

BUSINESS SURVEY

1. Indicate the category that best describes your business by checking one line only:

Service (37)	Professional (18)	Retail (11)	Other (10)
Manufacturing (6)	Distribution (2)	Property Management (2)	

2. How long have you been in business?

1-5 Years (8)	6-10 Years (13)	11-25 Years (26)
26-50 Years (17)	51-100 Years (11)	Over 100 Years (4)

3. How long has your business been located in Milford?

1-5 Years (11)	6-10 Years (17)	11-25 Years (23)
26-50 Years (16)	51-100 Years (7)	Over 100 Years (3)

4. Why is your business located in Milford?
 1. Hometown – Family Business (35)
 2. Location – Customer Base (26)
 3. Community Values (5)
 4. Serve the Milford Community (4)
 5. Zoning Favorable (2)
 6. Available Property (2)
 7. Didn't know Difficulty with P&Z (1)

5. Is your business: Local (50) Regional (17) Global (7) National (5)

6. How many full time and part time employees do you have?

Full Time – 2,419	Part Time – 67
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7. Does the available workforce meet your needs? Yes (67) No (9)

8. Do you currently need any assistance from state or local agencies and do you have job training needs?

Need Assistance – Yes (9) No (69) Job Training Needs – Yes (9) No (68)

9. Currently the business climate is very challenging. Do you think it is improving? Yes (28) No (43)

10. Do you feel your company will potentially hire new employees in:
- | | | | |
|------|----------|---------|----------------|
| 2011 | Yes (30) | No (46) | How Many (142) |
| 2012 | Yes (21) | No (44) | How Many (145) |
11. What “Milford” issues have the greatest impact on your business?
- | | |
|---|---|
| Business property tax (36) | Traffic patterns (18) |
| Building Department process (34) | Public safety (14) |
| Planning & Zoning process (33) | Crime (13) |
| Location (22) | Large inventory of available space (12) |
| Parking (21) | Blighted properties (8) |
| Revitalization of business districts (20) | Other (5) |
- 1) Property Values Related to Equity Credit for Home Improvements
 - 2) School System – Kids Demographics
 - 3) Taxes – (2)
 - 4) Illegal Massage Businesses in Milford (I know of 3!!!)
12. What are your company’s growth challenges?
- 1) Need more foot traffic/if more parking, more traffic.
 - 2) Growing & maintaining market share, available credit to homeowners, “green” product offerings.
 - 3) Revitalization of downtown.
 - 4) Our business is dependent upon other independent small business – we have a shrinking customer base as box stores take over the area.
 - 5) Finding physicians.
 - 6) The current housing market.
 - 7) Being aware of and keeping abreast of changing trends and attitudes regarding the funeral procession.
 - 8) Located in city building with limited access and unable to change location or introduce products for convenience of our members.
 - 9) Planning & Zoning’s requirements for signage. Made me take down my only sign – now business is in toilet.
 - 10) Getting people educated on the benefits of clinical research.
 - 11) Trying to compete with foreign people who aren’t USA born citizens! They should not be in this country period!
 - 12) Legitimizing massage as a profession that’s licensed when there are 3 “non-licensed” biz in Milford.
 - 13) Cannot buy either building on either side.
 - 14) Limited (by contract) to market only in CT.
 - 15) Economy – Consumer Confidence (24)
 - 16) New Business and Product Development (6)
 - 17) Lack of Business Capital/Cash Flow (6)

- 18) Lack of Qualified Workforce (4)
- 19) Permitting Process, P&Z and Building (3)
- 20) Healthcare Costs/Reform (3)
- 21) State and National Regulations/Compliance (3)
- 22) Growing and Maintaining Market Share (2)
- 23) Available Credit to Homeowners (2)
- 24) Taxes (2)

13. What are the assets that Milford offers you as a business?

- 1) Location/Highway Access/Rail (28)
- 2) Well-Run Town – Good City Services (17)
- 3) Quality of Life (17)
- 4) Population/Good Mixed of Socio-Economic Levels/Age/Diverse (9)
- 5) Low Crime Rate (8)
- 6) Good Chamber (7)
- 7) Physical Beauty/Shoreline (5)
- 8) Downtown/New England Feel (5)
- 9) Good Mix of Residential & Commercial (5)
- 10) Diverse Economy (5)
- 11) Good Business Climate/Resources (4)
- 12) Good Available Workforce (2)

14. A. What are the largest business challenges you have in Milford?
 B. How can they be improved or solved?

- 1. **Permitting Process** – The permitting process and Building Department inspection requirements – long delays to get inspected – Economic Development – Building – and Planning & Zoning should work for Milford residents not to discourage development – Building Department more user friendly. It is not the process, it is the arrogant people & how they misinterpret the “law” – Building Department is always a challenge – can be more informative & less frivolous – Planning & Zoning. Allow me to put my sign back up – Ease of Building Department process – Put people in charge of departments that are from Milford – I have not recently needed to deal with the Building Department or P&Z but have heard this can be difficult – Zoning & Building – Attitude of Building Dept. – Fire Tom Raucci & Sulkis and replace them with people who want the job and will treat taxpayers with respect – Inept Building Department – Fire the staff – permit process needs to be streamlined and planner discretion curbed! – Better enforcement of remodeling/building contractors working illegally.
- 2. **Taxes** – Kill the business entity tax – State regulation – taxes – Tax breaks for small businesses – Cost of doing business (business taxes) – Business and Property taxes for small business – This year the Mayor began a Business Property Tax – never paid it prior. Personal property taxes for

manufacturers – Taxes are higher than colleagues in other states – high local taxes – cut spending.

3. **Incentives** – Need to encourage business owners to use each other as a resource, i.e., use a local business for your needs – Incentives from State to encourage business in this State.
4. **Promotion** – Promotion of our services & quality of services – Helping people be aware of changing trends in the Funeral Profession. Creating more business – need more customers – our events draw crowds – we need to keep that momentum.
5. **High Cost State** – Expensive place (CT) to live & work, to quote Ronald Reagan “get gov’t off our backs”. The cost of rent and taxes going up and my business profits don’t. – Housing is too expensive for some of our employees. Taxes, medical benefits & paying customers.
6. **Local Affordability** – Keep Milford affordable to live to work. Keep our balance between business and residential. Affordability of rent, power, etc. – Don’t know the solution.
7. **Parking** – (2)
8. **Traffic** – Rte. 1, 95 etc. – consistently heavy w/traffic, many of the commuters have difficulty.
9. **Insurance** – Insurance companies claim that the area is “saturated” with other therapists, therefore, denies my service. Difficult to place property insurance along shoreline – unknown prices high, for less coverage. We need the insurance companies to stop red lining our potential clients due to their proximity to the water.
10. **Misc. Comments**
 - I don’t think the challenges are Milford, but more a national confidence in consumer spending.
 - Lack of City administration involvement with downtown economic development in keeping with the Town Center character.
 - Financial Support and More Awareness. Reaching potential clients.
 - Cash Flow
 - Somewhat insular mentality – more global thinking process.
 - Move us to the first floor with walk up and private entrance. This would make our services available when the rest of building is closed.
 - Police keep forcing us to move our trucks away from properties we are servicing. This costs us time.
 - Location

- Competition is ongoing!
- Crime – at least four times personal & business assets have been stolen from my place on vehicles.
- Maintain operations.
- Challenges not from Milford.

I have no challenges – I love Milford.

15. Does Milford meet your “quality of life” requirements? 73 - Yes 4 - No
If not what areas do you feel we need to improve?
- 1) More help for cultural events – MFAC is still a hidden treasure – a secret.
 - 2) Need more diversions – restaurants, retail high end fun chains – no more fast foods.
 - 3) Manual operation of Town’s court lights – save \$, accessibility – other towns have them. Planning & Zoning – Building Dept. – people avoid to the max – not growth friendly.
 - 4) Milford is a great City! More public parking downtown would help. Why is the lot under 1 New Haven Avenue closed at night?
 - 5) Eisenhower Park is not properly maintained – could be a real asset.
 - 6) I think Milford is a wonderful place to live!
 - 7) Roads, sidewalks.
 - 8) Milford is a great City to live and run a business in.
16. Do you have plans/opportunities for expansion? Yes (28) No (49)
Plans for downsizing? Yes (7) No (65)
17. Have you contacted UI to learn about ways to lower your energy costs?
- Yes (37) No (42)
18. Are you currently utilizing any of UI’s energy programs that pay incentives for energy conservation?
- Yes (26) No (49)
19. What seminars, educational programs, events or functions can the Milford Chamber of Commerce provide you that will be of value to your company?
- 1) Make sure fellow chamber members use chamber members for work.
 - 2) Not sue at this time.
 - 3) They do a pretty good job now for sales & lead generation, marketing, etc., “TABLETOPS” & Business After Hours.
 - 4) Bad debt collection.
 - 5) Form a “Green Initiative” networking group other towns have a “Green drinks organization”.

- 6) How to better manage cash flow.
 - 7) Fostering non-profits.
 - 8) Computer basics – ebay selling – business loans affordable insurance.
 - 9) Health fairs.
 - 10) The state hurts our business.
 - 11) MCOC has a very well-rounded offering of activities. I am very pleased when all that is offered.
 - 12) Any event or function where many related businesses or services related to mine (construction) will attend & network together.
 - 13) Please let us know how we can compete with other Milford financial institutions.
 - 14) Seminars with DEP for pesticide awareness and for credits that can be applied for licenses renewals.
 - 15) More business after hours with professional small businesses.
 - 16) We are partnering with Chamber on Small Business Institute. More education for Chamber members the better!
 - 17) Better business plan seminars – being able to be involved in events to promote my business.
 - 18) Monday night is excellent – BAH is excellent.
 - 19) Insurance seminars with focus on new health care & type of insurance for businesses & professionals.
 - 20) Many business people are concerned/have questions about the new health care legislation and its impact.
 - 21) None at this time! I like the pamphlets of info., but don't really have a need to utilize their offers! My business doesn't really warrant it.
 - 22) Small business, green energy.
 - 23) More gardening/landscaping events to advertise in for business.
 - 24) Friday morning.
 - 25) Expediting administrative process.
 - 26) Any tax seminars.
 - 27) They're running the programs that we need.
 - 28) Networking and legislative.
 - 29) Any opportunity where we can let the community know that we exist & and are ready & willing to serve them.
20. Comments. . .please be brief and offer constructive comments on how we can aid your business?
- 1) A parking garage by the courthouse.
 - 2) Make Milford attractive to build & bring companies to.
 - 3) Being a retailer in the green it would be nice to receive an email when there is a fair or parade in the green instead of finding out because there are barriers being set up. It would allow for stores to staff better & maybe plan promotions around the events.

- 4) The local aid that would help my business is just that. Local business doing business with local business & local people doing business locally. Build a better local economy and fix the country one zip code at a time.
- 5) I have none – my business uses very little electricity.
- 6) Encourage all local business owners to use or frequent each other as well as the Milford City gov't. agencies – use, solicit and keep the business local, i.e., Milford Based Businesses!!
- 7) Institute some grants for businesses. I have a number of ideas I'd love to discuss.
- 8) Encourage support to non-profits.
- 9) Stream line development – make permitting easier.
- 10) Offer discounts to businesses from other businesses for services such as hotel conference rooms, catering, or other “In-network” promotions through the Chamber.
- 11) Make sure the people in Hartford stop over taxing us. It looks like they will try to allow local municipalities to tax self-storage in addition to the state tax.
- 12) Continue to lobby at state level on behalf of businesses. More business breakfast seminars. Interactive website capabilities.
- 13) Make City Departments business friendly & customer friendly so more of us can enjoy doing & sharing business with them. At the end of the day everyone wins.
- 14) We need volunteers who are dedicated to the credit union movement.
- 15) Many Reps. In state legislature are too willing to ban pesticides without realizing the impact on businesses such as mine. Laws are passed without conversation or compromise with licensed professionals.
- 16) I don't need help, I just need less obstacles from state government & less regulations.
- 17) Listen, my signage was small and tasteful, lit up sign hanging from the ceiling in front of my shop. Landlord took it down and made me remove window painted sign that had been up for 18 years. Now noone can see my business. It's ridiculous. My sign wasn't dirty or worn – no reason to take down. It is killing my business!!!
- 18) Allow companies that would help Milford grow and open stores/offices in Milford. Say yes to Sonic & Stew Leonards.
- 19) Milford Business Property Tax – new to me this year – will encourage me to make long-term plans to avoid Milford. Where I register my cars, where I purchase R.E. for my shop in long-term growth. Milford Zoning – they are not business friendly. Building Dept. – Any small project that can avoid the dept. will.
- 20) Traffic at the peak times is an increasing issue. Rout 1 needs to be 5 lanes through the entire City – at least from Orange (where they added a center turning lane) to the old Gloria's/Gusto's area. People still talk about the issue with the building permitting process . . . hopefully this is being addressed. This survey was a good idea.

- 21) Provide a list of new businesses that can be contacted by me for my services!
- 22) We like referrals for individuals, families and businesses that need insurance.
- 23) Improve sites in town – take care of Harbor area, Eisenhower Park – trails, bridges and clean the pond – could have volunteers help! Maintenance in Milford – Landscaping, etc.
- 24) Continue to provide support for manufacturing through the legislative action committee agenda.
- 25) Stop spending dollars on outside consultants on issues that was already can solve with our member Chamber of professionals.
- 26) State needs to be more business & tax friendly to attract & keep businesses.
- 27) Satisfied.
- 28) The City of Milford’s consulting engineers are my competition. This is a very unfair business practice! Consultants from other areas would be a fairer arrangement.
- 29) Scholarship money for retraining workers for new careers. Thank you for your hard work and effort to support the business community.
- 30) The political climate of Milford is great. CT political & economic situation is Anti-Business and Anti-Capitalist.