OHIO TECHNOLOGY LEADERS
2015 TECH ISSUES REPORT
When it comes to perceived support for their industry, Ohio’s technology entrepreneurs and executives don’t believe the state fully values their contributions. And, they think more investment funding, increasing college IT enrollment, and attracting tech workers from other states are important issues to address to sustain strides the tech sector has made.

These are a few of the conclusions gleaned from a recent Tech Issues Report, a collaboration between OHTec, The Circuit, Technology First, TechLife Columbus and Tech Toledo. On the surface, some may find the survey’s findings surprising – especially when one considers that the IT industry accounts for more than 92,000 jobs (source: JobsOhio) in Ohio with nearly 10,000 IT jobs open annually (ODJFS). The data reveals tech companies in Ohio face numerous challenges and if those barriers are addressed there are impressive opportunities for gains in employment, revenue and market reach.

Tech leaders were asked to share their opinion on state government support for the tech industry and to rank the issues of most importance to them.

**CONCLUSIONS**

**THE QUESTION:**
How do tech executives/entrepreneurs feel about Ohio’s support for the IT industry?

**THE ANSWER:**
Mostly neutral, but leaning towards non-supportive.

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**Ohio’s State Government Adequately Supports the IT Industry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CAPITAL
• Funding programs to help promising tech ventures grow and scale.

TALENT
• A key driver in the industry and top of mind for entrepreneurs and technology executives as evidenced by two of the top three issues noted by respondents
• A long-term approach is preferred by increasing IT enrollment in college, but that desire is balanced by interest in short-term relief in the way of attracting out of market talent

ENCOURAGING INNOVATION
• Consistent and predictable tax rates and structures that help spur research and development

TECH START UP SUPPORT
• Programs, accelerators, mentoring and more to assist early-stage tech companies get started and gain traction.
With two hundred forty-five completed surveys, the data provided offers a compelling glimpse into the preferences of Ohio’s technology sector. However, it’s equally interesting to see the priorities and assessments from the various regions of the state represented.

One can see that respondents in Columbus are most favorable about the role of state government in the industry and corresponding results achieved. More than 40% agree at some level with the statement and that market had the smallest percentage disagreeing with the statement.

However, Columbus is somewhat of an outlier as the other four markets are fairly consistent in their assessment. Cleveland has the least favorable opinions of state government support, more than 30% disagree at some level and no respondent strongly agreed.

Cleveland results are followed closely by Cincinnati, respondents there were much more neutral, though roughly 30% disagreed as well. Dayton and Toledo, the smallest markets, are essentially neutral.
Ohio's Different Regions Reflect Varied Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relative Rankings of Regional Priorities</th>
<th>Cincinnati</th>
<th>Cleveland</th>
<th>Columbus</th>
<th>Dayton</th>
<th>Toledo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing college enrollments in IT disciplines</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting attraction of IT workers from other states</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased amount of investment funding</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable tax opportunities for tech R&amp;D investments</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State sponsored programs to increase software development talent</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax credits or funding for interns</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased support for start-up tech firms</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodic meetings between tech companies and state legislators</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Around the state, members of the IT industry offered an intriguing view of the relative importance of issues in their region. The top three priorities by region can be summarized as follows:

**Cincinnati**
1. Internship funding
2. Investment Funding
3. Collegiate IT enrollment

**Cleveland**
1. Collegiate IT Enrollment
2. Investment Funding
3. Tax support for R & D

**Columbus**
1. Start-Up support
2. Attracting tech workers
3. Investment funding

**Dayton**
1. Collegiate IT Enrollment
2. Software talent
3. Attracting tech workers

**Toledo**
1. Start-Up support
2. Attracting tech workers
3. Investment funding
The Circuit and Technology First will share this information with their members, constituents and other industry stakeholders in Greater Cincinnati and Dayton. The organizations will also use this report to engage with regional legislators in support of their region’s technology industry.

“This information helps us tailor our programming and advocacy towards initiatives that are critically important to the industry,” said Brian Berning, President of The Circuit. “When there is consensus, collaboration and action among our peers, we can collectively bring real change to our communities.

This information also helps our members get a better understanding of what we share in common and how we may differ on different economic and political issues.”

Tech Toledo and TechLife Columbus will share the report with their respective communities to help foster the conversation around these important tech issues.

OHTec will also use this report in its legislative advocacy efforts as it seeks to educate lawmakers and other public policy officials on the importance, interests, and needs of Ohio’s tech industry.

Specifically, OHTec will share the information with Ohio legislators in a planned DC fly-in with CompTia (Computer Technology Industry Association and TecNA (Tech Councils of North America)) and with state policymakers as part of COSE (Council of Smaller Enterprises) Day at the Capitol, an annual event occurring in the spring.

Report results are expected to help increase lawmakers’ understanding of the industry and how they can shape policies to support its growth.

“This data, gathered from different parts of the state and from both entrepreneurs and IT executives, really increases our understanding of the interests of the tech industry,” said Brad Nellis, Executive Director of OHTec. “It will also help us sharpen our focus of support and hone our messaging to legislators.”

This collaboration is the first of its kind for the tech industry in Ohio; these organizations are encouraged by the results and enthusiastic about additional collaboration around advocacy and other areas in the near future.
ABOUT THE SURVEY

Two hundred forty-five (245) IT executives and tech entrepreneurs from across Ohio participated in this study. Respondents represented stakeholders from Ohio’s formal and informal technology associations in the major population and business centers of the state. Entrepreneurial tech firms accounted for 45% of respondents while enterprise IT executives accounted for 33%.

ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

Respondents identified themselves as:

- Tech Company Executive: 16%
- Tech Entrepreneur: 29%
- Service Provider: 5%
- Enterprise IT Executive: 33%
- Other: 15%
- Investor: 2%

Respondents noted their location as:

- Columbus: 38%
- Cleveland: 27%
- Cincinnati: 20%
- Dayton: 9%
- Toledo: 6%
- Other: 15%

ABOUT THE ISSUES: DETAILED SURVEY RESPONSES

Ohio's state government adequately supports the IT industry across the state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please rate the following issues based on their importance to your business and the IT industry in Ohio.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Very Unimportant</th>
<th>Somewhat Unimportant</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing college enrollments in IT disciplines</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting attraction of IT workers from other states</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased amount of investment funding (public and private)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable tax opportunities for tech R&amp;D investments</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State sponsored programs to increase software development talent</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax credits or funding for interns</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased support for start-up tech firms (funding/accelerators/etc.)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodic meetings between tech companies and state legislators</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>36%</td>
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</table>
ABOUT OHTEC

Founded in 1998, OHTec has more than 600 members representing all facets of information technology: software development, IT services, website design and development, custom application development, IT recruiters and others. Its mission is to support its members and support growth of the industry in northeast Ohio; signature programs/services include: Tech Week, the CIO Symposium, Tech Thursday networking as well as talent and business development services.

ABOUT THE CIRCUIT

Founded in 1994, 501 c (6) non-profit trade association. The Circuit’s Non-profit mission is to unite IT solution and service providers, corporate IT departments and businesses that support them. The Circuit provides education, networking opportunities, an online sales channel, advocacy to government, for the entire IT community in our region.

ABOUT TECHNOLOGY FIRST

Technology First is an IT industry trade association. We create a community for individuals to grow their business, share knowledge, learn new skills, seek new opportunities and explore the future. Our goal is to transform the Dayton region into the gold standard for the best-connected Information Technology community.

ABOUT TECHLIFE COLUMBUS

We are a growing group in Columbus, Ohio passionate about technology and startups. Our mission is to foster culture, education and passion for cutting edge technology and entrepreneurship, ultimately leading to increased innovation. TechLife Columbus encourages and enables our tribe to connect, learn and grow.

ABOUT TECH TOLEDO

Tech Toledo connects the IT, design and entrepreneur communities in the Toledo region by guiding grass root efforts, organizing events for networking and education, and providing strategic roadmaps for collaboration.