



METROPOLITAN HALIFAX  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

*'The Voice of Business'*

## **Results of the 1998 Member Satisfaction Survey**

As part of its ongoing commitment to effectively meet the needs and priorities of its members, the Metropolitan Halifax Chamber of Commerce conducted a membership survey this fall. The survey is part of an annual process which alternates between longer in-depth surveys that cover a comprehensive range of topics (last done in 1997) and shorter, more focused surveys like the one conducted this year. These surveys serve an important purpose in providing the Chamber with valuable feedback on how well it is doing in serving its membership, and also to help direct the Chamber's focus on policy issues. The 1998 member survey was once again conducted with the support of Corporate Research Associates, whose assistance was provided on a volunteer basis. A total of 613 individual members responded to this year's survey, which represents more than one-quarter of the Chamber's membership.

### **Overall Satisfaction**

Previous surveys have shown a high level of satisfaction with the Chamber, and in 1998 members are more positive than ever before. Nine in ten (89%) of those responding are at least somewhat satisfied overall with their membership in Chamber of Commerce, compared with 86 percent in 1997 and 81 percent in 1995. More important, three-quarters of those surveyed this year are mostly (53%) if not completely (23%) satisfied, compared with less than five percent who express dissatisfaction.

### **Valuable Services and Activities**

Such high levels of satisfaction can be linked to the value that members find in many of the important services and opportunities made available through the Chamber, and the 1998 survey shows improved ratings in all areas. Networking is the number one reason why most people join the Chamber, and close to four in ten (37%) members say the Chamber's networking events offer significant value (up 5 percentage points since last year), with another 31 percent rating networking events to provide moderate value.

Over the past year, the Chamber has put an increased emphasis on representing the business community on public policy issues, and this effort has been recognized, with seven in ten rating these activities as offering significant or moderate value (up 12 points from 1997). Members are also more positive than before in placing significant value in the Chambers' publications (e.g. *Business Voice*) (up 6 points), the work of committees and task forces (up 8 points), the Annual Spring and Fall dinners (up 2 points) and member discounts and benefits (up 6 points).

## **Communications**

Member communications continues to be a key strength, with virtually all of the members responding to this survey indicating they are completely (68%) or mostly (25%) satisfied with the way in which the Chamber keeps them informed about activities, events and services. Success in this area can be attributed in part to effective communication vehicles and innovation in such areas as e-mail notices; 84 percent of members who receive e-mail notices from the Chamber are completely or mostly satisfied with this form of contact.

But effective communications is more than technology, and the Chamber's success in this area is a reflection of its staff. Three-quarters of members are completely (45%) or mostly (35%) satisfied with the level of service provided by Chamber staff, and most of the remainder are those who have not (yet) had enough contact with staff members to offer a rating.

## **The Chamber as the Voice of Business**

One of the Chamber's principal roles is to represent the interests of its members and the business community in general. Results from the survey show that members are generally positive about the Chamber's performance in this area, but at the same time many can also see room for improvement. Roughly eight in ten members believe the Chamber is at least generally effective in representing the interests of business (84%), in addressing emerging business issues (84%) and lobbying government on behalf of business (78%). But in each case no more than one-quarter of those responding rate the Chamber as very effective. Moreover, the Chamber is not yet seen as providing a strong role in servicing the needs of emerging industries such as information technology and film; just over half (53%) feel the Chamber is effective in this area, while one-third (34%) could not offer any opinion.