

What has helped our businesses ?

Relationships

Supportive friends/ family
Networking, HBWC, ICC
Local family connections.
Happy working environment: good boss, colleagues, staff, clients.
Influence of others' vision, enthusiasm, positive feedback.
Personal contact with others including clients.
Working with female colleagues.

High proportion of comments emphasised importance of relationships.

Finance & Admin

Recession as opportunity.
Downfall of the banks.
Continued growth in income against negative market background.
Good suppliers (credit).
Few comments under this heading.

Management incl. training & marketing

Good staff & teamwork, including team's specific skills, teamwork, building local knowledge, good leadership & CPD / training.
Management structure, rebranding, winning awards, achieving targets, growth of company.

Communication IT, websites.

Growth through word of mouth (*several comments*)
Internet / Broadband (*several comments*)
Increase in social media & web 2.0.
New website / IT systems.
Personal or Staff PC skills.
Mobile phone.
Yellow Pages.

Location, transport links & related costs.

Location (*several comments*)
Working from home.
Ease of access London and south. Property prices value for money.
Growth of Inverness.
Golf.

Other

Scotland.
Positive news stories.
Redundancy.
BID, Inverness streetscape.
Resurgence of interest in my specialist field.

What has hindered our businesses ?

Finance & Admin incl. regs.

Economic downturn, recession, property crash etc.
Many comments.

Red tape, VAT, tax, govt legislation, rates, lack of help from HIE and other public sector bodies, regulatory muddles and mistakes, admin we have to do for govt, too much employment legislation, tight timescales, political interference.

Many comments.

Banks, lack of funding, insecurity of current financial climate, investors' lack of confidence. Reduced company or client spending power. Clients' failure to pay on time, cash flow from other companies, pressure to reduce prices, local businesses going bust, undercutting by competitors.

Many comments.

Reluctance of clients to pay if freebies available from HIE and others.

(Two comments on latter.)

Relationships.

Isolation.

No other negative comments.

Other

Weather. Lack of opportunities. Over-qualified so can't get a job. Foot and mouth, single farm payments. Complacency.

Management incl. staff & training.

Staff: cutbacks, lack of skills, recruitment difficulties, business skills. Head office interference, lack of local knowledge, micro management, poor ongoing admin, poor communication from executives, indecision, working hours.

Communication, marketing, IT, websites.

Poor grasp of marketing, misunderstanding from outside about what we offer, public opinion. Negative news stories *(several comments)*. Cost of advertising. Communication issues, slow feedback.

Location, transport links & related costs.

Location itself *(several comments)*. Oil prices, Highland delivery costs. Premises. Challenges of public transport. Huge geographical area, how to attract people from remote areas. Inverness town centre - empty, dirty, Streetscape.

What has helped Highland business?

Finance & Admin incl. regs.

Strong dollar and Euro bring more tourists.

Location, transport links & related costs.

Wonderful location (*many comments*).
Easy access.

Management incl. staff & training.

Skilled staff, stable employment.
Customer loyalty (*2 comments*).
Competitive edge.

Local to Highlands.

Whisky!
Willingness of Highland businesses to collaborate.
Boom and bust has less impact here. Close network of friendly support.
Small businesses buy local. Small communities = interaction, close knit.
Self-sufficient. Growing population. High standards. Value for money (housing etc).
Space to think.
Inspirational values.

Communication, marketing, IT, websites.

Broadband.

What has hindered Highland business?

Finance & Admin incl. regs.

Banks & credit crunch
(many comments).
Failing businesses.
Housing market slowdown.
HM Customs & Rev cutbacks, therefore less help and support available.
Rates (dictated by rent). Lack of confidence.
Clients not prepared to pay going rate for professional work.

Local to Highlands.

Traditional, backward looking, insular *(and many similar comments)*.
Incomers not in touch with local markets. Reliance on tourism, downturn in tourism. Over protective of our area. Small groups of decisions makers.
Lack of facilities compared to elsewhere, limited opening hours etc.
Support centralised down south/England.
Lack of funding compared to south.
Business turnover limited by low population density, low level markets.

Management incl. staff & training.

Staff recruitment and retention, poor skills *(several comments)*.
Central control and savings.

Location, transport links & related costs.

Poor transport and communication links *(many comments)*.
High fuel costs. Reaching people outside Inverness is a challenge. Distance from national clients, general remoteness.

Communication, marketing, IT, websites.

Poor local media coverage of business, negative stories *(several comments)*.
Technical breakdowns.
Overseas call centres.
Awareness of advertising outlets.

Other

Closure of local post office.