

10 best reasons for doing business in Northland

The First half of 2008 has started out as a bit of a shocker. Petrol Prices have skyrocketed, Interest rates have held their highs, basic food stuffs are increasing in price and the Housing market is slumping.

The Northland Chambers own survey on business outlook has reported a drop in confidence over the coming 12 months which has been backed up nationwide by indicators out of the major banks.

In mid May 2008 the Northland Chambers of Commerce asked members what was the best reason for being in business in Northland and awaited the response. We have had feedback from a few businesses to say that the business climate was getting tougher. We were pleasantly surprised to discover that the replies came in over the next week or so were full of enthusiastic comments and the positive sides of being in business in our region.

The amount of enthusiasm and feedback we received cemented the impression that our membership although diverse and widely spread do have a more optimistic and positive outlook than other businesses.

These comments are outlined along with the complete list in our eBook - the 10 best reasons to be in business in Northland which can be downloaded from our website www.northchamber.co.nz

The 10 best reasons for being in business in Northland

1. Northlands Statistics

- Unemployment is down - Northland's unemployment rate continues to break records by bucking expectations and trending downwards to another record low of 3.9% (from 4.1%) in the previous quarter. This is only a fraction higher than the national average which has grown from 3.4% to 3.6% over the last quarter. A great result for Northland in comparison to a number of other regions' rates progressing upwards (This fact unfortunately wasn't reported in mainstream media) source DOL
- Population growth : Statistics NZ predict Population growth for the future to be at around a 13 % for the period 2006 - 2013

2. Businesses want to relocate here

- Why wouldn't they. Climate, lifestyle, comparatively cheaper rental/ leases on commercial properties & Staff Costs. Some of the constraints on availability of good commercial property being answered in the medium term by industrial developments in Waipapa and Marsden Point.

3. Region of Opportunities

- A number our members mentioned the endless opportunities in Northland. Most of these people are 'new Northlanders' who hang recently relocated here have identified a number of business opportunities or Gaps in the market in various industries within Northland in comparison to markets like say Auckland. (Anons)
- Marsden Rail Link will open up opportunities for Developers, Businesses and the Port and act as a catalyst for Economic and Business Development in the Region.
- Attraction of technical and skilled immigrants is made easier through the ability to market the lifestyle and physical attributes of the region as a great place to live, work and play.

4. People People People

- A number of our respondents commented on loyal customers and suppliers
- Northlanders have a can-do attitude
- Business people say that Northlanders are relaxed, direct and practical
- People are not superficial
- Comments on people being friendly, helpful, acting with integrity and having the pioneering spirit
- Northlanders adapt to change readily

5. Lifestyle

- Northland has a favorable climate. Known throughout the country as the winterless North
- The coast is always within reach in all parts of Northland
- Recreation opportunities are plentiful with plenty of physical attributes
- The income to cost of living ration is perceived as still being more affordable than in other areas in New Zealand.
- Recent announcements by Telstra/Northpower – re a world class broadband (data, voice, video)infrastructure in Whangarei.

6. Location

- New Zealand's only Global City is getting closer with initiatives such as the Auckland Motorway extension shortening the traveling time
- Good locality for farming and primary industries (no droughts). Plentiful natural resources giving the economy an opportunity to grow extract fish and graze.
- Competitively able to attract skilled immigrants because of the lifestyle

7. Productivity

- Road congestion almost non-existent
- Distance to Auckland
- Isolated location (far north) encourages businesses to put in systems and process to operate efficiently to counter the effect of isolation.

8. The Economy

- Boom and Bust cycle appear to have evened out.
- Size of the regions towns means the population is fiercely parochial
- Good, Proactive workforce
- Marsden Point area poised for growth
- NZs only natural deep water port
- Wealth of business information and support services available in the region
- Although still heavily dependant on Primary industries there is a good diverse spread of industry across primary, secondary and tertiary sectors.

9. Co-opetition

- Live and work together. There were comments on businesses working together to assist and support each other even to the extent of sharing resources and equipment with competitors.

10. Knowledge

- Obstacles. Business is aware of the obstacles to growth. these are Red tape, external factors such as fuel, interest and exchange rates and infrastructure limitations
- Newly elected District Councils offer a ray of hope in the continual fight against Red Tape and Resource management issues.

Responses from Survey

Cheryl Lee – Info Centre

Optimism prevails in Northland because people want to be here. Two outstanding assets of the region are the stunning natural environment and warm sub tropical climate which provide a fabulous playground, and the cultural diversity expressed in the wonderful art and food.

Chantal Gilmore - Gilmore Brown Limited

Agree there are plenty of untapped opportunities to come out of Northland, to support these is our great position so close to Auckland from both a business and lifestyle perspective. Also the readiness for our business owners to work together in industry sectors or complimentary industries to achieve a good result for the region and ultimately a good result for individual businesses.

Helen Blaxland

A few comments from us at North Haven Hospice- a business with a difference!

There are benefits of accountability in a smaller business community both commercially and socially. Much of our brand and goodwill is generated by experience and word of mouth which in turn makes us all the more aware of the need to deliver excellence in each and every contact both with patients and families as well as the business community with whom we draw from.

Doing Business in Northland – a smaller community allows people to recognise deeper values that make community function eg respect wise use of resources and gives an appreciation of high quality service, adaptability and flexibility of approach so as to meet client/ customer needs/wants.

Phil

Our increasing accessibility to the Auckland market place and Auckland visitor access to us. Twenty years ago we were not this close and with a vastly improved SH1, rail link addition and development of our port to an import and export facility replacing Auckland's, the accessibility is only going to get better.

Robin Grieve

I would have thought that the best reason for doing business in Northland is the people. We are a great community with enough drive and enthusiasm to foster success in business. We have a sense of community and loyalty and fairness. We also share an enjoyment of the region in which we live and we know how to balance our life to maximise all of the above.

Steven Gardner - Deepweb Web Design

I believe the best thing about the north for business is lifestyle, including weather and the other activities that are available up here.
I think it is a key factor in why people move here.

Linda Wigley

I would have to say that historically and culturally Northland is the place to be, given its special place in New Zealand history. Northland is the birthplace of a Nation and has a unique history; sites of some of NZ's earliest settlement both Maori and Pakeha; NZ's oldest buildings, as well as many sites of special cultural and archaeological significance.

The Whangarei Museum, Kiwi House and Heritage Park attracts visitors from all over the World, who visit to find out more about the history of the place and our people also to experience our unique native species such as Kiwi and gecko.

For example in January this year 47% of our visitors were from overseas and last month (April '08) we received visitors from 27 different countries.

We also have a lot of potential for growth within the heritage and cultural sector, which we aim to realize through our Kiwi North project - a significant upgrade of our existing facility which will meet this growing demand for heritage and cultural attractions.

David Moss – Managing Director (Roseman & Warren) United Travel Whangarei

“Roseman & Warren United Travel was first established in Whangarei in 1947, and I personally became involved in the business

In 1983. Over the years, and especially in times of economic hardship, it has become apparent that the discerning public of Whangarei recognises value and service & the ‘personal touch”, has a higher degree of customer loyalty than any main centre can boast.”

Unknown

I have long been an advocate of the lifestyle Whangarei has to offer. Many people seem to run Whangarei down as some kind of hick town, but in reality it has a lot to offer.

Not too big to be impersonal: this is a real advantage in business, as it is possible to form close and cordial working relationships with other businesses, *-people know each other!*

Everything is available in a town like Whangarei, and if it's not, Auckland is just down the road...

We have a reasonable climate, warm enough in winter and not too hot in summer. We also get enough rain to keep the lawn green.

A picturesque local environment, - many areas around Whangarei are absolutely lovely places to live.

A wonderful coast which affords opportunity for all sorts of recreational pursuits such as fishing, boating, diving, kayaking, or simply lazing about on one of the many beautiful beaches within about half an hour's drive from the city. Such recreational pursuits also generate business opportunities.

lynda@kericopycentre.co.nz

Pleasant community Lifestyle.

Jeff O'Shea - Ballance

As a farmer owned Co-operative Ballance Agri-nutrients is committed to delivering the best value for fertiliser products to our shareholder customers, therefore it is very important to us to have a facility like ours and our many distribution Service Centres as close to our customer base as we can be.

This also requires us to have the best people we can get to help support all of our operations therefore the staff we have all enjoy the life style and location that the North has to offer.

The support we have from contractors and suppliers within the North is exceptional, some of these relationships go back more than 40 years and continue to as strong as ever continuing to add value to our business –

Steve McNally

Northland business people have a very practical can do attitude.

Northland is a new district by comparison with other parts of NZ which I believe is an advantage as much of the infrastructure is relatively new and Northland Business people have had to cope with doing business in less than ideal conditions over the past 10 – 20 years compared with Districts like the Waikato or Bay of Plenty.

Northland businesses have greater hurdles to overcome with distances to markets, greater distance to processing and manufacturing industry which increases input costs.

The bonus for these problems is a great living environment less road congestion and a great work force.

No wasted time sitting in queues of traffic to and from work, thereby being more productive

Noël Jelsma – Gen-i

“...after having worked in Holland, Switzerland & Auckland, I have found one of the real positive aspects of doing business in Northland to be the relaxed, direct and practical nature of business relationships here. People generally communicate candidly, and I find the relationships you build here to be enduring and fulfilling for both parties...”

Annette Hammond – NZ Couriers

If we use the example of APN who has moved a big part of their business into Whangarei, and ask why they have come from Australia to Whangarei ?
Cheaper Rent is part of the answer -(I hear) with them they have bought in staff from around the country plus employing locally.

The "lifestyle" combined with the job opportunity can lead to the untapped or the introduction of other business bought in by people moving into the north.

So Cost effectiveness is another reason - Look at the Industrial developement @ Marsden Point - Auckland is out pricing itself.

Darren Mason

Can do attitude

Anthony Gilmour – Guthrie Bowron

For me another reason for doing business in northland is.
The genuine nature of northland business people, less pompous more practical honesty, which is hard to come by these days.

Don Austin - Dresca Limited

One of the best reasons for doing business in Northland is that we are servicing the farming industry and when the farming industry is on a high then most other business have a trickle down effect.

steve@scenemagazine.co.nz

"The Whangarei district has been on a growth curve for the last 5-10 years and should continue to be attractive place to call home. While we have clear shortcomings (such as the lack of infrastructure, the result of poor long-term planning by local authorities in the 1990s), the growth spurt looks sustainable for the mid-long term. That creates business opportunities just about everywhere."

John Cook - 5 Deep Limited

"an area and people of endless possibilities in which to do business".

Graham Moor – Bay of Islands Roofing Ltd

There is a reality about the people. Hospitable, generous, friendly, honest and not superficial would be my perception of my fellow Northlanders!

Vanessa Wijnstok – Freight Traders Ltd

Regarding business in Northland...etc

1. Northlanders like doing business with Northlanders so there is always an advantage in that.
2. We don't have to start the day sitting in a traffic jam, which allows us to get to the workplace on time in a great mood everyday.
3. Northland is attracting diverse, creative and enthusiastic people. This collective energy ignites other people's imagination and creates even more opportunities.
4. There is a wealth of business support and quality, free education to further your personal growth and business knowledge.
5. It is obvious Northland will continue to grow due to its climate, beauty and relative affordability...so why wouldn't you want to do business in a rapidly expanding and stimulating business environment

Briar White – Lemonwood

"because we get to know our customers well and can help them on a one to one basis which can not or does not happen in the cities. We are able to form a relationship that can go beyond business and can also help with networking.

(JK) John Kearney – Total Idea

Walk any street, in any Northland town and you'll always get a smile. Isn't it great!

Anon

Some of the best reasons I find beneficial about being in business in Northland, is the growth and development which the Northland Region is undergoing. In Kerikeri alone, you have the development of the Waipapa retail outlet, the new John Butler Centre, the new by-pass which is easing the infrastructure side. All these areas have been key employment sectors over the last two years and will continue to be as new businesses grow in the Area.

In Whangarei it is a town with lots to offer. We have excellent schooling, a supportive community and the chance to grow and develop the area to keep attracting more business and people, which are the crucial elements that will keep growth at an optimum. I find it is important to keep focussed and drive your business the way you want to develop, and not dwell too much on Media Hype which has a negative effect and makes the best of us wary. Supporting local business and team work will also certainly help over the next two years.

Kerry Newton - KKR Recruitment

Hope this helps, we all have days when it is difficult to not get bogged down with the bad news broadcast in the media. I know one of my personal reasons for coming to Whangarei from the UK and not direct to Auckland was that there is opportunity up here, the growth patterns are still looking good, its just red tape and bureaucracy that will slow us down.

Graeme – Ruraltec

From my point of view, being a training company, one of the best reasons for being in business in Northland is the fantastic potential of the young people we have up here. I guess another one would be the opportunities available in the rural sector, esp dairy farming and horticulture.

Lesley Armstrong-Jennings www.shopenzed.com

The one best reason for being in business in Northland is distance. Perceived and actual distance from suppliers, shippers, competition, and customers, creates greater urgency, the need for better business systems, and less time spent looking at how we are performing compared to others. Here at Shopenzed.com in Ngunguru, we just have to focus on doing the best possible job for our customers and as promptly as possible, and we're going from strength to strength as a result.

Keith Ardern - Horwath Poutsma Ardern Limited

Living in Northland might not have you in the top quartile of earners in NZ however the income you can earn in Northland is sufficient for you and your family to enjoy the great outdoors including fishing, sailing, horse riding, surfing, sub-tropical forest walks, coastal walks, massive kauri trees not to mention some wonderful cafes”

Rick Palmer

I like the integrity of (most of) the people in business up here.

Robyn Banks – Headlines

We live 5mins drive from work, no traffic hassles, compared with Auckland.

Lots of parks not far from home, Anzac Rd, Parahaki, 5 tracks and a play ground, Western Hills.

10 mins and I'm out of town for a bike ride.

15 mins and I can Kayak.

20 mins drive and we're at the beach (which one would you choose and no people)

Fabulous mountain walks Mt Mania Mt Aubery Mt Lion Bream Head etc

Glenbervie Forest Mountain Bike rides

Great breakfast clubs SWAP and service organizations, Rotary to belong to to name just 2.

It's small enough to know lots of people and they're friendly

Great selection of gyms

I think you get the picture, we love it here and we're only 2 hours from Auckland for shows and we're going in the opposite direction to Aucklanders so mostly we don't get hung up in their traffic woes!!! ☹ ☹ ☹ ☹

Love Light and Laughter

Bruce Young - Company Director and Business Advisor -

byoung@iconz.co.nz

"One of the benefits of working in Northland is that business people expect, and do actually receive, a much higher level of accountability from businesses, than is available in larger cities, simply because we work and live together in a very special region of New Zealand"

'A rapidly growing broadband and data infrastructure recently announced by Northpower / Telstra meaning that businesses will have access to World Class BroadBand, voice and data services and have the lifestyle at the same time'

Lance – MITRE 10

I would say that if we had to look at positives:

- Growth in the region
- More stable work force
- Skilled migration into the area due to lifestyle choices

Richard – NDC Design

A good few reasons for being in business in Northland is, I find there is a “down to earth” realistic expectation approach when dealing in business eg, timeframe to do a job is realistic or the honest discussions that come up whilst doing the project.

Another thing I have noticed we do more here is have the ongoing meetings, get together during the life to the project which turns into friendships or when meeting in the street or other places dialogue take place. All the reasons above may all relate to it's a more relaxed environment to do business in as opposed to city life.

For us I can be on a muddy farm in the morning and in the afternoon be in Northpower's office, I like that diversity meeting Real people.

Adam Isa – Paper Plus Whangarei

I'm not sure that I'm suitably qualified to make any comment given that I've only lived and owned a business in Whangarei for 8 months. However, Clearly I have taken a reasoned risk in purchasing a business.

I longitudinally analysed Northland's, specifically Whangarei's, demographics through the Statistics NZ website and came to the conclusion that there is tangible growth in population that is meaningfully employed. I believe that Whangarei and Northland will continue to prosper as Auckland increases in its mire of inept management and population growth. Residents in Auckland will seek to find more 'lifestyle' opportunities as the city struggles with its lack of investment in critical infrastructure, something that Whangarei and Northland should see and proactively invest in.

Graham Tiplady - Village Manager - The Falls Lifestyle Estate

Being in the retirement village industry, (55 to 95 age group), Northland has a huge benefit over cities like Auckland for;

- Easier quicker shopping

- No traffic problems

- Friendlier people

- Older people can drive their car with confidence

- Everything you need is available in Northland, and obtained with a lot less

hassle.

- Excellent medical care.

After all 40% of our residents come to live in the village for the above reasons.

Anon

Thank you for getting hold of me, and yes I would be more than happy to give you my opinion on Northland's economic activity on an anonymous basis.

My personal opinion is that Northland has been the “forgotten province” in NZ and has lagged behind other parts of the country in terms of investment, development and infrastructure, in the past. This has begun to change in the last few years (or decade) so in a way we are beginning to become self generating in activity and growth, while we are catching up to the rest of NZ. This has allowed us to not be so affected by any “economic downturns” the rest of the country may be facing.

Anon

Fairly diversified economic base ie:

Dairy

Beef

Some Sheep

Forestry

Timber processing

Tourism

A few other major industries I can think of that are pretty essential being fuel, cement and fertiliser.

Developing ship building and repair industry

Proximity to Market

Climate

Dare I say it – risks – security of power supply (through Auckland), roading infrastructure???

Key point is the Diversified Industry Base which helps to carry the region through the different industries economic cycles.

Dennis – Juken

'we attract skilled technical staff to work at our plant in Kaitaia primarily for the lifestyle'

Maree Walters

What a fabulous initiative, I believe we have outstanding opportunities in Northland — we are a region that offers great diversity of business across many industries. As a population we are relatively small providing a measure of intimacy and trust within our community that is often not available in larger centres. We are people not numbers, and people love to do business with people.

As a community we do feel the affects of our economic climate which is often influenced from the media, this however, does not always sway us on a larger scale as it may do in the bigger cities. As a business community we are passionate about where and how we live and create business opportunities — we care, and make a difference by supporting each other for a more robust business environment.

I have recently read of the rise of the Empire State building during a time a great financial adversity. Great minds, great vision and a united approach – we are fortunate as we have all of these shared attributes within our community. Our attitudes individually and collectively will influence our futures.

Barry - Industrial Stainless

I think one of the big advantages for our selves as well as customers is the relatively small business community we operate in. We all know what each others capabilities are, what machinery we have what materials we stock etc and we don't treat each other as a competitor more as an associate and will help each other when the need arises. This assist to public as well, if we can't do it maybe the shop down the road will be able to.

AJW

The best reason for doing business in Northland is that the regulatory authorities, being acutely aware of the development potential for the area over the next decade and beyond, are proactive in supporting growth and business expansion via forward thinking planning documents whilst also being prepared to actively engage with businesses seeking to locate in the area. In addition to this it would appear that newly elected Councils are encouraging planning and development staff to react more positively towards increased development than they possibly have done in the past.

Allister Ackers - Pihanga Properties Limited

Thanks for the opportunity. I would agree with you that in general we are more optimistic than some other parts of the country at the moment. Why? I think the untapped opportunities you allude to are a major contributor. There is a solid base of dairying that will obviously benefit from the upswing in commodity prices in that sector (and that is with a relatively high dollar still), and we are beautifully poised to capitalise on the baby boomers retiring to our sub-tropical climate. Its 2 hours (and falling) to visit the kids in Auckland and you have the coastal living environment that people are looking for in their retirement years. Adding to that is the on-going development of the port and the industry that this brings. These three factors (agriculture, retirement trends and port growth) are what has made the Western Bay of Plenty area one of the fastest growing in recent years and there is no reason Northland could not experience the same growth.

Sorry if that is more than the one reason you were looking for, so if you want to summarise, it comes back to untapped opportunities.

Murray Madden

Northland still has that pioneering spirit, the we can do anything if we roll up our sleeves and go for it attitude.

Allan Kerrisk - Chief Fire Officer

My employees are ready, willing and able to propose and adopt change. You can have an idea on Monday, have it workplace tested within a week and implemented without fuss in a fortnight.

Mark Williamson – Ahlers

Northlanders are a unique breed.

They have the vision to see that supporting local businesses provides benefits for the entire community. This loyalty, coupled with lifestyle makes Northland the best place to be in business.

Brent Hewitt – BDO Spicers

The TRAFFIC compared to Auckland there is none, that helps to reduce the stress levels and makes it more pleasurable in servicing our clients.

Jack McLean - Zego International Limited

I think it's good doing business in Northland from our point of view because hopefully one day our product can be dispatched from Marsden point
Currently it costs around \$1500.00 to have a 20ft container bought up to Waipu and then back to Auckland

Gwendolyn Needham - HIGHWISE LEADERSHIP

In Northland, in many fields of endeavour, the entrepreneurial business person can enjoy unparalleled nature, scenery, beaches, and outdoor pursuits, plus, in the main, much less traffic hassle, while reaching markets via the marvels of modern technology. You may as well live where the living is great! My own business - HIGHWISE Leadership-“if you want to fly high, you need to get wise”- is strengthened, not limited - by its Northland foundation and roots.

Margaret

Business for me is optimistic. Managing my business has given me the opportunity to develop my skills in a very diverse market. I have had to learn how to manage a more relaxed working environment. This now has been achieved with both myself and my employees meeting the requirements of their personal family lives along with their need to provide additional income to their homes. The growth in Mangawhai and Northland provides a rewarding environment to be associated with. Over the past 6 years I have seen a considerable improvement in the delivery of goods and services to the “off the main trunk line” areas. The volume of people visiting Mangawhai has increased and business opportunities and development in our area is unlimited as long as you are prepared to put in the hard yards.

More people of high business acumen are moving into our area. Positive people who are wanting to make a lifestyle move to the North are starting to drift in.

Judith Sleavin - Annie Rose Ltd

Large Creative Community
Business resources, like Biz North, etc

Graham - Long Flat Bacon Co

I think the one best reason for being in business in Northland is the support of other Northland businesses and their ‘buy local’ attitude.

Jack - Stanley Marine

I think lifestyle pretty much sums it up. I have been in business in Northland over 19 years and I find now that it is like doing business with friends and relations. Northlanders by their nature are friendly positive people.

Jeroen – Dive! Tutukaka

Our vibrant people. Our subtropical climate and relaxed/realistic outlook plus positive network between businesses and communities has to be part of the foundations for a healthy happy business environment. Our smallness also means easy approachable community and business leaders, enabling fast tracking of new ideas and innovations. Opportunities are galore for those that wish to take them!

Wendy –Salt Air Limited

Not only do we get to work on the beach, and enjoy a living in a beautiful place, but we also enjoy the thrill of introducing visitors to the region to our beautiful Northland coastline. Our passengers constantly remind us that we are very privileged to have such stunning scenery and beaches in our back yard.

Brett – First Mobile

Yes, lifestyle and untapped opportunities are two of the major factors for being in business here in Northland. We are fortunate that we have a population that wants to create opportunities in business which in turn gives a business like mine to service them.

I believe that critical to our success is our prosperous agricultural base. If the farmers do well then we all do well.

We are also a very parochial lot and if somebody local does a good job for us then we are very loyal to them. Our clients very rarely shop around because they trust us and we should be giving no reason to move. Nearly everybody likes to support local businesses hoping that that local business will support the community. Unfortunately, this is not always the case and often business owners are too short sighted and cannot see the overall effect of that support.

We are always trying to support different events and organisations and I believe that support does come back.

Paul Dunn – Marine North

One great reason for being in business in Northland is that Northland has grown to a point where it has its own micro economy. The highs and lows are not as great in Northland compared with Auckland and other large centers, this enables a certain steadiness boosted in part by the population growth continuing to bring money into the area. I believe because people are able to get into homes and businesses with a lot less risk and debt, a steady business environment is created. In other words the balance of income against costs seems to enable people to have a great work / life balance and therefore own their business with confidence.

JC

One of the biggest assets we have in Northland are our people. They are entrepreneur's, outgoing, independent, friendly and apart from always willing to have are going are fiercely parochial towards Northland.

Andy Mayhew

The one best reason for being in business in Northland is the great business community that thrives and works well together. For the most part, every business owner that I deal with is positive about theirs and other's businesses.

Davina - Absolute North

One of the best reasons to be in business in Northland is that we have the opportunity to meet and really get to know other business owners. This gives us all a fantastic network – to support and assist each other.

Anon

Northland is the best place to be in Business due to:

The priceless support structures/ mentor programmes available to new businesses at little or no cost to enable new businesses to succeed.

Linda Wallis

I've done some thinking about good reasons for doing business in Northland and there are many. One of the most important to me is the personal involvement with people that you don't get in a large city. I meet new people every day in my business ventures and in the main they are open to discussing ideas and options, making changes, etc. I also find that many people are transplants from other areas of New Zealand who come north for a lifestyle change. They bring amazing talents and experience that they are willing to share, but in a relaxed manner that makes working together a great experience. They are also those who have been in Northland all their lives and bring a rich variety of experience and culture to any meeting or event.

The people – that's what keeps me in business in Northland.

Philippa Dally - West Coast Consulting Ltd

When I returned home to Dargaville after being away over 25 years, I thought I would find myself a nice little easy job and just potter. It was harder than what I expected and necessity led me to create a business.

I wouldn't say it's been easy because it hasn't - living and working in a small town has it's pros and cons but if I had stayed in Auckland, I would still be on the same old corporate office treadmill.

Living in Northland has provided me with the opportunity to create something for myself and I grabbed it with both hands. Three years on, I'm still here and enjoying every minute of it".

Ken Orr

Whangarei is adjacent to Auckland but out of Auckland.

Grant Algie - Dip Urb Val, FNZIV, FPINZ

Here is something that we think is important. Whangarei is only 160 km's (2 hours drive and getting quicker) north of the biggest urban population in NZ and we think there will always be a population drift north which will continue to have a positive effect on our business.

Steve Gillingham

My view is lifestyle and being only 2 hours away from NZ's only truly global city.

Darrell Trigg

If Marlene and I were to mention the best reason for being in business in Northland it would be the opportunities that our close proximity to Auckland affords us.

Terry Sage Business Coaching New Zealand

One best reason; Businesses in Northland face different challenges to other regions within New Zealand, for this reason they have to be resourceful and think out side the normal business square to prosper. This makes coaching them extremely exciting, which is why doing business in Northland from a Business Coaches perspective is far better than any other part of the country.

Kelly –Trainspotter

We had the Kawakawa Puff & Pull Carnival yesterday. It was an awesome fun filled day. The carnival is in its second year, and I think it will just improve as the years go by. There were so many people in our little main street I was so proud to be a local! This leads me to our best reason for being in business in northland: Having a busy successful café in a positive bubbly town and district we are surrounded by our friends and family. Friends, family and loyal suppliers and customers provide strong support networks and partnerships. Because the locals are loyal to us we loyally support them in fundraising projects – the money just goes around and around in the community! I think being surrounded by other small to medium business owners on the “same page” as us really helps us keep motivated.

Wayne Stead – Stead Enterprises

In Northland I regularly come across an amazing number of really innovative ideas many of which ultimately produce employment and also work for subcontractors and engineering work for prototyping opportunities.

Skilled staff who can produce high quality products from minimal drawings or a visions from an entrepreneur.

A wide range of talented mentors who are able to assist new businesses through their teething stages.

A very supportive and capable Chamber of Commerce who assist the business community in many different ways.

The most experienced Business development team in NZ in BizNorth who run excellent courses for a wide range of business sectors.

A competent team at Enterprise Northland who play an excellent role in developing strategic opportunities for communities around Northland to increase sustainable ongoing employment.

Some of these projects are joint ventures with the Ministry of Social Development who work in many communities assisting in new ways to provide collaborative opportunities with other govt departments and private social agencies.

A range of residents who have a huge repertoire of talent gained both offshore and around NZ who wish to make Northland their home.

In the thirty years that I have lived here I continue to be impressed with the positive changes that I have observed which collectively make Northland a great place to do business.

Terry – Westforce

Hi Jeff. Northland (in particular, Whangare):

A smaller city, but with an excellent range of services and amenities all accessible over small travelling distances.

Newest NZ deep water port at Marsden Point.

Mild climate.

Proximity to the most extensive and best selection of beaches in NZ.

After Hamilton, the next closest city to Auckland. The closest waterfront city to Auckland.

Craig Dackers

One of the best things about doing business in Northland is the people we deal with. Open minded, relaxed and fun loving people resulting from the stress free environment we live in here in the beautiful North.

Paul – Direction

What strikes me about Whangarei is the strong sense of camaraderie for people who share an affinity for business in Northland. Whether you call yourself the national head honcho of a company of one, a freelancer, a solopreneur or self-employed, local relationships matter more than fancy referrals. In addition our city favourably compares to its neighbouring cities for its relatively low real estate prices and in particular office lease, adding to its attractiveness as a place for doing business.

Mark - Wilkinsons Sports

I guess for me it is the future growth of the area and the potential of northland with its warmer climate and wonderful coast line. Also I think at the moment the rural areas are doing a little better than the city areas at the moment and they still like that personnel service.

Margaret Bishop - Newman Engineering (2004) Ltd

“It seems to me that one of the Best reasons for being in business in Northland is the positive attitude of the people who live in our communities – I’m glad so many of them are our customers!” Margaret Bishop – Newman Engineering

Guy Alexander - All Talk Communications Ltd

Northland offers something unique, whether it be lifestyle, being a developing economic hub or just the great people! Northlanders are always open to new ideas and no where else are people this friendly. I’ve grown up in Northland, worked in Auckland and found that Whangarei North is a far easier place to do business. Unfortunately I am stuck in Auckland but still up there once a month as its important for my business to capitalize on Northlands economic conditions, and help other business owners cut costs.

Ces Burke – BizNorth

- Northland has now well and truly shed its past “boom and bust” image.
- Our region now enjoys a well-rounded economy capable of supporting most types of businesses, and our proximity to the Auckland market is a considerable advantage for many of our businesses.

Pat Matthews – Santeez Café

What a beautiful place to live-,the growth up this part of nz is just beginning- we are on the forefront of the tourist industry increasing in the north-more and more younger families are moving into the district-the young have more of a positive outlook for the future they don,t sit and whine they are out there still looking at ways to improve their way of life so for them to do that it keeps all the wheels turning, look at our farming industry they are doing great they were once known to be the back bone of nz which that line might not please some,i say who cares we need to pull together as a country....even though we have the bad news(petrol,food,ect all going up up up)i say lets ride the wave,live with in your means,and get ready for the wave to stop-cause everything is going to take off, if you lock all the doors you will miss all your opportunities when the market opens its flood gates. Look at this time as bringing things back to a more realist economy we need more younger families moving in and buying homes, we need the old to stay in the north to retire, we need overseas investors, so why not be proud of the northland and push the clean green life-who wants it I do!

Mark Smith – Magnetism

When I moved from Auckland to Whangarei 2 years ago, I never expected to find such opportunity for business. I see it as Tauranga was ten years ago... opportunity is everywhere! Any business can succeed if your customer service and overall excellence shines through. It doesn't matter what industry you're in if those two qualities are the foundation of your business. There is plenty of room for us to all succeed and grow.

Dave Fletcher – IZARD Investments

I believe here are several reasons for being in business in Northland. There are also some negatives such as cost of transportation etc but I will focus on some positives.

Northland offers us a pool of lower cost resources. The average wage that is paid in the northland areas differs markedly from the wage that needs to be paid in the cities, if you add the lower costs of such things as lease of buildings then you have a head start. One area that I am positive about is the loyalty and the going of the extra mile by employees of the region. You must be careful in selecting the right staff, however if you do this right you will find that expectations are generally exceeded. As a company that is putting something back into the community you are viewed in a positive light in that community and the returns are there to see.

So often you see demarcation between employees in other areas, I have witnessed time and time again the team attitude, where someone else will pick up the ball before it hits the floor and the sense of "we are really achieving something" coming to the fore. I have an agenda of empowerment which sometimes raises issues but for the majority of the time it makes staff feel important and part of the company rather than just working for the company.

From the farming side of the group, we are lucky with the weather patterns (except the storms) we are able to lamb earlier and generally carry enough grass to continue increasing the weight of stock without all the costs of irrigation and feed.

We are well serviced by transport although this is now increasing in cost, this is an area that is impacting the business so other avenues need to be explored such as rail.

With the changing times people transport has increased such as Saltair's daily service to Auckland and return, it is hard to believe that Saltair can pick you up in Whangarei and have you in the Auckland CBD within 1 hour. So these types of service bring the Northland businessman closer and closer to the hub in Auckland. It is nice to be able to work in an environment that is not polluted and so built up that it takes 2 or 3 hours to get anywhere.

I would be one advocate for business in Northland.

Once again the negative is transport costs which I guess all NZ has to front due to us being a long thin country.

Catherine Stewart

PEOPLE - without hesitation, for me this is the first thing that comes to mind. So many people today, dwell and get so wound up, about the cost of things. Great, those costs are still going to be there and yes, it is important to be aware of same, but why dwell on such issues.

BEAUTIFUL HAPPY PEOPLE generate sales - it is infectious. Who wants to buy from a grumpy person.

One best reason for being in business in Northland is the people. We have tourists venturing North, sales people and travelers. Lets make their experience Beautiful. We have the opportunity in Northland to have the time to listen and not rush people, give amazing service, with a lovely smile and be proud we are in Northland.

Imagine if we portray our Northland as the friendly, most welcoming part of the Island. We would be flooded with people, just wanting to experience the lovely, friendly people. Imagine marketing it. Going huge with it, and having seminars in Northland just targeting this aspect.

Steve Gardner – Deepweb Web Design

I believe the best thing about the north for business is lifestyle, including weather and the other activities that are available up here.

I think it is a key factor in why people move here.