



Commission for
Communications Regulation

Information Notice

2009 Postal Market Business and Residential Surveys

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1 Background

Millward Brown Lansdowne was commissioned by the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) to undertake the 2009 Business and Residential postal market surveys. The key findings from both surveys are released by ComReg today.

The Business Survey research was undertaken by conducting telephone interviews with a sample of 1,000 businesses in the Republic of Ireland from 2 September to 28 September 2009, with quotas set for company size and industry sector. (Sector makeup; SMEs 724 /Corporates 276).

The Residential Survey research was undertaken by conducting a face to face survey with 1,010 adults aged 18-74 throughout Ireland, between August and October 2009, with interlocking quotas set on gender, age, region and social class and with the results weighted in order to reflect the exact demographics of the Republic of Ireland.

In order to be as reflective as possible of the current industry structure and employee profile in Ireland, the Business Survey company profile quotas (and weights) used in the 2009 report have been adjusted to better reflect the industry structure as it currently pertains. This embellishment has necessarily constrained some comparisons with previous year's data.

2 Business Survey Highlights

The key findings from the **Business Survey**, based on telephone interviews conducted with a sample of 1,000 businesses, show:

- There was a noticeable decrease in weekly mail volumes sent by businesses across all types of mail in 2009. The economic downturn was perceived by 3 in 4 businesses as the principal reason for the decrease, followed by substitution by electronic communications.
- Of the three in four businesses that suggested improvements to the postal service, cheaper, more reliable and faster postal services are considered to be the main improvements which would impact positively on businesses.
- Usage of alternative service providers by businesses has increased considerably since 2008 with one in three (35%) now using the services of both An Post and other service providers. However among those who use An Post only, just 6% claim to have been contacted by another service provider within the last year.
- An Post remains the preferred supplier for standard and large letters with other service providers gaining an increasing share of the packets and parcels market.
- Similar to last year, almost two thirds of all respondents claim they would use a second class postal service if it was available.
- 70% of businesses surveyed expressed satisfaction with the overall Postal Service provided in Ireland. However, almost one in three business respondents experienced at least one incidence of dissatisfaction with an aspect of the Postal Service in the last 12 months and of those who formally complained just 23% were happy with the handling of their complaint.
- Among the lower satisfaction scores expressed with regard to An Post were confidence with 'letters being delivered within one working day' of posting and 'recovery actions if things go wrong', while for other service providers 'overall cost' received the lowest satisfaction rating.
- There continues to be very low awareness among business consumers of the impending postal market liberalisation.

3 Residential Survey Highlights

The key findings from the Residential Survey, based on a structured questionnaire to a nationally representative sample of 1,024 adults aged 18-74, show:

- There was a decrease in the number of mail items delivered to each home address in 2009. The average number for 2009 stands at 8.47 items per week compared to 9.40 in 2008.
- Households posted just under 8 standard letters per month on average in 2009, which is slightly less than in 2008.
- 60% of respondents believe that reduced prices, improvements in access, reliability, security and service quality are the key factors that would increase their usage of the postal services.
- At 63% there is no significant change in awareness of alternative Postal Service Providers.
- At least half of those surveyed claimed they would make extensive use of a second class postal service if it were available.
- Satisfaction levels in 2009 were generally good, although lower satisfaction scores were recorded for 'letters being delivered within one working day of posting' and 'recovery actions if things go wrong'.
- One in eight respondents experienced an incidence of dissatisfaction with the postal service in the past 12 months but of those dissatisfied only one in three made a formal complaint.
- Internet usage is increasing, with almost half of all respondents having shopped online in the past 12 months. The survey found that those shopping online are heavier users of the postal service.
- The survey also shows a 14% increase in those viewing transactional mail online (now 41% of all respondents), this being more likely for those with home internet access and a 12% increase, up to 39%, for those who have switched some of their transactional mail to being delivered online.
- Similar to the business survey there is a continuing lack of awareness among residential respondents of the impending liberalisation of the postal market.

Appendix A - Business Survey Report by Millward Brown
Lansdowne - ComReg Doc 09/95a

Appendix B - Residential Survey Report by Millward Brown
Lansdowne - ComReg Doc 09/95b