

**Ignatieff vs. Harper:
PM Outperforms Opposition Leader on Most Issues,
Especially Those Deemed Important by Business Panel**

**BDO Dunwoody Weekly CEO/Business Leader Poll
By COMPAS in *Canadian Business*
For Publication May 14, 2009**



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1.0 Overview

The CEOs and business leaders on the COMPAS panel were asked to rate the importance of seven policy issues and identify which leader—Stephen Harper or Michael Ignatieff—would handle each issue better. The good news for Harper is that he is seen as outperforming his rival on 5 issues to 2. The good news for Ignatieff is that he is seen as outperforming the Prime Minister on two issues that he appears to care much about, namely employment insurance reform and Quebec. The Liberal leader's success is nonetheless tempered by the fact that the business panel rates these two issues as far less important than the issues on which the PM is seen as excelling.

These are the key findings from this past week's Internet survey of CEOs and business leaders on the COMPAS panel. The weekly business survey is undertaken for *Canadian Business* magazine under sponsorship of BDO Dunwoody LLP.

2.0 Issues and Leaders

In the view of the panel, the three most important issues facing Canada are Canada-U.S. trade relations, managing the economy during the recession, and managing it after the global recovery sets in, as shown in table 2a. Harper is seen as outperforming his rival an average of 2.5:1 on these issues, as shown in table 2b.

Ignatieff is seen as especially strong with respect to managing relations with Quebec, on which he outperforms Harper almost 2:1. But this is seen as the least important of the 7 issues. Harper is seen as especially strong with respect to managing relations with the west, on which he outperforms Ignatieff 9:1. This issue is perceived as having middling importance.



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Table 2a: (Q1) Now that Michael Ignatieff is officially the Liberal party leader, we would like your thoughts on the most important issues facing Canada and how the Conservative and Liberal leaders compare. On a 7 point scale where 7 means a very important issue and 1, the opposite, please score the following issues.

	Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
Canada-U.S. trade relations	6.5	60	33	4	2	0	1	0	0
Managing the economy until the world gets out of the Great Recession	6.4	59	27	9	4	0	0	1	0
Controlling spending and taxation once the global and Canadian economies begin to recover	6.2	47	35	12	4	1	0	1	0
National security and protection of the country from terrorism	5.6	31	28	20	12	4	3	1	1
Ottawa's relations with the West	5.5	22	37	27	9	4	1	1	0
Reform of employment insurance	4.8	14	14	34	20	12	6	0	0
Ottawa's relations with Quebec	4.6	10	18	27	20	15	7	3	0

Table 2b: (Q2) Who would you pick to handle the issue better as Prime Minister?

	Harper	Ignatieff	DNK
Ottawa's relations with the West	82	9	10
National security and protection of the country from terrorism	69	21	10
Managing the economy until the world gets out of the Great Recession	69	24	7



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	Harper	Ignatieff	DNK
Controlling spending and taxation once the global and Canadian economies begin to recover	65	21	14
Canada-U.S. trade relations	55	29	16
Reform of employment insurance	38	45	17
Ottawa's relations with Quebec	23	56	22

The following verbatims provide a nuanced sense of panel opinion:

Due to the fact that the new Liberal leader appears to lean more to the right, the fear of him being a Prime Minister is not as concerning as some of the other leadership candidates. He might have a problem due to the fact that he has not lived in the country for 30 years; which the Conservatives will use against him.

It's hard to have an opinion on whether Harper or Ignatieff would do better. We've seen Harper in action but not Ignatieff, although I'm not sure he could do any worse.

If there's a pandemic, the economy will not recover in the next year.

Canada now has the choice of two fairly strong and sophisticated leaders who can take policy decisions and work them through the national and global environments.

3.0 Methodology

The COMPAS web-survey of CEOs and leaders of small, medium, and large corporations was conducted May 4 - 6, 2009. Respondents constitute an essentially hand-picked panel with a higher numerical representation of small and medium-sized firms.



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Because of the small population of CEOs and business leaders from which the sample was drawn, the study can be considered more accurate than comparably sized general public studies. In studies of the general public, surveys of n=112 are deemed accurate to within approximate 9.3 percentage points 19 times out of 20. The principal and investigator on this study is Conrad Winn, Ph.D.

