

AVON BUSINESS SURVEY

APRIL-MAY 2005

Topline Results

Conducted for:

AVON TOWN GOVERNMENT

AVON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

By:



**Center for
Survey
Research &
Analysis**

at the University of
Connecticut

(Choice of Avon as location of business)

Q1. Regarding Avon as the location of your business, was that a choice that you made OR a choice made by someone else in your company?

Respondent made choice	70%
Someone else in company made choice	23%
Not a choice / business located here for long time (vol.)	4%
Other	3%
Count (# of interviews)	(251)

ASKED ONLY IF RESPONDENT MADE CHOICE

Q2a. What were the two or three most important reasons for locating your business in Avon?

Location/Accessibility/Convenience	72%
Clients/Affluent population	11%
Infrastructures/Services	6%
Community/Nice area	3%
Other	6%
Don't know	2%
Count	(176)

ASKED ONLY IF SOMEONE ELSE IN COMPANY MADE CHOICE

Q2b. To the best of your knowledge, what were the two or three most important reasons for locating this business in Avon?

Location/Accessibility/Convenience	66%
Clients/Affluent population	14%
Infrastructures/Services	6%
Community/Nice area	2%
Other	8%
Don't know	4%
Count	(50)

(Avon business climate – “big picture” questions)

Q3. Overall, how would you rate Avon as a place for your company to conduct its business -- excellent, good, fair or poor?

Excellent	53%
Good	36%
Fair	7%
Poor	1%
Don't know	3%
Count	(251)

Q4. In your opinion, how accommodating is the Avon town government to meeting the needs of your business -- very accommodating, somewhat accommodating, somewhat unaccommodating or very unaccommodating?

Very accommodating	31%
Somewhat accommodating	39%
Somewhat unaccommodating	9%
Very unaccommodating	2%
Don't know	18%
Refused	0%
Count	(251)

Q5. What is the single BEST thing about owning or managing a business in Avon?

Location/Accessibility/Convenience	45%
The People/Community	10%
Customers/Affluent clientele	10%
Quality of life/Nice area	6%
Town/Rural & Suburban/Neighborhood	5%
Business friendly	3%
Other	6%
Don't know	15%
Count	(251)

Q6. What is the single WORST thing about owning or managing a business in Avon?

Nothing	10%
Signage/Signs regulations	8%
Highway access	7%
Cost of living/Cost of real estate	7%
Taxes	6%
Traffic	6%
Town government/Town regulations	5%
The People	4%
Location (general)	2%
Lack of public transportation	2%
Availability of workers	2%
Lack of infrastructures	2%
Commercial/Retail Development	2%
Competition	1%
The changing character of the town	1%
Other	6%
Don't know	27%
Count	(251)

Q7. Is there anything that is of importance to your business that you feel is lacking in Avon?

No	71%
Yes (Specify)	25%
Signage regulations	5%
Businesses lack support from the Town	4%
Lack of infrastructures	4%
Highway access	2%
Support services for businesses	2%
Public transportation	2%
Flow of customers	2%
Other	4%
Don't know	4%
Count	(251)

ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO SAID YES TO Q7

Q7a. Is this something that is offered in any other community that you know of in Connecticut?

No	15%
All other major CT towns	26%
West Hartford	12%
Hartford	8%
Canton	5%
Simsbury	3%
Other	9%
Don't know/Refused	22%
Count	(65)

(Ranking Avon on key characteristics – importance and satisfaction)

IQ8. How important are the following characteristics to your business here in Avon - very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all?

<i>(↓ Rotate order)</i>	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important	Don't Know	Refused
Support services for your business	28%	27%	14%	23%	8%	0%
Transportation infrastructure in town	24%	25%	15%	31%	4%	1%
Access to the labor force with the skills you need	24%	24%	18%	31%	3%	1%
Housing affordability for your employees	14%	20%	13%	48%	3%	2%

IQ12. How satisfied are you with Avon on these same characteristics - very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied or not satisfied at all? If you don't know enough to say, please say so.

<i>(↓ Rotate order)</i>	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not too satisfied	Not at all satisfied	Don't Know	Refused
Support services for your business	27%	38%	4%	7%	23%	2%
Access to the labor force with the skills you need	20%	35%	6%	7%	30%	2%
Transportation infrastructure in town	20%	35%	8%	13%	23%	2%
Housing affordability for your employees	9%	23%	14%	14%	36%	4%

(Labor issues)

Q16. In the past couple of years, have you had any difficulty finding lower skilled, lower wage, entry-level employees for your business? If you don't hire this type of employee for your business, it is OK to say so.

Yes, have had difficulty	18%
No, no difficulty	32%
Don't hire that type	43%
Don't know	4%
Refused	2%
Count	(251)

ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO SAID YES TO Q16

Q17a. Would you call this a serious problem for your business, a moderate problem or only a minor problem?

Serious problem	24%
Moderate problem	47%
Minor problem	27%
Refused	2%
Count	(45)

ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO SAID YES TO Q16

Q17b. In your opinion, why is your business having troubling finding this type of employee?

This type of worker lives far away/ they don't live in or can't afford to live in Avon	42%
People or kids in Avon don't want this type of work	24%
Skill level too low	11%
No public transportation	11%
Too much competition for this type of employee	4%
Their wage demands are too high	2%
Other	4%
Count	(45)

(Business support services)

IQ18. How satisfied are you with the following business support services in town very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied or not satisfied at all? If any of these are not applicable to your business, it is OK to say so:

(✓ Rotate order)	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not too satisfied	Not at all satisfied	Not Applicable	Don't Know
Office supply stores	66%	22%	2%	2%	8%	0%
Local restaurants for business lunches and dinners	65%	18%	3%	2%	12%	0%
Local hotels for business travelers	37%	19%	2%	1%	40%	0%
Professional services such as business planning, bookkeeping, etc.	32%	22%	3%	2%	41%	1%
Technical support services – such as computer support	27%	22%	4%	3%	42%	2%
Training and educational outlets for your employees – for skills relevant to your business	8%	13%	8%	5%	63%	2%

Q24. Are there any other support services that are critical to your business that I have not mentioned?

No	83%
Yes – Supplier/Printing capabilities	6%
Yes – Technology support services	1%
Yes – Banking services	1%
Yes – Transportation services	1%
Yes – Other	7%
Don't know	1%
Count	(251)

ASKED ONLY TO THOSE WHO SAID YES TO Q24

Q25. How satisfied are you with the Town Of Avon regarding the support service that you just mentioned?

Very satisfied	30%
Somewhat satisfied	20%
Not too satisfied	18%
Not satisfied at all	25%
Don't know	8%
Count	(40)

(Rating utilities)

IQ26. How important is the availability and quality of the following utilities to your business in Avon - very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all?

<i>(↓ Rotate order)</i>	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important	Don't Know/NA	Refused
Power	85%	8%	2%	4%	1%	1%
Cell phone reception	73%	12%	6%	9%	1%	0%
High speed internet access	69%	12%	6%	12%	3%	0%
Water	65%	11%	8%	15%	2%	0%
Sewer	46%	18%	7%	24%	5%	1%
Wireless networking	34%	19%	15%	29%	3%	0%
Natural gas	24%	11%	9%	50%	5%	1%

IQ33. Now, how satisfied are you with the availability and quality of these same utilities in Avon - very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied or not satisfied at all? If any of these are not applicable to your business, please just say so:

<i>(↓ Rotate order)</i>	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not too satisfied	Not at all satisfied	Don't Know/NA	Refused
Water	72%	16%	2%	3%	7%	1%
Power	67%	23%	6%	1%	3%	0%
Sewer	61%	13%	3%	5%	18%	1%
High speed internet access	49%	22%	6%	4%	17%	1%
Natural gas	36%	10%	4%	3%	43%	3%
Wireless networking	29%	21%	6%	8%	33%	3%
Cell phone reception	29%	33%	16%	13%	8%	1%

Q33a. How interested are you in participating in a cost sharing cooperative of businesses in your area to collectively fund projects to improve the power supply to your area? Are you very interested, somewhat interested, not too interested or not interested at all?

	All businesses in Avon	Only businesses who are "not too" or "not satisfied at all" with their power
Very interested	2%	6%
Somewhat interested	16%	22%
Not too interested	18%	17%
Not interested at all	61%	56%
Don't Know	3%	0%
Refused	0%	0%
Count	(251)	(18)

(Relocating, expanding or contracting)

Q40. Over the next five years, what is the most likely scenario for your business - to maintain a presence in Avon or to relocate from Avon?

Maintain a presence in Avon	86%
Relocate from Avon	8%
Don't know/Not sure	6%
Refused	0%
Count	(251)

ONLY ASKED IF RELOCATING FROM AVON

Q41a. What are the main reasons for your possible relocation out of Avon?

Taxes/Cost	37%
Business Related	26%
Personal Reasons	16%
Other	16%
Don't Know	5%
Count	(19)

ONLY ASKED IF RELOCATING FROM AVON

Q41b. Will you be relocating to a nearby town, relocating within Connecticut but not to a nearby town, or relocating outside of the state?

Nearby	47%
Within CT but not to a nearby town	16%
Outside of state	26%
Don't know	11%
Count	(19)

ONLY ASKED IF REMAINING IN AVON

Q42. Over the next five years, do you expect your business presence in Avon to expand, contract or stay about the same?

Expand	47%
Contract	2%
Remain same	49%
Don't know	1%
Count	217

ONLY ASKED IF REMAINING AND EXPANDING IN AVON

Q42a. For your potential expansion, do you think you will buy or lease new space, rent new space or expand your business without acquiring any new space?

Buy or lease new space	35%
Rent new space	15%
Expand business without any new space	42%
Don't know	9%
Count	103

ONLY ASKED IF EXPANDING & WILL BUY OR LEASE NEW SPACE IN AVON

Q42b. How much new space do you think your expansion will require?

Less than 1,000 square feet	22%
1,000 to under 5,000 square feet	42%
5,000 to under 10,000 square feet	11%
10,000 to under 25,000 square feet	6%
25,000 square feet or more	8%
Don't know	11%
Count	36

ONLY ASKED IF EXPANDING IN AVON

Q42c. Will you be hiring new employees as part of your expansion?

Yes, 1 to 5	54%
Yes, 6 to 10	13%
Yes, 11 to 20	6%
Yes, 21 to 50	4%
No, not hiring	13%
Don't know	11%
Count	(103)

ONLY ASKED IF EXPANDING IN AVON

Q42d. What are the main reasons for your business expansion in Avon?

Growth	39%
Increased Business	17%
Space	5%
Other	34%
Don't Know	5%
Count	(103)

ONLY ASKED IF REMAINING IN AVON BUT CONTRACTING

Q43. Why do you expect your business in Avon to contract?

Retirement	60%
Stop doing daycare	20%
Owner's decision	20%
Count	(5)

ASKED TO BUSINESSES WHO PLAN TO REMAIN IN AVON

IQ44. For each of the following, do you see it as a major challenge, a minor challenge or not a challenge at all if you ever decided to expand your business presence in Avon:

(↓ Rotate order)	Major challenge	Minor challenge	Not at all a challenge	Don't Know	Refused
Town taxes	29%	41%	24%	6%	1%
Having the necessary labor force	23%	32%	38%	6%	1%
Finding available and adequate space for expansion	22%	32%	40%	4%	1%
Getting funding for expansion	18%	31%	41%	9%	0%

(Avon Day)

Q48. Are you familiar with a local event called Avon Day?

Yes	86%
No	14%
Count	(251)

IQ49. Avon Day is a showcase of all that the town has to offer. The day consists of non-profit and service organization display booths, live entertainment, service organization food booths, children's rides and games, and a Taste of Avon featuring samplers from local restaurants. It gives residents the opportunity to learn about services and businesses located in the community of Avon.

Q50. How interested would your business be in participating in Avon Day activities by setting up booths and showcasing your products and services to the community of Avon - very interested, somewhat interested, not too interested, or not interested at all?

Very interested	16%
Somewhat interested	22%
Not too interested	14%
Not interested at all	43%
Already participate in Avon Day (vol.)	5%
Don't know	0%
Count	(251)

Q51. If the Avon Chamber of Commerce was to consider a separate day, apart from Avon Day, for businesses to set up booths and showcase their products and services. How interested would your business be in participating in this separate Avon Business Day?

Very Interested	14%
Somewhat interested	29%
Not too interested	13%
Not interested at all	43%
Don't know	2%
Count	(251)

(Buy local campaign)

Q52. If the Avon Chamber of Commerce was to consider launching a 'Shop Avon' campaign - a promotional campaign urging town residents to buy products and services from businesses within the town, would you favor or oppose this idea?
(Strongly/Somewhat)

Strongly favor	45%
Somewhat favor	33%
Somewhat oppose	6%
Strongly Oppose	4%
Don't know	12%
Refused	0%
Count	(251)

(Tax incentives to build business)

Q53. Do you favor or oppose the Town of Avon providing subsidies, such as lesser taxes, to businesses that plan to physically expand within the town meaning build new or additional facilities within the town?

Strongly favor	32%
Somewhat favor	32%
Somewhat oppose	10%
Strongly Oppose	13%
Don't know	13%
Refused	1%
Count	(251)

(Retail/business space)

Q54. Do you feel that Avon has enough existing retail or business space to satisfy any possible expansion that you might consider in the next few years, or do you think it might not have enough existing space in that regard?

Has enough space	75%
Might not/does not have enough space	14%
Don't know	12%
Refused	0%
Count	(251)

(Rezoning)

IQ55. Would you support or oppose land use policies which would rezone vacant property in certain parts of town to allow for:

	Favor	Oppose	Don't know	Refused
Additional office development	53%	37%	10%	0%
Additional retail development	40%	50%	10%	0%
Additional industrial development	39%	48%	12%	1%

Q58. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statement: The town of Avon should consider re-zoning some existing, undeveloped areas that are currently residentially zoned into commercial and industrial zoned areas to encourage business

	Avon Business Survey	Avon Residents Survey
Strongly agree	17%	8%
Somewhat agree	19%	17%
Somewhat disagree	16%	22%
Strongly disagree	39%	49%
Don't Know	10%	4%
Refused	0%	0%
Count	(251)	(x)

Q59. If there were going to be increased commercial development in Avon, what kind of development would you favor the MOST - retail development, office space development or manufacturing development?

	Avon Business Survey	Avon Residents Survey
Retail development	20%	25%
Office development	47%	53%
Manufacturing development	14%	7%
Combination	8%	7%
Don't want any development	-	7%
Don't Know	10%	1%
Refused	1%	0%
Count	(251)	(x)

(Avon Town Center)

IQ60. The Town of Avon has just adopted a master plan to help enhance and improve the economic viability of Avon Center which is the area near the intersection of Route 44, Old Farm Road and Route 10. The key idea is to make this area look and feel more

Q60. How familiar are you with this master plan; would you say you're very familiar, somewhat familiar, not too familiar, or not at all familiar?

Very familiar	16%
Somewhat familiar	26%
Not too familiar	19%
Not familiar at all	38%
Don't know	0%
Count	(251)

Q61. Based on what you know, would you support or oppose this type of plan?

Support	78%
Oppose	9%
Don't Know	12%
Refused	0%
Count	(251)

Q62. Do you think if this plan were implemented, it would benefit the overall business climate in Avon a lot, some, not too much, or none at all?

A lot	30%
Some	43%
Not too much	13%
None at all	8%
Don't Know	6%
Refused	0%
Count	(251)

(Town Boards & Commission – Usage, fairness and application process)

IQ64. Avon has several boards and commissions mostly comprised of volunteer members or elected officials. Over the past two years, have you or one of your employees filed an application of some sort with the following boards or commissions?

(✓ ROTATE ORDER)	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Don't Know	Refused
Planning and Zoning Commission	15%	80%	3%	2%	0%
Zoning Board of Appeals	8%	89%	2%	1%	0%
Inland Wetland Agency	4%	91%	2%	2%	0%
Town Council	4%	92%	2%	1%	0%
Water Pollution Control Authority	3%	94%	2%	1%	0%

ASKED ONLY OF BUSINESSES WHO FILED AN APPLICATION WITH AT LEAST ONE OF AVON'S BOARDS OR COMMISSIONS

IQ69. For each board or commission your business filed an application with, please tell me if you feel the process you went through with that board or commission was generally fair or generally unfair.

ROTATE ORDER	Fair	Unfair	Don't Know	Refused	Count
Planning and Zoning Commission	92%	0%	5%	3%	38
Town Council	91%	0%	0%	9%	11
Water Pollution Control Authority	86%	0%	0%	14%	7
Zoning Board of Appeals	84%	5%	5%	5%	19
Inland Wetland Agency	73%	9%	9%	9%	11

ASKED ONLY OF BUSINESSES WHO FILED AN APPLICATION WITH AT LEAST ONE OF AVON'S BOARDS OR COMMISSIONS

IQ74. For each board or commission your business filed an application with, please tell me whether your application was granted or not granted. (Note: if several applications, ask for a general rating that sums up their experiences)

ROTATE ORDER	Granted	Not Granted	Don't Know	Refused	Count
Planning and Zoning Commission	89%	5%	3%	3%	38
Zoning Board of Appeals	89%	5%	0%	5%	19
Inland Wetland Agency	73%	9%	9%	9%	11
Town Council	64%	9%	18%	9%	11
Water Pollution Control Authority	57%	0%	29%	14%	7

(Town Services – Usage, professionalism and fairness)

IQ79. Over the past two years, how often have you or one of your employees interacted with the following town departments for an issue involving your business several times, a few times, once or twice, never?

ROTATE ORDER	Several times (or more)	Few times	Once or twice	Never	Don't Know	Refused
Avon <u>building department</u>	11%	4%	10%	72%	3%	0%
Avon <u>assessor's office</u>	10%	5%	20%	63%	3%	0%
Avon <u>planning and zoning department</u>	8%	5%	10%	75%	2%	0%
Avon <u>police department</u>	8%	10%	16%	65%	2%	0%
Avon <u>engineering department</u>	6%	4%	4%	84%	2%	0%
Avon <u>fire department</u>	6%	5%	12%	75%	3%	0%
Avon <u>public work's department</u>	2%	6%	8%	82%	2%	0%

ASKED ONLY OF BUSINESSES WHO HAD SOME INTERACTIONS WITH AT LEAST 1 TOWN DEPARTMENT

IQ86. For each town department that your business had some interaction with, please say if you feel you were treated very professionally and courteously, somewhat professionally and courteously or not at all professional or courteously.

ROTATE ORDER	Very prof. & court	Somewhat prof. & court	Not too prof. & court	Not at all prof. & court	DK	Ref.	Count
Avon <u>engineering department</u>	97%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	35
Avon <u>police department</u>	92%	5%	2%	1%	0%	0%	83
Avon <u>public work's department</u>	90%	0%	0%	0%	8%	0%	39
Avon <u>fire department</u>	88%	9%	0%	0%	4%	0%	57
Avon <u>planning & zoning department</u>	85%	8%	2%	3%	2%	0%	59
Avon <u>building department</u>	83%	8%	2%	3%	5%	0%	63
Avon <u>assessor's office</u>	80%	14%	0%	0%	6%	0%	86

(Profile of Avon Businesses)

QD1. In which section of Avon is your business located

On or near Rt. 44 but not Avon Center	39%
Avon center	18%
West Avon	16%
Avon Park South	8%
Avon Park North	5%
Eastern Avon	3%
Country Club Road	3%
Other Part	7%
Don't Know	0%
Count	(251)

QD2. Which of the following best describes your business - retail, manufacturing or service?

Service	71%
Retail	21%
Manufacturing	4%
Other	4%
Count	(251)

QD3. How many full time employees work for your business here in Avon? By full time employees, I mean employees working 35 hours or more a week

None/zero	12%
1 (self)	31%
2 - 5	39%
6 - 10	8%
11 - 25	6%
26 - 49	2%
50 - 99	1%
100 - 499	1%
Count	(251)

QD4. How many part time employees work for your business here in Avon? By part time employees, I mean seasonal workers and employees working 34 hours a week or less

None/zero	46%
1 (self)	20%
2 - 5	24%
6 - 10	6%
11 - 25	4%
50 - 99	0%
Count	(251)

QD5. Are you the owner of the business, or manager?

Owner	72%
Manager	25%
Other	3%
Don't Know	0%
Count	(251)

Rtitl. What is your job title at (BUSINESS)?

President	14%
Manager/Director	24%
Vice President/Officer	6%
Owner/Partner	44%
Other	13%
Count	(251)

QD6. How long have you been the OWNER/MANAGER of this business in Avon?

Less than 1 year	10%
2 to 3 years	19%
4 to 5 years	11%
6 to 9 years	14%
10 to 19 years	29%
20 years or more	18%
Count	(251)

QD7. How long has your business been located in Avon?

Less than 1 year	5%
2 to 3 years	14%
4 to 5 years	11%
6 to 9 years	18%
10 to 19 years	28%
20 years or more	24%
Count	(251)

QD8. How many locations does this business have?

1	79%
2	9%
3-5	6%
More than 5	6%
Refused	0%
Count	(251)

QD8A. And, is the location in Avon the headquarters, or a branch?

Headquarter	69%
Branch	28%
Other	2%
Don't Know	2%
Count	(54)

QD9. Does your business currently own or lease its location here in Avon?

Own	41%
Lease	57%
Both	0%
Don't Know	2%
Count	(251)

ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO LEASE

QD9A. How likely is it that you might buy some space here in Avon in the next couple of years - very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not likely at all?

Very likely	4%
Somewhat likely	13%
Not too likely	25%
Not likely at all	55%
Don't Know	2%
Count	(142)

QD10. Is your business a member of the Avon Chamber of Commerce, or not?

Yes, Member of Chamber of Commerce	31%
No, not Member of Chamber of Commerce	63%
Don't Know	5%
Count	(251)

QD11. Do you yourself live in Avon?

Yes	49%
No	51%
Count	(251)

QD12. How many of your employees live in Avon?

Less than half	65%
About half	8%
More than half	18%
Don't Know	5%
Refused	4%
Count	(251)