the sectors in North London with for example distribution/logistics having very few responses but we know is a major sector. As such this reflects the sporadic nature of who completes a survey and not an imbalance of our chosen recipients.

### 3. How many years has your business been operating?

1-2 years	9.3%
2-10 years	31.8%
<b>10 years+</b>	<b>56.1%</b>
Did not specify	2.8%

Our survey has targeted a good cross section of newly started and established businesses. With an average age of 19 years North London's businesses are in general, well established.

### 4. How many people does your company employ?

<b>1-9</b>	<b>65.4%</b>
10-19	13.1%
20-49	8.4%
50-199	10.3%
200+	2.8%

This information has consistency with responses in question 6 in that we would typically expect companies with lower turnovers to have fewer staff.

### 5. Over the next 12 months how do you expect your staff numbers to change (%)?

<b>Increase</b>	<b>40.2%</b>
Decrease	19.6%
<b>Did not specify</b>	<b>40.2%</b>

It is promising that a high percentage of the companies that answered this question expect their staff numbers to increase. Of those who responded the average increase that is expected is 20.9% and the average decrease is 17.4%.

### 6. Into which band does your turnover fall (£)?

<b>0-100,000</b>	<b>38.3%</b>
100,000-500,000	26.2%
500,000-1m	10.3%

1m-5m	13.1%
5m-10m	6.5%
10m+	2.8%
Not specified	2.8%

This information has consistency with the responses in question 4 in that we would typically expect smaller companies to have lower turnovers. It is suggested that in the next survey we target more of the larger companies in North London.

**7. What size are your premises?**

<b>0-3000 sq ft</b>	<b>50.5%</b>
3000-10000 sq ft	9.3%
10000+ sq ft	17.8%
Did not specify	22.4%

The above information is consistent with the employee numbers and backs up the fact that North London is not a major employer location in comparison to say central London where many large company headquarters are based.

**8. Are your premises freehold, leasehold or short term rented?**

Freehold	31.8%
<b>Leasehold</b>	<b>38.3%</b>
Short term rented	19.6%
Did not specify	10.3%

Again, the above results concur with premise size and employee numbers in that one would expect small and/or new companies to have short term tenancy arrangements. Many respondents did state they work from home which is why the percentage of freehold properties is so high.

**9. Within the next 12 months are you considering:**

Expanding your existing premises	9.3%
Relocating to new premises within North London	12.2%
Relocating to new premises outside North London	7.5%
Acquiring additional premises	6.5%
Reducing the size of your premises	3.7%
Closing down	1.9%
<b>None of the above</b>	<b>58.9%</b>

This is key information for use in our core business growth role which will be acted upon by NLB. A high proportion of companies are looking at relocation both within and outside of North London showing the importance and worth of our online property search. In reality many of these firms looking for premises may be on a long term timescale but this is indicative of an optimistic outlook to their business. Over half of the respondents intend to stay as they are, indicating the stagnant nature of the economy and a cautious approach from businesses.

**10. If you are considering acquiring new/additional premises, please tick in order of importance which factors that would influence your decision on where this property would be located:**

The most important factor in choosing premises is affordability – the inference being North London is currently successful in part due to its stock of an affordable range of premises.

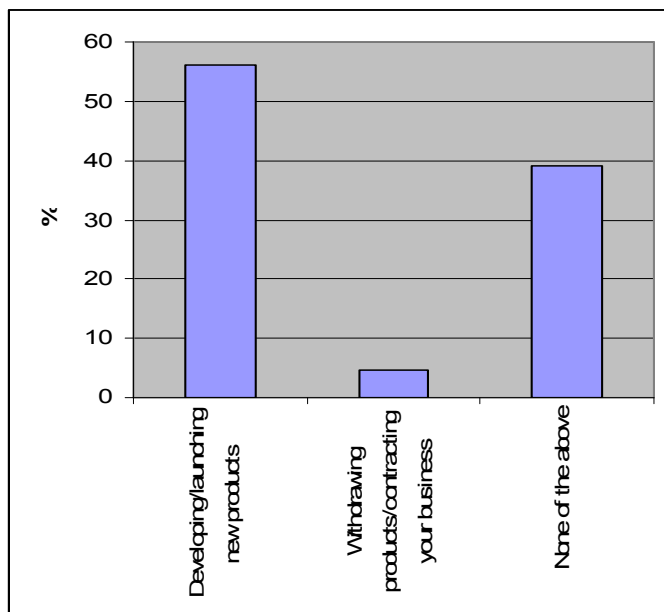
The next most important factor is quality of premises, this is expected as even if premises are very cheap a basic level of quality and serviceability is necessary in order to function.

The two other factors that were felt to be important were, Access to transport links and access to markets. Access to transport links is particularly important to manufacturing and distribution companies which North London is home to a lot. Access to markets is important for most industries in this survey however their product will dictate how crucial this is in relation to other factors.

**11. Within the next twelve months will you be:  
Developing/launching new products**

Withdrawing products/contracting your business  
None of the above

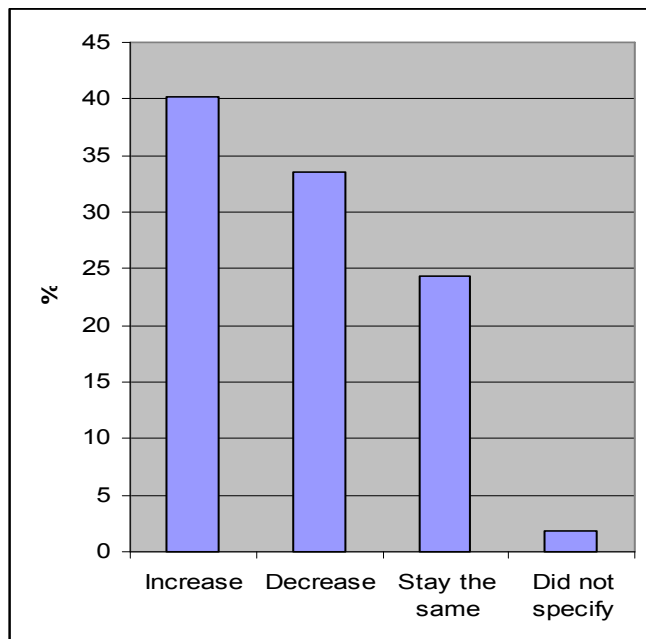
**56.1%**  
4.7%  
39.2%



The above is an excellent indication of the innovation of North London's businesses.

**12. How do you predict your trading performance in 2009 will compare to 2008?**

**Increase** 40.2%  
Decrease 33.6%  
Stay the same 24.3%  
Did not specify 1.9%

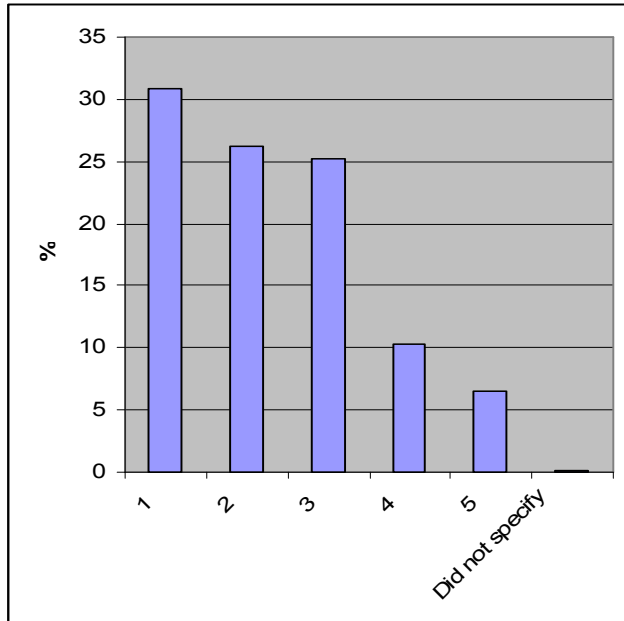


With the economy the way it is we expect some companies trading performance to decrease but it is very encouraging that so many North London businesses predict theirs will increase in 2009.

**13. How satisfied are you currently with North London as a business location? Please rank 1-5 (1 is very satisfied, 5 is not at all satisfied).**

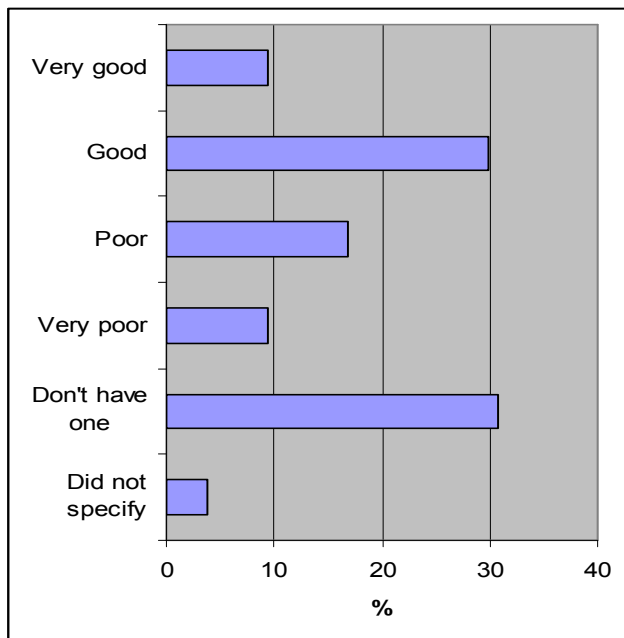
<b>1</b>	<b>30.9%</b>
2	26.2%
3	25.2%
4	10.3%
5	6.5%
Did not specify	0.9%

The majority of businesses have a high level of satisfaction of North London as a business location with more companies being satisfied than not satisfied.



**14. How would you describe your relationship, if any, with the local borough council?**

Compared to last years survey the relationships between North London businesses and their local council has improved greatly, going from 15.6% commenting on good relations to 39.3%. Unfortunately a number of local businesses still feel they have a poor or non existent relationship with their local council.

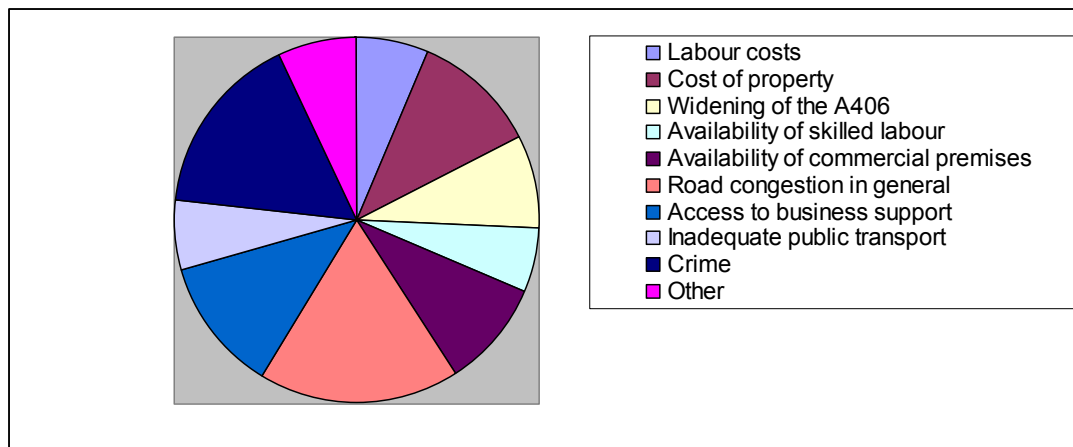


**15. How would you rate the following services your local borough provides?**

Following last years results refuse collection has gone from being one of the poorest performing services to the best based on 2009 responses. Health and Safety and Trading Standards were considered the next best performing services. Business rates and Parking control were once again rated very poorly.

**16. What do you think are the top three issues in North London that you believe need to be addressed?**

Labour costs	19.5%
Cost of property	32.7%
Widening of the A406	25.1%
Availability of skilled labour	16.7%
Availability of commercial premises	28.8%
<b>Road congestion in general</b>	<b>53.2%</b>
<b>Access to business support</b>	<b>35.5%</b>
Inadequate public transport	18.6%
<b>Crime</b>	<b>49.4%</b>
Other	20.5% - Rates, parking, lack of freehold commercial properties.



Note the top three issues from each respondent have been grouped together so percentages sum to 300, giving a relative weighting to their rank. As previous questions have demonstrated the top issues are no surprise, congestion a clear leader with crime, cost of property and access to business support all coming in next.

**17. How likely is it that your business will remain in one of the North London Boroughs in the next 3 Years?**

86.0% of businesses said it was likely that they will remain in North London in the next 3 years with only 13.1% stating that it wasn't very likely.

**18. Can you indicate the top three challenges your business will face over the coming 12 months?**

Although there were many different responses to this question (full list available on request) the top three challenges that business will face over the coming 12 months are increasing turnover, maintaining cash flow and surviving the recession.

**19. North London enjoys a highly accessible location but can you indicate two improvements to the transport system that would help capitalise on this prime location:**

Again there were many different responses to this question (full list available on request) but the top two improvements to the transport system that businesses felt were necessary are widening of the A406 and to minimize parking restrictions.

**20. Would you like us to add you to our subscription list for Connect, the free bi-monthly business magazine for North London?**

71.9% of responses said they would like receive Connect.

**21. North London Business offers a free commercial property service as well as access to other business support. Have you ever used the services of North London Business?**

70.1% of responses said they have not used any of NLB's services.

**22. Are you interested in finding out more about the services North London Business can provide you with?**

61.7% of responses said they would be interested in finding out more about the services of NLB.

**23. Please make any additional comments or expand on any of the above answers.**

A full list of comments are available on request.