

# BalParQ survey 2004

*Growth of the party market continues to be constant and buoyant.*

## Balloon and Party Quotient (BalParQ8)

This is the eighth survey and seventh anniversary of this health check of the party retail and balloon decorating sectors.

The previous survey figures (2002) are included in brackets where appropriate.

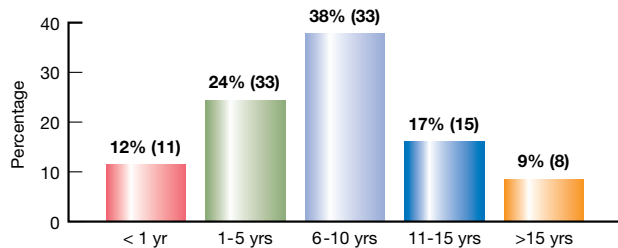
### Store demographics

*Average no. full-time employees 2.4 (2.1)*

*Average no. part-time employees 2.5 (3.1)*

The number of full-time staff has increased, while number of part-time employees has decreased accordingly. Overall employment has not changed too much, but working hours continue to be flexible.

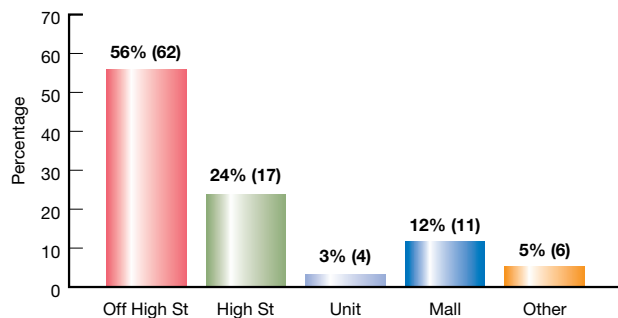
### Years in business



### Store location

Party shops are returning to the high street. While rents are higher, so is the income.

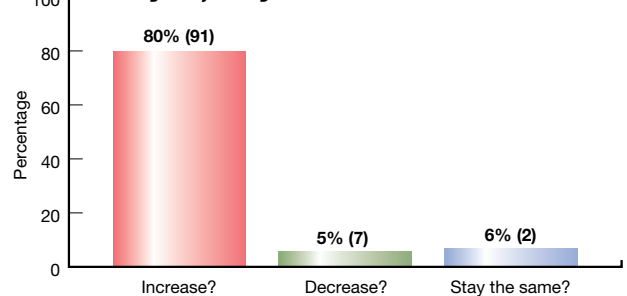
### Location of retail outlets



### Business development

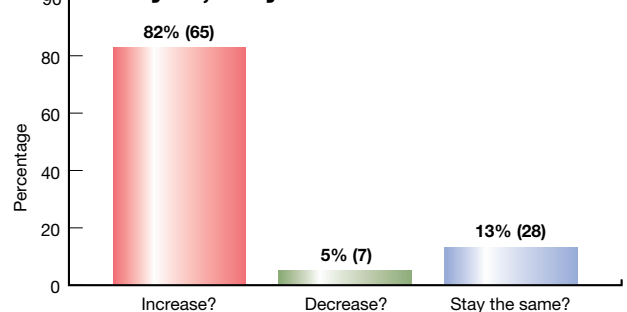
Business year-on-year remained constant, while future confidence is strong despite the general retail slowdown.

#### Last year, did your business:



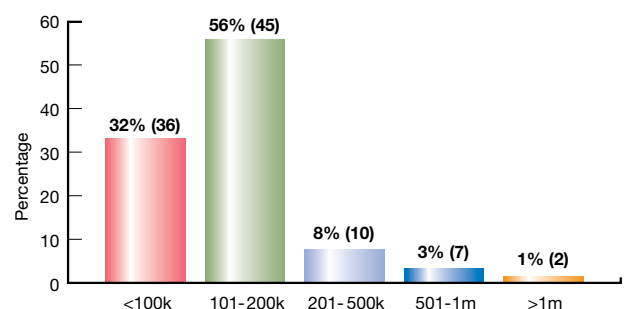
If your business increased, by how much? 17% (16)

#### This year, will your business:



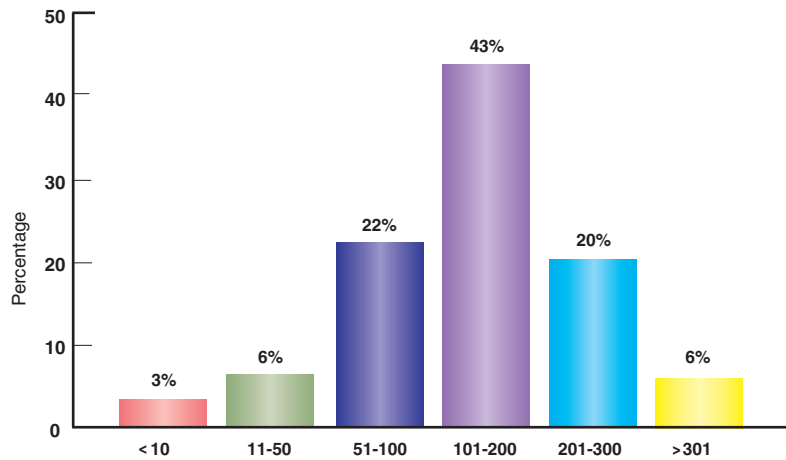
### Retail income profile

#### Retail income per annum

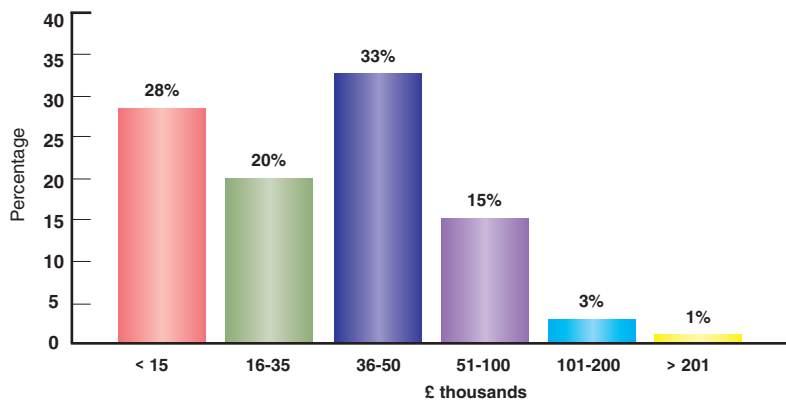


## Party decoration income profile

### Events decorated in a year



### Decorating income per annum



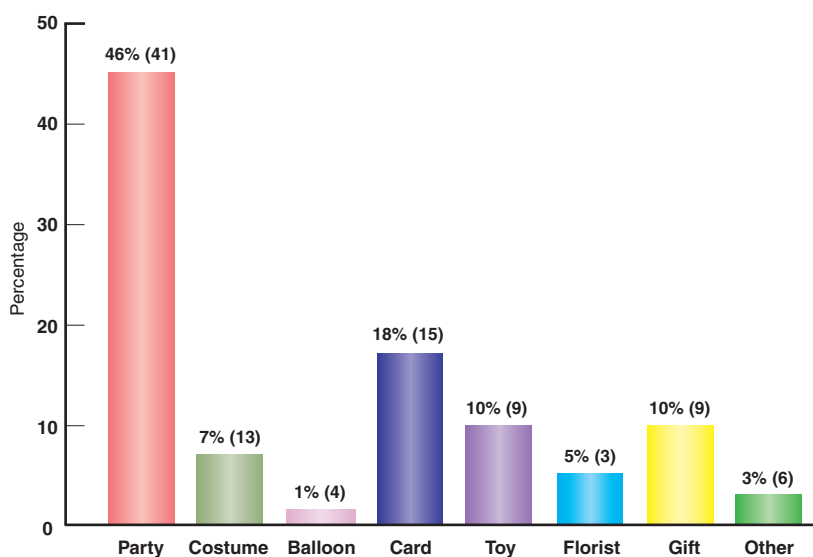
This research has been produced exclusively by *partytimes* magazine for the sector.

The average size of a party shop in the UK is 580sq.ft.

| Product mix         | % of stores carrying products |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Balloons            | 94% (90)                      |
| Confetti            | 54% (59)                      |
| Invitations         | 62% (45)                      |
| Masks               | 56% (75)                      |
| Novelties           | 47% (61)                      |
| Banners             | 41% (70)                      |
| Hats                | 57% (60)                      |
| Costumes            | 57% (57)                      |
| Balloon accessories | 43% (47)                      |
| Gift wrap           | 55% (60)                      |
| Table decorations   | 45% (45)                      |
| Face paints         | 51% (56)                      |
| Plush               | 48% (47)                      |
| Disposables         | 69% (45)                      |
| Cards               | 42% (41)                      |
| Pocket money toys   | 41% (37)                      |
| Stationery          | 53% (30)                      |
| Crackers            | 35% (22)                      |
| Chocolates          | 10% (12)                      |
| Fireworks           | 32% (33)                      |
| T-shirts            | 3% (5)                        |
| Dancewear           | 1% (1)                        |

## Primary product associated with the business

Party shops are becoming more prominent on the high street. Card shops are taking more party products on board with balloon and costume shops apparently broadening to an overall “party” focus.

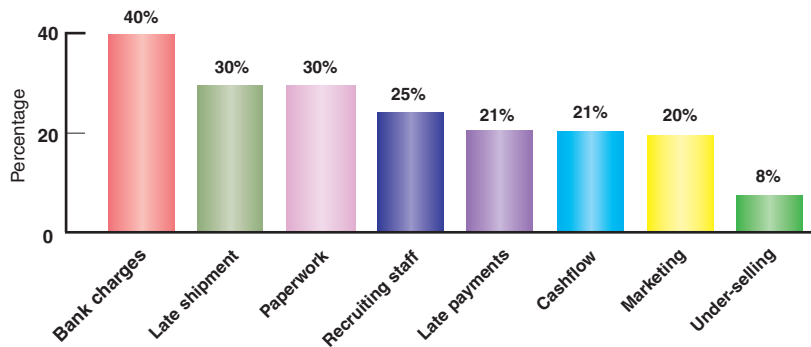


## Most common business problems for party shops:

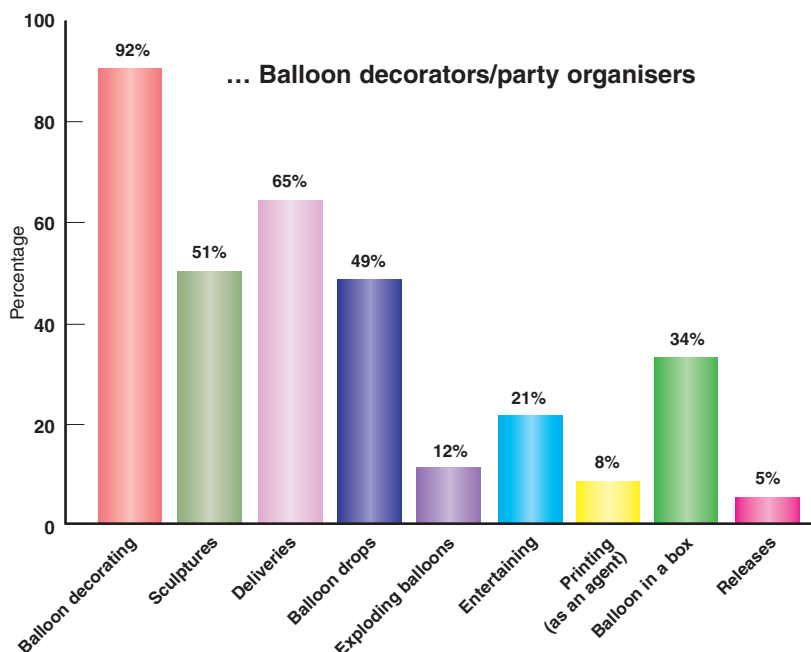
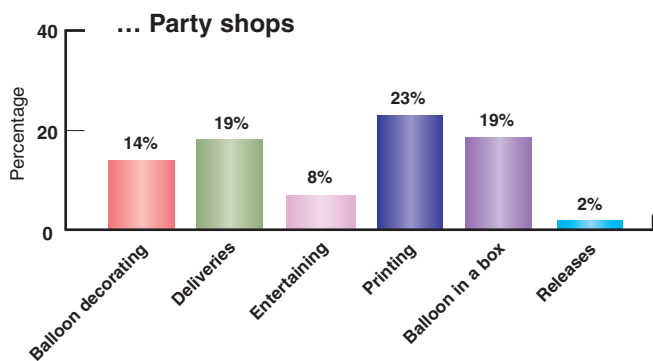
Bank charges represent the single biggest business problem facing party retailers, according to a survey carried out by *partytimes* magazine. Over 40% of respondents considered charges levied by their banks as a significant hindrance to their business development.

The second biggest problems for party shops are late shipment of product and paperwork. These factors affected 30% of respondents.

The next biggest headache is caused by difficulties in recruiting suitable staff. Other problems identified by party shops affecting their businesses include late payments, cashflow, poor marketing and other shops under-selling the same goods.



## Additional services offered by...



## Importance of seasons/celebrations to party businesses

- 1 Weddings
- 2 Valentine's Day
- 3 Halloween
- 4 New Year
- 5 Birthdays
- 6 Mother's Day
- 7 Christmas
- 8 Easter
- 9 Anniversaries
- 10 Father's Day
- 11 Christenings

## General comments from respondents

"Controlling rate of growth requires fine judgment and some luck"

"Problem of bank charges reduced by online banking"

"Our major problem is people working from home who charge less"

"Large manufacturers supply supermarkets at much lower prices, making it impossible for a party shop to compete. Could they package them differently so prices can't be compared? Until they do, I am boycotting them – and still surviving!"

## Summary

The party sector continues to mature, but the problems identified in the initial research in 1995 are still present. There are a wide range of outlets to sell party products – and growing wider – yet it appears that the number of specialist party shops is growing.

Many thanks to all our readers who took the time to complete and return the forms to us.

We are happy for readers to reproduce this information. Where possible, we would appreciate the courtesy of a credit.