



Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce
Press Release
For Immediate Release

Fort Frances, Ontario
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Survey Reveals Shoppers are Generally Satisfied

135 consumers shared their thoughts and opinions on everything from their satisfaction with customer service to store hours to what they would like to see added to the local business community in the first ever Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce consumer survey, which ran from August 15 to September 15.

Cassandra Parise, Community Development Officer for the Chamber, who created and organized the survey, said she was very pleased with the response rate and input received. “The survey revealed a lot about what people want locally - why they’re shopping here and why they’re not. All great information that we can now share with the business community to help them meet the needs or increase the level of satisfaction of consumers”.

Parise shared the results of the survey with the Chamber Board of Directors at a recent meeting, revealing the following results:

Of the 135 respondents, 72% were between 30-59 years of age. 73% were residents of Fort Frances; 24% responded from the District; while 4% were from other parts of Canada and 1% reside in the United States.

Consumers shop Fort Frances because of the convenience and location, to support local business and the economy and because they know the owner or employees. Consumers do Not shop Fort Frances due to the lack of selection, high prices and poor customer service experiences.

The most important factor to consumers when shopping was customer service which ranked in at 95%. Product selection, price and consistent store hours also ranked in at over 70% each.

The majority of consumers purchase groceries, personal products, professional services and home & garden products/services in Fort Frances but purchase their clothing and footwear in other parts of Canada and the United States. Entertainment including video rentals are purchased mostly in the United States.

86% of respondents were sometimes satisfied with their purchase or service in Fort Frances while 71% were NOT satisfied and 54% were generally satisfied with their purchase or service in Fort Frances.

58% were NOT satisfied with their purchase or service in the District; 71% were satisfied with their purchase or service in other parts of Canada while 81% of respondents were satisfied with their purchase or service in the United States. Of those responding, no one was never NOT satisfied with their purchase or service in the United States or other parts of Canada.

When asked what motivates consumers to purchase products or services in Fort Frances, 95% stated convenience; 92% are motivated because they know the owner or employees; and 90% purchase their products or services in Fort Frances to support local business.

30% shop in the District because of good service while 28% of respondents shop the District because they know the owner and employees and to support local business.

65% stated product selection was what motivated them to shop other parts of Canada while 58% rated high quality and 43% said low price were their motivators.

83% of consumers are motivated to shop in the United States because of low price; 71% because of product selection; and 45% shop in the United States because of the good service they receive.

The majority of respondents or 78% would purchase more products and services locally if more of what they needed were available in Fort Frances. 22% said they might purchase more if more was available while no one said they would NOT purchase more if more was available.

And finally, when asked what additional businesses Fort Frances could benefit from, top responses included restaurant (family not pizza) - 70%, movie theatre - 64%, book store - 51%, shoe store - 48%, doctor/health care provider - 47% and women's clothing store and grocery store also ranked over 40% each.

The survey results will now go to the Chamber's Executive committee for review, analysis and action planning.

The Chamber, in partnership with the Rainy River Future Development Corporation, is already in the process of bringing in a guest speaker on the importance of good customer service and how to get there. Maggie (Milne) Chicoine, from Thunder Bay will host a seminar Wednesday, October 22 for the business community. The seminar will cover what it takes for a business to succeed when uncontrollable challenges seem to crop up at every turn, why businesses should link with each other, how to take steps for connecting for everyone's best service benefit and a step by step guide for small business to help revise your customer service plan.

Details on the customer service seminar including location will be available in the coming days.

The Executive committee will also be reviewing the possibility of having the survey on their web-site permanently for consumers to share their thoughts and opinions on an on-going continual basis with results being tabulated quarterly.

The Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce would like to thank everyone who participated in the consumer survey as well as the businesses who had the surveys available for pick up - Wilson's Business Solutions, Walmart, Canadian Tire, Northwood's Gallery & Gifts, Kettles Restaurant, Howarth's Home Centre, La Place Rendez-Vous and Rainy Lake Sports & Tackle.

As an incentive for consumers to fill out the survey, a \$50.00 Chamber Gift Certificate was up for grabs. Karen Angus was the lucky winner.

For a complete break-down of all the consumer survey questions and results, please visit the Chamber website at www.fortfranceschamber.com or call Parise at 807-274-5773.

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