

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S ECONOMY IN CONTEXT

– THE NEED FOR CHANGE –

***Overwhelmingly, 90% Believe Major Changes in BC are Needed
To Assure Economic Competitiveness***

***Eight in Ten (81%) British Columbians Believe Their Province
Has all The Things Necessary to be Canada's Best Economy***

***Unless Major Changes Made, However, (77%) British
Columbians Believe That Their Best Days are Behind Them***



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Vancouver, British Columbia –Ipsos-Reid (formerly, the Angus Reid Group) was recently commissioned to survey British Columbians on their current views of business and economic issues. The results indicate that an overwhelming 90 percent believe major changes in BC are needed to assure economic competitiveness. Eight in ten (81%) British Columbians believe their province has all the things necessary to be Canada's best economy. Unless major changes are made, however, (77%) British Columbians believe that their best days are behind them.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted between September 26, 2000 and October 1, 2000. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 800 adult British Columbians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult British Columbian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual British Columbian population according to the 1996 Census data.

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Overwhelmingly, 90% Believe Major Changes in BC are Needed To Assure Economic Competitiveness

Nine in ten (90%) British Columbians agree that ‘we need to make major changes in BC to assure that we are economically competitive’; 64 percent ‘strongly’ agree and compares to only 2 percent who ‘strongly’ disagree.

- Vancouver/Burnaby residents (at 86%) are slightly less likely than other regions of the province to hold this view (all other regions are above 90%).
- Older British Columbians were least likely to agree with this statement; 87 percent of 45 to 54 year olds and 86 percent of those aged 55 and over agree while more than 90 percent of each of the younger groups did so.
- Also, the most highly educated (those with university degrees or higher) were the least likely to agree (84%) that major changes were needed to maintain economic competitiveness.

Eight in Ten (81%) British Columbians Believe Their Province Has all The Things Necessary to be Canada’s Best Economy

A strong majority of British Columbians (81%) agree that their province has all the things necessary to be Canada’s best economy; a majority (53%) ‘strongly’ agree this is the case while only 4 percent ‘strongly’ disagree.

- This view is weakest on the Lower Mainland; in Vancouver/Burnaby 77 percent agree while for in the rest of the Lower Mainland 75 percent agree.
- When those agreeing (81%) are asked on an open-ended basis about what things BC has that would make it Canada's best economy, natural resources generally (37%), good geographic location (12%), tourism (11%), and an educated/skilled population (11%) are common replies.
- Fifty-four percent of British Columbians agree the province has what it takes to be Canada's best economy even though they stated that the BC economy is on the 'wrong' track. When asked on an open-ended basis what was the cause of this errant course, a majority (65%) mentioned government (and if lack of leadership/direction is also considered government – 75%) while another 16 percent mentioned taxes.

Unless Major Changes Made, However, (77%) British Columbians Believe That Their Best Days are Behind Them

Seventy-seven percent of British Columbians agree (51% 'strongly' and 27% 'somewhat') with the statement that 'unless we make major changes to how we do things in BC, our best days will be behind us'; 12 percent 'somewhat' disagree and 9 percent 'strongly' disagree with this view. British Columbians, both regionally and demographically, are consistent on this point.

British Columbians Think They Have Fallen Behind Regions Like Ontario and Alberta on Economic Competitiveness

A majority (56%) ‘strongly’ agree that BC is falling behind competitively. Combined with another 26 percent that ‘somewhat’ agree and eight in ten British Columbians (82%) hold this view against only 14 percent who disagree.

- Regionally, residents of Vancouver/Burnaby were least likely (76% agree) to hold this view.
- Younger (18-34) British Columbians and those more highly educated (university graduates and higher) were also less likely to think this way; 77 percent and 76 percent, respectively, either ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ agree that BC is becoming less competitive economically.

Two-Thirds (64%) Of British Columbians Agree That A Person Starting A New Business Should Probably Move Away From BC

Thirty-seven percent of British Columbians polled ‘strongly’ agree with the statement that a person starting a new business should probably move away from BC; another 27 percent ‘somewhat’ agree while one in three (34%) disagree.

- Regionally, residents of Vancouver Island were least likely to agree (56%) with this view while those in the Lower Mainland (excluding Vancouver/Burnaby) were most likely to agree (69%).



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