

The findings in this report are based on a quantitative survey conducted among a convenience sample of women business owners in Vietnam. Qualitative focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were also conducted among 82 women business owners (as noted below). All of the women who participated in the focus groups or interviews also filled out a survey questionnaire. Some of the verbatim quotes from the women who participated in the focus group discussions are included in this report to add first-person flavor to the survey findings. A report focused on the qualitative discussions is being published separately.

For the quantitative survey, a 39-question, 75-item survey was mailed to a sample of 2,160 women business owners - gleaned from a random sample of 4,000 names drawn from several lists from Chambers of Commerce, industry associations, and the Vietnam Women's Union, which totaled 13,000 registered businesses. Out of the sample of 4,000, there were 2,160 records with complete mailing addresses. Surveys were mailed to these 2,160 business owners in late July, 2005 and, by the time of the survey cut-off in late August, 473 responses were received. This represents a 21.9% response rate - an excellent rate of return for a survey of this type.

A survey of N=473 responses has an error rate of +/- 4.5%, at a 95% level of confidence. This means that, 95 times out of 100, survey responses will be within 4.5% of true population values.

The experiences of 82 women were collected during in depth interviews and focus group discussions. Eight focus group discussions were conducted with a total of 63 participants selected from a range of industries and locations. All participants owned formal sector businesses, with the exception of one discussion in Da Nang which included representatives from the informal sector. The focus group discussions were conducted in four different locations: Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang and Can Tho. Each discussion was approximately 2 hours in duration.

In addition, a total of 19 in-depth interviews were conducted with women entrepreneurs at their workplaces. The average length of these individual interviews was 2 hours. The interviewees were selected through various channels. Women's clubs and business associations recommended some women, while others were found through word of mouth. Four of the women also participated in focus group discussions.

Of course, given that this survey and the companion qualitative discussions were not conducted among a truly random sample of all women business owners in Vietnam (since such a list does not exist) - but rather a convenience sample of women business owners who are members of or on the mailing lists of several national associations, or who are registered with the government - the results reported in this summary are likely not representative of all women business owners in Vietnam. It is more likely that the women included in the sample population for this survey are the owners of larger, more well-established businesses, as well as businesses in the formal sector. The owners of smaller firms, part-time or seasonal businesses, and self-employed women in the informal economy are therefore likely to be under-represented in this survey.