

Dear CCA member:

In the spring of 2010, CCA commissioned Ipsos Reid to conduct a national survey measuring Canadians' perceptions and awareness of co-operatives.

The survey was commissioned in preparation for the International Year of Co-operatives, which will take place in 2012. CCA will consider the survey results when preparing key messages and planning activities to take place during the International Year.

It was developed in consultation with CCA's Branding Resource Group, an informal group of co-operators brought together to discuss issues related to co-op sector public outreach. Special thanks to The Co-operators, Gay Lea Foods, CUMIS, Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, Mountain Equipment Co-op, Co-op Atlantic and La Siembra for both their advice and their financial contribution to the survey.

Ipsos Reid completed its report earlier this month and we are pleased to share it with you. Some of the survey's key findings include:

- One in five respondents said they were a member of a co-operative; in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 61 per cent of respondents cited membership in a co-op, while the figure for Alberta was 44 per cent.
- Seven in 10 respondents agree that co-operatives keep money in the local economy, are an important part of their communities and create jobs that help support local communities.
- More than two-thirds of respondents agree that co-operatives are a trusted place to do business and save members money.
- Two-thirds of respondents agree that co-operatives provide quality products and services. The same percentage of respondents agrees that co-operatives offer good customer service and have a good reputation.
- Three out of five respondents agree that co-operatives offer good value for money and are well-run businesses.
- The words most commonly associated with co-operatives are "local", "for all ages" and "about community."

On the less positive side:

- The majority of respondents say they are "not very" (41 per cent) or "not at all" (18 per cent) familiar with co-ops. Only 7 per cent described themselves as "very familiar" with co-ops.
- 44 per cent did not know the difference between co-operatives and other types of businesses.
- When given the names of specific businesses, respondents were confused as to whether or not they were co-ops. For example, 49 per cent of respondents believed COSTCO was a co-op, while 36 per cent said COSTCO was "not a co-operative" and 16 per cent were not sure. Other non-co-ops that were identified as co-ops by some respondents included Shell, Canada Post, Hudsons Bay Company, TD Canada Trust and the Canadian Union of Public Employees.