



Peel TransHelp Client Satisfaction Survey

2008

Prepared for the Region of Peel
by ERIN Research ~ www.erinresearch.com



 Region of Peel
Working for you

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

TransHelp provides door-to-door transportation services for eligible citizens of Peel, 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 that are contracted through a Request for Proposal (RFP) Process. TransHelp partners with non-profit organizations such as Caledon Community Services and Red Cross to deliver TransHelp services.

TransHelp measurement and service improvement initiative

TransHelp conducted its first comprehensive client survey in 2005 and again in 2008, to measure progress and to identify priority improvement areas going forward. ERIN Research was commissioned by TransHelp to conduct focus groups and a quantitative survey of 500 participants in late 2008.

Key findings

The key findings of the 2008 TransHelp client survey are positive and are summarized in the table below. They show that there has been a statistically significant improvement in six of the seven major dimensions of client satisfaction from 2005 – 2008.

Table 1. Major client satisfaction ratings, 2005 – 2008

Dimension	2005	2008
Overall satisfaction with most recent trip	8.6	9.0 *
Telephone service		
The person on the phone was courteous	9.0	9.3 *
The person on the phone treated me fairly	8.9	9.3 •
The person on the phone was knowledgeable, competent	8.8	9.1 •
Overall ratings of service providers		
TransHelp bus operators	8.8	9.2 •
Bram City taxi operators	7.0	7.7 •
Blue and White taxi operators	7.6	8.0

* Statistically significant difference, 2005-2008.

Strengths

Strong client ratings indicate that many aspects of the service are going extremely well:

- Staff interaction with TransHelp riders, both on the phone and in person is one of the strongest elements of the service. The caring and kindness exhibited by staff carries through the entire client experience.
- Users of the TransHelp service feel protected and secure during their travel, which is an important aspect of their enjoyment of the journey.
- The cost of the service is considered by most clients to be very reasonable.
- TransHelp staff continually seek to upgrade the service to users and have made significant progress in a number of important areas during the last three years.

Service challenges still exist

The most notable challenges that TransHelp management and staff need to address are centred on the following problems and barriers experienced by clients:

Complaints

36% of clients who had complained received no response. TransHelp could examine the procedures for handling of complaints and communicate them to clients.

Wait times for transfers to other systems

Although transfers to other transit systems are not wholly under the control of TransHelp, further communication to smooth transitions with other paratransit systems could be pursued.

Changes in the confirmed pick-up time

This issue received attention in the comments from riders, and was a source of anxiety for some: clients were checking their confirmed departure up to three or four times before the ride. TransHelp will need to refine the changes in confirmation to minimize stress amongst clients.

Hours of service

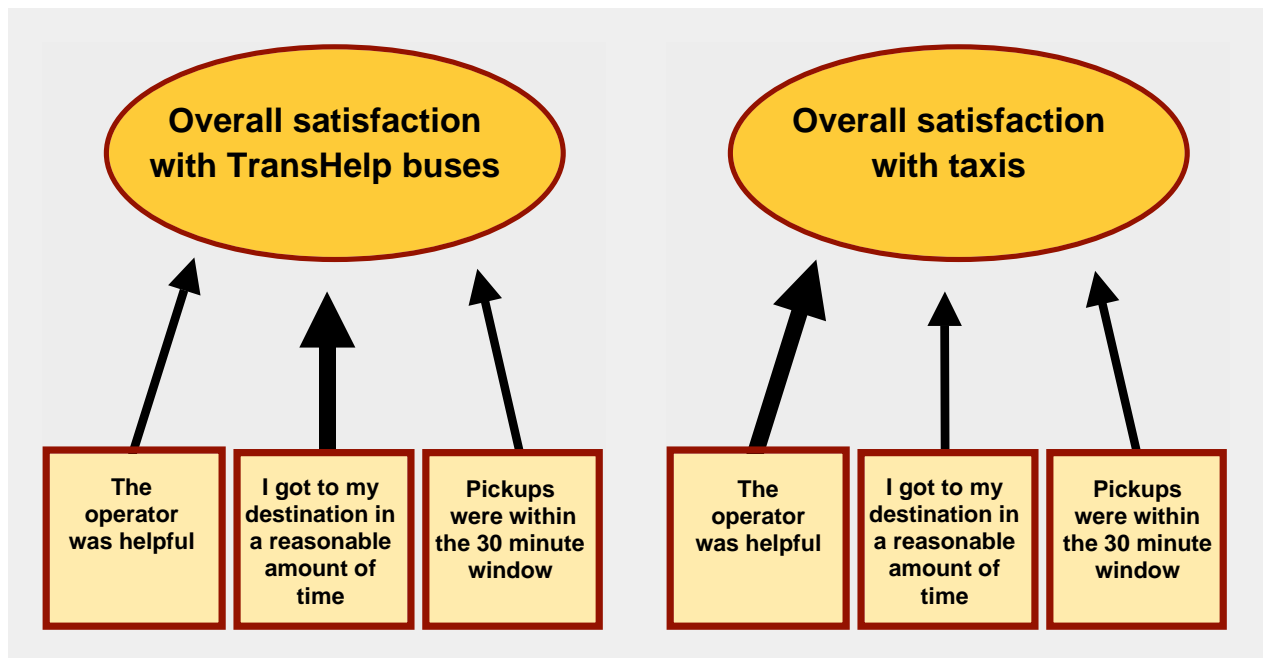
Telephone interviewers found that clients were unclear about hours of operation, especially in the Caledon/Bolton service area. Continual communication of the hours of operation in the newsletter is recommended.

The overarching go-forward strategy

Focus on drivers

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.

Figure 1. Drivers of satisfaction, TransHelp 2008



Involve all staff in 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.

1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Background

"Working together to enhance the lives of those unable to use conventional transit."

TransHelp's Mission

TransHelp (TransHelp) provides door-to-door transportation services for eligible citizens of Peel, who are unable to use conventional transit, with or without an escort. TransHelp serves approximately 5,000 clients and employs approximately 86 employees.

In 2008, TransHelp provided approximately 290,000 customers – an average of 60 rides per customer. Rides are provided partly by Peel-owned buses and also by private taxis. TransHelp partners with local taxi companies to deliver their services.

Project overview

ERIN Research designed and conducted a customer satisfaction survey to gain feedback regarding TransHelp services. The research includes both qualitative and quantitative components:

- Qualitative research component: Two focus groups were held; one with members of The TransHelp Advisory Committee (TAC) and one with representatives of the client population.
- Quantitative research component: An in-depth telephone survey of 500 TransHelp users.

Major objectives

The TransHelp project has five major objectives:

1. To assist TransHelp to improve the quality of services provided to the client.
 2. To enable TransHelp to improve service based on feedback from the client.
 3. To gather information on the client's determination of what is important with regards to the service provided by TransHelp as well as the strengths and weaknesses.
 4. To better understand the client's expectations of the service and expectations of any implemented improvements.
 5. To compare key measures of client satisfaction for 2005 and 2008.
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2. METHOD

Overall approach

TransHelp survey measurements included the following topic areas:

- Satisfaction with overall service
- Ease of Booking a ride
- Standby ride
- Same day requests
- Transfers to other Para Transit
- Interactive Voice Response System (IVR)
- Communications
- Hours of Service
- Fare payments and payment options
- Process for handling complaints
- Satisfaction with service by Provider
- Satisfaction with Initial Contact for Information on Service
- Satisfaction with Service On Time Performance on pick up and drop off
- Satisfaction with assistance offered while getting in and out of vehicles.

The survey was representative of the TransHelp clients' population with respect to gender, geographic location and age.

Focus groups

ERIN Research worked closely with TransHelp staff, using valuable input from two focus groups (conducted with members of the TransHelp Advisory Committee and seven TransHelp clients) to create a relevant, comprehensive and up-to-date questionnaire.

Survey features

The survey questions probed into details of customers' experiences with TransHelp – what works and what does not. The majority of questions were in multiple choice format. Open-ended questions were asked to enable users to give full expression to their views.

The survey was designed to identify drivers of client satisfaction with TransHelp services. The analysis of the results provides guidance to TransHelp staff and management at the level of specific activities and processes.

Sample

501 TransHelp clients participated in a telephone survey in November 2008. A sample of this size is accurate to within ± 4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The sample was drawn randomly from the current base of active customers.

Table 2. TransHelp sample characteristics, 2008

	Number	Percent
Gender		
Female	326	65
Male	175	35
Age		
<35	56	11
35-49	62	12
50-64	119	24
65+	264	53
Place of residence		
Mississauga	270	54
Brampton	161	32
Caledon/Bolton	50	10
Other (e.g. Toronto)	20	4
Number of years living in Peel		
Less than 1 year	19	4
1 to 3 years	54	11
4 to 9 years	77	16
10 to 15 years	76	16
More than 15 years	250	53
Number of years as a TransHelp client		
Less than 1 year	139	28
1 to 3 years	163	33
4 to 9 years	123	25
10 to 15 years	48	10
More than 15 years	27	5
Frequency using the TransHelp service		
3 or more times per week	98	29
1 to 2 times per week	104	31
Once or more than once per month	85	25
Less	54	16
Total	501	100

Response rate

The response rate of the 2008 survey was 66 percent, which is very high for a client survey and means that TransHelp can be very confident in the results.

Reporting of results

The majority of survey questions used a 5-point “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree” scale. When reporting average agreement, the more intuitive 10-point format is used. The scales correspond as shown below¹:

Question on the survey:					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Staff were knowledgeable and competent	1	2	3	4	5
0-10 scale used for reporting the average result: (e.g. in Figure 12)	0	2.5	5.0	7.5	10.0
	⏟		⏟	⏟	
Agreement groupings: (e.g. in Table 3)	Disagree		Neutral	Agree	

Throughout the report, percentages are rounded independently and totals may not add to exactly 100.

Key definitions

The Appendix contains descriptions of several statistical terms used in this report.

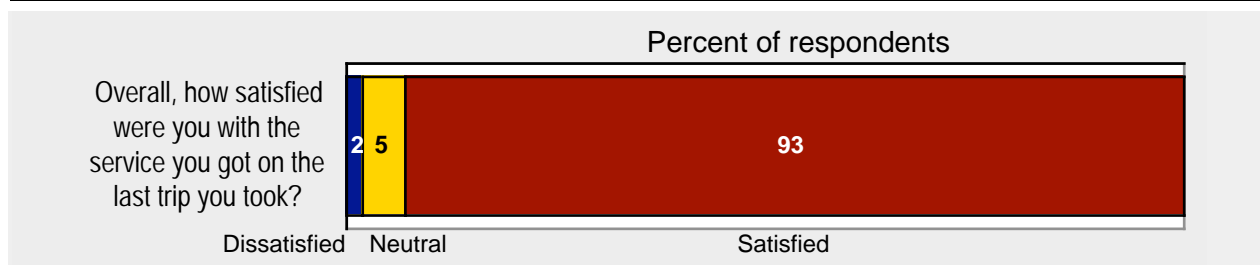
¹ The 0 to 10 scale provides the same information as the 5-point scale but makes it easier to understand the result. An average score of 7.0 out of 10 has clear meaning for most people, while the corresponding average of 3.8 out of 5 does not.

3. YOUR MOST RECENT TRIP

The survey asked a series of questions about the client's most recent trip with TransHelp. 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.

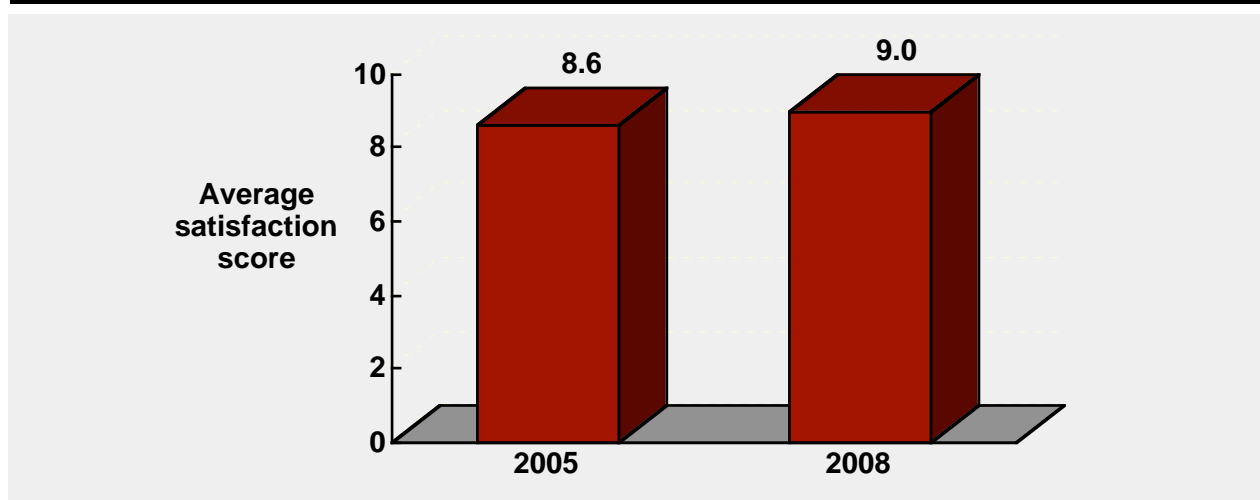
Figure 2 shows that 93 percent of TransHelp clients reported that they were satisfied with the service they got on their last trip. Just 2 percent were dissatisfied.

Figure 2. Overall satisfaction with the service you got on your last trip: percentages, 2008



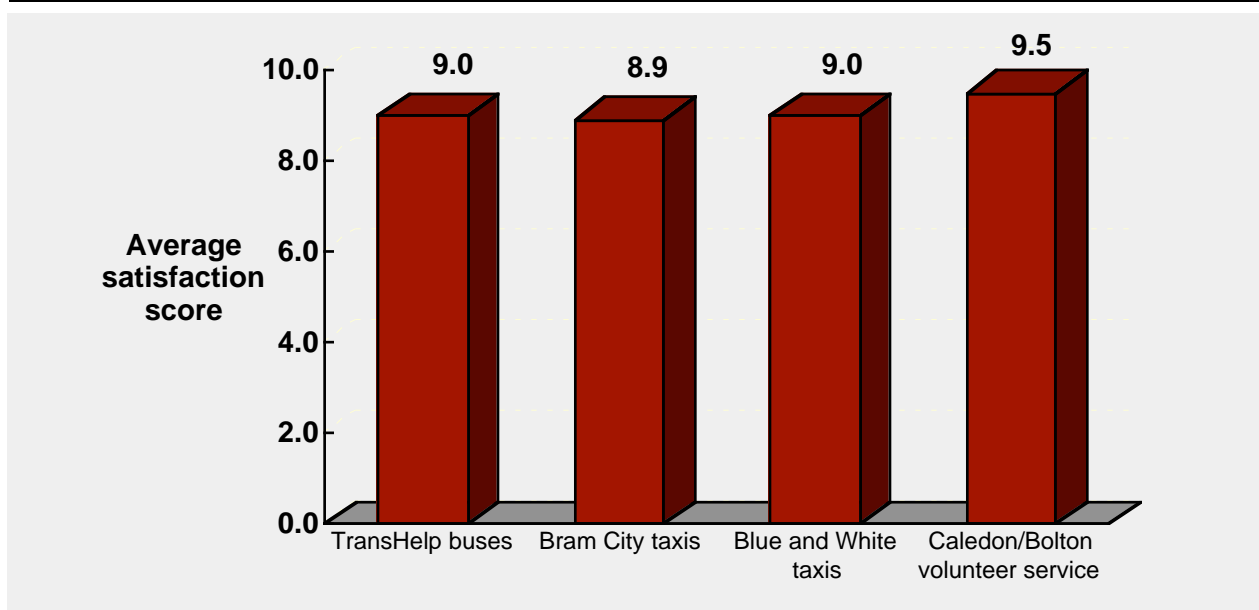
In 2008, the average satisfaction score with the last trip was 9.0, compared to 8.6 in 2005. This is a statistically significant increase.

Figure 3. Overall satisfaction with the service you got on your last trip: averages



Overall satisfaction with the most recent trip varies slightly based on the transportation service. The Caledon/Bolton volunteer service scored higher than other modes of transportation with an average score of 9.5. The difference between Caledon/Bolton and the other three services is statistically significant.

Figure 4. Overall satisfaction with the service you got on your last trip by transportation service, 2008



Note: These results do not include trips where the client took a bus one way and a taxi the other.

Selected comments on Overall Satisfaction with Service

Everyone is very polite. Right after my surgery the drivers would come right to my door to help me into the bus. (Mississauga)

For me, they are the best service. All the drivers - both taxi and bus drivers - are very kind. (Mississauga)

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)

I don't know how I would get around without TransHelp. I couldn't afford the regular taxi service. TransHelp allows for inclusion for people with disabilities. I can go anywhere I want to in the Region. (Mississauga)

I find everything just wonderful. I like that it's so handy, convenient and dependable.
(Mississauga)

I really am grateful for their service. They are all so nice and helpful, and the rides are comfortable. I wasn't sure at the beginning that I would use their services, however they are truly wonderful, and I really enjoy going out places because of their kindness. (Mississauga)

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 just think it's very helpful for people who can't ride on public transit. It's door-to-door service and I like the security of it. (Brampton)

I think it is a heavenly service. Without it, we could not go out or do anything as a family. We could not afford to travel by taxi. Both my husband and I have been injured in an accident and cannot drive. We are on a very limited budget and it allows us to get to medical appointments and to take our son out. (Brampton)

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)

The best part is that people in need do not have to make their own way from point to point on their own. TransHelp offers a system that allows people to travel in a safe and timely way.
(Brampton)

It lets me get around - I would be housebound without them. (Caledon)

It's a nice feeling to feel safe. The driver makes you feel safe. They always help you on and off the bus. (Caledon)

I am grateful that we have this service and it's available at a favourable price. (Caledon)

To live in the country without wheels is a very difficult thing. I can't describe the importance and the feeling of gratitude I have for this service. (Caledon)

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)

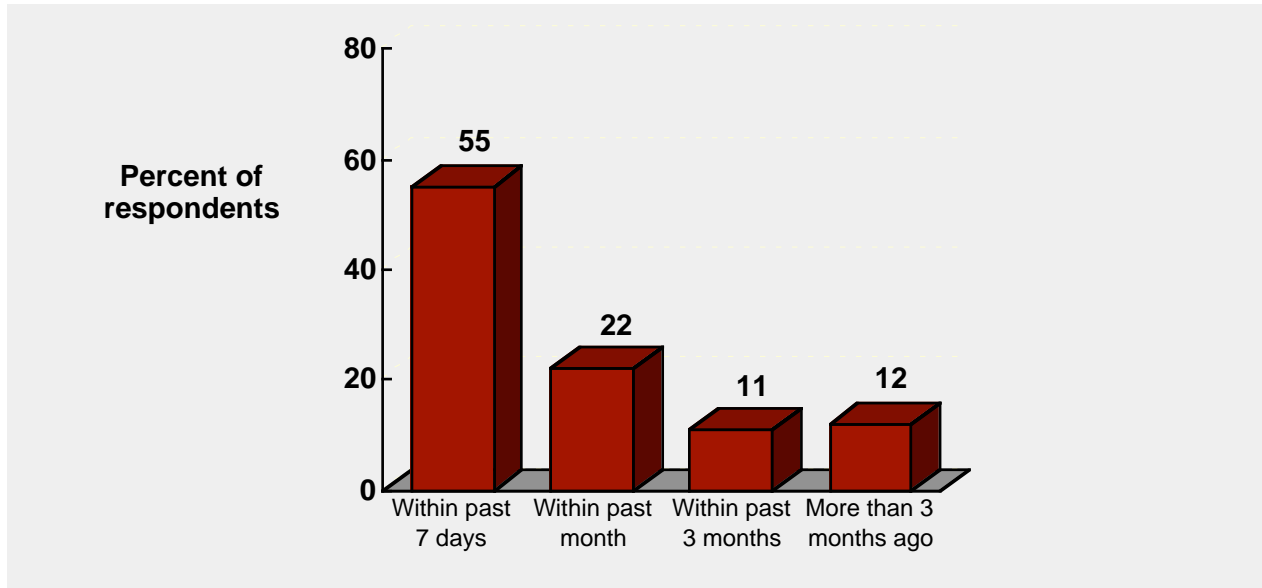
The personnel involved - both the people in the office that book the rides and the bus drivers - are wonderful and extremely kind. (Bolton)



Planning the trip

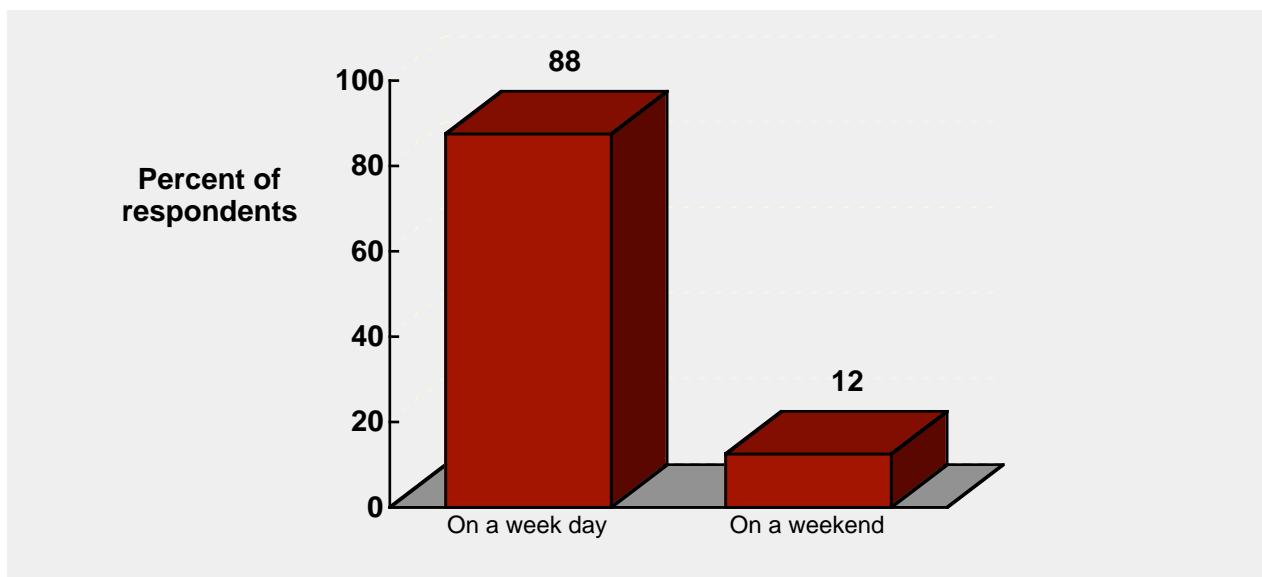
Just over half of TransHelp clients had used the service within the past week. Including this group, just over three-fourths of TransHelp clients had used the service in the past month.

Figure 5. When was your last trip on TransHelp?



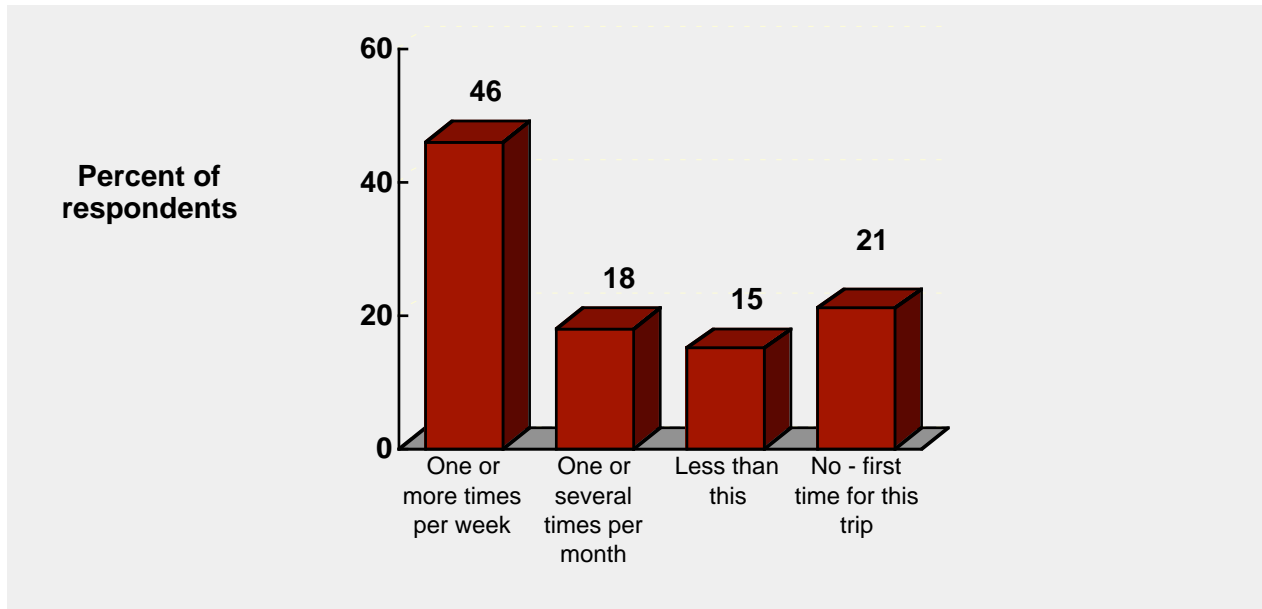
The vast majority (88 percent) of TransHelp rides take place during the week; 12 percent were on a weekend.

Figure 6. Was this trip...?



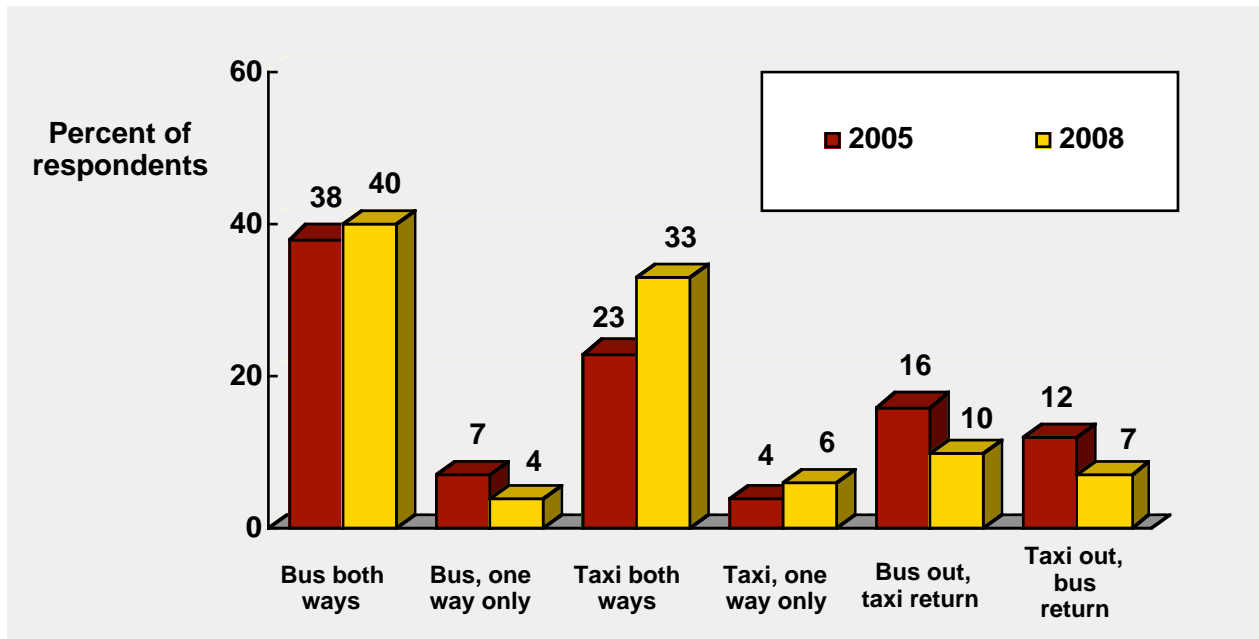
The most recent trip for just under half of TransHelp clients was one that the client takes one or more times per week. Including this group, 64 percent of clients said that this trip was one that they take one or more times per month.

Figure 7. Was this a trip that you make on a regular basis?



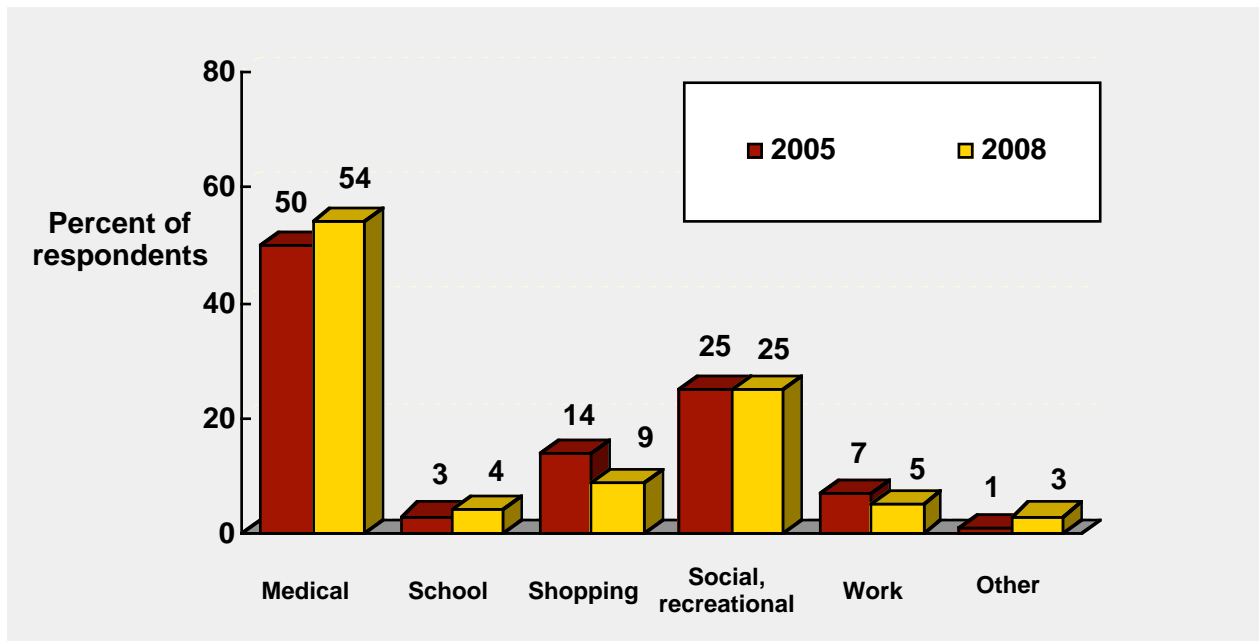
The pattern of bus and taxi use is slightly but significantly different in 2008. Fewer clients took mixed bus/taxi rides in 2008 in comparison to 2005. While 23 percent of clients took a taxi both ways in 2005, in 2008 33 percent took taxis both ways. In 2005, 28 percent of clients took a mixed bus/taxi ride, while in 2008 only 17 percent took mixed rides.

Figure 8. Mode of transportation



In 2005, 50 percent of clients said that the reason for their trip was 'medical,' while in 2008 the percentage of medical trips rose to 54 percent. Comparing 2005 to 2008, there were decreases in the percent of clients who said that the reason for their trip was 'shopping' and 'work.' The overall pattern in 2008 differs significantly from 2005.

Figure 9. What was the reason for your trip?

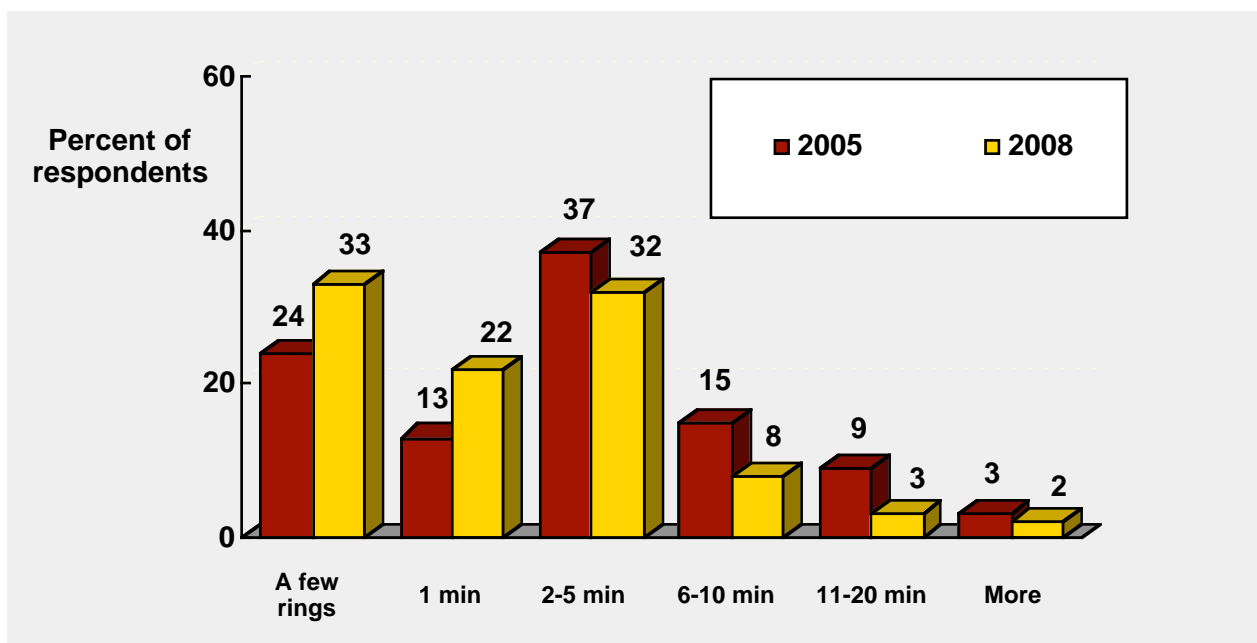


Phoning to book a ride

Twenty-two percent of TransHelp clients had standing orders and therefore did not place a call to order their most recent ride. The data in Figure 9 only includes the 78 percent who called specifically to order their most recent ride.

The percent of clients who waited for a 'few rings' before getting an answer when they called to book a ride increased significantly from 2005 to 2008, from 24 percent to 33 percent. The percentage who got an answer within 1 minute rose from 2005 to 2008, from 13 percent to 22 percent. Placing these groups together, the total percent of clients who got an answer within 1 minute rose from 37 percent to 55 percent. For wait times of 2-5 minutes or longer, there are corresponding decreases between 2005 and 2008. Overall this is a significant improvement in response times for clients when booking a ride.

Figure 10. When calling to book a ride, how long did you wait before someone answered the phone?



Note: Clients who reported rides some months in the past may not accurately recall how long it took to answer the phone. These results were therefore checked against clients whose ride was within the previous 7 days. There is not a significant difference, and the results for all clients are reported here.

What is a reasonable wait on the phone?

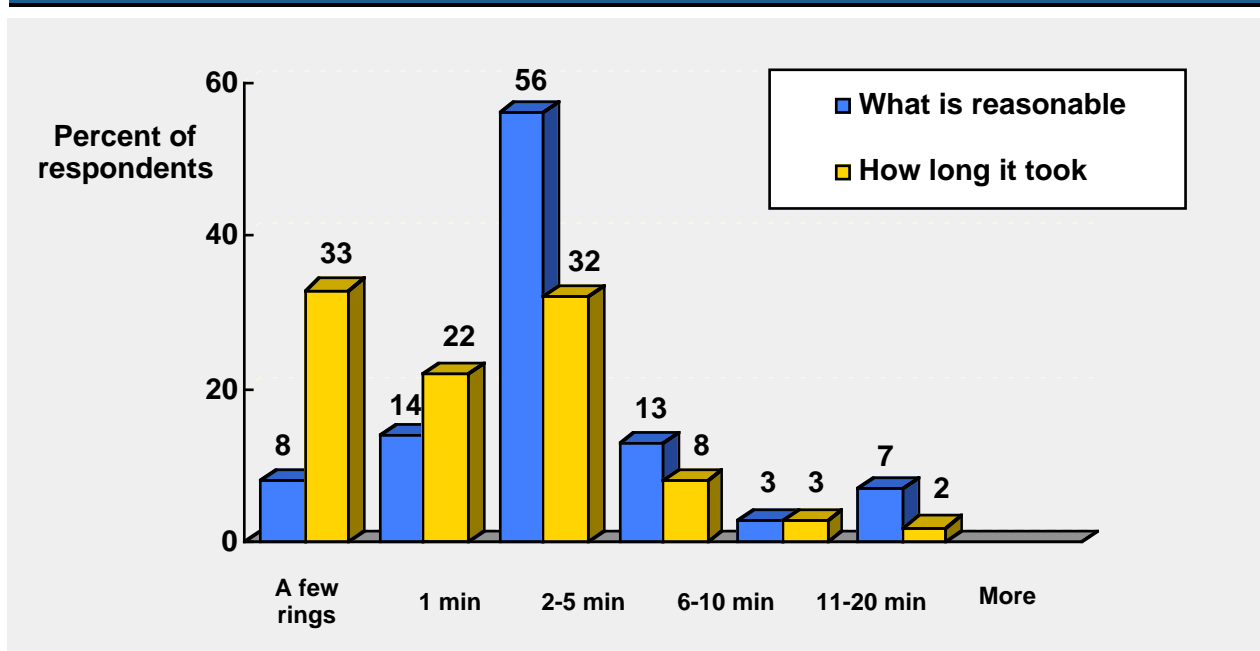
Respondents were also asked what a reasonable wait time is when phoning to book a ride. Figure 11 shows what clients consider reasonable and what they actually experienced.

Comparing each respondent's answers to these two questions:

- For 52 percent, the phone was answered sooner than their standard for reasonable service;
- For 38 percent, the answer came at their standard for reasonable service;
- For 11 percent the answer was slower than their standard for reasonable service.

Overall, 90 percent of TransHelp clients received an answer as fast as they considered reasonable or faster.

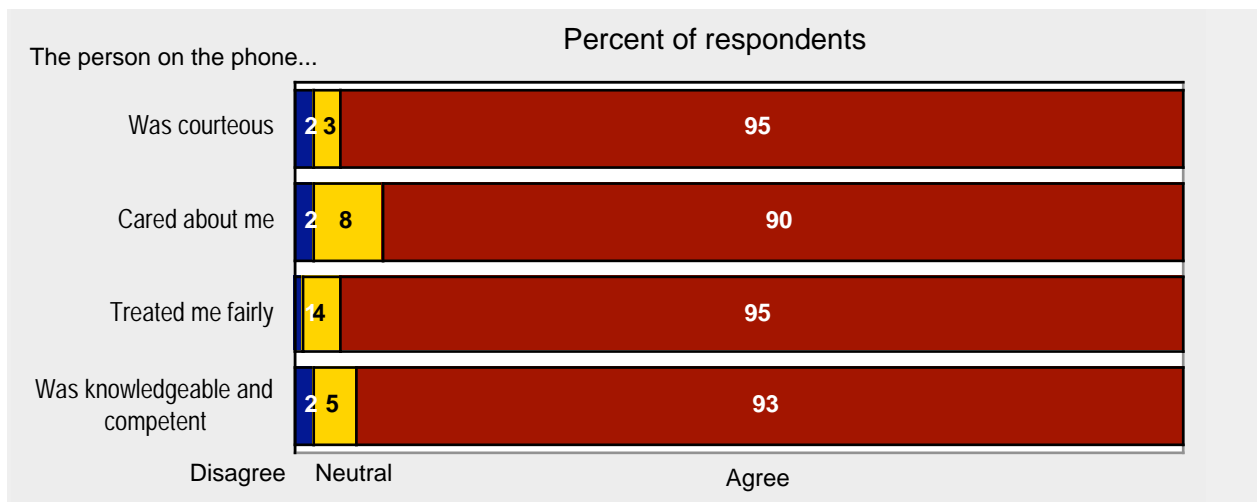
Figure 11. Answering the phone



Ratings of TransHelp office staff

TransHelp clients rated phone staff very highly for their most recent call to schedule a ride. 90 percent of clients or more agreed with all four service measures.

Figure 12. Quality of service provided by phone staff: percentages



Scores on each of these service measures were higher in 2008 than in 2005. For two measures, 'Cared about me' and 'Treated me fairly', the difference is statistically significant. All four service measures in 2008 scored 9.0 or higher.

Table 3. Quality of service provided by phone staff: averages

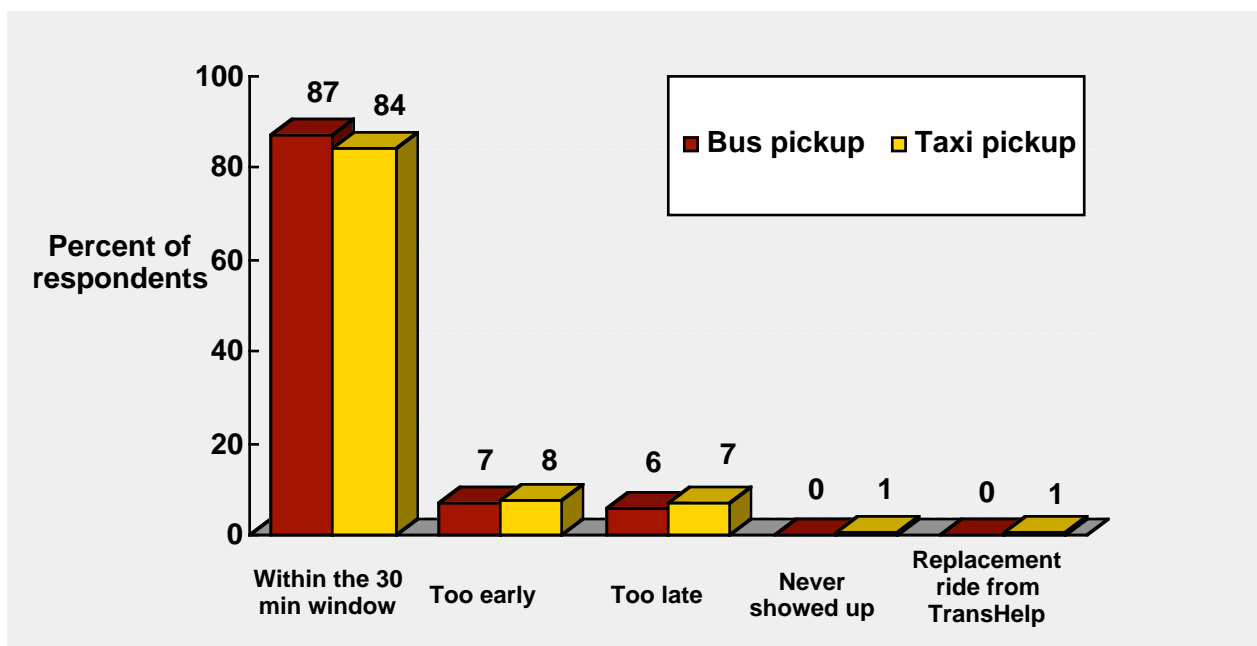
The person on the phone...	Average agreement score	
	2005	2008
Was courteous	9.0	9.3
Cared about me*	8.5	9.0
Treated me fairly*	8.9	9.3
Was knowledgeable and competent	8.8	9.1

* Statistically significant difference between years.

Pickup from home

Still focusing on clients' descriptions of their most recent ride, 86 percent report that they were picked up within the 30 minute window. The results were slightly better for buses which picked up in the 30 minute window 87 percent of the time versus 84 percent for taxis. This was not a statistically significant difference.

Figure 13. When did the bus/taxi arrive for your pickup at home?



For clients who said that their ride arrived early, the median length of time that the ride arrived early was 15 minutes. The median time that TransHelp rides arrived late was 15 minutes. There were no significant differences between buses and taxis.

Sixty-two percent of TransHelp clients overall required assistance getting into the vehicle for their ride. 68 percent of clients using a bus required assistance compared to 54 percent for taxis. This difference was statistically significant.

96 percent of TransHelp clients overall got the required assistance from their operator. Clients using the bus got the required assistance from the operator 99 percent of the time versus 92 percent of the time for taxis. This difference was statistically significant.

Selected comments on Pick Up from Home

I have a complaint about when they would pick my daughter up for Girl Guides. I would tell them that she could not be too early. They still have to be more empathetic to her needs they would bring her 50 min early and expect her to wait. This is a special need service, they need to have a more personal touch to consider the individual needs, these people are exposed to elements waiting and they should not leave them waiting for a ride or arrive too early.

(Mississauga)

As long as they show up within the 30 minute window I can understand that. (Brampton)

Wheel-Trans gives you a reminder if they change the time they are to pick you up. Trans Help doesn't notify you. I would like a reminder if they change the time. (Brampton)

I would just like to ensure the drivers come to the right door (back versus front), otherwise my trip gets cancelled but we've identified where they should get me. (Mississauga)

The number one improvement would be that they should respect the pickup time. I understand they need to accommodate many but if they could consider that you can not be arriving too early it would be an improvement. (Mississauga)

For a ride around the corner they pick me up an hour before I want to be there. In the case of my church trip, they drop me off before the building is even open and I have to wait out in the cold. For short trips they should pick you up closer to the time requested. (Brampton)

If my ride is for 10am then I need to be ready for 9:45am, however if they show up early at 9:30 then I would like them to wait until 9:45, because that's the original time frame that I was to be ready for. If we need to be ready for the driver, it should work both ways, and they should not be early and then leave. (Caledon)

I like that fact that they say they have to be there within the 30 min window and that I can rely on that. (Brampton)

The fact that they deal with seniors: they say they are going to be arriving by 8 o'clock and if they are not here until 8:30 it is too long to keep them waiting. It also makes me late for work because I cannot leave my mother alone outside waiting for her ride. (Bolton)

I don't like the one hour pick up window. They need to regulate the system according to the distance the person is traveling. If I am only going around the corner I don't want to be picked up an hour before my appointment. I could be picked up 15 minutes before that and then I could arrive at my destination an hour and 15 minutes early. In the winter this can be a problem. (Mississauga)

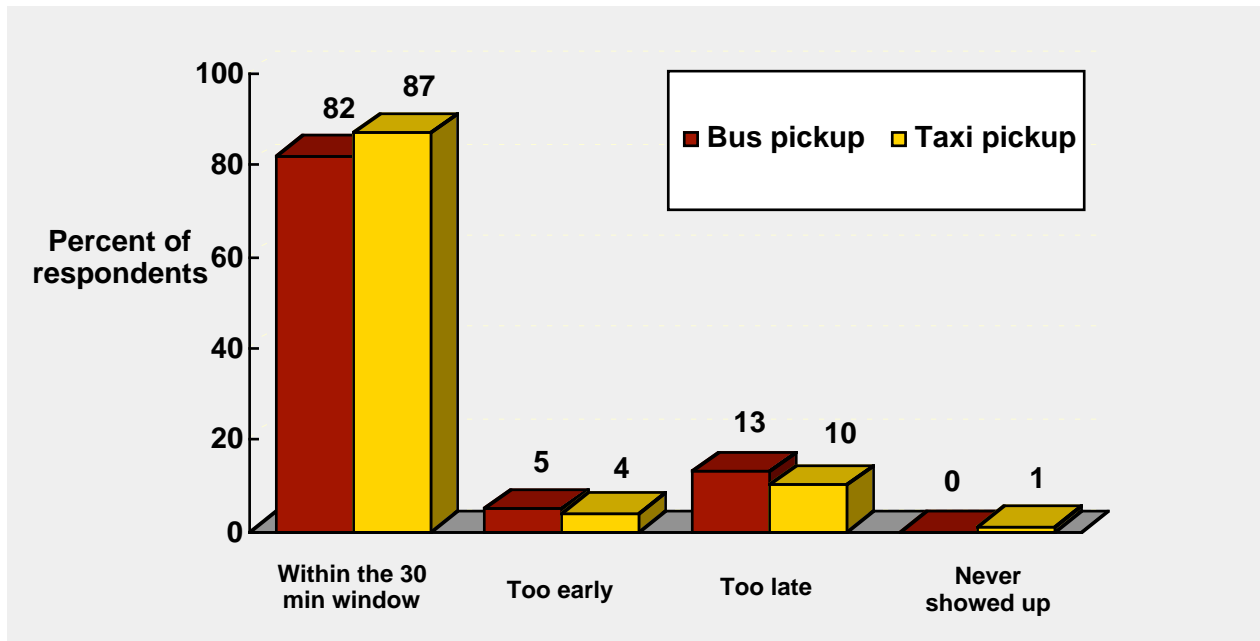
If they arrive before their 30 minute window period, they won't wait even though they are too early. (Brampton)



Pickup from the destination

Results for pickup from the destination are similar to the results for the pickup from home. 84 percent of TransHelp clients overall were picked up within the 30 minute window. Although taxis were better at picking up in the 30 minute window than buses (87 percent versus 82 percent), these differences were not statistically significant.

Figure 14. When did the bus/taxi arrive for your pickup from the destination?



For clients who said that their ride arrived early, the median length of time that the ride arrived early was 10 minutes. The median time that TransHelp rides arrived late was 15 minutes. There were no significant differences between buses and taxis.

Results for getting assistance were similar to those from the beginning of the journey. 63 percent of TransHelp clients overall required assistance getting into the vehicle for their ride. 68 percent of clients using a bus required assistance compared to 60 percent for taxis. This difference was not statistically significant.

Selected comments on Pickup from Destination

I'm not good with the window for when they pick you up. They usually pick you up an hour before we want to get picked up. When the customer asks for a specific time it should be respected. The time of the ride should not be beyond the 30 minute window. Being picked up an hour before is not acceptable. On Thanksgiving I asked to be picked up at 7:00 pm but they booked for 6:00 pm. We ended up gulping down our food and leaving before dinner was over. It is very upsetting for my family. (Mississauga)

I don't like the fact that you have to wait an hour or longer to be picked up. My husband's doctor's appointments only last 10 minutes and then he has to wait an hour or more to be picked up by the bus. He is non verbal and becomes very agitated when he has to wait. (Mississauga)

I had to wait for 2 hours to be picked-up. I called the office and it was closed, then they sent a regular taxi. I have a scooter so I couldn't use a regular taxi. I wasn't well and needed my insulin so I ended up passing out and an ambulance was called. I ended up in the hospital but Trans help paid for the ambulance because it was their fault. (Mississauga)

It is a shame that they couldn't be more precise with their drop off and pick up times. Because of this I ended up canceling the service. My son is severely handicapped and attends a day program that is 10 minutes away from my condo. The taxi arrived one day at 7:10 am for a requested 8:10 pickup. Meanwhile the centre doesn't open until 8:30 am. On his last trip he was picked up at 3:30 but he didn't arrive home until well after 5:00 pm. I live in a condo so I had been down stairs in the lobby waiting for his arrival for over an hour. He had been driving around in the bus for an hour and a half. I don't think that it's fair to him to have to drive around for an hour and a half for a trip that should only take 10 minutes. So, I have given up on your service at this time. I work nights so it would have been nice to use the TransHelp service. (Brampton)

The pick-up on the return portion is not very good. I have waited 3 hours. The drivers should be more informed as to where the pickup is. I was told to wait where I had been dropped off, but then I was charged as a no-show. I do not have a cell phone and had to go in to find a pay phone. It was cold outside to be waiting. I have never had on-time pickup on the return trip. (Mississauga)

There is a major problem with the Bram City Taxi system. Everyday they pick me up late from work, most of the time my time boss has gone home, and I'm left outside in the cold past 5:30. (Brampton)



Perceptions of bus and taxi operators

Four statements that describe important aspects of operator performance were presented separately for the outbound and homebound rides. Since the outbound and homebound ratings do not differ to an appreciable degree, the average score for both directions is reported in Figure 15 and Table 4. These are overall scores include both buses and taxis. (Scores for the four services separately appear in Table 5).

For 2008, percent agreement for the four statements ranges between 93 percent and 95 percent.

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.

Figure 15. Experience in the vehicle, percentages for 2008

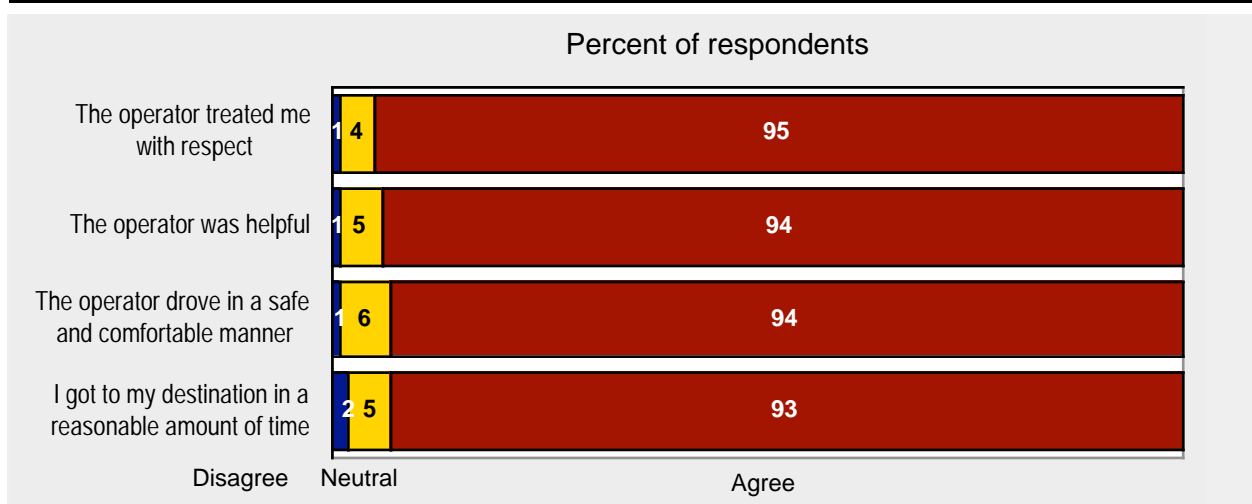


Table 4. Experience in the vehicle: Overall averages

Dimension	Average agreement score	
	2005	2008
The operator treated me with respect	9.2	9.3
The operator was helpful	9.2	9.2
The operator drove in a safe and comfortable manner	9.3	9.3
I got to my destination in a reasonable amount of time	9.3	9.2

Table 5. Experience in the vehicle: Average scores for 2008

Dimension	TransHelp	Bram City	Blue and White	Caledon/Bolton
The operator treated me with respect *	9.5	9.1	9.0	9.5
The operator was helpful *	9.5	8.9	8.8	9.2
The operator drove in a safe and comfortable manner	9.4	9.2	9.2	9.3
I got to my destination in a reasonable amount of time	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.4

* Statistically significant difference among services

Selected comments on Bus Operators

The door to door service can not be beat. It is a wonderful service and I find everyone to be very helpful, they even call me when they are running late to let me know. (Mississauga)

Have the drivers securely fasten all the belts around my wheelchair so that I don't move around while we are traveling. (Mississauga)

I would like to be able to request the type of vehicle that I prefer to travel in. I much prefer traveling on their buses, as the bus drivers are much more helpful than the taxi drivers. (Mississauga)

I travel twice a week to the Brampton Civic Hospital for my dialysis treatment. After the treatment I am exhausted. I have to keep going outside to look for my bus. I wish the driver would come into the lobby and look for me. I have no strength to wait outside and I am so afraid I will miss my bus. (Brampton)

I like the fact that it is easily wheel chair accessible. The drivers are so helpful. Miss)

I like them because they would ask me if I needed help and help me down the steps and with my walker. (Mississauga)

The drivers all have enjoyable personalities and are very helpful. (Mississauga)

All the people are very courteous. The drivers are very helpful to me when I'm getting in and out of the buses. (Mississauga)

I like the professionalism of the drivers. Everyone is very friendly and you can count on the service. (Brampton)

Selected comments on Taxi Operators

Drivers should all adhere to the same policies. One driver would not help me into my house. He then took me to a mall, where I had to wait for a family member to pick me up. All the others drivers helped me into the house. (Mississauga)

I want the car taxi drivers to become more courteous and polite, or please only send buses for me. (Mississauga)

I would like to have more courteous drivers (taxi). (Mississauga)

If they had buses on the weekend it would be great because we hate the taxis. They are never on time and the drivers are not helpful. (Bolton)

I want the drivers to help me more as I really can't walk well and they should help. (Brampton)

Most of the drivers are absolutely wonderful. (Bolton)

Confirming or changing the ride

Eighty-nine percent of passengers stated that they confirmed their ride after the initial booking. This 89 percent breaks down to: 51 percent confirmed by phone and 38 percent by IVR. The pattern is similar for the outbound and the return rides: 85 percent confirmed their ride after the initial return booking: 48 percent confirmed by phone and 37 percent by IVR.

Five percent of passengers stated that they called on the phone to change the time of one or both trips subsequent to their original booking.

Selected comments on confirming/changing their ride

If I confirm my ride at 4:30, it will change overnight. You have to double check, and I think that is really bad. (Mississauga)

In regard to trying to get times correct, I confirm at 4:00 and then the following morning, but the time confirmed in the morning will be 20 minutes before or after the time confirmed at 4:00. I would like to see them try to keep the times as correct as possible. (Mississauga)

The line is very busy to confirm. (Mississauga)

TransHelp should not change an already confirmed pick up time. That's what they did to me, so I had to cancel my plans that I had already arranged, because they changed my time. (Mississauga)

I have had a few situations when I asked for a return time of 12 pm and when I confirmed it there was a 15 min discrepancy. Overall the service is ok. (Mississauga)

If I book a ride and check the night before, the time will change by the next morning. You have to check the next morning. The driver says they know what time was originally booked and would not leave me behind, but I don't know if that is actually the case. (Brampton)



When you call for confirmation of your ride they always book an earlier time than what you have requested. I understand they meet the needs of all passengers but one hour earlier is too much. (Brampton)

Sometimes you confirm the ride at 4:00 and then the next morning it's changed. That is disconcerting- the times should stay the same once they are confirmed. Perhaps the drivers could take a break or whatever when someone cancels, rather than rescheduling everyone else. (Brampton)

The process to change the time is very good and they are usually very accommodating. It's nice to have that flexibility. (Brampton)

This is a standing ride for every day of the week. Sometimes the ride time can change for every day, everyday can end up being a different pickup time. I don't know who changes the ride, but I want it to go as scheduled. (Brampton)

I find the system fantastic. (Mississauga)

I don't need to call and confirm rides with CCS when I'm travelling within the area, because CCS simply confirms when I'm booking the trip. If I need TransHelp services, then yes I do call to confirm by using the IVR system. (Caledon)

Sometimes you have to wait 5-10 minutes before you can get through between 4 and 6 pm. I don't know what to suggest to improve that situation. (Mississauga)



Drivers of satisfaction for the recent ride

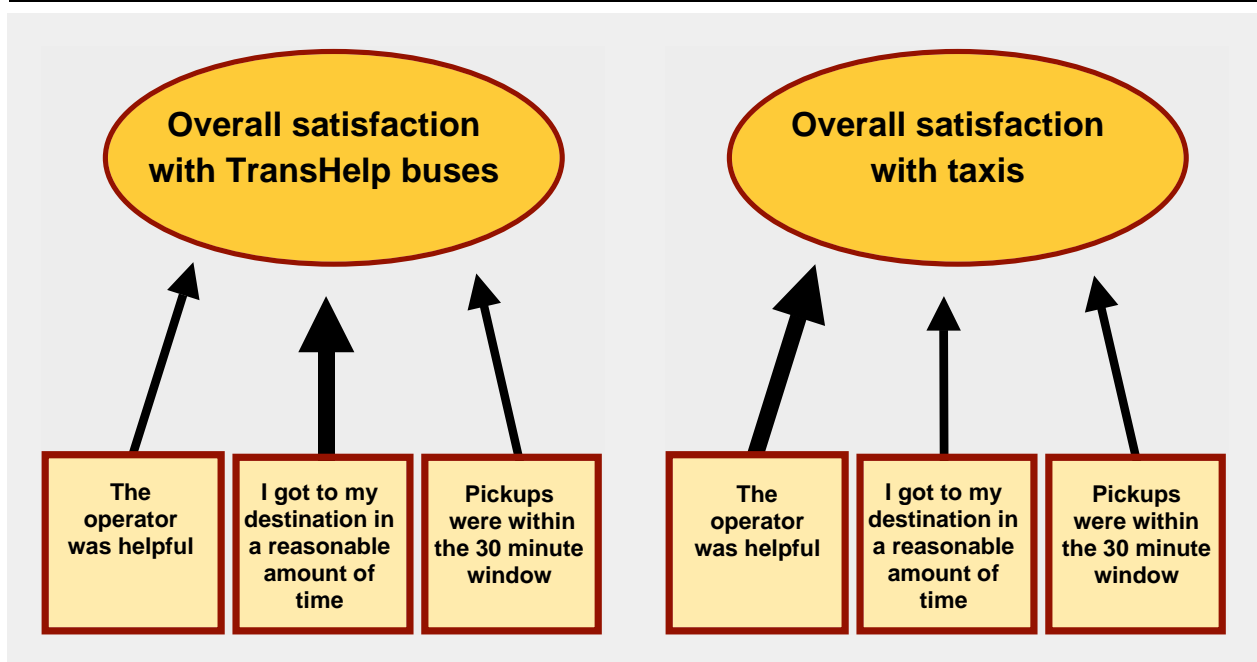
While satisfaction scores for the recent ride are very high, there were still some clients who experienced problems. This section asks what the “drivers of client satisfaction” are – i.e. it identifies the elements that most strongly distinguish satisfied and dissatisfied clients.²

In identifying the drivers, all of the factors reported in earlier sections were examined to determine whether they were associated with client satisfaction. This process yields three elements that strongly determine satisfaction

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.

For TransHelp buses, the element that most strongly differentiates satisfied from less satisfied clients is getting to the destination in a reasonable amount of time. With buses, a trip can take more or less time depending on the number of stops and the route chosen. Clients are sensitive to these differences.

Figure 16. Drivers of satisfaction



² The identification of drivers is often done using a statistical technique called multiple regression. This is not appropriate for the present data because client ratings are skewed strongly to the "satisfied" end of the scale. Logistic regression was used instead, contrasting those who rated their overall satisfaction at 5 out of 5 with those who rated satisfaction at anything less.

For taxis, the degree of care and support offered by operators has the major impact on client satisfaction. This is consistent with client comments that taxi operators vary in the help that they provide. Getting to the destination in a reasonable amount of time may be less of an issue with taxis because the route and time is more predictable than a bus route and time.

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 – if a significant number of operators drove recklessly, this item would very likely become a driver. The fact that this or some other measure is not a driver may simply mean that the large majority of clients have no problem with the present situation.

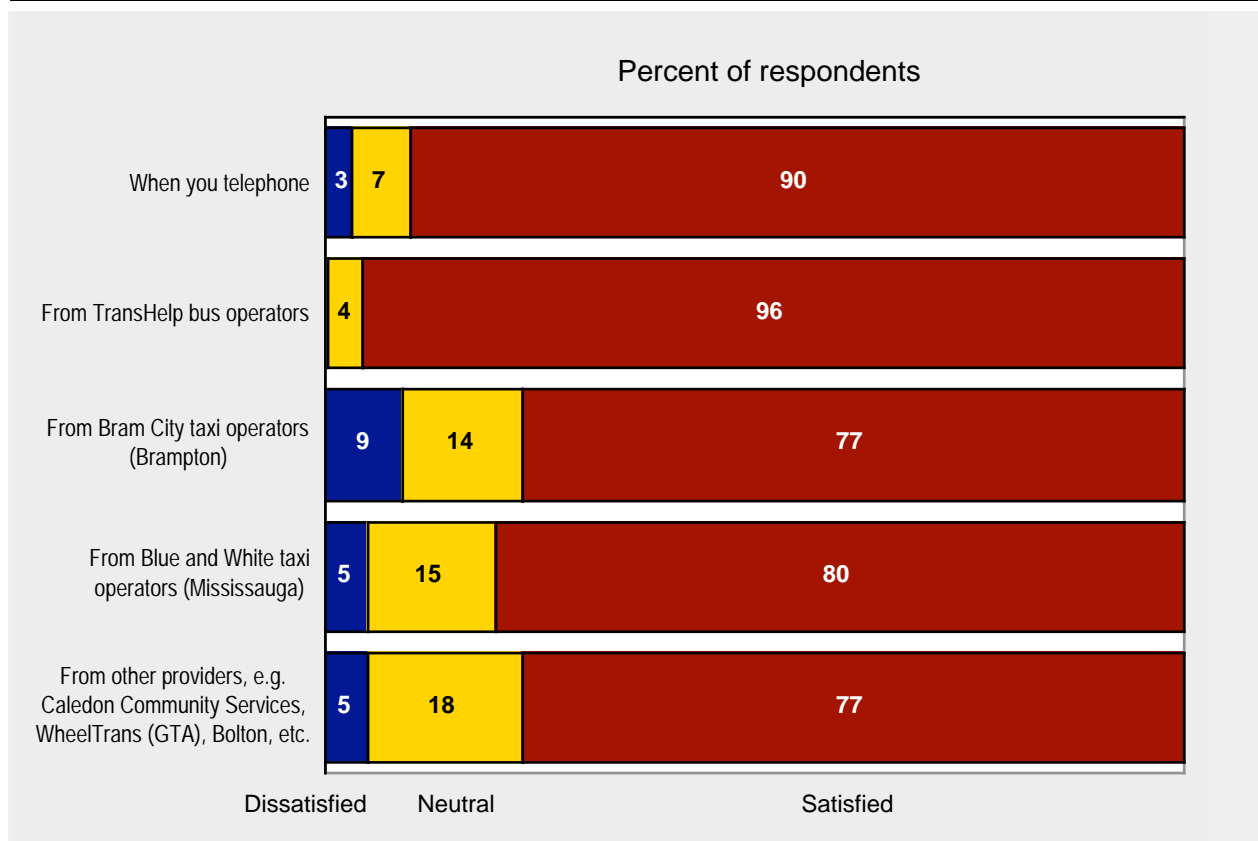


4. OVERALL SERVICE QUALITY

Following the questions about the most recent trip, clients were asked about TransHelp service in a more general sense.

Clients rated TransHelp's telephone service very highly. 90 percent of clients said that they were satisfied with the telephone service. Although the majority of clients were satisfied with the different transportation options, only the scores for TransHelp bus operators were above 90 percent. The other three groups scored between 77 and 80 percent satisfied.

Figure 17. Satisfaction with the quality of service that you get..., (percentages)



General satisfaction measures, 2005-2008

Two of the general satisfaction measures – satisfaction with TransHelp bus operators and with Bram City Taxi operators – show a statistically significant increase from 2005 to 2008. Changes in the other measures are not statistically significant.

Table 6. Satisfaction with the quality of service that you get..., (averages)

Service	Average satisfaction score	
	2005	2008
When you telephone	8.5	8.7
From TransHelp bus operators *	8.8	9.2
From Bram City Taxi operators (Brampton) *	7.0	7.7
From Blue and White Taxi operators (Mississauga)	7.6	8.0
From other providers, e.g. Caledon Community Services, Wheel-Trans (GTA), Bolton, etc.	8.3	7.8

* Statistically significant change, 2005 – 2008

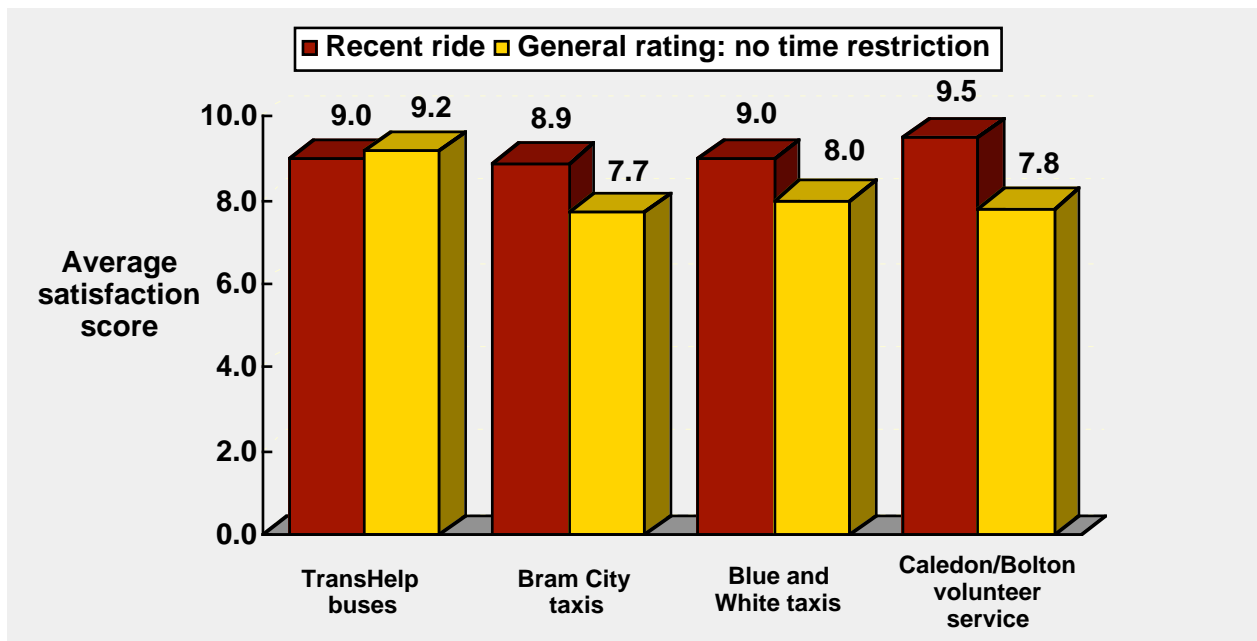
Comparison of the recent ride and the general measures

Figure 18 compares client ratings of the recent ride with their overall rating of each service.

- The rating of the recent experience is the better indicator of current performance, as it focuses on fresh memories of a specific event.
- The overall rating is sometimes called “service reputation”, and may be coloured by more distant memories, and by information that the client gets from other sources, for example comments made by acquaintances.

Generally, service reputation scores are the lower of the two. Service reputation scores can reflect attitudinal baggage and stereotypes that are far removed from current experience. The high reputation score for TransHelp buses is a positive sign.

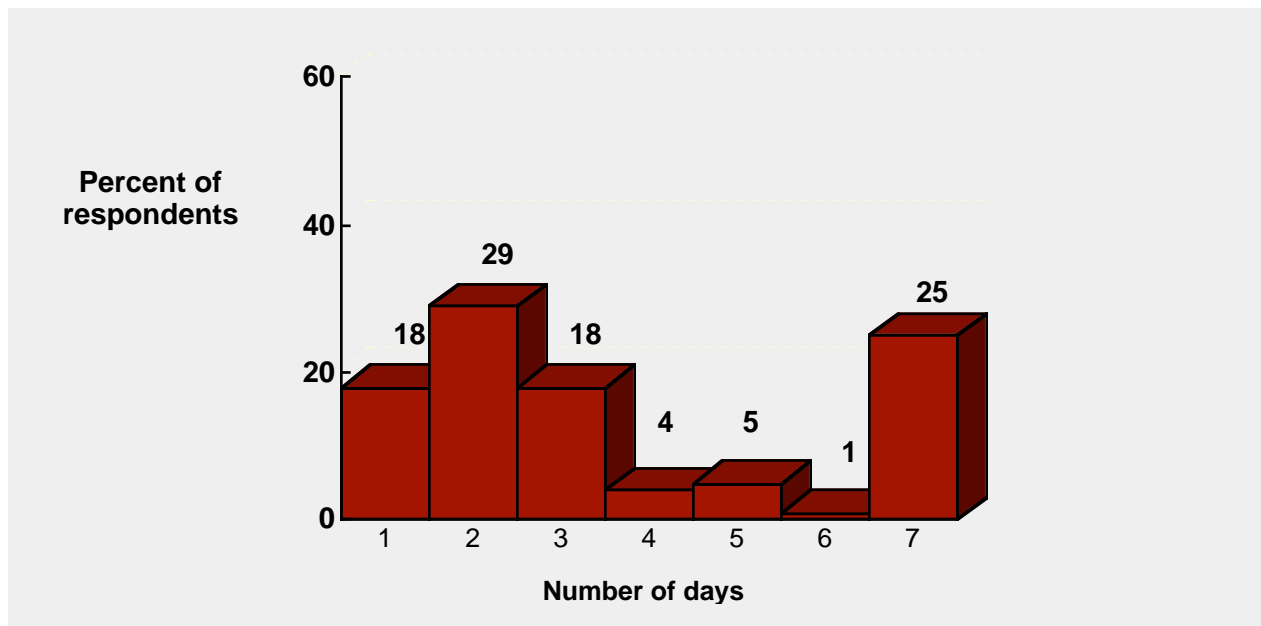
Figure 18. Recent versus more distant experience



5. SCHEDULING

21 percent of TransHelp clients have a standing order and do not call for most rides. The other 79 percent order rides in advance. 65 percent of clients book their rides three days or less in advance. 25 percent of clients normally order their ride seven days in advance.

Figure 20. How many days in advance do you normally book a trip?



Note: Results exclude standing orders.

TransHelp requires people to book by 2:00 pm the business day before they request a ride. 83 percent say that this meets their needs.

There is a one-hour minimum time between drop-off and pick-up. 19 percent of TransHelp clients said that this causes them difficulty, while the other 81 percent said that it does not.

Standby bookings

Forty-four percent of clients stated that they had attempted to make a standby booking in the past year. The major reason for standby rides is medical needs, followed by social/recreational activities.

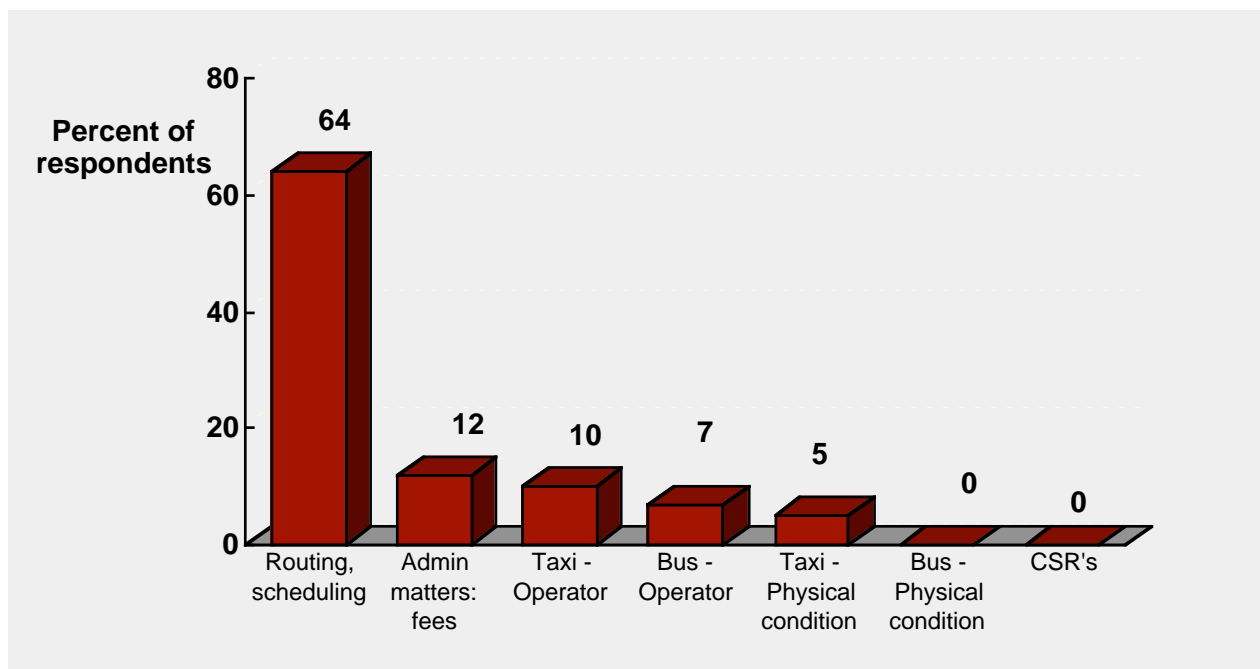
Table 7. Standby bookings

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

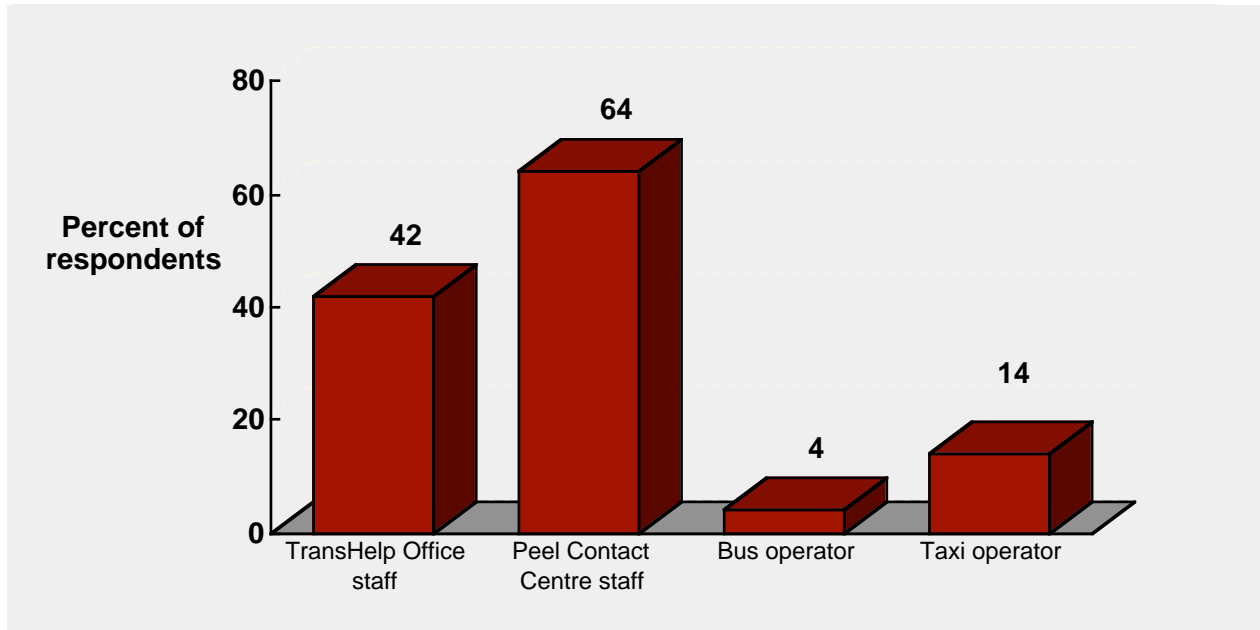
Eighteen percent of TransHelp clients made a complaint or suggestion to TransHelp in the last six months. The majority (64 percent) said that their complaint/suggestion was about routing or scheduling issues. This includes late or early pickups and no-shows. Another 12 percent said that they made a complaint/suggestion about administrative matters, such as fees.

Figure 21. About what did you contact TransHelp?



Sixty-four percent of those who made a complaint or suggestion contacted the Peel Contact Centre. 42 percent contacted the TransHelp Office. These were the two main contact points.

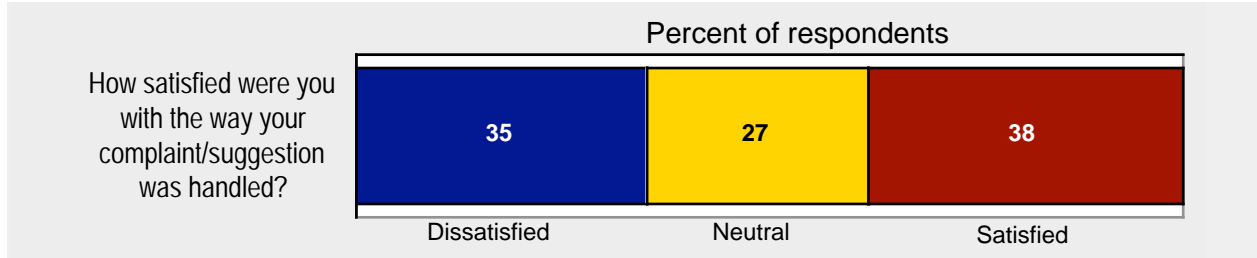
Figure 22. Who did you complain/make your suggestion to?



Note: Percentages add to more than 100 as respondents were able to select multiple contact points.

Satisfaction with the way that the complaints were handled is low. Over one third said that they were dissatisfied with the way their complaint/suggestion was handled. Average satisfaction scores for the handling of complaints were 4.4 in 2005 and 4.9 in 2008. The difference is not statistically significant.

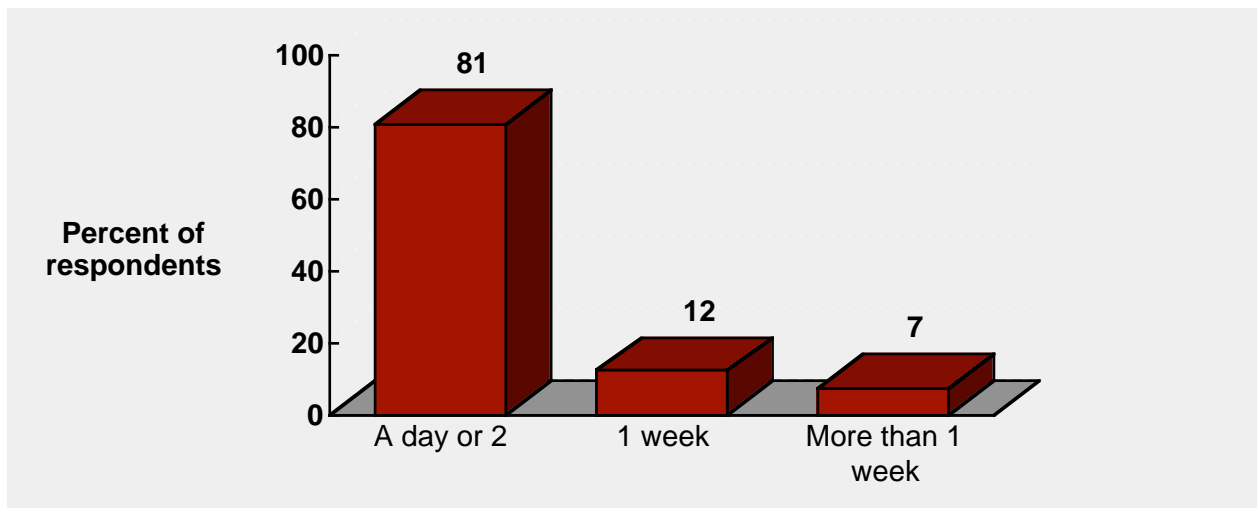
Figure 23. Satisfaction with the way that your complaint (or suggestion) was handled: percentages



Sixty-four percent of clients said that TransHelp got back to them with a response. For this group, the average rating of satisfaction with the complaint process was 5.9 out of 10. For the 36 percent who received no response, satisfaction was just 2.6. The difference is statistically significant.

For those who did get a response, most received their response within a day or two (81 percent, while 19 percent had to wait up to a week or longer). The time taken to respond also affects satisfaction. The average score is 6.4 out of 10 for those who received a response with a day or two, and 4 out of 10 when the response took longer.

Figure 24. How long did it take for TransHelp to respond to your complaint/suggestion?



Selected comments on Handling of Complaints

My daughter's bus did not arrive at home on time, it ended up being an hour and a half late due to a breakdown, however nobody thought to call to inform us of this situation. There should be certain times, where TransHelp should notify people of an emergency. They did not recognize the importance of my complaint and certainly did not respond immediately. There have been other complaints that I have made, however they did respond within a reasonable time frame. (Mississauga)

I have difficulty standing for more than 10 minutes to wait for the bus. The driver told me that he would pass this information on to his supervisor. I have remained quiet because I am grateful for my ride. I cannot say anything against the service. Where would I go to get a ride? (Brampton)

From past experience I have found that complaining to TransHelp is a waste of time. (Mississauga)

I like that I can phone and tell them how I feel about the service and they always are very understanding and listen to me. (Mississauga)

In general, I feel that they need to improve their procedures to respond to people more quickly, and to provide more consideration to that person's feelings and needs. (Mississauga)

I called to complain about them not picking me up at the correct door. They never responded to my complaint and I cannot be sure that they have communicated this, so it still remains a concern they will pick me up at the proper spot. (Brampton)

I called in July with a complaint about the way a driver spoke to me, so I was transferred to the appropriate person. I explained the details, however to date I have never heard back from them. I am extremely disappointed with the entire experience, and the way it was handled. (Brampton)

They've called me to ask about the issue but then they don't get back to me. I want to know that they are doing something to resolve these situations. (Brampton)

If you have a complaint, I would like TransHelp to respond faster than one week. (Mississauga)

In the last two weeks a problem occurred with our schedule being changed for no reason. We were away for a while but when we came back I called to reinstate our regular schedule but they added additional trips. This was very frustrating. I've called the office to complain and they say they'll get back to me but they don't call. The accounting person has voice mail but you never hear from her. I want to know that our account is not being deducted for rides we never requested. (Brampton)

They apologized and they did reverse the charges eventually. (Mississauga)

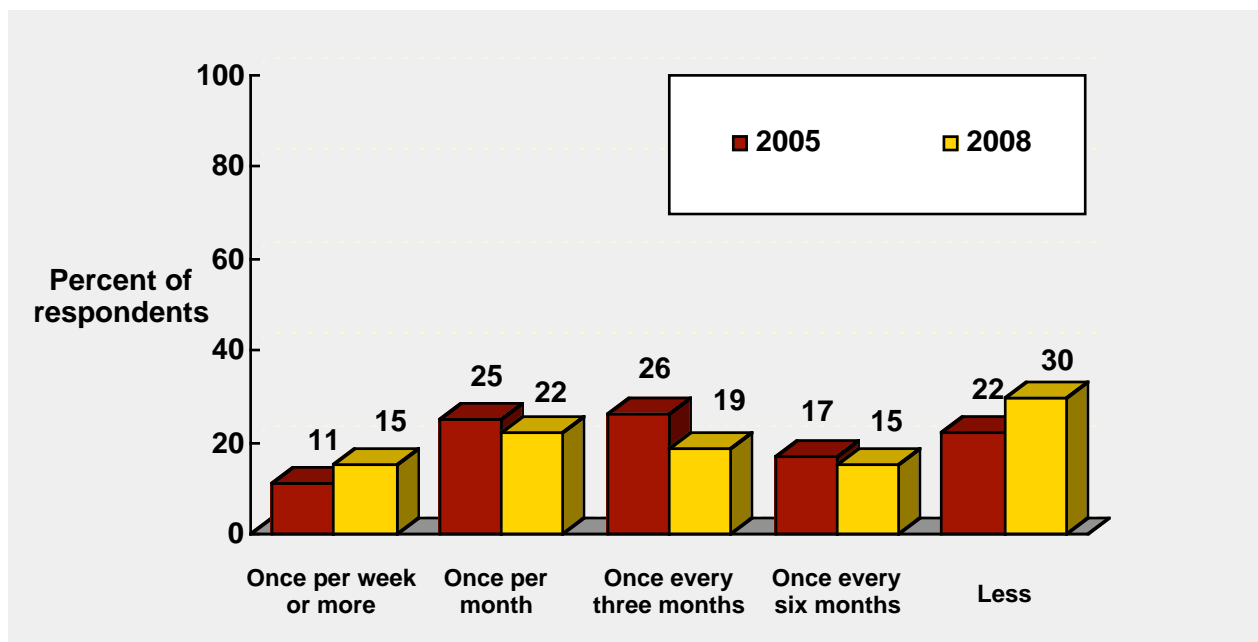


7. USE OF OTHER TRANSIT SYSTEMS

Fifteen percent of TransHelp clients said that they sometimes transfer to or from a neighbouring system such as Wheel-Trans in Toronto. Figure 25 shows the frequency with which clients transfer.

Neither the number of clients who transfer nor the frequency of transferring have changed from 2005.

Figure 25. How often do you transfer?



Results are for the 15 percent of respondents who report making transfers to neighbouring systems. Basing the percentages on all respondents would produce lower figures. In 2008, for example, 22 percent of those who transfer do so about once a month. This represents 22% times 15% of all TransHelp clients – i.e. about 3 percent of all clients.

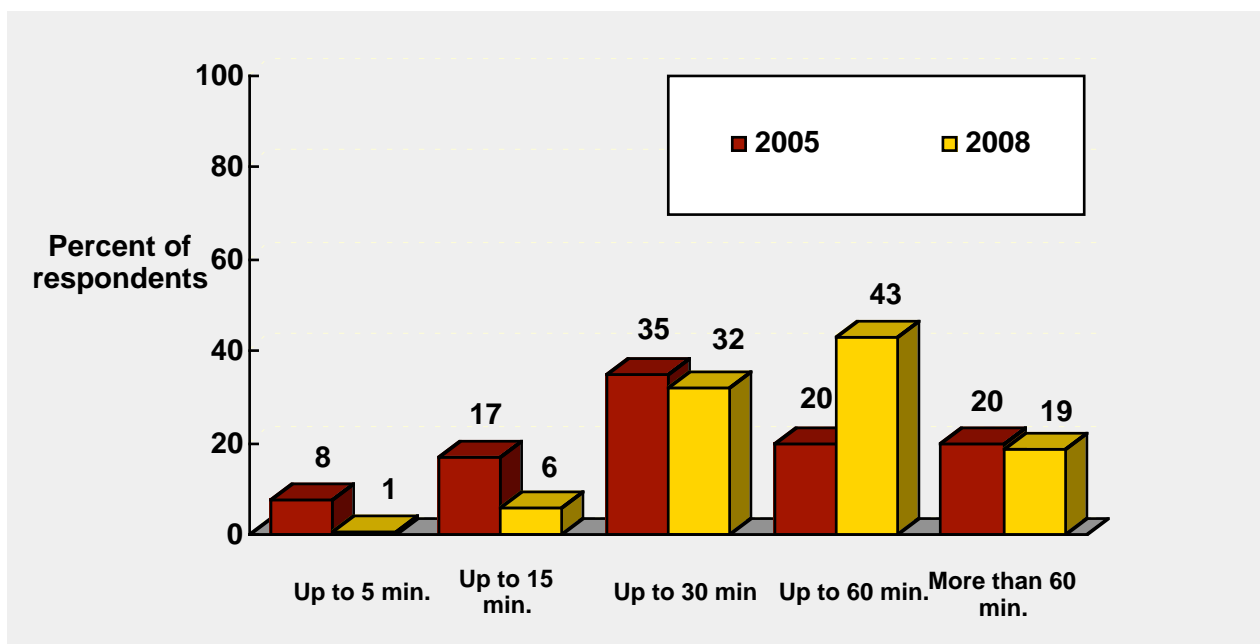
Typical wait times when transferring

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 percent in 2005 to 62 percent in 2008.
- The proportion who waited 15 minutes or less decreased from 25 percent in 2005 to 7 percent in 2008.

Results for 2005 and 2008 differ significantly.

Figure 26. When you transfer between systems, what is the typical wait time?



Results are for the 15 percent of respondents who report making transfers to neighbouring systems.

Acceptable wait times when transferring

Clients who use other systems were asked what they considered an acceptable wait when transferring. While there is some apparent change from 2005 to 2008, the difference is not statistically significant.

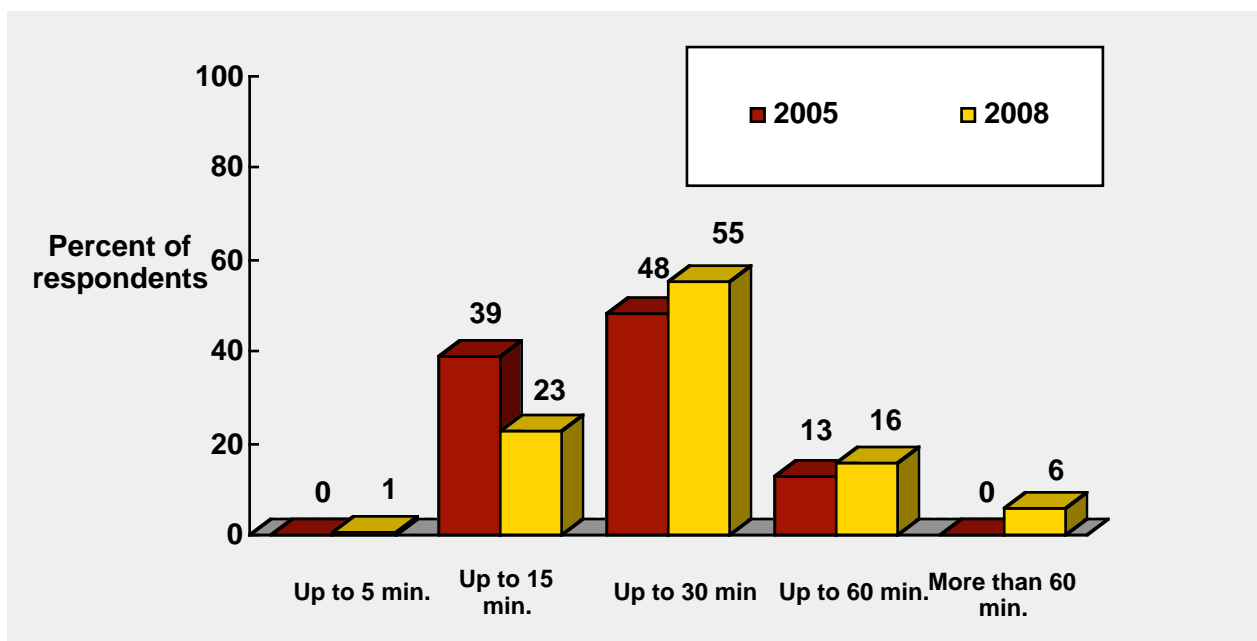
In general, the acceptable wait times are shorter than what clients actually experience. For 2008, for example:

- 24 percent find 15 minutes or less acceptable, while just 7 percent report waiting 15 minutes or less.
- 6 percent find 60+ minutes acceptable while 19 percent report waiting this long.

Comparing the typical and acceptable wait times directly:

- 6 percent of clients who transfer say that their typically wait time is shorter than what they consider acceptable;
- 37 percent of clients say that their typically wait is about what they consider acceptable;
- 57 percent of clients say they typically wait longer than what they consider acceptable.

Figure 27. When you transfer between systems, what is an acceptable wait time?

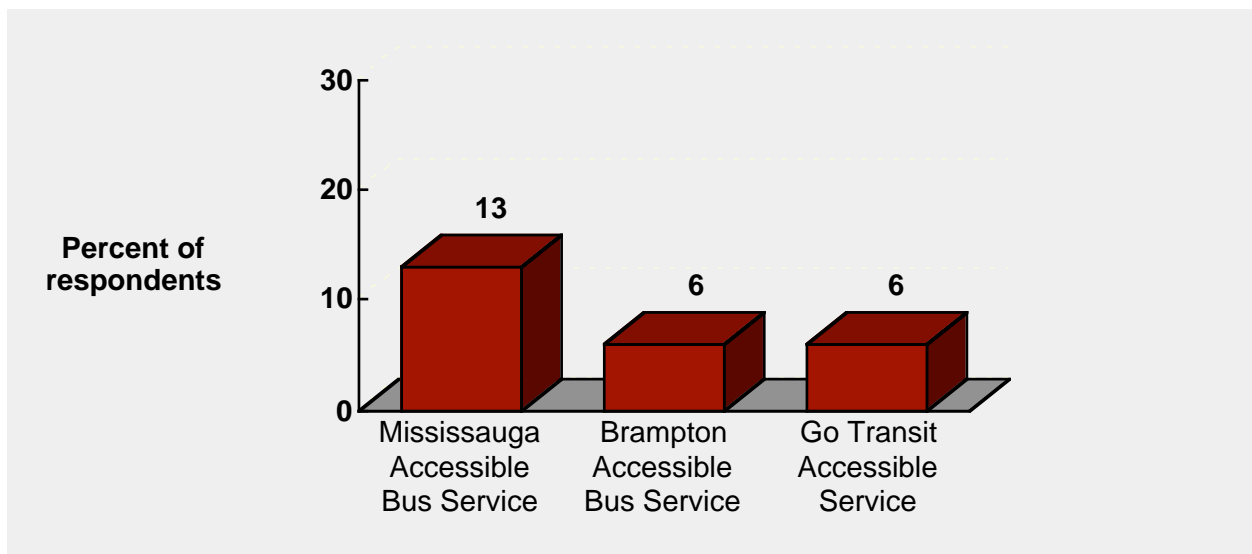


Results are for the 15 percent of respondents who report making transfers to neighbouring systems.

Use of other accessible systems

Fifteen percent of all TransHelp clients report using one or more of the three local accessible transit systems in 2008 (Figure 28).

Figure 28. In the past 6 months have you used...?



Selected comments on Transferring between Systems

If TransHelp tells me they are going to come and pick me up at 9:00 am so I can meet Wheel-Trans for 9:30 they do not need to send a taxi just for me at 8:00am. This is too early to arrive at the station and I have to wait for over one hour for Wheel-Trans. (Mississauga)

I think more people would make use of transferring between neighbouring systems if it was improved. TransHelp and Wheel-Trans don't work well together so you try to avoid it. (Mississauga)

There is no dialogue between systems. It appears no one cares. Also Wheel-Trans only waits 5 minutes, so you have to plan accordingly and allow a lot of time so people end up waiting for hours. (Mississauga)

They need to have somewhere for us to wait for Wheel-Trans, because elderly people can't wait outside in the cold and if you wait inside the hospital at the lounge, then you can't see the TransHelp bus. TransHelp should arrange something with Queensway Hospital, maybe they can place a bench just inside the hospital doors. (Mississauga)

They don't give you a time for drop off so you don't know when you'll be able to make a connection. Wheel-Trans tells you not only when you'll be picked up, but also when you'll be dropped off. (Brampton)

TransHelp is definitely more flexible - if you're running late, they are helpful in waiting for you however other systems don't do that. (Brampton)

I am grateful for the transportation from CCS to Wheel-Trans, so it's okay to wait for as long as it takes. (Bolton)

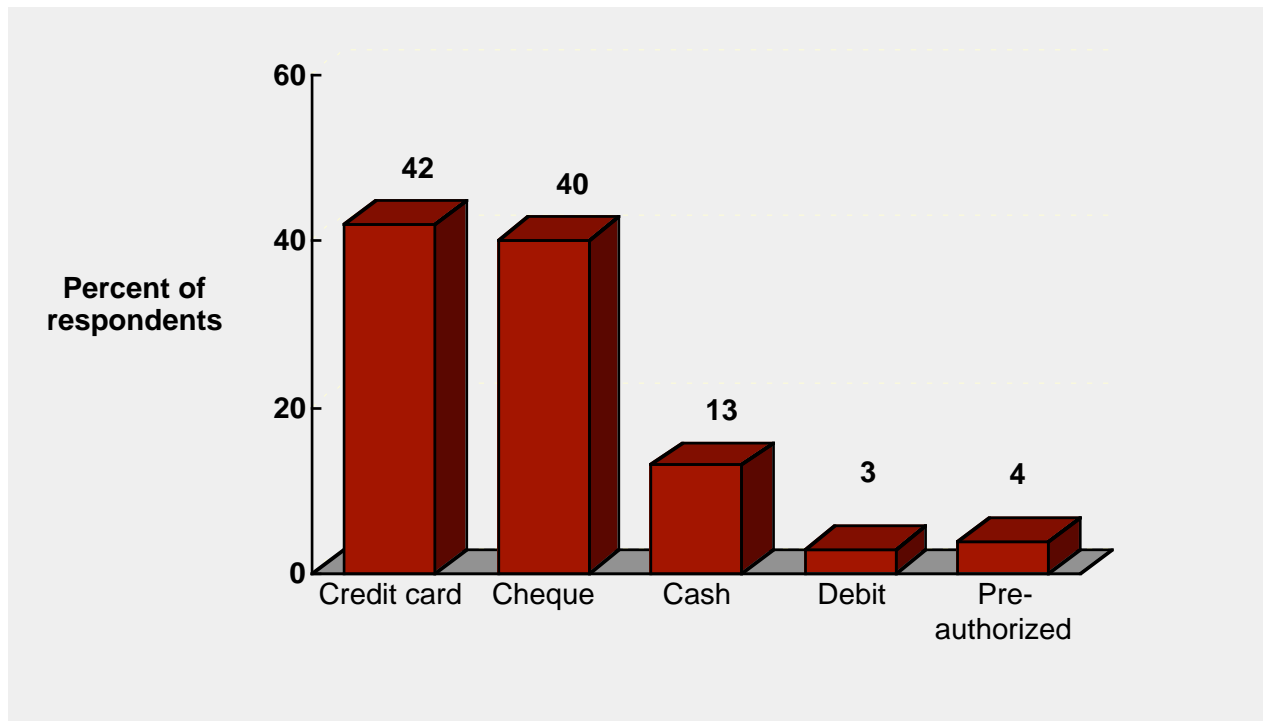
It is very difficult to wait for your transfer. You are so afraid that you are going to miss your connection. You are afraid to use the washroom incase the taxi comes while you are in the washroom. (Toronto)



8. PAYMENT

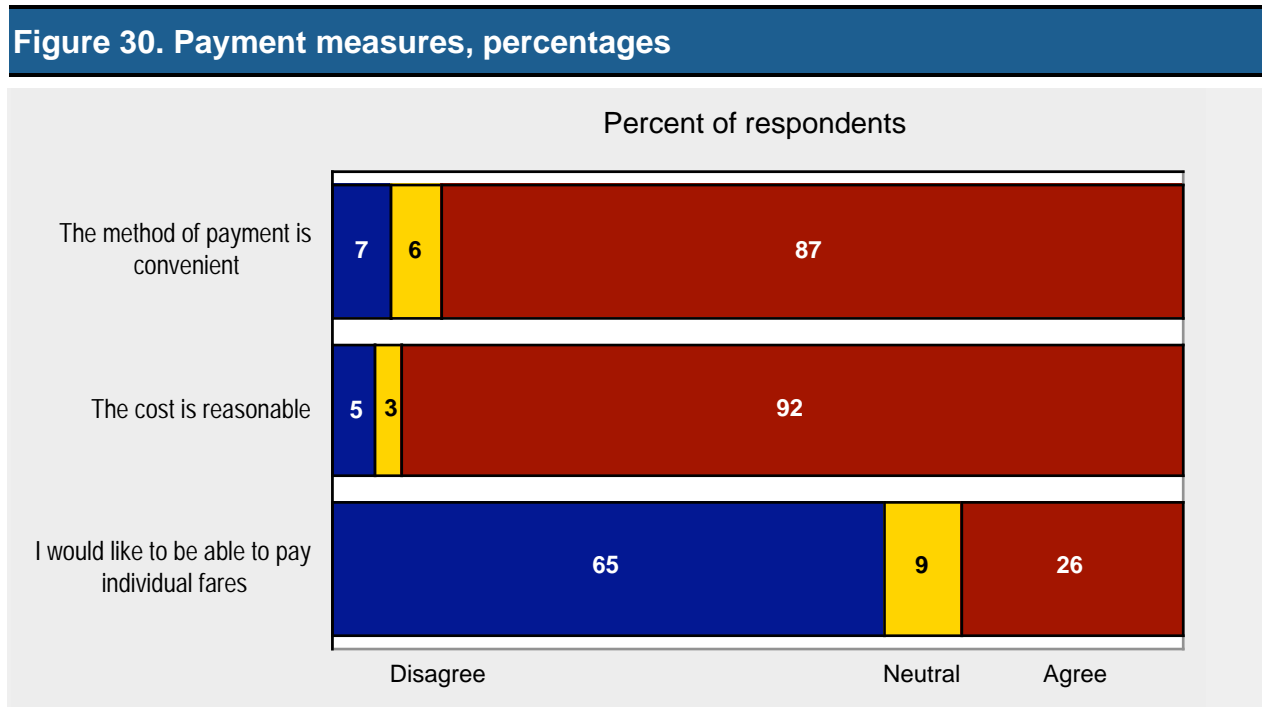
Most TransHelp clients pay by credit card or by cheque. Thirteen percent say that they pay cash.

Figure 29. How do you usually pay for TransHelp rides?



Note: Percentages add to more than 100 as respondents could select multiple payment options.

Clients generally agreed that the present method of payment is convenient and that the cost is reasonable. About one-quarter support the idea of being able to pay individual fares (Figure 30).



Average agreement scores for these measures did not change to a statistically significant degree from 2005 to 2008 (Table 8).

Table 8. Payment measures, averages

Dimension	Average agreement score	
	2005	2008
The method of payment is convenient	9.0	8.6
The cost is reasonable	9.3	9.0
I would like to be able to pay individual fares	3.5	2.9

Fifty-five percent of clients have heard about the MPASS. Of those people, 12 percent either currently or sometimes use the MPASS.

Selected comments on Payment issues

I have a problem with paying for my tickets. I don't have a chequing account, so I give a friend the cash and she goes to the office and pays with one of her cheques. I would like to be able to pay the driver for my ride. If I run out of money in my account I can't go to church this week. I worry that this might happen someday. (Mississauga)

I also find it a nuisance to have to phone in every month to confirm that we are continuing with the MPASS. I think it should be that you only have to phone in if you are **not** continuing on with it. (Mississauga)

I'd like to see payment available online through your bank. (Mississauga)

There is a very small window for booking the monthly pass. A couple of times we've just missed the cut-off, and then we have to pay day-by-day. It's fairly rigid and involves negotiation to get back onto the monthly pass. I have asked why they can't just put it on a regular credit charge until notified otherwise, but they have their rules. (Mississauga)

I would like them to change the way they handle payments for people that pay by credit cards. When you call to book a ride and they notice your account is low, they should be able to tell you and then bill your credit card right on the spot, and not send you to another department. It's very inconvenient to phone another department, who never answers their phones, and then call back to book your ride, they should just do it all at one time. (Brampton)

When we could give a cheque to the driver it was good now my son has to call them and tell them to take the money off of my credit card. I really do not like to pay this way I would like to give the driver a cheque. (Brampton)



9. SAFETY AND COMFORT

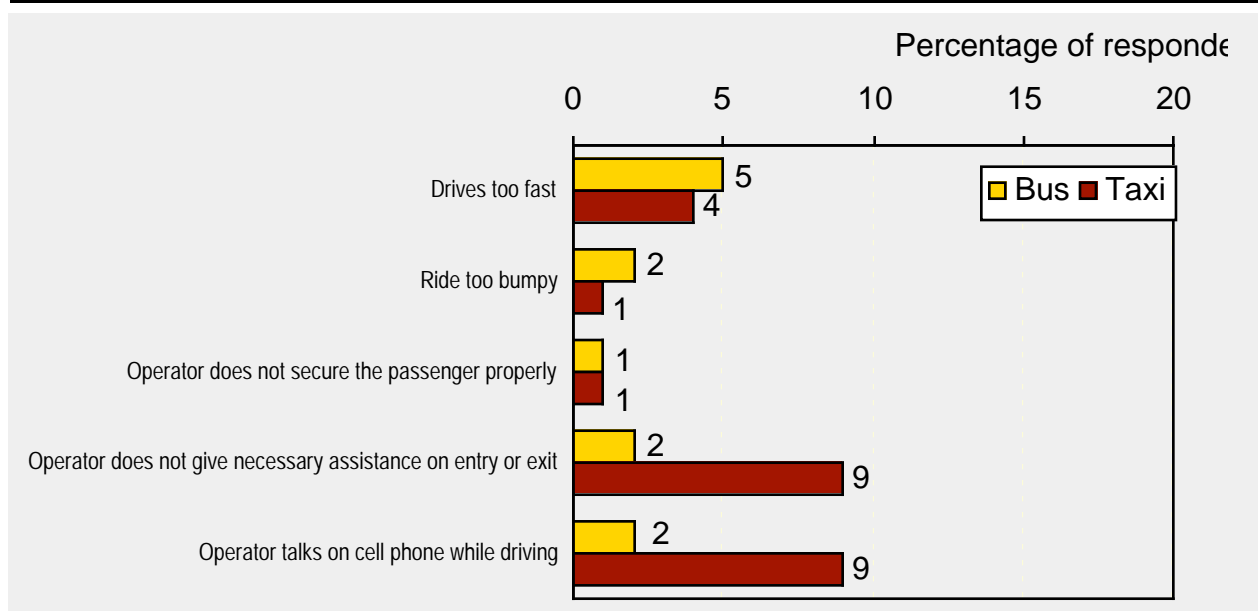
Concerns about bus and taxi operators

Clients who used TransHelp buses were asked if they had any of five concerns about the operators. Ninety-one percent reported no concerns, while nine percent reported one or more of the five issues, shown in Figure 31.

Among taxi users, 79 percent reported no problems while 21 percent registered one or more of the issues. The issues that differentiate taxi and bus operators are clearly:

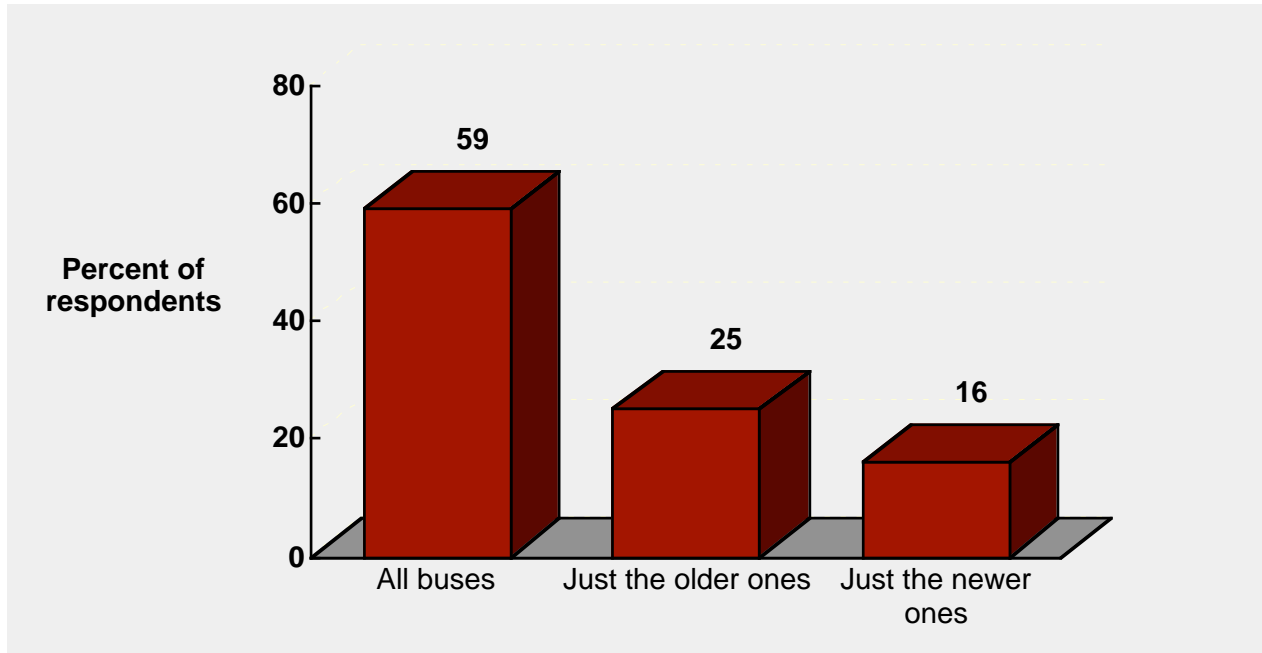
- Provision of assistance getting in and out;
- Use of cell phones while driving.

Figure 31. Concerns about bus and taxi operators



Eighteen percent of bus users said that they had concerns about the design of the buses. Of these, 59 percent said that their concerns extended to all buses.

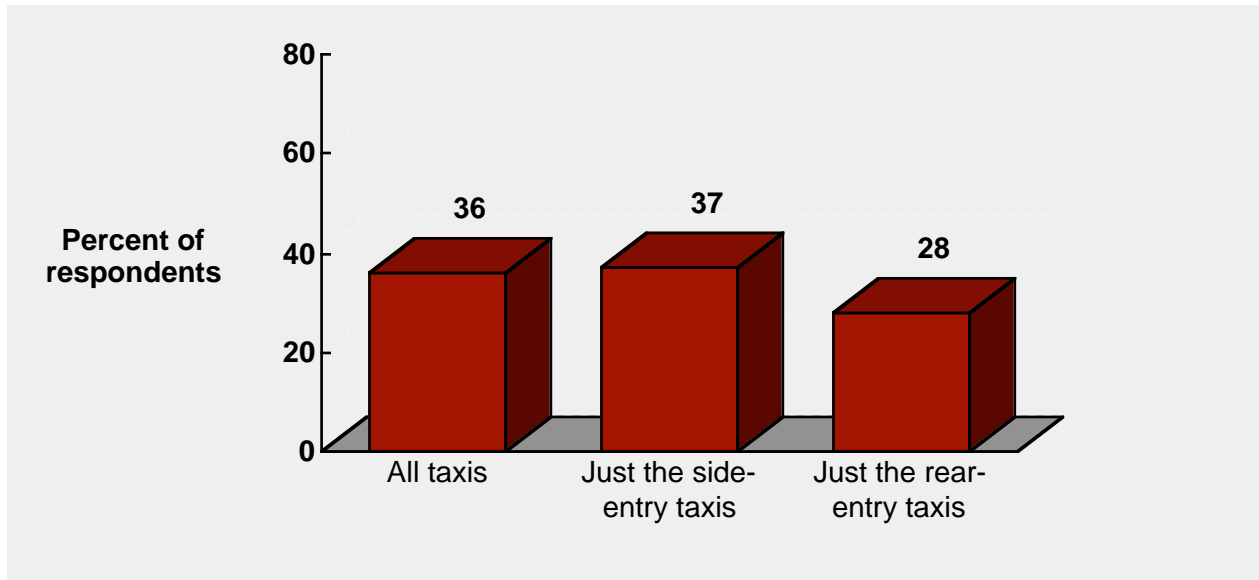
Figure 32. What type of buses do your concerns apply to?



Percentages are based on the 18 percent of respondents who have concerns about the design of buses.

Twenty-six percent of taxi users said that they have concerns about the design of the taxis. Of these clients, 38 percent said that their concerns applied only to the side-entry taxis and 28 percent had concerns only about the rear-entry taxis.

Figure 33. What type of taxis do your concerns apply to?



Percentages are based on the 26 percent of respondents who have concerns about the design of taxis.

Selected comments on Safety and Comfort

I would change the amount of time they keep me waiting on the bus. I have had an amputation of my toes and I need to keep my foot up so it is painful to have to be on the bus for a long period of time. (Mississauga)

I would like to only travel by taxi because with my back it is so uncomfortable travelling by bus. (Mississauga)

I would like to drive forward on the bus ramp rather than backward. Please, please I beg of you, change the policy. Please make an exception for me, because I drive in a small power chair. (Brampton)

The ride is so uncomfortable in the older buses, that I would like TransHelp to stop using them, and to provide more rides with the newer buses. (Brampton)

The Caledon bus is very small. There is not enough room for my wheelchair. (Bolton)

I don't like being at the back of the bus. I don't mind sitting behind the driver, but the back of the bus is just too noisy. (Caledon)

10. IVR, INTERNET, NEWSLETTER AND ELECTRONIC BOARD

Booking rides by IVR

An IVR is an Interactive Voice Responses system – an automated telephone system that allows the user to make requests, generally by pressing buttons on a touch-tone phone.

TransHelp’s IVR can currently be used only to confirm and cancel rides. In 2008, 37 percent stated that it would be useful to book rides on the IVR, compared to 31 percent in 2005. The change is not statistically significant.

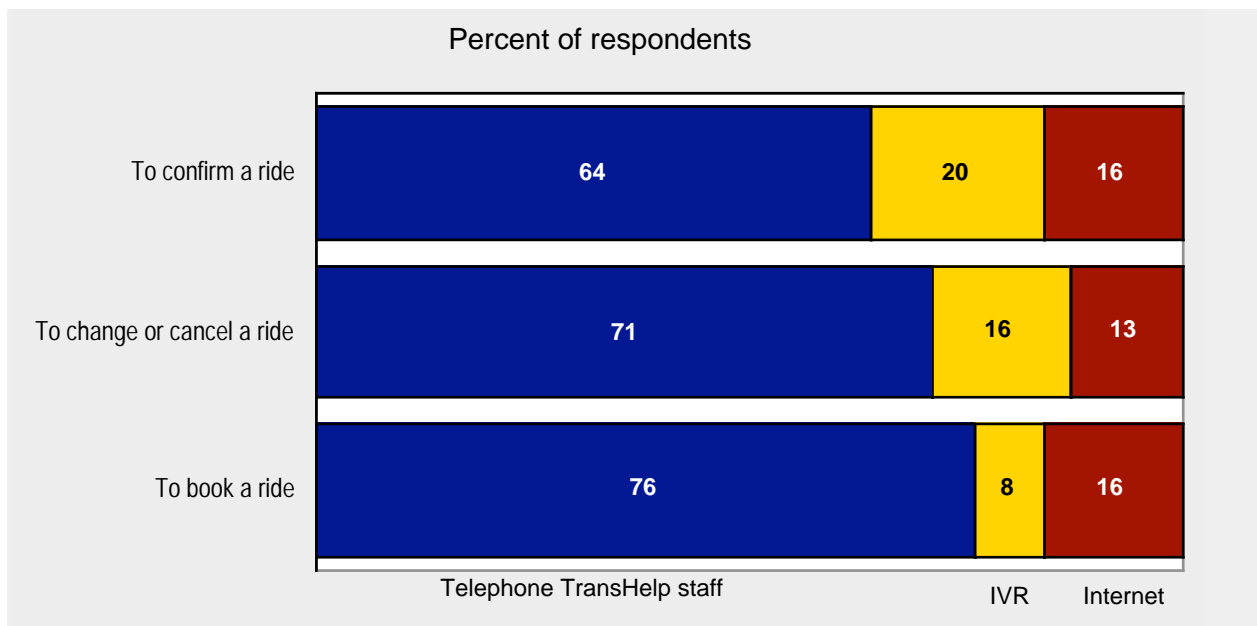
Use of the Internet

In 2008, 51 percent of respondents have Internet access where they live, compared to 44 percent in 2005. The majority of clients still prefer to use the telephone to confirm, change, cancel, or to book a ride.

2008 shows a significant increase in the proportion of clients who would like to:

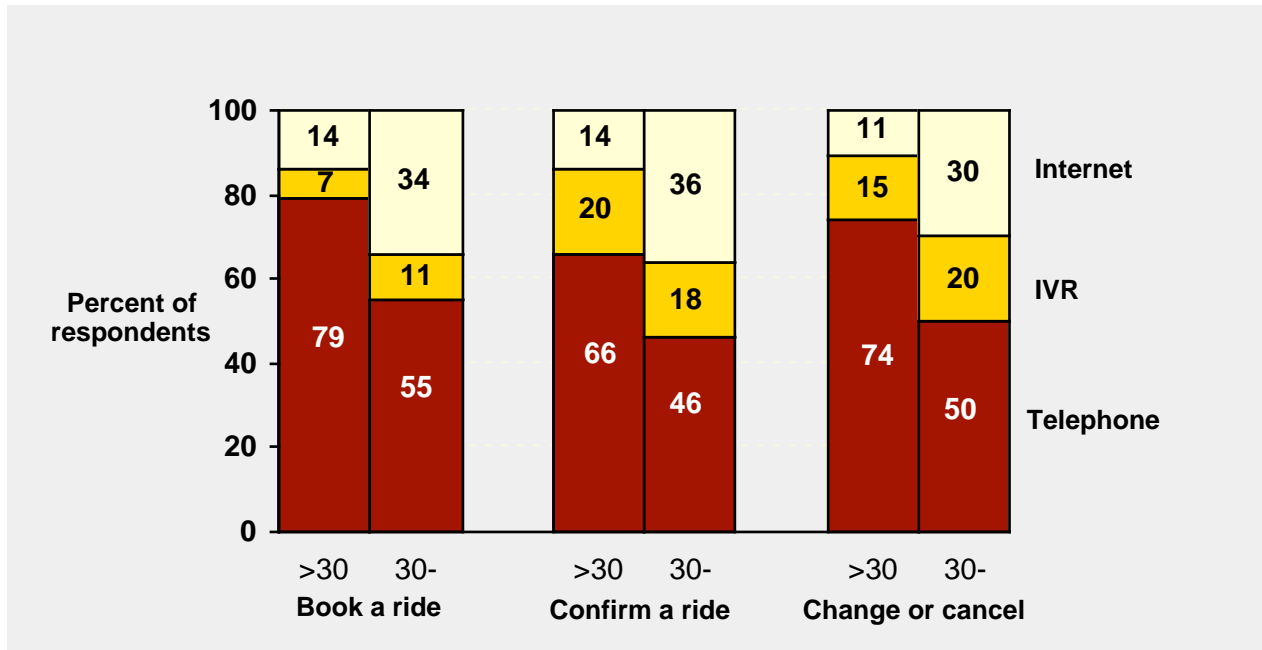
- Book a ride (now 16 percent, up from 11 percent in 2005)
- Confirm a ride (now 16 percent, up from 11 percent in 2005).

Figure 34. Preferred means of communication, 2008



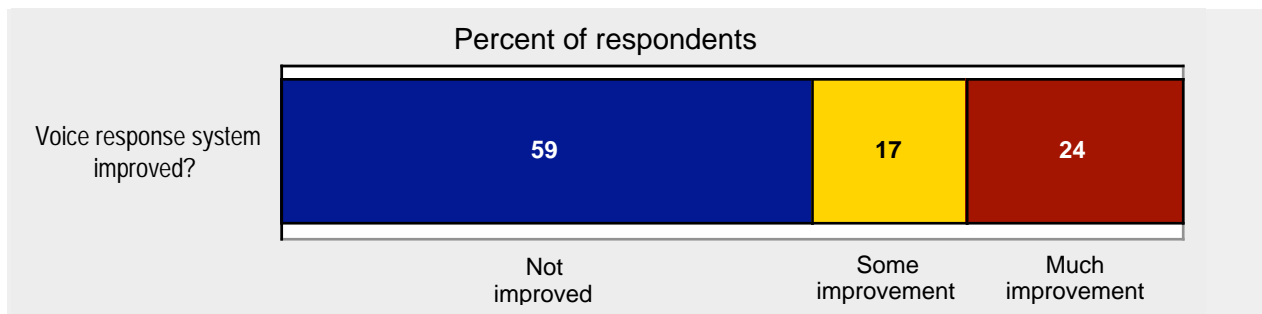
There is a distinct difference between clients who are 30 years or younger and those over 30 years of age. Approximately one-third of the younger group would use the Internet for any of the three purposes (Figure 35).

Figure 35. Preferred means of communication, 2008: by age



The majority of clients said that the IVR system has not improved over the last 2 years, although just under a quarter said that the IVR system had improved.

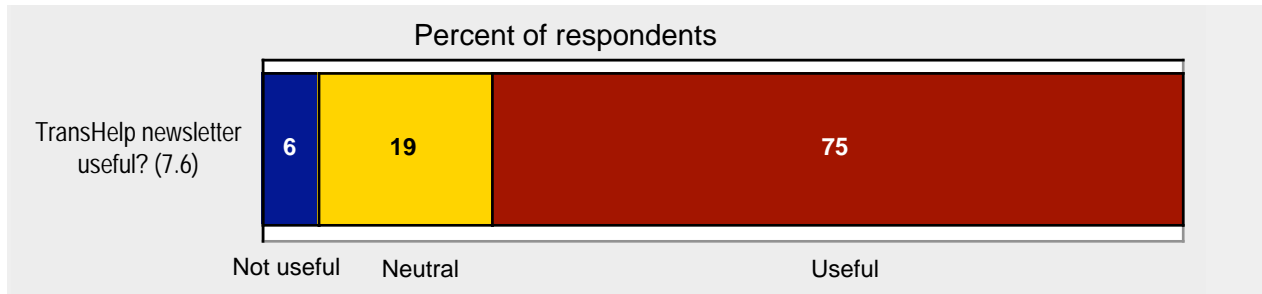
Figure 36. Do you think that the voice response system has improved over the last 2 years?, 2008



Newsletter

Forty-eight percent of respondents said that they have seen the current TransHelp newsletter. Those who had seen the newsletter were asked how useful they thought it was. Seventy-five percent said that the newsletter was useful, and only 6 percent felt that it was not useful. The average satisfaction score was 7.6 out of 10.

Figure 37. How useful is the TransHelp newsletter?

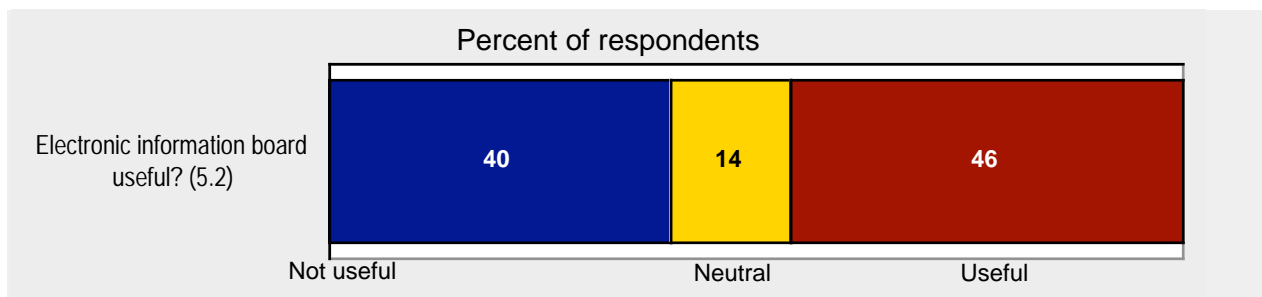


Note: The number in brackets is a mean rating, scaled from 0 to 10.

Electronic information board

Ten percent of respondents 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 percent thought that it was useful, while 40 percent said that it was not useful. The average score was 5.2.

Figure 38. How useful is the electronic information board?



Note: The number in brackets is a mean rating, scaled from 0 to 10.

Selected comments on the IVR

Give me one good reason why I should use the IVR when nine out of ten times the IVR system states the incorrect time. This is why I want a live operator. If you want to cancel one standing ride on the IVR system it will wipe out all of the other rides. Sometimes I have to wait on hold as long as 20 minutes in order to speak with a live operator. You can't tell me that every single operator is talking and no one is available for that length of time. (Mississauga)

I call twice to confirm my rides because the time changes between 4:00pm and the next day. (Mississauga)

I do not use the IVR. I am scared of using it. (Mississauga)

I want the IVR time to be more accurate, sometimes I call within an hour of my pickup time and the actual time they come is much later than the announced time. When the driver arrives he will tell me he was given a different time from the IVR. (Mississauga)

If you cancel your ride on the IVR it cancels both rides, your trip out and your return trip. You should be able to cancel one part of your trip using the IVR. (Mississauga)

The automated system is always a different time than what the driver has on his sheet. (Mississauga)

I do like the fact that they do have the IVR so you don't have to be on hold. It's a lot easier. (Brampton)

I don't really like the IVR system. If I press one wrong button I have to start all over again and I find that very frustrating. (Brampton)

I don't like the IVR system. I am legally blind, so I prefer to talk to a live operator. (Brampton)

The IVR system never works for me. I enter my date of birth and then it tells me that no matches are found. (Brampton)

I was using the bus in Caledon. One time I called the IVR in Mississauga to confirm my ride. I was given the wrong information on the IVR. When I spoke to the person in the Caledon office I was told not to use the IVR to confirm the Caledon bus. So from that time on I called the office and spoke to a live operator to confirm my trips. I never had any more difficulties with the process. (Caledon)

They should have fewer recording on the IVR system when I am call in a few times a week and I have to listen to the same information over and over. The system should be simple and quick not so many recordings. (Mississauga)



Selected comments on the Internet

If they offered Internet service I would be able to use the service 24-7. I have never been able to use the IVR system. (Mississauga)

I would strongly encourage Internet booking, confirming, etc... An alternative would be good when you can't reach a live person. (Mississauga)

Can I please ask TransHelp not to move the service to the Internet because there are so many people like myself who can not afford a computer. This service is for the disabled and a lot of elderly people who at this stage would not be able to adapt to computer service. (Mississauga)

Regarding the use of Internet for booking and confirmation, that would be good provided they keep in email contact with me if there are any changes and email to confirm a booking. (Mississauga)

I'd like more convenient ways to schedule, such as the Internet and I'd like assurance that I'll get picked up on my confirmed schedule. (Bolton)

The Wheel-Trans system can now be booked on the Internet and I just love it. The TransHelp system should offer the Internet. (Toronto)

Selected comments on the Electronic Information Board

My seat was right beside the information board, so it was too awkward to turn myself to see anything on it. (Mississauga)

The dot screens (information board) cause seizures. I have no choice how she is oriented in the bus, so if the board is operating when I get on, I will ask them to turn it off. (Mississauga)

There is such a short message on the information board, I wonder why bother, and there are problems with the unit. The screen droops and sometimes even unplugs itself. It's an interesting gimmick, but that's all and it probably cost a lot. (Mississauga)



11. HOURS OF SERVICE

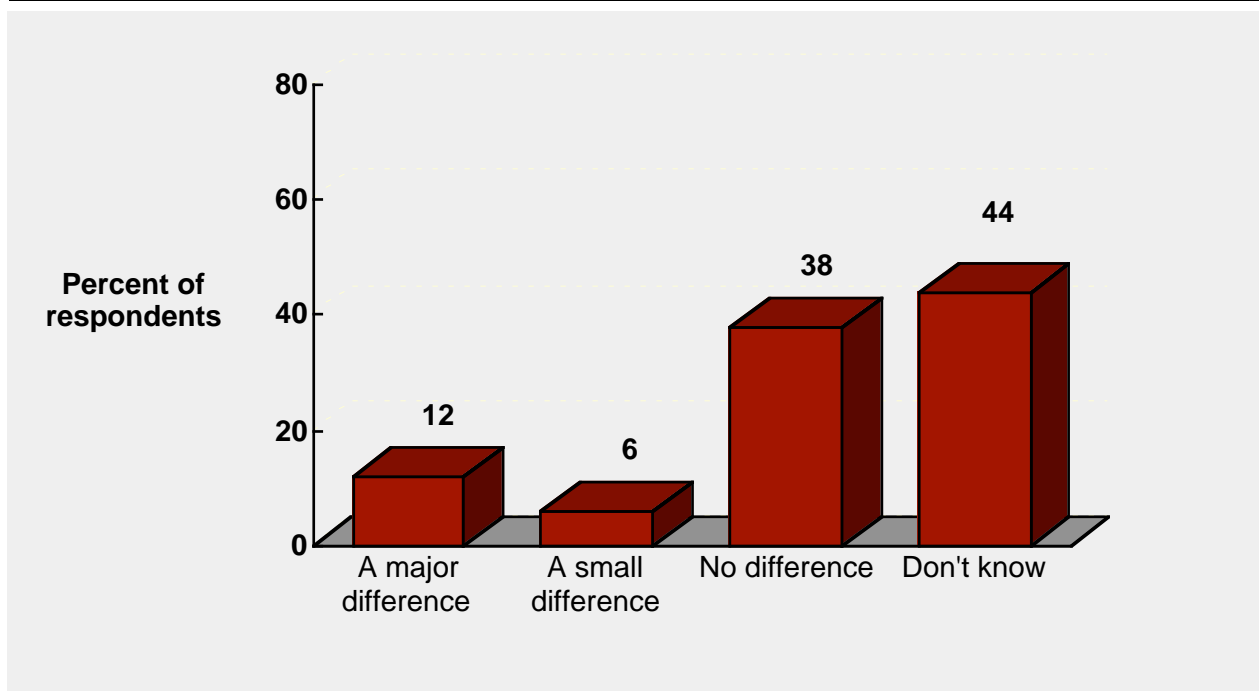
In 2008, 87 percent of clients stated that the present hours of service were sufficient, similar to the 88 percent in 2005. The other 13 percent of TransHelp clients in 2008 (12 percent in 2005) felt that they needed service later than 11:30 pm (Monday to Saturday) and 10:00 pm (Sunday).

In 2008, just over two-thirds of those who said that they need extended hours said that they need a later ride once or twice a month (2005 produced similar results). The remainder suggested that they might use extended hours from 3 to 12 times per month.

Since 2005, the window for booking and confirming was move 2 hours later, such that clients can book up to 2 PM weekdays and confirm after 4 PM.

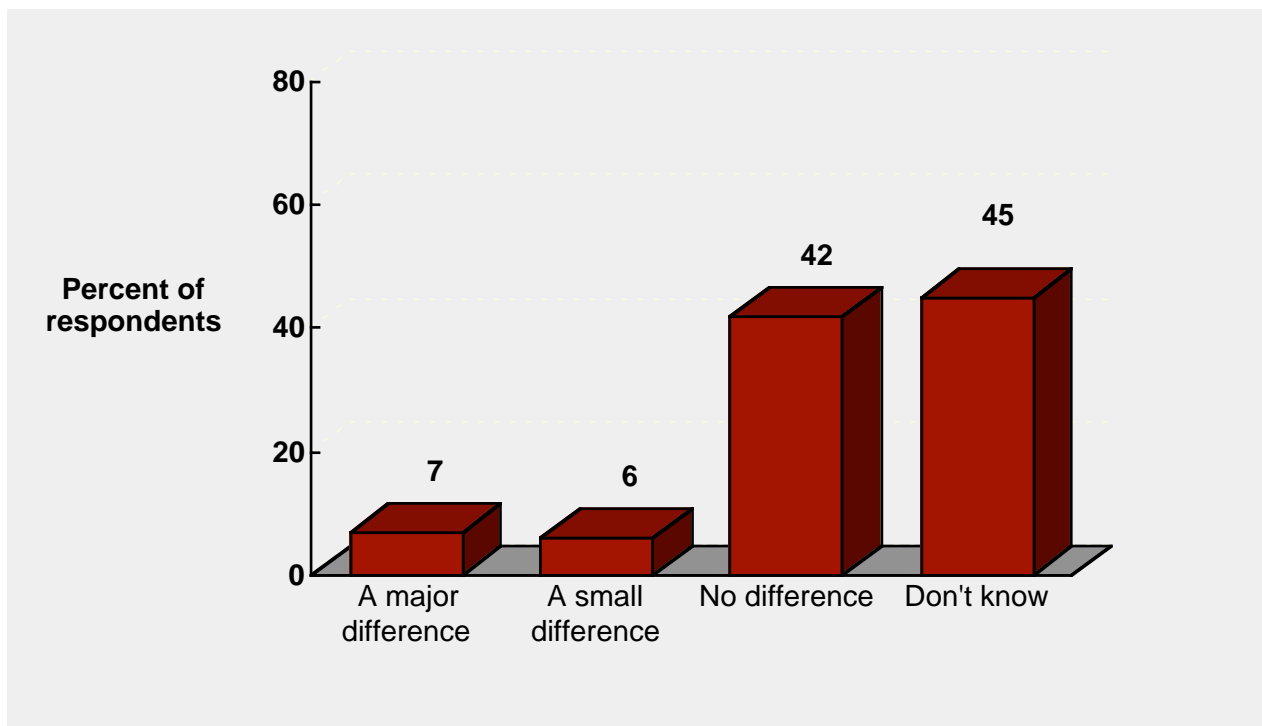
Clients were asked whether being able to book a ride until 2:00 pm the day before made a difference to them. Eighty-two percent said that they didn't know or that it made no difference. For 12 percent, the change has made a major difference.

Figure 39. You can now book a regular ride up until 2:00 pm the day before. Does this change make a difference to you?



The parallel question about confirming a ride produced a similar response: advancing the window has made a difference to a minority of clients.

Figure 40. You can now confirm a ride for the next day from 4:00 pm. Does this change make a difference to you?



Weekend service

Thirty-four percent of clients report that they have used the weekend bus service. Eighty-six percent of these said that they had not experienced any difficulties booking a weekend bus ride, while 13 percent said that when they tried to book a ride, there were no rides available.



Selected comments on Hours of Service

I would like to see Trans Help run until 11:00 pm on Sundays and holidays. (Mississauga)

I would like the buses to run until at least 10:00 pm during the week. Don't tell me that the buses run until 11:30. In Brampton, the buses have to go back to the yard at 7:00 and then you're stuck with taxis, and in Brampton there is only one taxi, so if there is a group of people there is no way of all going at the same time. Someone will have to wait at least an hour. That's why people don't go out at night. (Brampton)

I wish that the Bolton bus had later service. I would like to go to my MS meeting in Bolton, but the bus stops running at 9 pm. I would need to be picked up after 9 pm. (Bolton)

My local bus in Caledon does not run at night. I have a meeting I would like to attend that ends at 9:30 pm and I can't attend because the bus stops at 6 pm. I wish the buses offered evening service and later service on the weekend. This year I didn't bother to go to the Caledon Fair because I would have to leave by 1:00 and it just wouldn't be worth the effort. (Caledon)



12. PATH FORWARD

Continuously building on TransHelp's very positive foundation

The 2008 TransHelp Client Satisfaction Survey shows that Peel's TransHelp can move forward confidently on a very positive foundation. The survey demonstrates the significant progress made by the TransHelp team since 2005, when the previous survey was conducted.

Firstly, the results of the survey show a high level of satisfaction among clients.

Secondly, the results show that each and every staff member is important to gaining and sustaining clients' satisfaction.

Finally, both quantitative data and qualitative information (namely client comments) are consistent in their messages. Listening carefully to, and acting intentionally on the views and voices of the clients, is key to continuous improvement in all areas of TransHelp.

Strengths

Strong client ratings indicate that many aspects of the service are going extremely well:

- Staff interaction with TransHelp riders, both on the phone and in person is one of the strongest elements of the service. The caring and kindness exhibited by staff carries through the entire client experience.
- Users of the TransHelp service feel protected and secure during their travel, which is an important aspect of their enjoyment of the journey.
- The cost of the service is considered by most clients to be very reasonable.
- TransHelp staff continually seek to upgrade the service to users and have made significant progress in a number of important areas during the last three years.

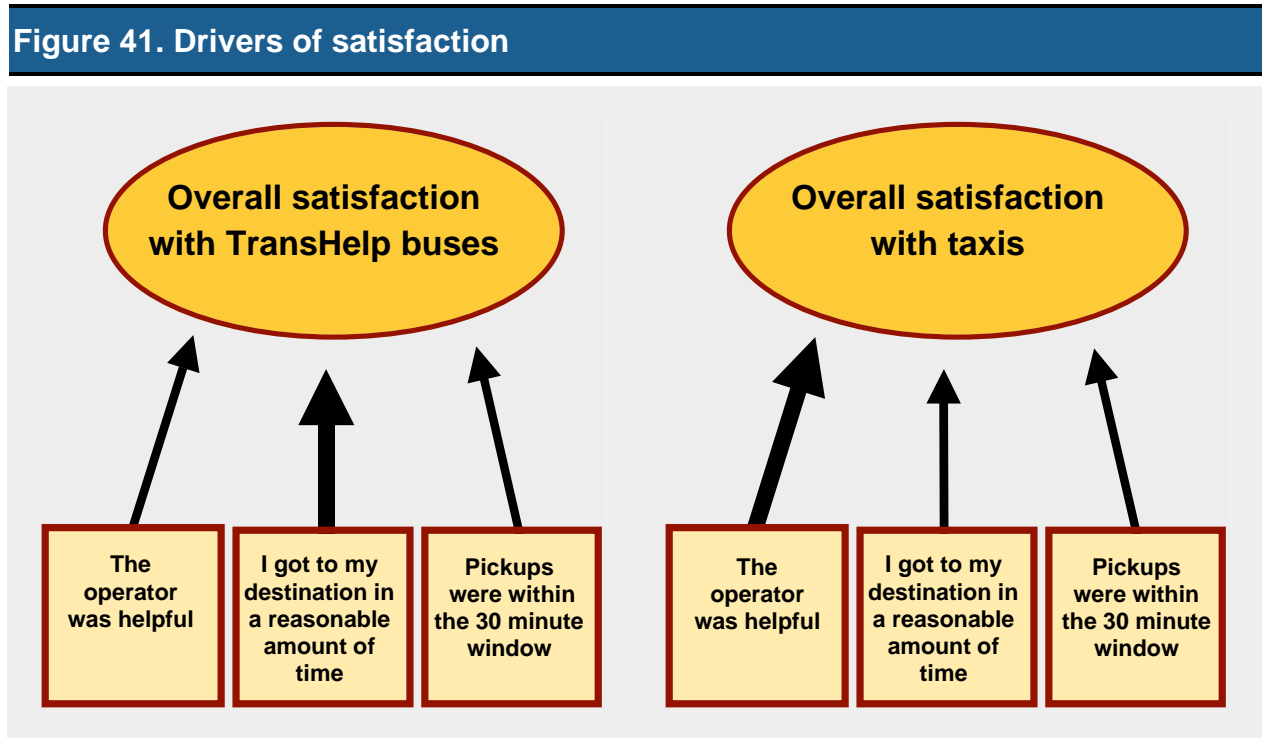
The essence of satisfaction

In rolling out the results, ERIN Research recommends that TransHelp emphasize the importance of the three drivers of client satisfaction. The same three drivers underlie satisfaction with both buses and taxis, but the emphasis is different.

For TransHelp buses, the element that most strongly differentiates satisfied from less satisfied clients is getting to the destination in a reasonable amount of time. With buses, a trip can take more or less time depending on the number of stops and the route chosen. Clients are sensitive to these differences.

For taxis, the degree of care and support offered by operators has the major impact on client satisfaction. This is consistent with client comments that taxi operators vary in the help that they provide. Getting to the destination in a reasonable amount of time may be less of an issue with taxis because the route and time is more predictable than a bus route and time.

While drivers have the largest impact on satisfaction, 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. The fact that this is not a driver simply reflects that fact that the large majority of clients find that operators are safe and courteous.



Other detailed recommendations

Amongst a host of positive and encouraging data and comments, there are, nevertheless, specific points raised by clients, some of which appear to be interlinked, that could be addressed by TransHelp:

Complaints

36% of clients who had complained received no response. TransHelp could examine the procedures for handling of complaints and communicate them to clients.

64% of complaints addressed the issues of routing and scheduling. TransHelp could look at these complaints from the perspective of the greatest usage types and examine the possibilities for some quick wins in terms of the 54% usage for medical appointments and the 25% usage for social/recreational purposes.

Wait times for transfers to other systems

While only 15% of the riding population transfers to other systems, it is an area for potential improvement. Although this is not wholly under the control of TransHelp, further communication to smooth transitions with other paratransit systems could be pursued.

Changes in the confirmed pick-up time

This issue received attention in the comments from riders, and was a source of anxiety for some: clients were checking their confirmed departure up to three or four times before the ride. If a booking needs to be changed, then a call back module to inform clients of the change would be desirable. Providing a reason for the change might reassure clients that the change was not arbitrary.

Hours of service

Telephone interviewers found that clients were unclear about hours of operation, especially in the Caledon/Bolton service area. Continual communication of the hours of operation in the newsletter is recommended.

Electronic Information Boards

In terms of effective communications, these boards are ill-positioned on the buses to provide maximum impact. Only 46% of the riders found them to be useful. Unless the positioning/relevance of the boards can be improved, it may be more effective to provide handouts that could be taken home and perhaps read by other caregivers.

Wrap-up

Peel TransHelp has demonstrated its commitment to acting on the results of its client survey. Clients strongly support the responsive, thoughtful and resourceful actions and practices TransHelp has instituted since the last survey in 2005.

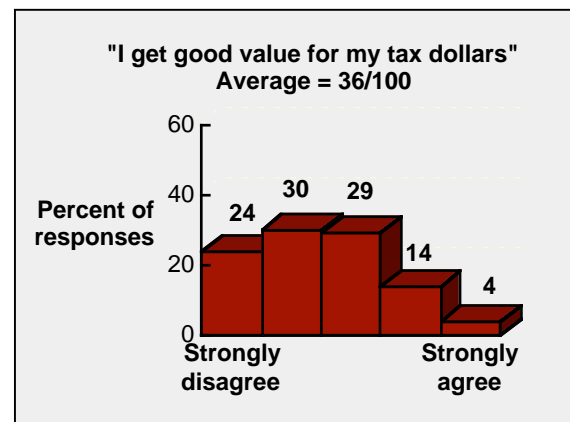
APPENDIX: STATISTICAL TERMS

Driver – A feature or element that has an important impact on an outcome. Drivers can be identified for satisfaction with channels, confidence, access, etc. A driver of satisfaction is a feature or 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 the overall satisfaction with that service will be high and conversely when scores on the drivers are low overall satisfaction will also be low. Since drivers identify the things that are most important to the users of the service they tell service managers where they should focus in order to get the biggest bang for their improvement efforts. Improvement strategies that are focused on strengthening performance on key drivers are highly effective.

Average scores and percentages

Many survey questions were set out as five-point scales, where a response of 1 means “Strongly disagree” and 5 means “Strongly agree”. In presenting these results, scores are expressed in the more intuitive scale of 0 to 10.

Responses to scaled questions are reported as “average scores”. These are simple arithmetic averages, for example, the average of the numbers 2, 2, 3, 1 and 4 is $12 \div 5$ or 2.5.



The average score is **not** the same as the percent of respondents who agree. In the example chart, the average score is 3.6 out of 10 while the percent in agreement is 18 (i.e., the 4 percent who strongly agree plus the 14 percent who agree).

Sample margin of error – A margin of error is frequently quoted in reports of survey results. The standard manner in which this is calculated assumes a two-choice question (i.e., response options such as “Yes“ and “No”) and a 50:50 distribution of responses between the options. Many – probably most – survey questions are not of this nature (e.g., there are more than two response options), and the “standard” margin of error does not apply in any exact sense. The “standard” margin of error is used by convention, but it is an approximation that should not be taken too literally in any research report.

The “standard” margin of error for the 2008 TransHelp study is ± 4.5 percent, 19 times out of 20.

The “standard” margin of error is only relevant to categorical data and does not apply at all to questions that use 5-point scales (e.g., “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree”). Margins of error can be calculated for these data, but they are not determined by sample size alone, depending also on the distribution of responses to each individual question. There is no single margin of error that applies to scaled results in general.