



LISTENING TOUR OVERVIEW

It's All About You! Member feedback is the heartbeat of the West Coast Chamber. We exist to serve our business community as a catalyst for growth, a convener of leaders and influencers, and a champion for a thriving community. Actively listening and responding to the Holland/Zeeland business community has always been our priority, but when our long-term Chamber President & CEO Jane Clark retired and Jodi Owczarski transitioned into the leadership role in September 2022, we knew it was a crucial time to pause and listen to the voices of our members. Not only that, but we were also coming out of a haze of uncertainty after a worldwide pandemic. We knew that a part of re-imagining the future would be to have a pulse on the challenges and successes of our membership. So, we did just that. Our entire team engaged in the process of reaching out to every single member. Together we actively listened, responded, and tracked the data along the way. We enjoyed all of the conversations and feedback provided through emails, surveys, and in-person meetings. Thank you to all of those who participated. We truly appreciate and welcome your open and honest feedback, not only during the Listening Tour, but always.

MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



We were overwhelmed by the inspiring things happening in our community. Many organizations are celebrating milestone anniversaries from one year in business all the way up to a 100-year anniversary. Organizations reported record breaking sales, mergers and acquisitions, new locations, growth into new markets, renovations and expansions, successful leadership transitions, and numerous awards. In addition, many organizations shared they are implementing new employee benefit programs such as providing benefits for part-time employees, launching healthcare plans, and offering enhanced development and training programs. It was so inspiring hearing all of these remarkable stories!





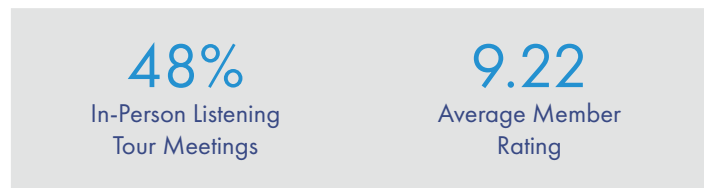
MEMBER CHALLENGES



Although there are challenges, it is clear we are a resilient and ambitious community. Although supply chain challenges were noted, it comes as no surprise that talent is the greatest concern. A few talent related issues such as housing and childcare were also mentioned. The takeaway is that the talent challenge is not going away any time soon and that instead organizations are getting creative with hiring, retention, automation, partnerships, and processes for delivering their products and services. Many also noted a desire to continue improving their diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, as they see this as a way to attract and retain employees.



LISTENING TOUR STATISTICS



NEXT STEPS

At the West Coast Chamber, we envision a bold future for our community. We're taking your feedback to heart and will be using this data as we map out our next fiscal year. We have also implemented a few changes along the way based on your responses. For example, we modified our DEI focus to an inclusivity focus. The goal is to foster a culture of belonging within the business community. We also heard that talent needs to be a priority, so we are leaning into this in a variety of ways. We're working hard to put West Michigan on the map for positive stories, such as growing Community Impact Day – we had over 950 volunteers in 2023 and tons of positive media mentions. We are the first Chamber in the nation to launch this program and we'll be making it even bigger next year while teaching other Chambers how to replicate it in their own communities. We're putting a big focus on being a convener between the education and business sectors by giving educators access to our facility, partnering with the Ottawa Area ISD to launch a program similar to West Coast Leadership for students, and highlighting happenings in education in our magazine and weekly eNews. Be sure to check out our Annual Report later this year for a more detailed recap of what was accomplished throughout this past year. Your insight and feedback will always be the driving force for West Coast Chamber's areas of focus, so please contact us anytime with your comments and ideas. Let's continue to trailblaze forward together.

