Economic Pulse of 495/MetroWest

Friday, November 30, 7:30-10:00 AM

The results of the 6th Annual 495/MetroWest Employer Survey & Forecast, with legislative, real estate, and employer perspectives

Special thanks to Framingham State University for hosting our event at their Warren Conference Center!
The 495/MetroWest Partnership
2018 Employer Survey & Forecast

Presented by
Dr. Michael J. Harrison
&
Matt Brockett
Framingham State University

In collaboration with the 495/MetroWest Partnership, The MetroWest Daily News, The Milford Daily News & Framingham State University
Agenda

• Overall Findings
• 2018 Select Survey Results
• New Questions
• Challenges in the Region
• Focus Group Results
• Summary
2018 Overall Findings

• Optimism is stable
• More hiring is expected; Year over year increases since 2013
• Higher revenue expectations
• Most important challenges in the region similar to last year
  • Some differences between larger and smaller organizations
• Transportation/Infrastructure & Qualified Employees needed for growth
• Skills gap of applicants keeping employers awake at night
### 2018 Selected Survey Results

**Optimism is stable**

**Business conditions in the 495/MetroWest region - better or worse than they were a year ago?**
- 49.7% say Better (54% in 2017)
- 46% say About the Same as last year
- 4.6% say Worse than last year

**Over the course of the coming year how will the economy in the 495/MetroWest region do?**
- 11% say Improve significantly
- 54% say Improve slightly
- 11% say Decline slightly
- .66% (1 response) Decline significantly
2018 Selected Survey Results

Continued strength in hiring & revenue

**Over the course of the coming year do you expect to hire additional staff in the 495/MetroWest region?**
- Yes: 56%
- Up from 48% in 2017
- Up from 41% in 2016
- Up from 32% in 2014
- Up from 29% in 2013

**Compared to the previous year what are your expectations for your organization’s revenue performance this year?**
Slightly higher expectations compared to 2017 building from increases in 2016
- 77% expect revenue increases
- 10% expect increases of 20% or more
- 21% expect increases of 11%-19%
- 46% expect increases of 1%-10%
- 8% expect revenues to decrease (similar to 2017)
# 2018 Selected Survey Results

## Challenges for the region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
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| What is the single most important challenge in the 495/MetroWest region facing your business today? (HC & Labor quality stay in the top 3; Labor costs new entry at the top) | • Labor quality (skills gap of applicants)  
• Healthcare costs  
• Labor costs |
| Rank the following 495/MetroWest area transportation needs in order of importance (Results similar to 2016 & 2017) | • Access to highway infrastructure  
• Relieving Highway congestion  
• Access to Commuter Rail |
| In order for your organization to expand in the 495/MetroWest Region you need: (New Question in 2017) | |
Consistency for the past six years in what is needed for regional employers to grow:
Transportation/Infrastructure & Qualified Employees
Introducing

Matt Brockett
Graduate Assistant
Framingham State University
Focus Groups-Introduction

• 12 HR Professionals; 22 Business Professionals (MBA Candidates)
• Labor Quality- Double Edged Sword
• Skills Gap: New Applicants
• Technical Skills and “Soft” Skills
Technical Skills

• Certification and Specific Credentials:
  - HR
  - Manufacturing
  - Biotechnology
  - Project Management
  - Healthcare

• Trade Skills

• Basic Accounting Principles
  - Chart of Accounts
“Soft” Skills

• Lack of Professionalism: Social Media Usage
• Poor Business Etiquette
• Unable to Take/Use Constructive Feedback
• Poor Work Ethic: “This work is beneath me”
• Unwillingness to Investigate an Issue
• “My generation has it handed to us”
Focus Group Summary

• Technical Skills (15%)

• “Soft” Skills (85%)

• Focus Group Data Reinforces Survey Results
Overall Summary

• Overall the survey results indicate the region has a strong pulse
  • Strong hiring outlook- increasing since 2013
  • Strong revenue expectations
  • Stable optimism

• Consistency with the challenges in the region-no quick fix
  • Transportation/traffic congestion
  • Skills gap of applicants
  • Healthcare costs

Verbatim: “The 495/MetoWest Region is very strong and the future is bright for growth and commerce. All aspects of the transportation infrastructure must be improved to fill the current gaps that exist between capacity and efficiency vs. the much higher needs and demands.”
Thank you!

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