

**SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF EMPLOYEE SURVEY**

**Department Participation**

Employees were asked to indicate in which department they were employed. A summary of the responses by Department is outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1**

| <b>Department</b>                                 | <b>No. of Surveys Distributed</b> | <b>No. of Surveys Returned</b> | <b>% Return Rate</b> |
|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Administration                                    | 9                                 | 3                              | 33%                  |
| Clerks  | 16                                | 9                              | 56%                  |
| Community Services                                | 49                                | 24                             | 49%                  |
| Engineering/Public Works /Water Pollution Control | 83                                | 20                             | 24%                  |
| Finance   | 27                                | 14                             | 52%                  |
| Fire  | 115                               | 45                             | 39%                  |
| Human Resources                                   | 5                                 | 3                              | 60%                  |
| Parking Services                                  | 7                                 | 5                              | 71%                  |
| Planning and Building                             | 15                                | 13                             | 86%                  |
| Transit   | 60                                | 17                             | 24%                  |
| <b>Total</b>                                      | <b>386</b>                        | <b>153</b>                     | <b>39.6%</b>         |

The participation rates varied among the City Departments. The employee participation rates were highest in the Planning and Building, Parking, Human Resources and Clerks Departments. The lowest participation rates were in the Engineering and Transit Departments.

**Method of Communication**

Employees were asked to evaluate the various methods the City uses to communicate with its employees. There were two sections to this question. Section (i) asked staff to indicate which method they used to communicate. A detailed summary of the responses to section (i) is provided in **Table 2**.

**Table 2**

|          |                                    | <b>Frequently</b> | <b>Sometimes</b> | <b>Rarely</b> | <b>Not At All</b> |
|----------|------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| <b>a</b> | Memos/notices                      | 67 (44%)          | 57 (37%)         | 20 (13%)      | 3 (2%)            |
| <b>b</b> | E-mail                             | 39 (25%)          | 24 (16%)         | 13 (8%)       | 59 (39%)          |
| <b>c</b> | Division or section staff meetings | 10 (7%)           | 30 (20%)         | 38 (25%)      | 61 (40%)          |
| <b>d</b> | Department staff meetings          | 14 (9%)           | 24 (16%)         | 34 (22%)      | 66 (43%)          |
| <b>e</b> | Bulletin boards                    | 44 (29%)          | 66 (43%)         | 22 (14%)      | 11 (7%)           |
| <b>f</b> | City’s web site                    | 10 (7%)           | 23 (15%)         | 26 (17%)      | 79 (52%)          |
| <b>g</b> | Word of mouth                      | 71 (46%)          | 61 (40%)         | 6 (4%)        | 9 (6%)            |
| <b>h</b> | The grapevine                      | 48 (31%)          | 53 (35%)         | 22 (14%)      | 17 (11%)          |
| <b>i</b> | Newsletters                        | 16 (10%)          | 52 (34%)         | 44 (29%)      | 32 (21%)          |

Other methods identified include media, telephone, voice mail and cell phones.

**Note:** The majority of staff of the Fire, Parking, Transit, Engineering/Public Works/Water Pollution Control and Community Services does not have access to e-mail and the City’s web site at work.

Of the communications methods identified in the survey, those that received the highest response rates were “word of mouth”, “memos/notices”, “bulletin boards” and “the grapevine”. Further review of the statistics reveals that staff at City Hall are more inclined to use memos/notices and e-mails than staff located outside of City Hall.

Transit and Fire Department staff appears to rely on their bulletin board and newsletters for much of their information.

With respect to the least used methods of communication, there are two areas which had high response rates in the “rarely” and “not at all” categories. These methods were ‘Division of Section staff meetings”, and “Department staff meetings”. With the exception of a majority of staff respondents from the Planning and Building and Clerks Departments, the survey indicated that these two communication methods were seldom used.

**Effectiveness of Communication Methods**

Section (ii) of Question 2 asked respondents to rate the effectiveness of each communication methods. **Table 3** provides a detailed breakdown of the responses received.

**Table 3**

|          |                                    | <b>Highly Effective</b> | <b>Somewhat Effective</b> | <b>Not At All Effective</b> |
|----------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>a</b> | Memos/notices                      | 59 (39%)                | 86 (56%)                  | 2 (1%)                      |
| <b>b</b> | E-mail                             | 48 (31%)                | 38 (25%)                  | 42 (27%)                    |
| <b>c</b> | Division or Section staff meetings | 35 (23%)                | 51 (33%)                  | 33 (22%)                    |
| <b>d</b> | Department staff meetings          | 36 (24%)                | 50 (33%)                  | 32 (21%)                    |
| <b>e</b> | Bulletin boards                    | 27 (18%)                | 97 (63%)                  | 18 (12%)                    |
| <b>f</b> | City’s web site                    | 9 (6%)                  | 59 (39%)                  | 45 (29%)                    |
| <b>g</b> | Word of mouth                      | 25 (16%)                | 79 (52%)                  | 39 (25%)                    |
| <b>h</b> | The grapevine                      | 17 (11%)                | 60 (39%)                  | 62 (41%)                    |
| <b>i</b> | Newsletters                        | 20 (13%)                | 88 (58%)                  | 21 (14%)                    |

The responses to this question indicate that most of the communication methods were rated as either “Highly Effective” or Somewhat Effective”, with one exception. A large number of respondents that have access to the City’s web site rated it as ineffective (29%) as a communication method. It could be assumed that the City’s web site is viewed as not very effective because it is still in its developmental stage (note from Table 1, 79% of respondents currently do not visit the City’s web site and 59% do not use e-mail). It is

interesting to note that while many staff members in all departments rely on “the grapevine” as primary method of communication to receive their information, this method was rated as an ineffective method of communication by 62 (41%) of the respondents.

With regards to Division or Section Staff Meetings and Department Staff Meetings, the responses indicate that employees who participate in staff and/or departmental meetings rate these communication methods as “highly” to “somewhat” effective. Table 2 does not adequately reveal this inference, but closer analysis of the responses broken down by Departments shows that employees chose this method of communication as very effective, even though they currently do not participate in this method. Comments received in response to Questions 11 and 12 - “Other Comments” sections support the position that meetings are very effective methods of communicating.

**Question 3** asked employees to rank the sources from which they most commonly receive written or verbal information that affects them. **Table 4** provides a breakdown of the responses (including percentages) as follows:

**Table 4**

| Information Source                             | Most Frequent |             |            |            |            | Least Frequent |           |           |           |
|--|---------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|  | 1             | 2           | 3          | 4          | 5          | 6              | 7         | 8         | 9         |
| My immediate Supervisor/<br>Department Head    | 60<br>(39%)   | 17<br>(11%) | 7<br>(5%)  | 2<br>(1%)  | 1<br>(1%)  | 0<br>(0%)      | 1<br>(1%) | 0<br>(0%) | 0<br>(0%) |
| My fellow employees                            | 24<br>(16%)   | 18<br>(12%) | 12<br>(8%) | 11<br>(7%) | 4<br>(3%)  | 3<br>(2%)      | 0<br>(0%) | 0<br>(0%) | 0<br>(0%) |
| External media (newspaper,<br>radio, TV, etc.) | 3<br>(2%)     | 2<br>(1%)   | 7<br>(5%)  | 11<br>(7%) | 8<br>(5%)  | 9<br>(6%)      | 7<br>(5%) | 3<br>(2%) | 1<br>(1%) |
| Another Supervisor or<br>Department Head       | 1<br>(1%)     | 8<br>(5%)   | 9<br>(6%)  | 9<br>(6%)  | 11<br>(7%) | 3<br>(2%)      | 4<br>(3%) | 4<br>(3%) | 1<br>(1%) |
| Bulletin board                                 | 2<br>(1%)     | 5<br>(3%)   | 12<br>(8%) | 12<br>(8%) | 8<br>(5%)  | 11<br>(7%)     | 5<br>(3%) | 2<br>(1%) | 1<br>(1%) |
| Human Resources staff                          | 1<br>(1%)     | 5<br>(3%)   | 7<br>(5%)  | 7<br>(5%)  | 6<br>(4%)  | 5<br>(3%)      | 8<br>(5%) | 4<br>(4%) | 4<br>(4%) |
| Union President                                | 5<br>(3%)     | 11<br>(7%)  | 4<br>(3%)  | 7<br>(5%)  | 8<br>(5%)  | 7<br>(5%)      | 0<br>(0%) | 4<br>(3%) | 1<br>(1%) |
| My union steward                               | 0<br>(0%)     | 1<br>(1%)   | 4<br>(3%)  | 1<br>(1%)  | 8<br>(5%)  | 4<br>(3%)      | 6<br>(4%) | 2<br>(1%) | 3<br>(2%) |
| E mail   | 3<br>(2%)     | 10<br>(7%)  | 10<br>(7%) | 5<br>(3%)  | 1<br>(1%)  | 2<br>(1%)      | 1<br>(1%) | 4<br>(3%) | 8<br>(5%) |
| Other  |               |             |            |            |            |                |           |           |           |

The responses received to this question indicate that the information sources most frequently ranked as number one was “My immediate Supervisor/Department Head (39%) and “My fellow employees (16%). The results indicated that generally, staff relies on their immediate supervisor/Department Head and fellow employees as sources of information.

### Level of Satisfaction Re: Communication

**Question 4** asked employees to indicate their level of satisfaction about being informed about City business and events that impact them as City employees. Employees evaluated how well they were kept informed about their Division or Section, other Divisions or Sections, other Departments and about corporate decisions, policies etc. **Table 5** summarizes the responses:

**Table 5**

|            |                                      | <b>Very Satisfied</b> | <b>Somewhat Satisfied</b> | <b>Neutral No Opinion</b> | <b>Somewhat Dissatisfied</b> | <b>Very Dissatisfied</b> |
|------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>i</b>   | In your Division                     | 18(12%)               | 54(35%)                   | 21(14%)                   | 39(25%)                      | 20 (13%)                 |
| <b>ii</b>  | Other Division/Section of your Dept. | 7(5%)                 | 44(29%)                   | 52(34%)                   | 29(19%)                      | 59 (39%)                 |
| <b>iii</b> | In other Departments                 | 1(1%)                 | 18(12%)                   | 73(48%)                   | 37(24%)                      | 24 (16%)                 |
| <b>iv</b>  | Corporate Decisions, policies        | 5(3%)                 | 20(13%)                   | 60(39%)                   | 39(25%)                      | 28 (18%)                 |

The response received to Question 4 clearly indicate that employees are not very satisfied with how well they are kept informed of events that impact them as City employees. The category with the lowest percentage response was in the “very satisfied” category, while the “No Opinion” category had the highest response rate. Employees also seem to be much more dissatisfied (35% response rate) with being informed about what is going on in other Divisions/Sections of their own Department, than with what is going on in other Departments (16%) These figures seem to indicate that employees would like to know more about what is happening in other Divisions/Section of their own Department as well as other areas of the Corporation.

It is noteworthy that within the larger Departments (Fire, Engineering and Community Services), only one (1) respondent was “Very Satisfied” with how well they are kept informed of matters that impact them in their own Division/Section. The exception was Transit (with the third largest workforce of Departments surveyed) which had a majority of its respondents who were either “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with being informed about issues that impact them in their own department. This higher level of satisfaction in Transit Department is probably due to the fact that Transit staff is regularly updated on issues through a Department Newsletter. The Finance Department also did not have any employees that were “Very Satisfied” with information about what is happening in their own Department. Overall, for those Departments that have more than ten (10) employees, the highest levels of dissatisfaction seems to come from staff in the Finance and Engineering Departments, while the highest levels of satisfaction came from employees in the Transit and Planning and Building Departments.

**If you are “somewhat dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with how well you are kept informed about what is going on in your own Division/Section, please explain.**

The following explanations were most frequently mentioned:

- Lack of open communications (15);
- Hear what is going on from other Departments, media and public (7);
- Lack of communications with Department Head and supervisors (5);
- Last person to know (4);
- Get information first from the gossip mill/grapevine (4);
- Lack of trust in management motives (4); and
- Slow dissemination of information (3).

**If you are “somewhat dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with how well you are kept informed about what is going on in other Divisions/Sections of your Department, please explain.**

The most frequently mentioned explanations were:

- Lack of open communications (18);
- Hear mainly through the grapevine or other Departments (8); and
- Last person to know (4).

**If you are “somewhat dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with how well you are kept informed about what is going on in other Departments, please explain.**

The explanations most frequently mentioned were:

- Lack of sharing of information from other Departments (23);
- Hear mainly through the grapevine (9);
- New employee introductions lacking (3); and
- Hear from media first (2).

**If you are “somewhat dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with how well you are kept informed about corporate decisions, policies and matters: (e.g. strategic plans, Council’s Goals and Objectives for 2002-2003), please explain.**

The explanations most frequently given were:

- Lack of sharing of corporate information (19);
- Hear about corporate matters from the media first (10);
- Find out after the fact (4); and
- Policy book needs to be updated and distributed (3).

**Communication Issues**

**Question 5** asked employees to indicate how important they believe different communication issues need to be addressed by the City. **Table 6** summarizes the responses:

**Table 6**

|           |  | <b>Very Important</b> | <b>Somewhat Important</b> | <b>Not At All Important</b> | <b>Neutral / No Opinion</b> |
|-----------|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>a)</b> | Supervisor/ Employee Communications                        | 122(80%)              | 19 (12%)                  | 1(1%)                       | 6(4%)                       |
| <b>b)</b> | Communications between Divisions/ Section in my Department | 91 (59%)              | 42 (27%)                  | 6(4%)                       | 7(5%)                       |
| <b>c)</b> | Communications between Departments                         | 56 (37%)              | 73 (48%)                  | 10(7%)                      | 7(5%)                       |
| <b>d)</b> | Communication between management levels                    | 84 (55%)              | 44 (29%)                  | 6(4%)                       | 9(6%)                       |
| <b>e)</b> | Communication of Council decisions/ directions             | 67(44%)               | 63(41%)                   | 7(5%)                       | 9(6%)                       |
| <b>f)</b> | Overall organizational communications                      | 89(58%)               | 50(33%)                   | 1(1%)                       | 4(3%)                       |
| <b>g)</b> | Other  |                       |                           |                             |                             |

The responses to this question were unanimous – employees from all of the Departments surveyed view each of the communication issues shown in Table 6 as important. The two issues that received the highest number of “very important” responses were those of “Supervisor/Employee Communications” (80%) and “Communications between Divisions/Section in My Department” (59%). These are followed closely by “Overall Organizational Communications” (58%). These results correlate with all of the points discussed above. Employees indicated that they receive their information (that affects them as employees) from two main sources – “immediate Supervisors/Department Heads” and “fellow employees”. They also indicated that they would like to know more about what is happening in other Divisions/Sections of their Departments and in other Departments. The results suggest that employees believe that the current communication processes should be reviewed.

**Communication with the Public**

**Question 6** asked employees to indicate how effective they feel the City is communicating with the public through a number of communication methods. **Table 7** summarizes the responses:

**Table 7**

|           |                                | <b>Very Good</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Average</b> | <b>Poor</b> | <b>Very Poor</b> |
|-----------|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|------------------|
| <b>a)</b> | Cogeco Cable Six               | 10 (7%)          | 51 (33%)    | 51(33%)        | 18(12%)     | 6 (4%)           |
| <b>b)</b> | Mail outs in tax & water bills | 8 (5%)           | 60 (39%)    | 43(28%)        | 14(9%)      | 4 (3%)           |
| <b>c)</b> | Press Releases                 | 8 (5%)           | 61 (40%)    | 47(31%)        | 15(10%)     | 5 (3%)           |
| <b>d)</b> | Newspaper Ads.                 | 7 (5%)           | 46 (30%)    | 63(41%)        | 16(10%)     | 4 (3%)           |
| <b>e)</b> | Radio Ads                      | 8 (5%)           | 41(27%)     | 52(34%)        | 27(18%)     | 5(3%)            |
| <b>f)</b> | Newspaper Articles             | 7(5%)            | 46(30%)     | 62(41%)        | 12(8%)      | 5(3%)            |
| <b>g)</b> | Radio News                     | 12(8%)           | 57(37%)     | 53(35%)        | 11(7%)      | 3(2%)            |
| <b>h)</b> | Civic Corner (Observer)        | 7(5%)            | 53(35%)     | 49(32%)        | 14(9%)      | 6(4%)            |
| <b>i)</b> | Town Hall Meetings             | 4(3%)            | 25(16%)     | 56(37%)        | 27(18%)     | 10(7%)           |
| <b>j)</b> | Other - Mail Out Notices       | 0                | 0           | 0              | 0           | 1(33%)           |
|           | - City Council Meetings        | 0                | 0           | 1(33%)         | 0           | 0                |
|           | - City Web Site                | 5(3%)            | 3(2%)       | 1(1%)          | 2(2%)       | 0                |
|           | - Radio Talk Back - 1070       | 0                | 1(1%)       | 0              | 0           | 0                |

With respect to these breakdowns, a majority of the employees believe that “Mail outs in tax and water bills” and “Press Releases” are the most effective methods of communicating with the public. These are followed closely by the Radio – “Radio News and Radio Ads” and the Newspaper – “Newspaper Ads and Civic Corner”. “Town Hall Meetings” were seen by several employees (25%) as either “Poor” or “Very Poor” as a means of communicating with the public.

The results indicate that there is room for improvement in the Corporation’s methods of communicating with the public.

**If you believe the City is “poor” or “very poor” in communicating with the public through the noted communication methods, please explain.**

The following explanations for the poor ratings were provided for the communications methods:

- Town hall meetings: too structured (2); short notice period; times may be inconvenient for the public; and they are poorly attended.
- Newspaper: should provide positive weekly input; not extensively used; and information comes out too late.
- Web site: lack of information on web site.
- Mail-outs in Bills provide more inserts.
- Radio: expensive for ads (3).
- Civic Corner: boring; difficult to read; and locations in newspaper vary.
- COGECO: poor sound quality.

### **Personal Contact with the Public**

**Question 7** asked employees to indicate if in their position, they are required to deal with the public. A total of 93% of the respondents indicated that they deal directly with the public. Those that dealt with the public were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with how well they are trained to deal with the public. The following **Table 8** summarizes the responses received:

**Table 8**

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Very satisfied</b>        | 22% |
| <b>Somewhat satisfied</b>    | 41% |
| <b>No opinion</b>            | 10% |
| <b>Somewhat dissatisfied</b> | 12% |
| <b>Very dissatisfied</b>     | 6%  |

Of the respondents that were “**somewhat dissatisfied and very dissatisfied**”, 12% require “**general customer service**” training, 11% would like “**clarification of their role**” and 3% indicated that they needed “**letter writing**” training. **Questions 8, 9 and 10** asked employees to indicate how often they watched Council Meetings on Cogeco Cable Channel 6, read the “Civic Corner” section of the Observer and whether they ever visited the City of Sarnia’s web site on the internet. The responses are as follows:

| <u><b>Cogeco Cable Channel 6</b></u> |     | <u><b>Observer Newspaper</b></u> |     | <u><b>Sarnia Web Site</b></u> |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|-----|
| Once a month                         | 14% | Twice a month                    | 23% | Yes                           | 54% |
| Less than once a month               | 15% | Less than twice a month          | 16% | No                            | 44% |
| Rarely                               | 41% | Rarely                           | 40% |                               |     |
| Never                                | 29% | Never                            | 20% |                               |     |

It appears from the results that the majority of employees either rarely or never watch Council Meetings on Cogeco Cable 6 or read the Civic Corner in the local newspaper (The Observer). However, in comparing these answers with the responses contained in Table 7, it can be noted that employees rate these two communication mediums to be above average, as methods of communicating with the public.

Fifty four percent (54%) of the respondents indicated that they have visited the City’s web site. Comparing these results with the responses contained in Table 1 (Methods of Communication) and Table 2 (Effectiveness of Communication Methods), it is interesting to note that the web site was rated very low in both method and effectiveness of communication, yet a majority of employees have visited the site. It can probably be assumed that the web site is viewed as ineffective because of its present design and the fact that there is limited information on it at this time.

**Additional Comments /Feedback/Suggestions**

The final questions in the Internal Employee Survey provided staff with the opportunity to make suggestions regarding communication issues and/or to provide feedback regarding this communication undertaking.

More than half of the respondents (54%) took the time to provide written feedback and comments to the Committee.

**Question #11: What other comments would you like to make regarding internal communications within the City?**

The most frequently mentioned comments were:

- Lack of internal communications (9);
- Provide computer access for all outside employee groups (5);
- Staff needs to be better informed by supervisors (3);
- Communicate with staff before the media (2);
- Provide information newsletters/bulletins (2);
- Regular staff meetings needed (2); and
- New Employee introduction program needed (2).

**Question #12: If you were in charge of communication for the City of Sarnia, what would you do differently? (We really want to know!!)**

The most frequently mentioned suggestions were:

- Improve team building (12);
- Provide enhanced “new employee introduction” program (12);
- Provide more information sharing through newsletters/bulletins (9);
- Notify staff first before the media (9);
- Hold regular staff meetings (6);
- Provide computers to work sites outside City Hall (6);
- Hire communications specialist (5);
- Improve information sharing between management and staff (5);
- Improve staff recognition (4);
- Communications training for senior management (4);
- Better inform switchboard operators of staff changes and City projects (4);
- Release information on a timely basis (3);
- Improve attitude (3);
- Enhance City Web site (3);
- Provide open lines of communication between supervisors and staff (3); and
- Reinforce the positives (3).