



What is the Maine Brand?

“The Maine brand is a product of generations of Mainers where the close small communities, rugged geography and complex heritage have inspired a strong work ethic of creative and practical products and solutions.”

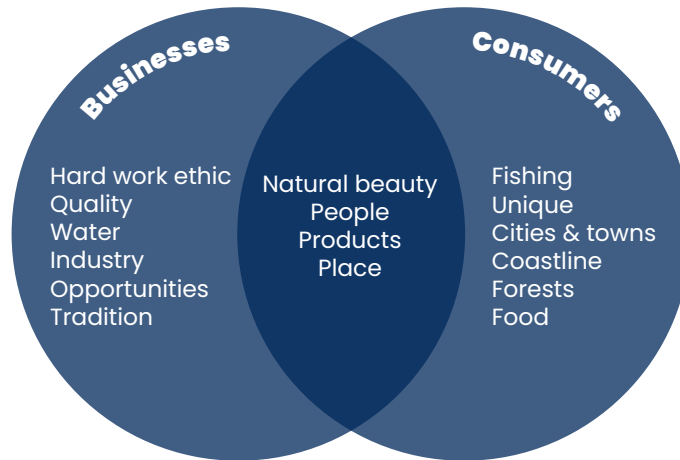
Maine business leader

With a moniker like Vacationland, the state of Maine has always positioned itself as an escape from ordinary pressures. Maine sometimes has struggled, however, to convince corporations that it was also a serious place to do business, competitive with other states on taxes, regulation and business climate. Since the publication of Maine’s Economic Development Strategy in 2020–2029, the state has demonstrated a renewed emphasis in its natural assets, including farms, forests, and fisheries, as sources of innovation, entrepreneurship, and job creation. These trends inspired us to undertake the Maine Brand Study.

The concept of a state brand encapsulates the unique identity, values, and offerings of a place, and can serve as a strategic tool for attracting tourism, investment, and business. Maine, traditionally known for its picturesque landscapes and coastal beauty, has leaned into tourism-centric branding with slogans like “Vacationland” and “The Way Life Should Be.” However, the ripple effects of such branding might extend beyond just tourism. The Maine brand, rooted in these idyllic perceptions, has significant implications for businesses operating within the state, influencing how they are perceived, how they market themselves, and how they integrate the state’s identity into their operations. Furthermore, this branding plays a pivotal role in shaping the perceptions of potential employees and consumers, affecting how Maine products and companies are viewed. Understanding the depth and breadth of this influence was the task of our research team, which sought to determine whether the Maine brand confers a competitive advantage in the marketplace. As part of this effort, we sought to understand Maine businesses and U.S. consumers might answer the following questions:

- **How do you define the Maine brand?**
- **Does it inspire the development of products and services?**
- **Does it have an impact on workplace culture?**
- **Does it affect a firm’s economic performance?**

Over a period of six months in 2023, ~ 250 Maine businesses and 500 U.S. consumers responded to our collection efforts. Here’s what we found.



The figure above depicts how businesses and consumers differ on the Maine brand and show what they share

“The Maine brand is unique for its captivating combination of rugged natural beauty, rich maritime heritage, delectable seafood cuisine (especially its famous lobster), and welcoming small-town atmosphere, all of which create a distinctive and memorable experience for visitors and residents alike.”

U.S. Consumer



Photo by Patrick Wine



Does the Maine brand influence the development of products & services?

Maine businesses and U.S. consumers agree "yes."

We asked:	Businesses	Consumers	How much more are consumers willing to pay for products and services made in Maine? 22%
Maine inspires the development of products and services.	4.01	3.89	
The Maine brand increases the appeal of products and services.	4.15	4.04	
Customers are more likely to purchase products and services from a Maine company.	3.88*	3.60	
Customers are willing to pay more for products and services made in Maine.	3.19	3.44*	
Products and services made in Maine are of superior quality & craftsmanship..		3.92	
I am likely to recommend products and services made in Maine to friends and family.		3.91	
	*statistically significant		
Based on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being "Strongly Disagree" and 5 being "Strongly Agree."			

Maine Business Leaders say:

"Our shelves contain only Maine grown, made or created products. Hyper local product encourages our community to shop at our store because they know that the money stays here, supporting a dozen small growers, processors and artists."

"Maine's history with the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts of Muskie speak well to my work in renewable energy."

"As a boatbuilder in this state, we appreciate that across the globe, a Maine built boat is recognized as a superior product because it was built in Maine."

Does the Maine brand have a positive effect on the attraction and retention of a skilled workforce?

Maine businesses and U.S. consumers agree "yes."

We asked:	Businesses	Consumers	"I moved to Maine as a young person and spent a lot of time on Maine's beaches. I needed a new beach chair at a time that I was getting into woodworking, and I was inspired by Maine's rich building history."
Corporate mission & values of Maine companies are consistent with the Maine brand.	4.37*	3.95	
The Maine brand helps to recruit skilled workers from outside the state.	3.15	3.70*	
Maine's quality of life helps to retain a skilled workforce.	3.77	4.02*	
I am likely to recommend Maine to friends and family as a place to live & work.		3.77	
	*statistically significant		
Based on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being "Strongly Disagree" and 5 being "Strongly Agree."			

"Outside of the state, the Maine brand is associated with quality craftsmanship and outdoor recreation. We are seen as leaders in the outdoor industry, which helps as a stamp of approval for potential customers who are learning about us for the first time."

"We leverage the lifestyle story when explaining why we aren't based in Boston or New York."

Does the Maine brand have a positive effect on the economic performance of businesses?

Maine businesses and U.S. consumers agree "yes."

We asked:	Businesses	Consumers
Maine companies perform better economically than if located elsewhere.	3.45	3.77
Being a Maine company provides firms with a competitive advantage.	3.36	3.51
Being a Maine company motivates firms to invest in the state.	4.08*	3.72

*statistically significant

Based on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being "Strongly Disagree" and 5 being "Strongly Agree."

"Our business is international focused on the power generation sector. Maine could play a role if it begins to develop an export market for wood pellet fuel. Sustainability and rule of law are critical underpinnings of the markets we work in. Maine offers both."

"My business was founded in Massachusetts, and then operated in California. Maine has been, by far, the best place to operate, run and grow a company/brand."

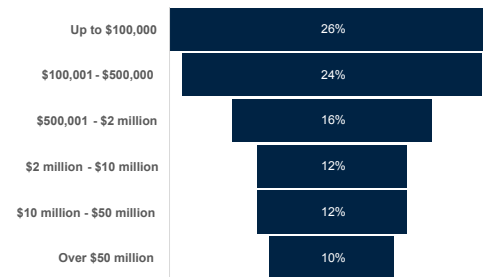
Who responded?

Businesses

Industry Sector (n=272)

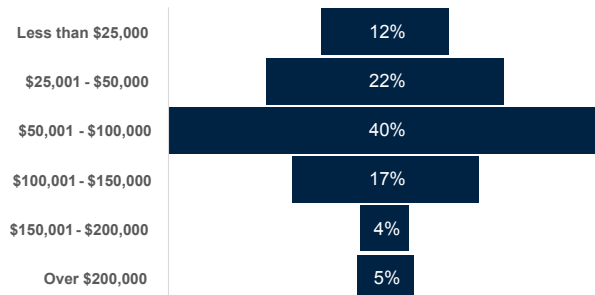


What were your sales in 2022?



Consumers

Annual Household Income



Where do you live? Percentage

Florida	10.2%
California	9.2%
Texas	8.8%
New York	7.6%
Pennsylvania	3.7%
Georgia	3.5%
New Jersey	3.5%
Illinois	3.3%
Maryland	2.7%
Washington	2.7%
Other state	44.9%



Key findings

1. Maine businesses and U.S. consumers define the Maine brand by its natural outdoor beauty, people, products, and place.
2. Maine businesses and U.S. consumers alike agree that the Maine brand influences the development of products and services. In fact, U.S. consumers are willing to pay 22% more for Maine products and services.
3. Maine businesses and U.S. consumers agree that the Maine brand has a positive effect on the attraction and retention of a skilled workforce.
 - Outdoor brands rate this impact more positively than other business types.
4. Maine businesses and U.S. consumers agree that the Maine brand has a positive effect on the economic performance of businesses.
 - Businesses with a higher percentage of Maine sales as well as those in the food, agriculture, marine, and aquaculture sectors rate this impact more positively than other business types.
5. The impact of the Maine brand remains strong both for manufacturers as well as businesses grossing over \$10 million in sales. Thus, as Maine businesses compete in the global marketplace, the Maine brand continues to be a differentiator that adds value.

Methodology

Online survey of 250 Maine business leaders from January–August 2023 promoted through public presentations, MaineBiz forum and online ad, direct email marketing, distribution by chambers of commerce and trade associations, and follow-up phone calls.

Online survey of 500 U.S. consumers conducted on www.cloudresearch.com in May 2023.

Research team

Caroline Paras, MA
Norm O'Reilly, MA, MBA, PhD, CPA
Erin Percival Carter, PhD
Melanie Brooks
Connor Blake, MBA
Robyn Dumont, MPPM
Clare Murray, MS

