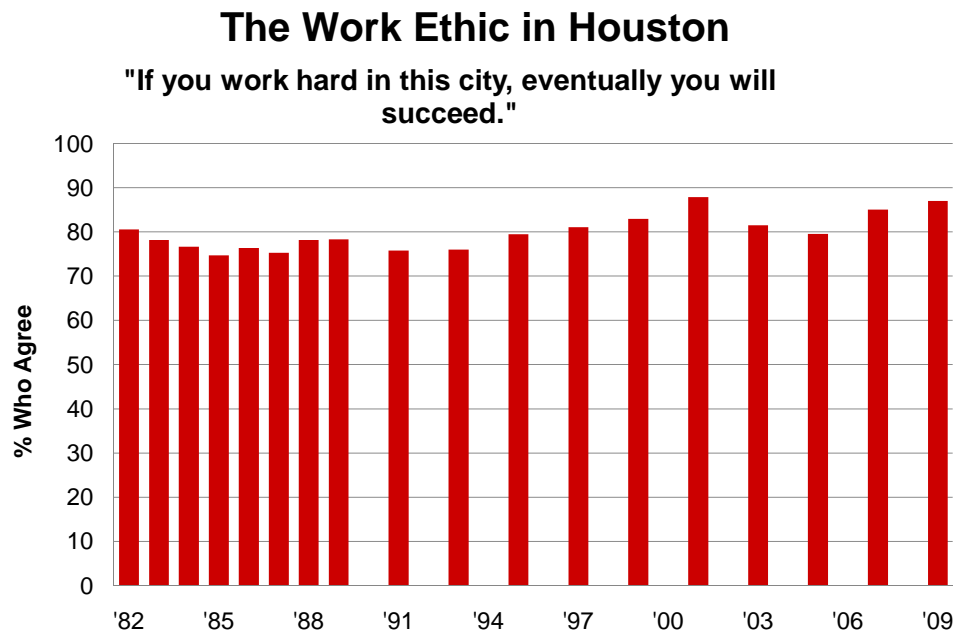


The Work Ethic in Houston

The work ethic is alive and well — and flourishing — in Houston.



Source: Rice University, *Houston Area Survey*, 1982-2009

- Houston's business success appears related, at least in part, to the overwhelming prevalence of the work ethic here and to confidence that Houston provides an environment in which individual initiative will be rewarded.
- According to Rice University's annual *Houston Area Survey*, a large majority of Houstonians agree that "if you work hard in this city, eventually you will succeed." In March 1982, when employment in Houston stood at what was then the all-time peak, 81 percent of respondents agreed. In February 1987, when Houston was at the bottom of its recession and unemployment stood above 10 percent, fully 75 percent of respondents still shared this view. In 1999, 83 percent of Houstonians accepted this statement — a record at the time. In 2001, agreement soared to 88 percent. Since then, agreement has remained at or above 80 percent, mirroring the optimism that preceded the mid-'80s recession. (By 1990, it had become so clear that Houstonians' responses to this item barely shift that it has since been omitted from the survey in alternate years.)
- In contrast to Houston's strongly positive attitude, agreement with this same statement in national samples over the same period has ranged only from 58 to 63 percent. The difference between Houston and the nation as a whole is statistically significant and has endured through the entire range of the regional business cycle.
- The confidence that personal effort will be rewarded in Houston transcends racial and ethnic categories. In 2007, 87 percent of Anglos and 79 percent of blacks agreed with the statement (a statistically significant difference, even though both overwhelmingly accept it), while agreement among Hispanics — who are more likely to be both younger and more recent arrivals to Houston — reached 89 percent.