



**Northamptonshire Chamber Quarterly Economic
Survey – Quarter 2, 2010**

Northamptonshire Chamber

Wednesday 7 July 2010

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DISCLAIMER

Whilst proper due care and diligence has been taken in the preparation of this report, 'Northamptonshire Chamber' cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information contained and does not accept any liability for any errors contained within this document.

1.0 Introduction and Methodology

The Quarterly Economic Survey for Quarter 2 2010 was recently conducted by Northamptonshire Chamber. An online questionnaire was designed consistent with the principles outlined by the BCC (QES guide). The survey was scripted and conducted according to the BCC national timetable for fieldwork/reporting (see Appendix 1). A link to the online survey was sent to 1021 members via an email link with a covering email from Northamptonshire Chamber (see Appendix 2).

86 companies responded to the survey (65 Services, 21 Manufacturing), employing around 3000 Northamptonshire employees; this represents a response rate of 8%.

The data results are split into responses from the Manufacturing Sector and Services Sector (as the QES has traditionally been analysed) and presented in order of the questionnaire. Percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered each question. For the Topical Questions in section 4 of the report, the results from both sectors are combined to ascertain a "whole business" response to the questions posed.

2.0 Manufacturing Results

Results are based on 21 respondents.

A. Your Business

How many people do you employ at this site? By size band

1-19

No of companies	12
No of employees	80

No of employees:

	No	%
0	1	8.3
2	2	16.7
4	1	8.3
5	2	16.7
7	2	16.7
10	2	16.7
11	1	8.3
17	1	8.3
Total	12	100

20-199

No of companies	8
No of employees	378

No of employees:

	No	%
24	1	12.5
25	2	25.0
32	2	25.0
37	1	12.5
43	1	12.5
160	1	12.5
Total	8	100.0

200-499

No of companies	1
No of employees	400

What is your main business activity?

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Manufacturing	8	66.7%	7	87.5%	1	100.0%	16	76.2%
Construction	4	33.3%	1	12.5%			5	23.8%
Total	12	100.0%	8	100.0%	1	100.0%	21	100.0%

B. Trading Patterns Domestic Market

Over the last three months have your sales/custom/bookings:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Increased	6	50.0%	4	50.0%	1	100.0%	11	52.4%
Remained the same	3	25.0%	3	37.5%			6	28.6%
Decreased	3	25.0%	1	12.5%			4	19.0%
Total	12	100.0%	8	100.0%	1	100.0%	21	100.0%

Over the last three months have your orders/advance custom/bookings:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Increased	7	58.3%	4	50.0%	1	100.0%	12	57.1%
Remained the same	2	16.7%	2	25.0%			4	19.0%
Decreased	3	25.0%	2	25.0%			5	23.8%
Total	12	100.0%	8	100.0%	1	100.0%	21	100.0%

C. Trading Patterns Export Market

Over the last three months have your export sales/custom/bookings:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Increased			4	57.1%			4	36.4%
Remained the same	1	33.3%	3	42.9%	1	100.0%	5	45.5%
Decreased	2	66.7%					2	18.2%
Total	3	100.0%	7	100.0%	1	100.0%	11	100.0%

Over the last three months have your export orders/advance custom/bookings:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Increased			4	57.1%			4	36.4%
Remained the same	1	33.3%	2	28.6%	1	100.0%	4	36.4%
Decreased	2	66.7%	1	14.3%			3	27.3%
Total	3	100.0%	7	100.0%	1	100.0%	11	100.0%

Total number of export companies:

Size Band	No.
1-19	3
20-199	7
200-499	1
500+	0
Total	11

D. Labour Force

Over the past three months has your workforce:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Increased	2	18.2%	3	42.9%			5	26.3%
Remained the same	9	81.8%	4	57.1%	1	100.0%	14	73.7%
Total	11	100.0%	7	100.0%	1	100.0%	19	100.0%

Over the next three months do you expect your workforce to:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Increase	2	16.7%	4	50.0%			6	28.6%
Remain the same	8	66.7%	3	37.5%	1	100.0%	12	57.1%
Decrease	2	16.7%	1	12.5%			3	14.3%
Total	12	100.0%	8	100.0%	1	100.0%	21	100.0%

Have you attempted to recruit in the past three months?

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Yes	3	25.0%	7	87.5%	1	100.0%	11	52.4%
No	9	75.0%	1	12.5%			10	47.6%
Total	12	100.0%	8	100.0%	1	100.0%	21	100.0%

If yes, were they:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Part-time			3	75.0%	1	25.0%	4	100.0%
Full-time	3	33.3%	5	55.6%	1	11.1%	9	100.0%
Temporary	2	40.0%	2	40.0%	1	20.0%	5	100.0%
Permanent			3	75.0%	1	25.0%	4	100.0%
Base	3	45.5%	7	118.2%	1	36.4%	11	100.0%

*Multiple response

Did you experience difficulty finding staff?

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Yes			2	28.6%	1	100.0%	3	27.3%
No	3	100.0%	5	71.4%			8	72.7%
Total	3	100.0%	7	100.0%	1	100.0%	11	100.0%

If yes, in what categories?

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Skilled manual/technical	1	25.0%	2	50.0%	1	25.0%	4	100.0%
Professional/managerial			1	50.0%	1	50.0%	2	100.0%
Clerical								
Un/semi-skilled			1	100.0%			1	100.0%
Base	1	20.0%	3	80.0%	1	40.0%	5	100.0%

*Multiple response

E. Cashflow

Over the past three months has your cashflow:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Improved	4	33.3%	1	12.5%	1	100.0%	6	28.6%
Remained the same	5	41.7%	6	75.0%			11	52.4%
Worsened	3	25.0%	1	12.5%			4	19.0%
Total	12	100.0%	8	100.0%	1	100.0%	21	100.0%

Currently, what factors most affect your cashflow?

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Available finance								
Bad debts					1	100.0%	1	100.0%
Promptness of payment/credit control	9	75.0%	3	25.0%			12	100.0%
Stock holdings/disposals	1	25.0%	2	50.0%	1	25.0%	4	100.0%
Stronger/weaker sales than anticipated	6	66.7%	3	33.3%			9	100.0%
Other	1	25.0%	3	75.0%			4	100.0%
Total	10	94.4%	7	61.1%	1	11.1%	18	100.0%

Cashflow - Other, please specify
Increased raw material costs & availability
None or little bank interest on the majority of funds
Seasonal peak if UK has dry spring/summer
Order cancellation

F. Investment

Have your investment plans for plant/machinery/equipment:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Revised up	2	16.7%	2	25.0%	1	100.0%	5	23.8%
Remained the same	8	66.7%	5	62.5%			13	61.9%
Revised down	2	16.7%	1	12.5%			3	14.3%
Total	12	100.0%	8	100.0%	1	100.0%	21	100.0%

Have your investment plans for training:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Revised up	3	25.0%	1	12.5%			4	19.0%
Remained the same	6	50.0%	6	75.0%	1	100.0%	13	61.9%
Revised down	3	25.0%	1	12.5%			4	19.0%
Total	12	100.0%	8	100.0%	1	100.0%	21	100.0%

G. Business Confidence

Over the next 12 months do you expect your turnover to:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Improve	6	50.0%	6	85.7%	1	100.0%	13	65.0%
Remain the same	5	41.7%					5	25.0%
Worsen	1	8.3%	1	14.3%			2	10.0%
Total	12	100.0%	7	100.0%	1	100.0%	20	100.0%

Over the next 12 months do you expect your profitability to:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Improve	2	16.7%	5	62.5%	1	100.0%	8	38.1%
Remain the same	8	66.7%	1	12.5%			9	42.9%
Worsen	2	16.7%	2	25.0%			4	19.0%
Total	12	100.0%	8	100.0%	1	100.0%	21	100.0%

H. Factors Affecting Your Business

Are you currently operating at:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Full capacity	3	25.0%	6	75.0%	1	100.0%	10	47.6%
Below full capacity	9	75.0%	2	25.0%			11	52.4%
Total	12	100.0%	8	100.0%	1	100.0%	21	100.0%

Over the next three months, do you expect your prices to:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Increase	2	16.7%	2	25.0%			4	19.0%
Remain the same	8	66.7%	5	62.5%	1	100.0%	14	66.7%
Decrease	2	16.7%	1	12.5%			3	14.3%
Total	12	100.0%	8	100.0%	1	100.0%	21	100.0%

Is your business currently suffering pressures to raise its prices from any of the following?

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Pay settlements	2	50.0%	2	50.0%			4	100.0%
Raw materials	9	60.0%	5	33.3%	1	6.7%	15	100.0%
Finance costs			1	100.0%			1	100.0%
Other overheads	3	37.5%	4	50.0%	1	12.5%	8	100.0%
Other	1	50.0%	1	50.0%			2	100.0%
Base	11	78.9%	7	68.4%	1	10.5%	19	157.9%

*Multiple response

Please indicate which of the following factors are of more concern to your business now than 3 months ago:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Interest rates			3	100.0%			3	100.0%
Exchange rates	3	42.9%	4	57.1%			7	100.0%
Business rates	1	33.3%	1	33.3%	1	33.3%	3	100.0%
Inflation	5	62.5%	2	25.0%	1	12.5%	8	100.0%
Competition	3	42.9%	4	57.1%			7	100.0%
Corporation tax	2	100.0%					2	100.0%
Energy costs	2	28.6%	4	57.1%	1	14.3%	7	100.0%
Personnel costs	6	66.7%	3	33.3%			9	100.0%
Base	11	110.0%	8	105.0%	1	15.0%	20	230.0%

*Multiple response

3.0 Services Results

Results based on 65 respondents.

A. Your Business

How many people do you employ at this site? By size band

1-19

No of companies	49
No of employees	236

No of employees

	No	%
0	4	8.2
1	8	16.3
2	8	16.3
3	6	12.2
4	4	8.2
5	4	8.2
6	3	6.1
7	1	2.0
8	2	4.1
9	1	2.0
10	1	2.0
12	3	6.1
13	1	2.0
15	2	4.1
19	1	2.0
Total	49	100.0

20-199

No of companies	15
No of employees	849

No of employees

	No	%
20	6	40.0
25	1	6.7
30	2	13.3
43	2	13.3
80	1	6.7
138	1	6.7
150	1	6.7
190	1	6.7
Total	15	100.0

200-499

No of companies	1
No of employees	450

No of Employees

	No	%
450	1	100.0

What is your main business activity?

	Size bands								Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499		500+			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Wholesale, retail & repairs	6	12.2%	1	6.7%	1	100.0%	8	12.3%	6	12.2%
Hotels & restaurants	1	2.0%	2	13.3%			3	4.6%	1	2.0%
Transport, storage & communication	4	8.2%	1	6.7%			5	7.7%	4	8.2%
Financial services	1	2.0%	2	13.3%			3	4.6%	1	2.0%
Real estate, renting & business services	24	49.0%	5	33.3%			29	44.6%	24	49.0%
Education	2	4.1%					2	3.1%	2	4.1%
Other community, social & personal services			3	20.0%			3	4.6%		
Other	3	6.1%					3	4.6%	3	6.1%
Total	49	100.0%	15	100.0%	1	100.0%	65	100.0%	49	100.0%

B. Trading Patterns Domestic Market

Over the last three months have your sales/custom/bookings:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Increased	17	37.0%	5	35.7%	1	100.0%	23	37.7%
Remained the same	17	37.0%	6	42.9%			23	37.7%
Decreased	12	26.1%	3	21.4%			15	24.6%
Total	46	100.0%	14	100.0%	1	100.0%	61	100.0%

Over the last three months have your orders/advance custom/bookings:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Increased	16	34.8%	6	40.0%	1	100.0%	23	37.1%
Remained the same	20	43.5%	5	33.3%			25	40.3%
Decreased	10	21.7%	4	26.7%			14	22.6%
Total	46	100.0%	15	100.0%	1	100.0%	62	100.0%

C. Trading Patterns Export Market

Over the last three months have your sales/custom/bookings:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Increased	3	10.7%	3	33.3%	1	100.0%	7	18.4%
Remained the same	20	71.4%	5	55.6%			25	65.8%
Decreased	5	17.9%	1	11.1%			6	15.8%
Total	28	100.0%	9	100.0%	1	100.0%	38	100.0%

Over the last three months have your orders/advance custom/bookings:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Increased	3	11.1%	3	33.3%	1	100.0%	7	18.9%
Remained the same	21	77.8%	4	44.4%			25	67.6%
Decreased	3	11.1%	2	22.2%			5	13.5%
Total	27	100.0%	9	100.0%	1	100.0%	37	100.0%

Total number of export companies:

Size Band	No.
1-19	28
20-199	9
200-499	1
Total	38

D. Labour Force

Over the past three months has your workforce:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Increased	7	14.9%	3	20.0%			10	15.9%
Remained the same	35	74.5%	6	40.0%	1	100.0%	42	66.7%
Decreased	5	10.6%	6	40.0%			11	17.5%
Total	47	100.0%	15	100.0%	1	100.0%	63	100.0%

Over the next three months do you expect your workforce to:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Increase	10	20.8%	7	46.7%			17	26.6%
Remain the same	34	70.8%	7	46.7%	1	100.0%	42	65.6%
Decrease	4	8.3%	1	6.7%			5	7.8%
Total	48	100.0%	15	100.0%	1	100.0%	64	100.0%

Have you attempted to recruit in the past three months?

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Yes	12	25.0%	14	93.3%	1	100.0%	27	42.2%
No	36	75.0%	1	6.7%			37	57.8%
Total	48	100.0%	15	100.0%	1	100.0%	64	100.0%

If yes, were they:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Part-time	5	38.5%	7	50.0%			12	42.9%
Full-time	8	61.5%	12	85.7%	1	100.0%	21	75.0%
Temporary	2	15.4%	2	14.3%			4	14.3%
Permanent	4	30.8%	3	21.4%			7	25.0%
Total	13	146.2%	14	171.4%	1	100.0%	28	157.1%

*Multiple response

Did you experience difficulty finding staff?

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Yes	8	57.1%	9	64.3%	1	100.0%	18	62.1%
No	6	42.9%	5	35.7%			11	37.9%
Total	14	100.0%	14	100.0%	1	100.0%	29	100.0%

If yes, in what categories?

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Skilled manual/technical	2	22.2%	2	18.2%	1	100.0%	5	23.8%
Professional/managerial	6	66.7%	4	36.4%	1	100.0%	11	52.4%
Clerical	3	33.3%	4	36.4%			7	33.3%
Un/semi-skilled	1	11.1%	3	27.3%	1	100.0%	5	23.8%
Total	9	133.3%	11	118.2%	1	300.0%	21	133.3%

*Multiple response

E. Cashflow

Over the past three months has your cashflow:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Improved	6	12.5%	4	26.7%			10	15.6%
Remained the same	22	45.8%	9	60.0%	1	100.0%	32	50.0%
Worsened	20	41.7%	2	13.3%			22	34.4%
Total	48	100.0%	15	100.0%	1	100.0%	64	100.0%

Currently, what factors most affect your cashflow?

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Available finance	7	14.9%	2	14.3%			9	14.5%
Bad debts	7	14.9%	3	21.4%			10	16.1%
Promptness of payment/credit control	23	48.9%	8	57.1%			31	50.0%
Stock holdings/disposals	2	4.3%	1	7.1%			3	4.8%
Stronger/weaker sales than anticipated	22	46.8%	6	42.9%	1	100.0%	29	46.8%
Other	6	12.8%	2	14.3%			8	12.9%
Total	47	142.6%	14	157.1%	1	100.0%	62	145.2%

*Multiple response

Cashflow - Other, please specify
Client payment terms Problems in the property sales and lettings market As a charity our funding from statutory services has much reduced. We are paid by standing order in advance Moving office expenses Investment Asset realisations in cases where we are appointed No contracts

F. Investment

Have your investment plans for plant/machinery/equipment:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Revised up	4	8.9%	4	28.6%			8	13.3%
Remained the same	35	77.8%	7	50.0%	1	100.0%	43	71.7%
Revised down	6	13.3%	3	21.4%			9	15.0%
Total	45	100.0%	14	100.0%	1	100.0%	60	100.0%

Have your investment plans for training:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Revised up	7	15.6%	3	20.0%			10	16.4%
Remained the same	33	73.3%	11	73.3%	1	100.0%	45	73.8%
Revised down	5	11.1%	1	6.7%			6	9.8%
Total	45	100.0%	15	100.0%	1	100.0%	61	100.0%

G. Business Confidence

Over the next 12 months do you expect your turnover to:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Improve	29	61.7%	11	73.3%			40	63.5%
Remain the same	8	17.0%			1	100.0%	9	14.3%
Worsen	10	21.3%	4	26.7%			14	22.2%
Total	47	100.0%	15	100.0%	1	100.0%	63	100.0%

Over the next 12 months do you expect your profitability to:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Improve	24	50.0%	9	60.0%	1	100.0%	34	53.1%
Remain the same	14	29.2%	3	20.0%			17	26.6%
Worsen	10	20.8%	3	20.0%			13	20.3%
Total	48	100.0%	15	100.0%	1	100.0%	64	100.0%

H. Factors Affecting Your Business

Are you currently operating at:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Full capacity	10	21.3%	4	26.7%			14	22.2%
Below full capacity	37	78.7%	11	73.3%	1	100.0%	49	77.8%
Total	47	100.0%	15	100.0%	1	100.0%	63	100.0%

Over the next three months, do you expect your prices to:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Increase	7	14.9%	2	13.3%	1	100.0%	10	15.9%
Remain the same	36	76.6%	10	66.7%			46	73.0%
Decrease	4	8.5%	3	20.0%			7	11.1%
Total	47	100.0%	15	100.0%	1	100.0%	63	100.0%

Is your business currently suffering pressures to raise its prices from any of the following?

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Pay settlements	1	3.4%	2	22.2%			3	7.7%
Raw materials	11	37.9%	2	22.2%	1	100.0%	14	35.9%
Finance costs	6	20.7%	1	11.1%			7	17.9%
Other overheads	18	62.1%	3	33.3%			21	53.8%
Other	7	24.1%	2	22.2%			9	23.1%
Total	29	148.3%	9	111.1%	1	100.0%	39	138.5%

*Multiple response

Other, please specify
Government red tape and tax increases
Business rates and utilities
Exchange rates and shipping costs
Corporation tax increase, higher petrol prices
Taxes
Shipping pricing
Exchange rates
Workload model
Government initiatives

Please indicate which of the following factors are of more concern to your business now than 3 months ago:

	Size bands						Total	
	0-19		20-199		200-499		No	%
	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Interest rates	15	33.3%	5	35.7%			20	33.3%
Exchange rates	11	24.4%	4	28.6%			15	25.0%
Business rates	11	24.4%	6	42.9%			17	28.3%
Inflation	11	24.4%	3	21.4%	1	100.0%	15	25.0%
Competition	18	40.0%	7	50.0%			25	41.7%
Corporation tax	15	33.3%	5	35.7%			20	33.3%
Energy costs	12	26.7%	3	21.4%	1	100.0%	16	26.7%
Personnel costs	12	26.7%	5	35.7%	1	100.0%	18	30.0%
Total	45	233.3%	14	271.4%	1	300.0%	60	243.3%

*Multiple response

4.0 Topical Questions: New Politics and Business

The new government is committed to presenting an emergency Budget within 50 days. What should be the top three priorities?

Top priorities for Emergency Budget	No	%
Normalise access to finance for sound businesses	23	27.4
Credible plan to cut the deficit	55	65.5
Freeze public sector pay	30	35.7
Reform public sector pensions	28	33.3
Cancel the increase in NICs	35	41.7
Reduce the burden of regulation	25	29.8
Protect investment for key infrastructure from cuts	12	14.3
Support for exporters	10	11.9
Address high energy and fuel bills	19	22.6
Abolish the 50% tax band	10	11.9
Raise VAT rates	9	10.7
Restore empty property Business Rate Relief	2	2.4
Other	8	9.5
Base	84	100.0

Other, please specify:

- Cut excessively paid local government and pseudo government management posts
- Make it easier for employers to recruit a flexible workforce
- Increase manufacturing base
- Am uncertain at present
- Reform public sector benefits such as excessive holiday
- Support British manufacturers
- Reduce public sector spending (headcount)
- Reduce benefits

Business Support

What business support services are - in your view - relevant and valuable, and should be protected from cuts? (please tick all that apply)

Business support services to protect from cuts	No	%
Free Financial Health Checks	14	19.2
Business Plans	17	23.3
Business Start Up	34	46.6
High Growth Coaching	14	19.2
Tax Breaks/Tax Credits for R&D	30	41.1
Free Resource Efficiency/Energy Audits	12	16.4
Policies and Support for Public Procurement	13	17.8
Export Advice	17	23.3
Train 2 Gain	19	26.0
Complying with Regulation	19	26.0
Advice on doing business in the EU	14	19.2
Other	10	13.7
Base	73	100.0

Other, please specify:

- Bank's lowering lending thresholds to previous levels
- Time to pay on VAT, PAYE & TAX
- We could live without any of these
- Innovation support grants
- Business Link advice and grants
- Not sure
- Leaders First funding for Leadership programmes
- More funding for training and development skills
- Nothing can be sacred
- Government-guaranteed bank loans easier to obtain

Business Rates

With the recent Business Rates Revaluation, many businesses became eligible for business rates reductions and backdated rebates. Have you checked whether your property is eligible?

	Count	%
Yes	28	35.0%
No	52	65.0%
Base	80	100.0%

Should Business Rate Relief be automatically applied?

	Count	%
Yes	53	64.6%
No	0	0%
Don't know	29	35.4%
Base	82	100%

If no, why not?

Landlord pays rates

Appendix 1

QES Q2 2010 Online Questionnaire

Quarterly Economic Survey

Quarter Two, 2010.



This is part of the British Chambers of Commerce national survey which is submitted to the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee and the Treasury to assist decision making on interest rates and policy.

Information supplied by individual organisations will be treated in the strictest confidence.

The survey should take approximately four minutes to complete.

A: Your Business

1. Approximately how many people do you employ at this site?

2. What is your main business activity?

- Agriculture, hunting & forestry
- Fishing
- Mining & quarrying
- Manufacturing
- Electricity, gas & water supply
- Construction
- Wholesale, retail & repairs (including to vehicles)
- Hotels & restaurants
- Transport, storage & communication
- Financial services
- Real estate, renting & business services
- Public administration, defence, social security
- Education
- Health & social work
- Other community, social & personal services
- Other, please specify

B: Trading Patterns Domestic Market

3. Over the last three months (excluding seasonal variations) have your sales/custom/bookings:

- Increased
- Remained the same
- Decreased

4. Over the last three months (excluding seasonal variations) have your orders/advance custom/bookings:

- Increased
- Remained the same
- Decreased

C: Trading Patterns Export Market

5. Over the last three months (excluding seasonal variations) have your sales/custom/bookings:

- Increased
- Remained the same
- Decreased

6. Over the last three months (excluding seasonal variations) have your orders/advance custom/bookings:

- Increased
- Remained the same
- Decreased

D: Labour Force

7. Over the past three months has your workforce:

- Increased
- Remained the same
- Decreased

8. Over the next three months do you expect your workforce to:

- Increase
- Remain the same
- Decrease

9. Have you attempted to recruit in the past three months?

- Yes
- No (*If no, please go to Section E*)

10. If yes, were they: *(please tick all that apply)*

- Part-time
- Full-time
- Temporary
- Permanent

11. Did you experience any difficulty finding suitable staff?

- Yes
- No *(If no, please go to Section E)*

12. If yes, in what categories? *(please tick all that apply)*

- Skilled manual/technical
- Professional/managerial
- Clerical
- Un/semi-skilled

E: Cashflow

13. Over the past three months has your cashflow:

- Improved
- Remained the same
- Worsened

14. Currently, what factors most affect your cashflow? *(please tick all that apply)*

- Available finance
- Bad debts
- Promptness of payment/credit control
- Stock holdings/disposals
- Stronger/weaker sales than anticipated
- Other, please specify

F: Investment

15. Over the past three months have your investment plans for plant/machinery/equipment:

- Revised up
- Remained the same
- Revised down

16. Over the past three months have your investment plans for training:

- Revised up
- Remained the same
- Revised down

G: Business Confidence

17. Over the next 12 months do you expect your turnover to:

- Improve
- Remain the same
- Worsen

18. Over the next 12 months do you expect your profitability to:

- Improve
- Remain the same
- Worsen

H: Factors Affecting Your Business

19. Are you currently operating at:

- Full capacity
- Below full capacity

20. Over the next three months, do you expect your prices to:

- Increase
- Remain the same
- Decrease

21. Is your business currently suffering pressures to raise its prices from any of the following? (*please tick all that apply*)

- Pay settlements
- Raw materials

- Finance costs
- Other overheads
- Other, please specify

22. Please indicate which of the following factors are of more concern to your business now than three months ago: (*please tick all that apply*)

- Interest rates
- Exchange rates
- Business rates
- Inflation
- Competition
- Corporate taxation
- Energy costs
- Personnel costs

I: New Politics & Business

23. The new Government is committed to presenting an emergency budget within 50 days. What should be the top three priorities? (*please tick your top three priorities*)

- Normalise access to finance for sound businesses
- Credible plan to cut the deficit
- Freeze public sector pay
- Reform public sector pensions
- Cancel the increase in NICs
- Reduce the burden of regulation
- Protect investment for key infrastructure from cuts
- Support for exporters
- Address high energy and fuel bills
- Abolish the 50% tax band
- Raise VAT rates
- Restore empty property Business Rate Relief
- Other, please specify

J: Business Support

24. What Business Support Services are in your view relevant and valuable and should be protected from cuts?
(please tick all that apply)

- Free Financial Health Checks
- Business Plans
- Business Start Up
- High Growth Coaching
- Tax Breaks/Tax Credits for R&D
- Free Resource Efficiency/Energy Audits
- Policies and Support for Public Procurement
- Export Advice
- Train 2 Gain
- Complying with Regulation
- Advice on doing business in the EU
- Other, please specify

K: Business Rates

25. With the recent Business Rates Revaluation, many businesses became eligible for business rates reductions and backdated rebates. Have you checked whether your property is eligible?

- Yes
- No

26. Should Business Rate Relief be automatically applied?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

27. If No, why not?

L: Further Information

28. Would you like to receive news of this quarter's QES results?

- Yes
- No

29. If you have answered 'Yes' to receive a copy of this quarter's QES results, please leave your email address below

Email address:

30. What is the name of your organisation? This information will be used to monitor response rates and will NOT be linked back to individual responses.

Appendix 2
Covering Email



Dear Chamber Member,

Coalition government and what business is like for you under a blue and yellow cabinet?

We're now into our second week of a Tory/Lib Dem government and the new Chancellor has already contacted the Chambers of Commerce nationally for our views on tackling the deficit!

Good early signs on the influence Chamber's will have on new government policy. So, as usual, the Chamber wants to know how business is faring for you? Last quarter's economic survey results showed Northamptonshire's manufacturers doing better for a second quarter in a row, but things still looking challenging for the county's services sector businesses, which may have been caused by all the uncertainty around the election.

This quarter, in addition to the usual questions on how sales and orders are going and your cashflow experiences, etc, we will be asking for your thoughts on what should be in the Emergency Budget on 22nd June (to feed back directly to the new Cabinet) and what business support services should definitely be saved if the inevitable cuts are to fall.

The survey will take 5 minutes of your time and is extremely valuable in letting business, local authorities and the media alike, know what is really happening in the Northamptonshire economy.

Please [click here](#) to complete the latest economic survey questionnaire.

The Chamber publishes the results of your survey every quarter; click on this link for details of the [previous quarter's results](#).

We greatly appreciate your time.

Kind regards,

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