

TRANSHELP CLIENT SATISFACTION STUDY 2008

ERIN Research for
TransHelp



ERIN
RESEARCH

OUTLINE

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1. BACKGROUND

- TransHelp provides door-to-door transportation services for Peel citizens, who are unable to use conventional transit
- TransHelp serves approximately 5,000 clients and employs 78 employees
- In 2008, TransHelp provided approximately 290,000 rides - an average of 60 rides per customer
- Rides are provided partly by Peel-owned buses and partly by local taxi companies and non-profit organizations
- TransHelp conducted its first comprehensive client survey in 2005 and again in 2008
- In 2008 ERIN Research was commissioned to conduct focus groups and a quantitative survey of 500 participants

1. OBJECTIVES

- 1 To assist TransHelp improve services based on client feedback
- 2 Determine what is important to clients: strengths/weaknesses
- 3 Better understand clients' expectations
- 4 Compare key measures of client satisfaction, 2005 - 2008

2. METHOD

ERIN Research designed and conducted a client satisfaction survey in fall 2008. The research had 2 components:

- Qualitative research:
 - 2 focus groups: one with TransHelp Advisory Committee (TAC) and one with clients
- Quantitative research:
 - In-depth phone survey of 501 current TransHelp users

2. 501 clients participated in the telephone survey

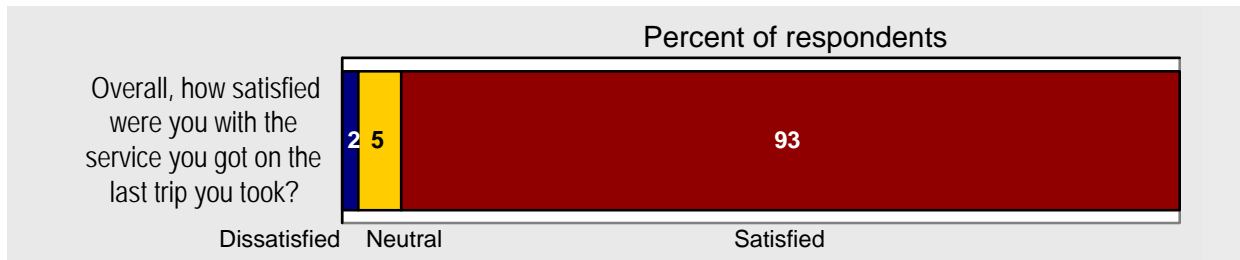
Gender	Percent
Female	65
Male	35
Age	
<35	11
35-49	12
50-64	24
65+	53
Place of residence	
Mississauga	54
Brampton	32
Caledon/Bolton	10
Other (e.g. Toronto)	4
Frequency using the TransHelp service	
3 or more times per week	29
1 to 2 times per week	31
One or more times per month	25
Less than once a month	16
Total (501 participants)	100

- The sample was drawn randomly from the current base of active clients
- The response rate was 66%, very high for a client survey



3. CLIENTS' MOST RECENT TRIP

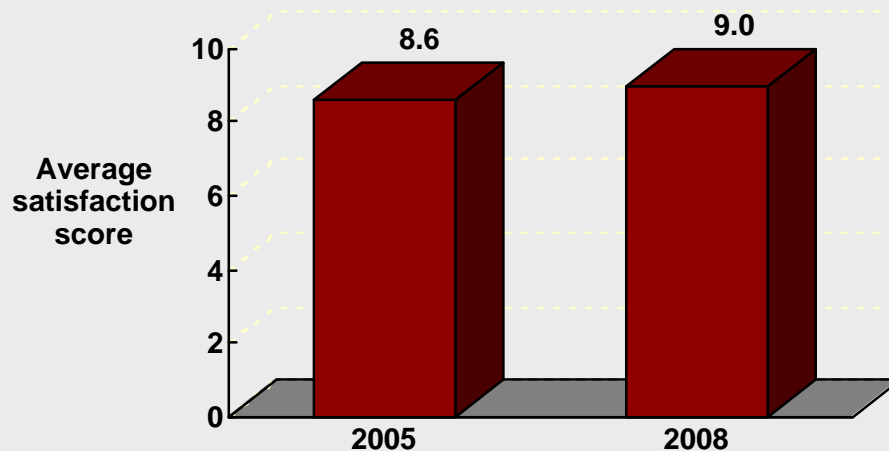
Overall satisfaction with the service you got on your last trip: percentages, 2008



- The survey asked a series of questions about the client's most recent TransHelp trip. This encourages clients to focus on the specifics of a fresh experience, and across the sample of 500 clients it provides a snapshot of current service.
- 93% of TransHelp clients reported that they were satisfied with the service they got on their last trip. Just 2% were dissatisfied.

3. CLIENTS' MOST RECENT TRIP cont'd

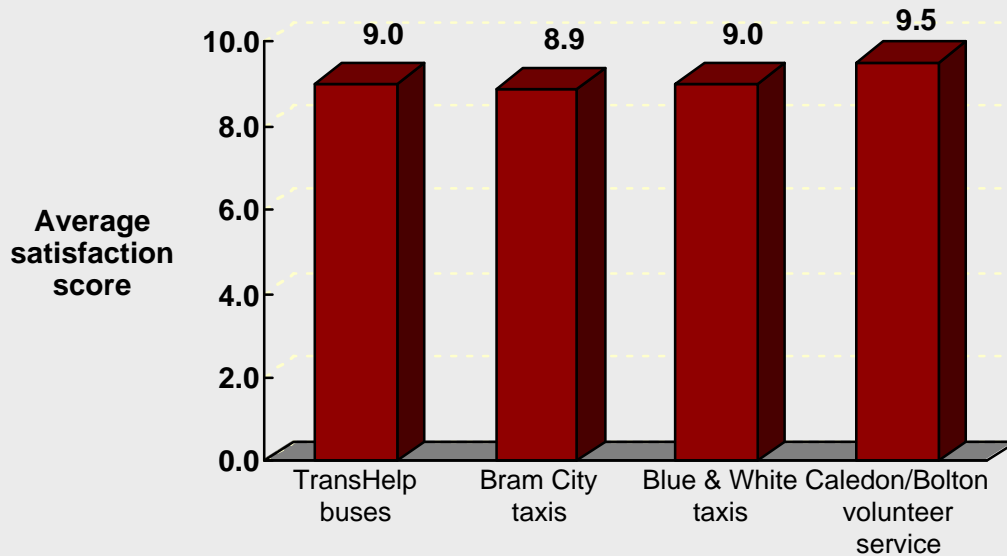
Overall satisfaction with the service you got on your last trip: averages



- In 2008, the average satisfaction score with the last trip was 9.0, compared to 8.6 in 2005. This is a statistically significant increase.

3. CLIENTS' MOST RECENT TRIP cont'd

Overall satisfaction with service on your last trip by mode of transport, 2008



- The difference between Caledon/Bolton (average score 9.5) and the other three services is statistically significant.
- Note: These results do not include trips where the client took a bus one way and a taxi the other.

3. VOICES OF CLIENTS

- *“I'm really, really satisfied. The people that work there, especially those on the switchboards, are excellent. The drivers are courteous and talk to you pleasantly. Also the dependability of the service is great. It's a wonderful service for people with disabilities.” (Brampton)*
- *“I am just grateful to have the service. I would not be able to work without it.” (Mississauga)*
- *“I do the Terry Fox run every year and I have to be down there at 7:30 to get ready. TransHelp has made an exception for me every year, and I can't tell you how much I appreciate that.” (Mississauga)*



3. THE VOICES OF CLIENTS cont'd

- *“Everyone at TransHelp works to make the system the best that it can be. Their service has improved dramatically over the past 2 years and I like that the newsletter is available online.” (Brampton)*
- *“I don't have to bother anybody for a ride. I have two kids but I don't want to have to ask them to take time off of work to take me to the doctor. I don't want to have to worry about getting to the doctor, it gives me my independence. Thank you for the TransHelp service.” (Brampton)*
- *“I like the convenience and the safety of the service. It is wonderful that it is available in our area. You can't always depend on your family, and TransHelp allows me my independence. There are three disabled people in our household, so we really appreciate the TransHelp service.” (Bolton)*

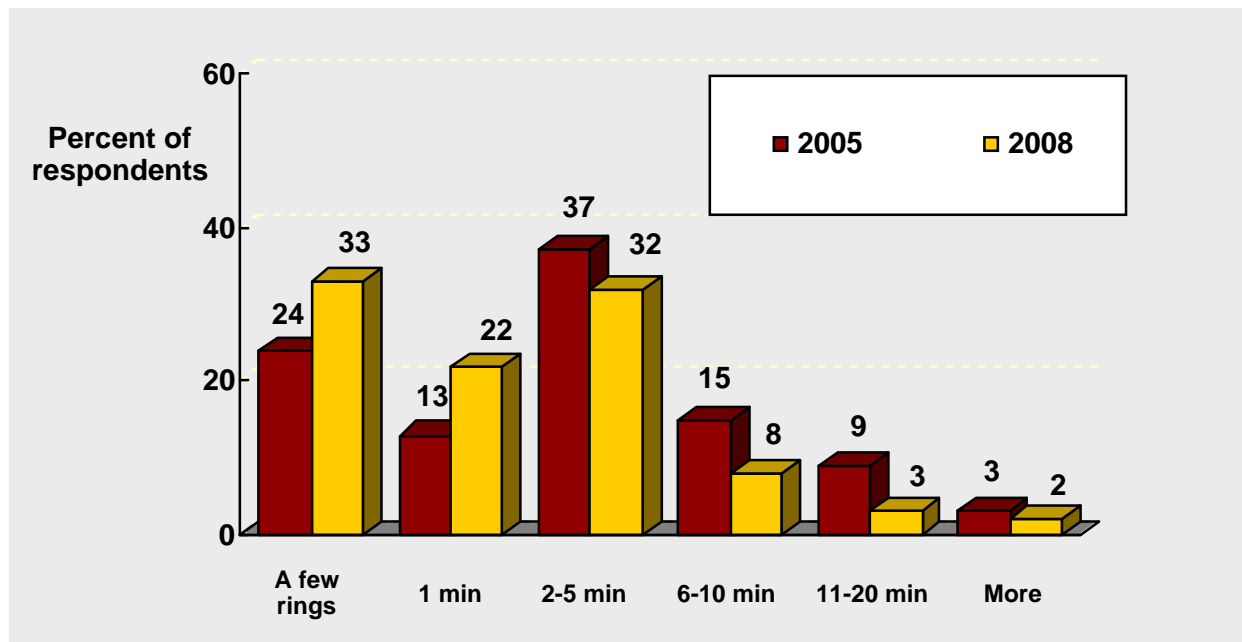


3. PATTERNS OF USE

- 60% of respondents use TransHelp at least once per week.
- 84% use the service at least once per month.
- 88% of TransHelp rides took place during the week; 12% were on a weekend.
- The pattern of bus and taxi use is slightly but significantly different in 2008. Fewer clients took mixed bus/taxi rides in 2008 in comparison to 2005.
- In 2005, 50% of clients said that the reason for their trip was 'medical,' while in 2008 the percentage of medical trips rose to 54%. The overall pattern in 2008 differs significantly from 2005.

3. PHONING TO BOOK A RIDE

When calling to book a ride, how long did you wait before someone answered the phone?

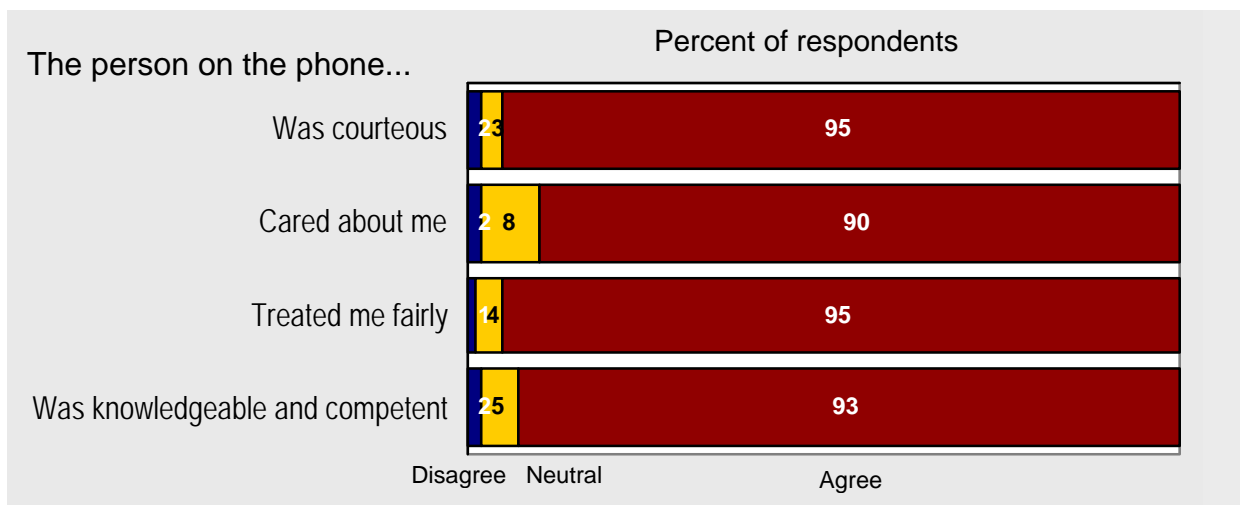


- Response times are significantly shorter in 2008 than in 2005.



3. RATINGS OF TRANSHELP OFFICE STAFF

Quality of service provided by phone staff: percentages



- TransHelp clients rated phone staff very highly for their most recent call to schedule a ride.
- 90% of clients or more agreed with each service measure.



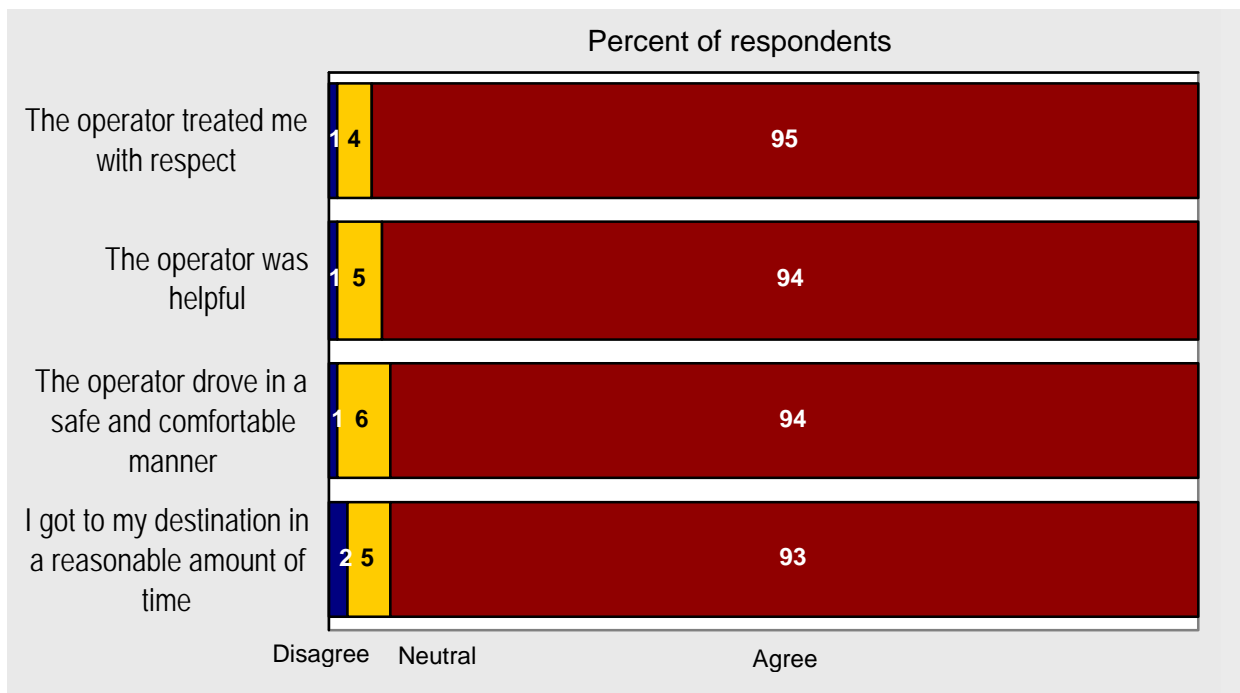
3. CLIENT EXPERIENCE WITH THE RECENT RIDE

- 86% were picked up within the 30 minute window.
- 7% of clients said that their ride arrived early. The median length of time that the ride arrived early was 15 minutes.
- 7% of clients said the ride was late. Again, the median time late was 15 minutes.
- 62% of TransHelp clients overall required assistance getting into the vehicle.
- 96% of of these clients got the assistance they needed from their operator.
- Pickup from destination was similar to the results for pickup from home.



3. PERCEPTIONS OF BUS & TAXI OPERATORS

Experience in the vehicle, percentages for 2008



- Ratings did not change significantly from 2005 to 2008 for any of the items. When ratings are as high as they are here, further increases are very difficult to achieve.



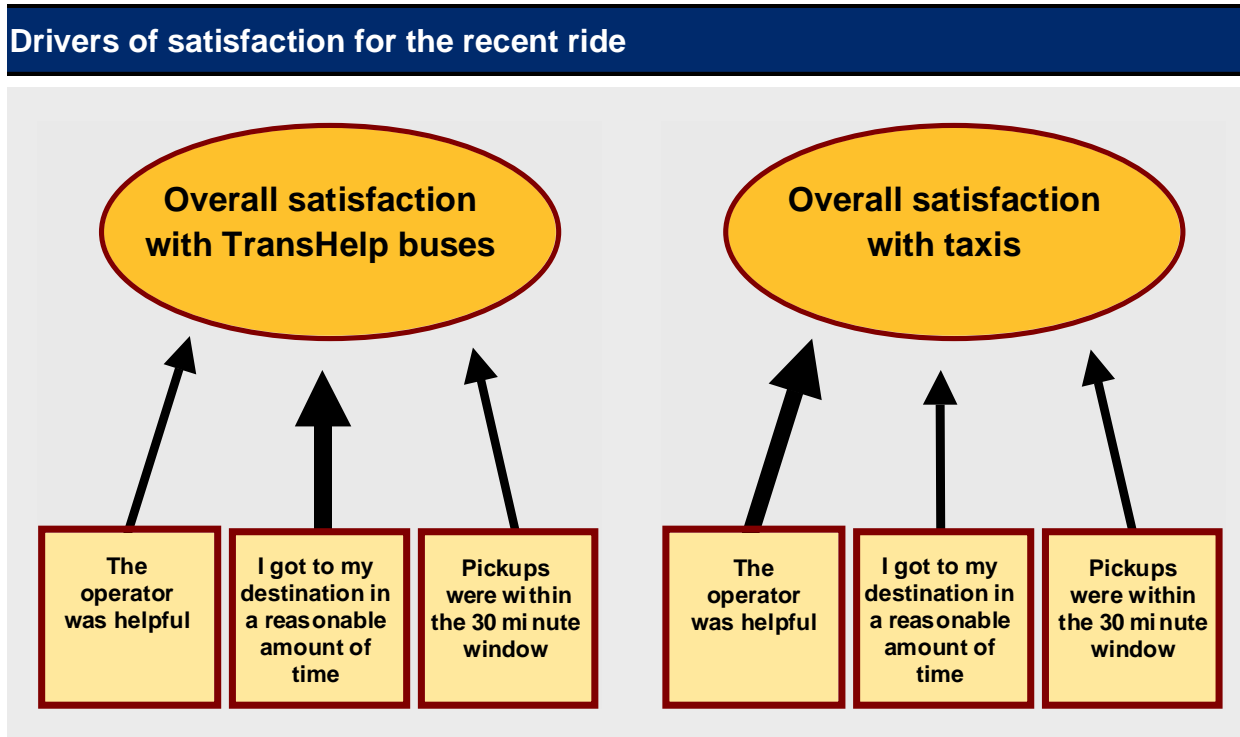


3. DRIVERS OF SATISFACTION

- A **driver of satisfaction** is an element of the service experience that is important in shaping a client's satisfaction with the service. When a service scores well on all of its drivers, overall satisfaction for that service will be high. Conversely when scores on the drivers are low overall satisfaction will also be low.
- Drivers identify the things that are most important to the users of the service, and this tells service managers where they should focus in order to get the biggest bang for their improvement efforts.



3. DRIVERS OF SATISFACTION: RECENT RIDE



- The drivers are shown separately for clients who used TransHelp buses and taxis. The same three drivers appear in both contexts, but the emphasis is different.

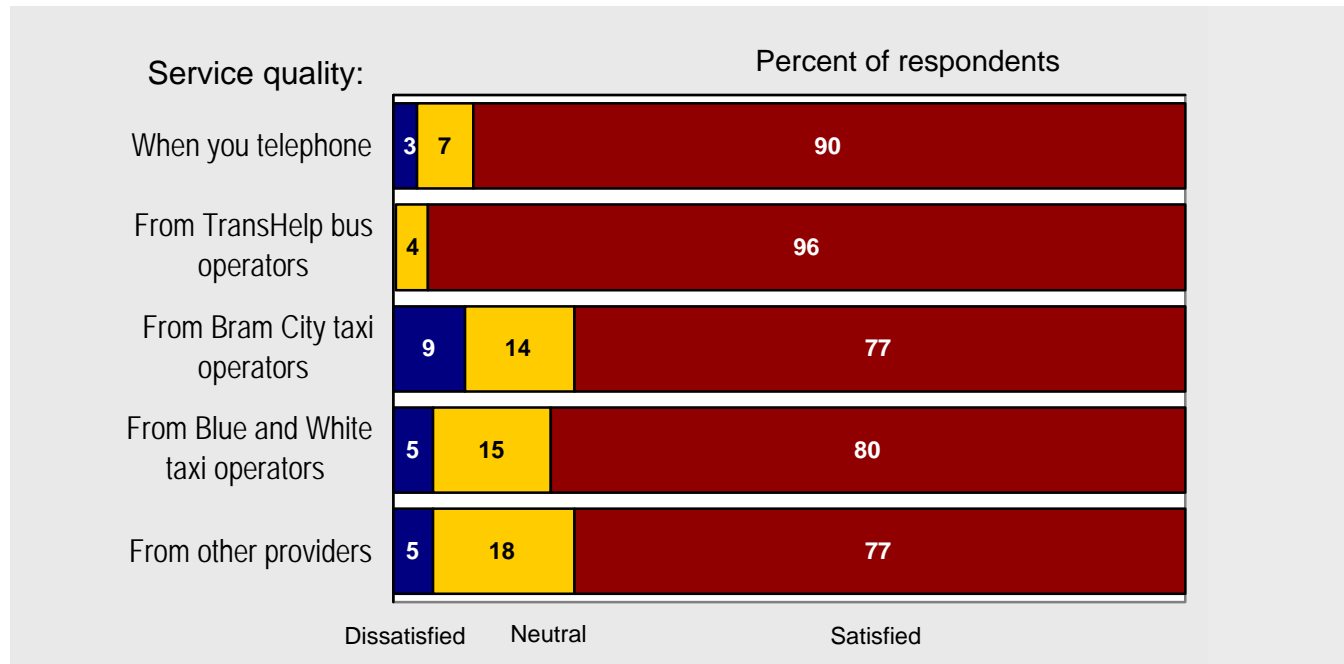
3. DRIVERS OF SATISFACTION: BUSES AND TAXIS

- For buses, the element of getting to the destination in a reasonable amount of time is key.
- For taxis, the degree of care and support offered by operators has the major impact on client satisfaction.
- The drivers are the strongest determinants of satisfaction, but this does not imply that other aspects of service delivery can be neglected. For example "driving in a safe and courteous manner" is clearly important.



4. OVERALL SERVICE QUALITY

Satisfaction with the quality of service that you get



4. CLIENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGE

- Almost one-third of respondents said that the system for booking rides was better.
- Some clients noticed improvements in other areas including taxi service and payment options .
- The large majority felt that there had been no negative change.



5. SCHEDULING

- 21% of TransHelp clients order subscription trips and do not call for most rides. The other 79% phone for demand rides in advance.
- 65% of clients book their rides three days or less in advance. 25% of clients normally order their ride seven days in advance.
- TransHelp requires people to book by 2:00 pm the business day before they request a ride. 83% say that this meets their needs.
- There is a one-hour minimum time between drop-off and pick-up. 19% of TransHelp clients said that this causes them difficulty, while the other 81% said that it does not.





5. STANDBY BOOKINGS

44% of clients stated they had tried to book standby rides

Question	Percent of respondents
For what reasons have you requested a standby ride?	
Medical	54
Social/recreational	22
Shopping	9
Work	5
School	2
Other	7

67% had tried to get a same-day standby ride:

Are you generally successful?

Mostly yes	39
50:50	8
Mostly no	53

56% had tried to book a standby ride after 2PM the day before:

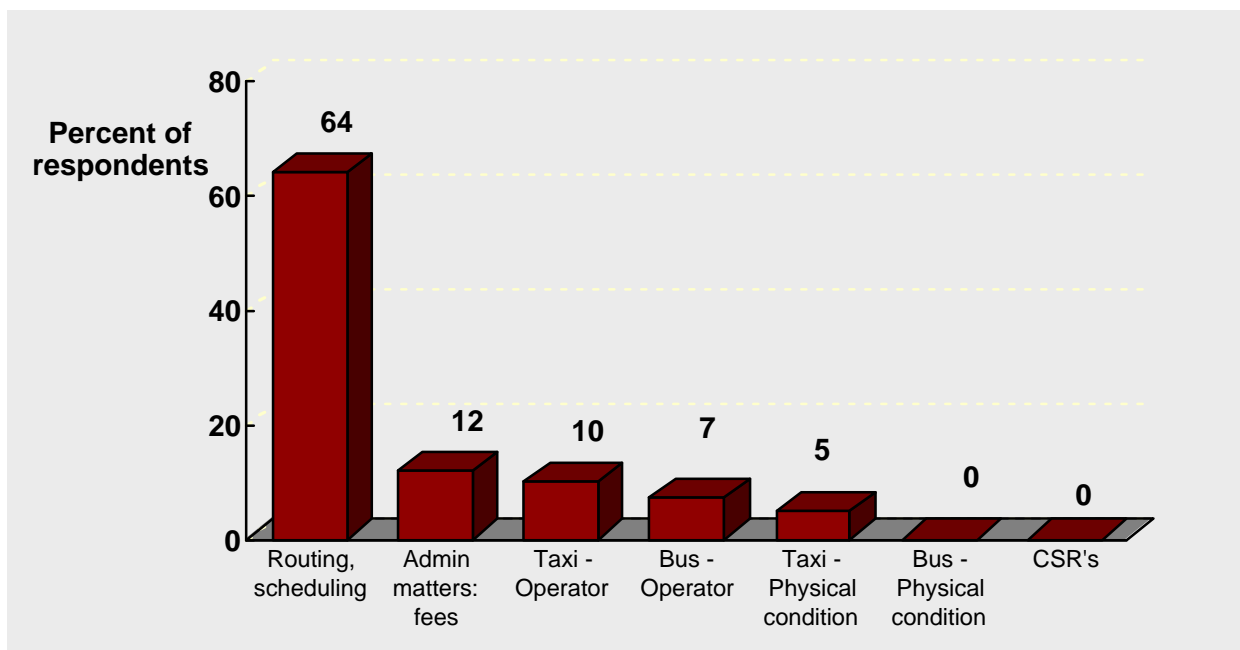
Are you generally successful?

Mostly yes	26
50:50	14
Mostly no	60



6. COMPLAINTS/SUGGESTIONS

18% of clients contacted TransHelp with a complaint or suggestion in the past 6 months. For these clients, the issues were...



“Routing and scheduling” includes late and early pickup and no-shows.



6. COMPLAINTS/SUGGESTIONS cont'd

- More than 1/3 said that they were dissatisfied with the way their complaint/suggestion was handled. Average satisfaction scores for the handling of complaints were 4.4 out of 10 in 2005 and 4.9 in 2008.
- Among the clients who had complaints or suggestions:
 - 64% said that TransHelp got back to them with a response. Their average satisfaction score for handling of complaints was 5.9
 - 36% said that TransHelp did not get back with a response. Their average satisfaction score for handling of complaints was 2.6
- For those who did get a response, 81% received a response within a day or two, while 19% waited one week or longer.



7. USE OF OTHER TRANSIT SYSTEMS

- 15% of TransHelp clients said they transfer to or from a neighbouring system such as Wheel-Trans in Toronto.
- Neither the number of clients who transfer nor the frequency of transferring have changed from 2005.
- Wait times for transferring seem to have increased from 2005 to 2008:
 - The proportion who waited 60 minutes or longer for a transfer increased from 40% in 2005 to 62% in 2008.
 - The proportion who waited 15 minutes or less decreased from 25% in 2005 to 7% in 2008.
 - Results for 2005 and 2008 differ significantly.

7. USE OF OTHER TRANSIT SYSTEMS cont'd

- Clients who use other transit systems were asked what they considered an acceptable wait when transferring.
- In general, the acceptable wait times are shorter than what clients actually experience:
 - 24% find 15 minutes or less acceptable, while just 7% report waiting 15 minutes or less.
 - 6% find 60+ minutes acceptable while 19% report waiting this long.
- 15% of all TransHelp clients report using one or more of the three local accessible transit systems (Mississauga, Brampton and GO).

8. PAYMENT

- Most TransHelp clients pay by credit card (42%) or by cheque (40%). 13% pay cash, and a few use debit or preauthorized withdrawals.
- Clients generally agreed that the present method of payment is convenient and that the cost is reasonable. About 1/4 support the idea of being able to pay individual cash fares (rather than pre-paying).
- 55% of clients have heard about the MPASS. Of those people, 12% either currently or sometimes use the MPASS.

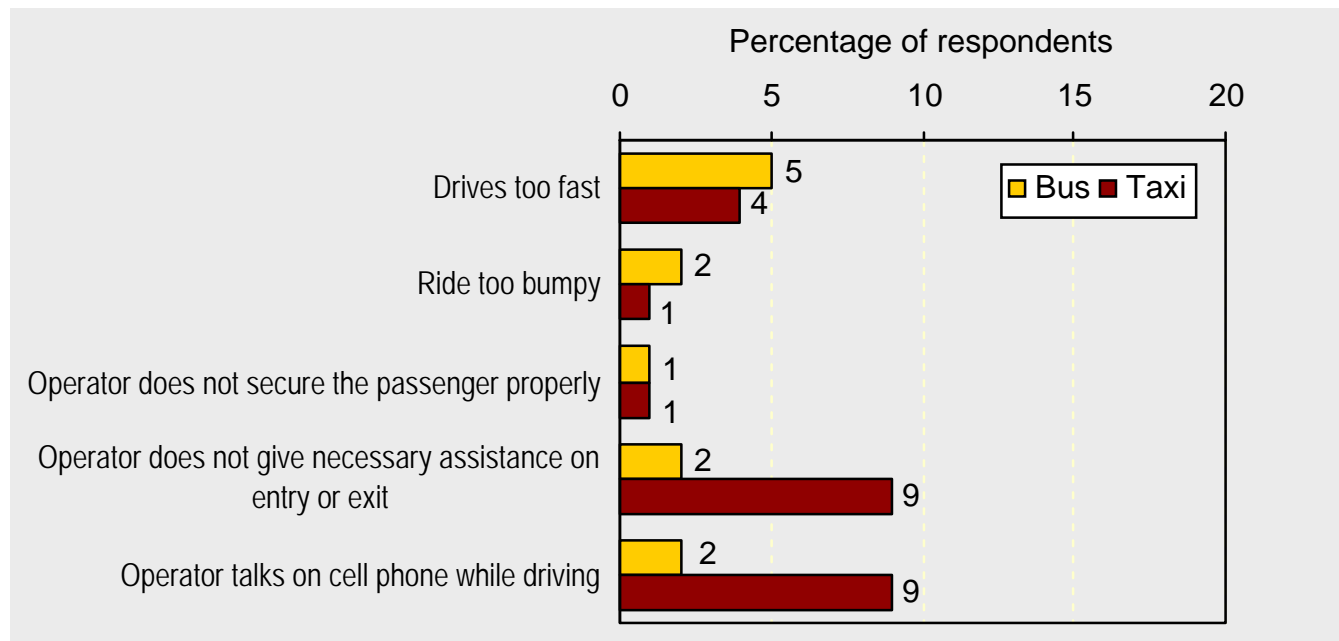
9. SAFETY AND COMFORT

- Clients who used TransHelp buses were asked if they had any of five concerns about the operators:
 - Too fast
 - Too bumpy
 - Does not secure passenger properly
 - Does not give needed assistance on entry or exit
 - Uses cell phone while driving
- 91% reported no concerns, while 9% reported one or more of the five issues.
- Among taxi users, 79% reported no problems while 21% registered one or more of the issues. The issues that differentiate taxi and bus operators are:
 - Provision of assistance getting in and out;
 - Use of cell phones while driving.



9. SAFETY AND COMFORT cont'd

Concerns about bus and taxi operators



9. SAFETY AND COMFORT cont'd

- 18% of bus users said that they had concerns about the design of the buses. Of these:
 - 59% said that their concerns extended to both the older and newer buses.
 - The remainder were divided between those who had concerns about one type of bus or the other.
- 26% of taxi users said that they have concerns about the design of the taxis. Of these:
 - 38% had concerns that applied only to the side-entry taxis
 - 28% had concerns only about the rear-entry taxis
 - 36% were concerned about both types.

10. IVR, INTERNET, NEWSLETTER AND ELECTRONIC BOARD

IVR

- In 2008, 37% stated that it would be useful to book rides on the IVR, compared to 31% in 2005. The change is not statistically significant.

INTERNET

- In 2008, 51% of respondents have Internet access where they live, compared to 44% in 2005.
- The majority of clients still prefer to use the telephone to confirm, change, cancel, or to book a ride.
- There is a distinct difference between clients who are 30 years or younger and those over 30 years of age. 1/3 of the younger group would use the Internet for booking, confirming or changing/canceling a ride.

10. IVR, INTERNET, NEWSLETTER AND ELECTRONIC BOARD, cont'd

NEWSLETTER

- 48% said that they have seen the current TransHelp newsletter.
- 75% said that the newsletter was useful, and only 6% felt that it was not useful. The average satisfaction score was 7.6 out of 10.

ELECTRONIC BOARD

- 10% said that they have ridden on one of the new buses which have an electronic information board. Clearly, many more clients than this have ridden on such buses, which implies that the boards do not register very strongly.
- Those who had noticed the boards were asked how useful they thought the information board was. Only 46% thought that it was useful, while 40% said that it was not useful. The average score was 5.2 out of 10.



11. HOURS OF SERVICE

- In 2008, 87% stated that the present hours of service were sufficient, similar to the 88% in 2005.
- Since 2005, the window for booking and confirming was expanded to 2 hours later.
- Clients were asked whether being able to book a ride until 2 pm the day before made a difference to them.
 - For 18%, the change made a positive difference.
 - Others said that they didn't know about the change (44%) or that it made no difference to them (38%).
- Clients were asked whether being able to confirm a ride from 4 pm made a difference to them.
 - For 13%, the change made a positive difference.
 - Others said that they didn't know about the change (45%) or that it made no difference to them (42%).
- 34% report they use the weekend bus service
 - 86% experienced no difficulties booking a weekend bus ride
 - 13% found there were no rides available.



12. PATH FORWARD

POSITIVE FOUNDATION

- Significant progress since 2005
- High level of satisfaction among clients
- Both quantitative and qualitative information are consistent in their messages
- Can move forward confidently on strong foundation

STRENGTHS

- Staff interaction with TransHelp users, one of strongest elements
- Caring and kindness exhibited throughout the entire client experience

12. PATH FORWARD cont'd

STRENGTHS cont'd

- Users feel protected and secure during the journey
- Cost of service is considered reasonable by most clients
- TransHelp staff demonstrate their commitment to continually upgrading the service
- Significant progress in a number of important areas has been achieved in the last 3 years

12. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Communication: A phone system that facilitates callbacks to clients and handling of complaints would:

- Inform clients of changes to bookings
- Enable staff to pinpoint major sources of complaints and so improve service
- **On-line booking:** This could improve matters for clients and free up Peel staff.
- **Taxis:** More training is indicated, especially for operators of sedan taxis, to ensure operators provide the needed level of assistance.
- **Transfers to other systems:** Better coordination is indicated, as wait times are increasing.
- **Electronic Information Boards:** Reposition for better visibility



12. PATH FORWARD cont'd

THE OVERARCHING GO-FORWARD STRATEGY

- **Focus on the drivers of satisfaction**
 - It is recommended that the Peel TransHelp leadership and staff focus on the three drivers of client satisfaction arising from the analysis of results of the 2008 survey.
- **Involve all staff in the solution**
 - It is recommended that Peel TransHelp conduct facilitated workshops with staff in all areas to work through how each driver of satisfaction could best be enhanced in their area.
- **Continue regular measurement**
 - Continue to measure client satisfaction and act on the results. We strongly support the responsive, thoughtful and resourceful actions and practices TransHelp has instituted since the last survey in 2005 and recommend that TransHelp keeps the pace and commitment until the next survey cycle in 2 to 3 years when progress will again be measured. Report highlights of survey results to all clients.

