

City of Brockville

Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

2024 Business Survey: Report



BROCKVILLE
CITY OF THE 1000 ISLANDS

March 25, 2024

Survey Timeframe: February 6 – March 10, 2024

Prepared by:

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
Economic Development Office
32 Wall Street, Suite 300, Brockville, ON

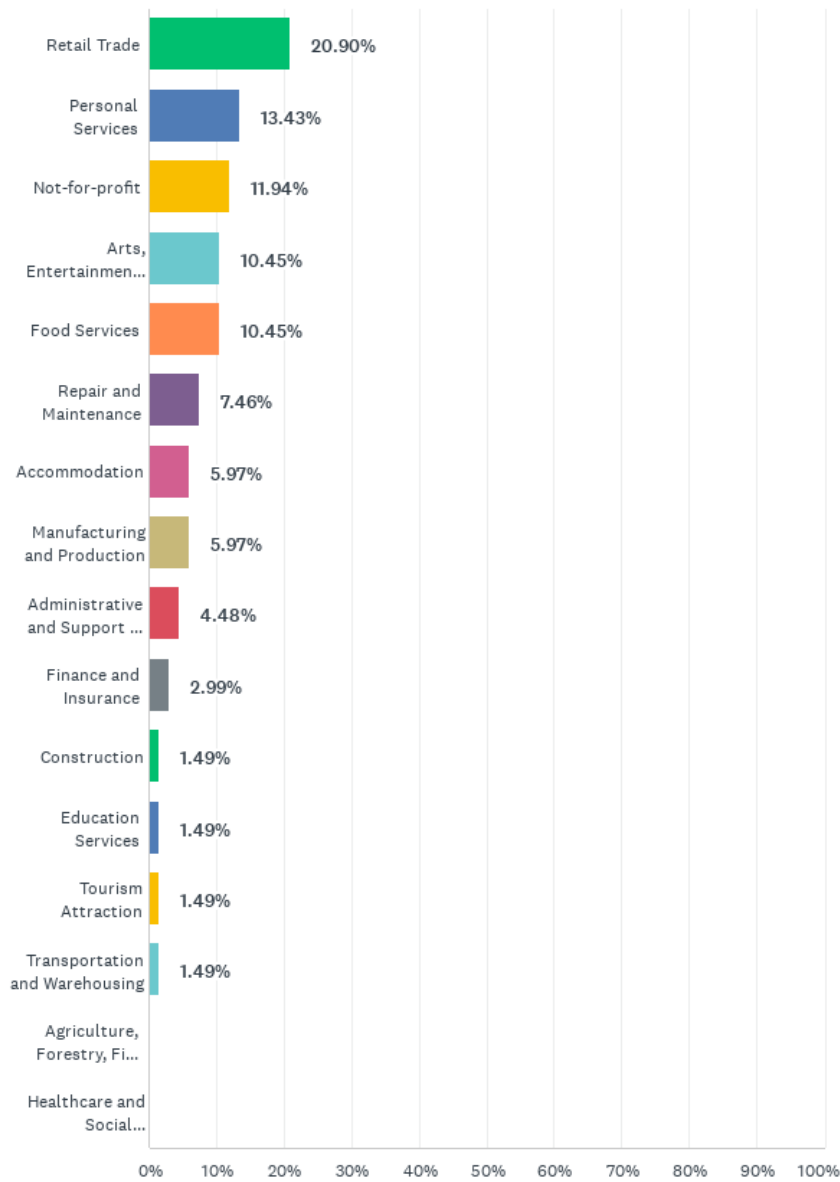


invest.leadsgrenville.com/reportsandplans

#2 What sector is your business primarily operating in?

Answered: 67

Skipped: 1



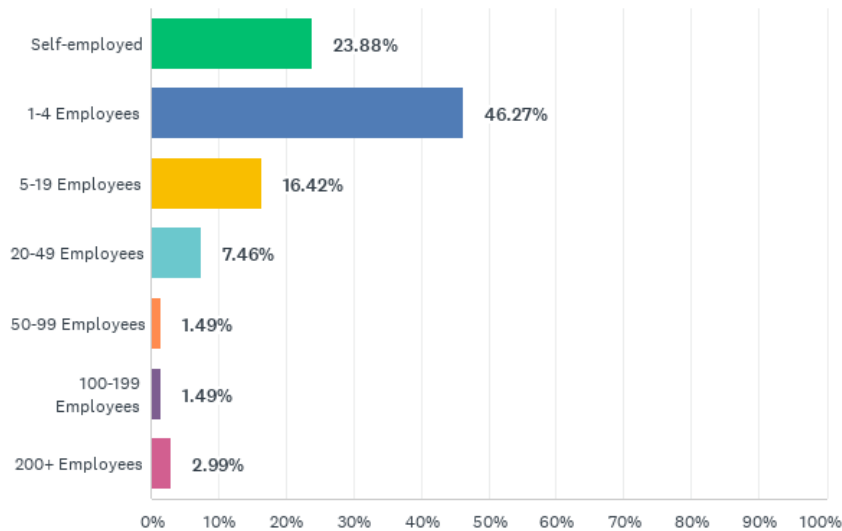
#2 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Retail Trade	20.90%	14
▼ Personal Services	13.43%	9
▼ Not-for-profit	11.94%	8
▼ Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	10.45%	7
▼ Food Services	10.45%	7
▼ Repair and Maintenance	7.46%	5
▼ Accommodation	5.97%	4
▼ Manufacturing and Production	5.97%	4
▼ Administrative and Support - Business Services	4.48%	3
▼ Finance and Insurance	2.99%	2
▼ Construction	1.49%	1
▼ Education Services	1.49%	1
▼ Tourism Attraction	1.49%	1
▼ Transportation and Warehousing	1.49%	1
▼ Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	0.00%	0
▼ Healthcare and Social Assistance	0.00%	0
TOTAL		67

#3 Typically, how many full-time equivalent employees does your company have?

Answered: 67

Skipped: 1

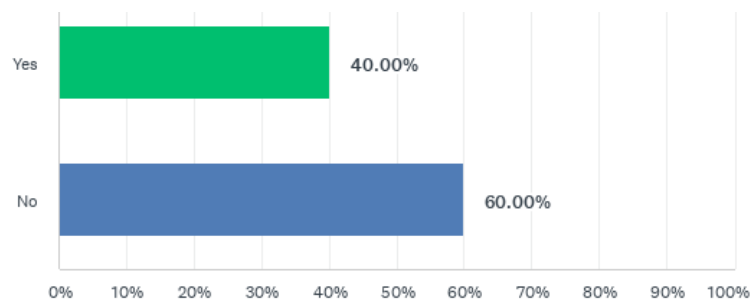


#3 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Self-employed	23.88%	16
1-4 Employees	46.27%	31
5-19 Employees	16.42%	11
20-49 Employees	7.46%	5
50-99 Employees	1.49%	1
100-199 Employees	1.49%	1
200+ Employees	2.99%	2
TOTAL		67

#4 For medium / large business (50 and above employees) - Are your employees unionized?

Answered: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	40.00%	2
No	60.00%	3
TOTAL		5

#5 For medium / large business (50 and above employees) - What are your top infrastructure issues, and why? i.e. hydro, natural gas, rail, etc.

Answered: 4

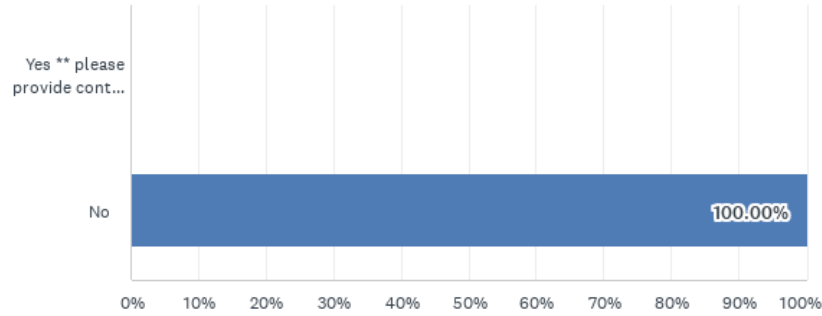
Skipped: 1

- Aging facilities.
- Rail - transport by rail has become difficult at best. Railcars become "stuck" at the Brockville interchange for days, sometimes weeks. Scheduled switches are regularly missed due to rail issues with staffing.
- Roads and bridges because they've been underfunded for years.

#6 For medium / large business (50 and above employees) - Are you interested in participating in an Ottawa job fair in October?

Answered: 4

Skipped: 1

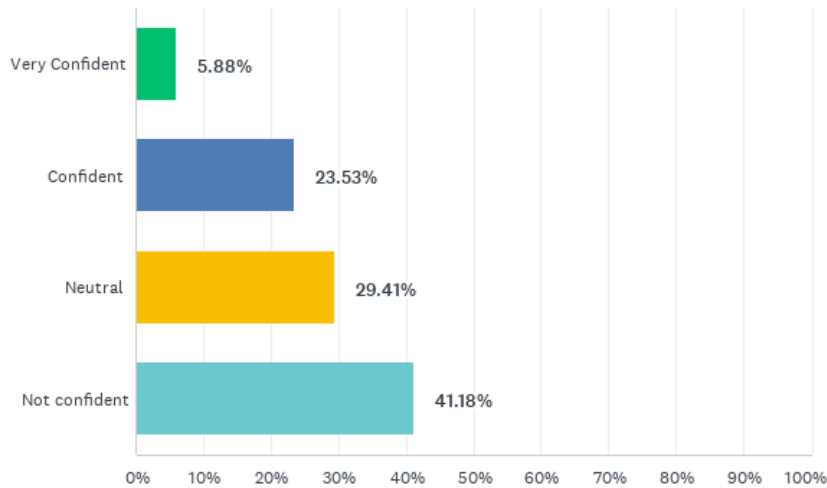


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes ** please provide contact info at end of survey	0.00% 0
No	100.00% 4
TOTAL	4

#7 How confident are you in the strength of the economy?

Answered: 51

Skipped: 17

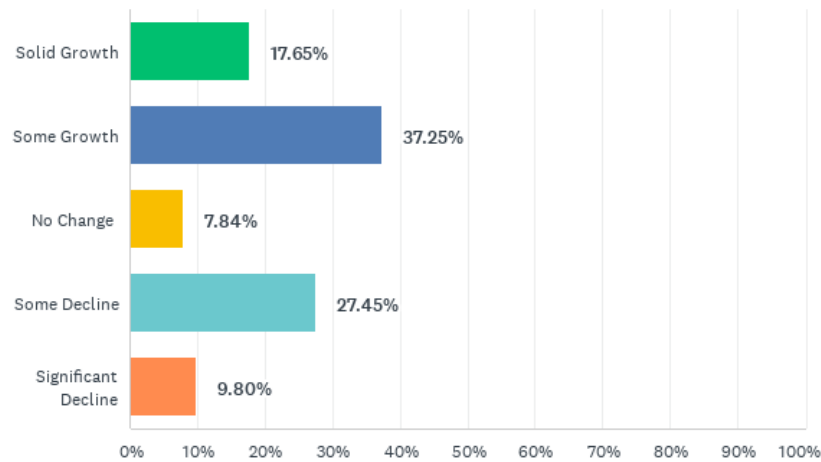


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very Confident	5.88% 3
Confident	23.53% 12
Neutral	29.41% 15
Not confident	41.18% 21
TOTAL	51

#8 In the last couple of years, what has your business experienced?

Answered: 51

Skipped: 17



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Solid Growth	17.65% 9
▼ Some Growth	37.25% 19
▼ No Change	7.84% 4
▼ Some Decline	27.45% 14
▼ Significant Decline	9.80% 5
TOTAL	51

#9 Rate the level of challenge to your business for each item.

Answered: 51

Skipped: 17

	1-NOT A CHALLENGE	2	3-SOMEWHAT CHALLENGING	4	5-VERY CHALLENGING	TOTAL
Increasing overhead costs	0.00% 0	1.96% 1	39.22% 20	21.57% 11	37.25% 19	51
Changes in demand for your product / service	12.00% 6	20.00% 10	36.00% 18	20.00% 10	12.00% 6	50
Supply chain instability	34.00% 17	10.00% 5	36.00% 18	14.00% 7	6.00% 3	50
Ability to retain employees	44.00% 22	18.00% 9	12.00% 6	12.00% 6	14.00% 7	50
Absenteeism due to reliable child care	60.00% 30	14.00% 7	12.00% 6	10.00% 5	4.00% 2	50
Increasing product prices	8.16% 4	4.08% 2	30.61% 15	22.45% 11	34.69% 17	49
Borrowing costs	26.53% 13	22.45% 11	22.45% 11	14.29% 7	14.29% 7	49
Repayment of CEBA loan	63.27% 31	8.16% 4	2.04% 1	4.08% 2	22.45% 11	49
Ability to find skilled employees	34.69% 17	8.16% 4	16.33% 8	14.29% 7	26.53% 13	49
Ability to offer competitive wages and benefits	24.49% 12	10.20% 5	18.37% 9	12.24% 6	34.69% 17	49

- Increase membership
- Lack of work ethic from many

#10 Rate the level of challenge to your employees or as a self employed individual for each item.

Answered: 50

Skipped: 18

	1-NOT A CHALLENGE	2	3-SOMEWHAT CHALLENGING	4	5- VERY CHALLENGING	TOTAL
Available housing / accommodation	26.00% 13	8.00% 4	36.00% 18	12.00% 6	18.00% 9	50
Available daycare	45.83% 22	12.50% 6	18.75% 9	8.33% 4	14.58% 7	48
Cost of Living ie. inflation	4.00% 2	2.00% 1	10.00% 5	30.00% 15	54.00% 27	50
Public transportation	50.00% 25	18.00% 9	26.00% 13	4.00% 2	2.00% 1	50
Caring for elders	37.50% 18	16.67% 8	29.17% 14	12.50% 6	4.17% 2	48

Comments:

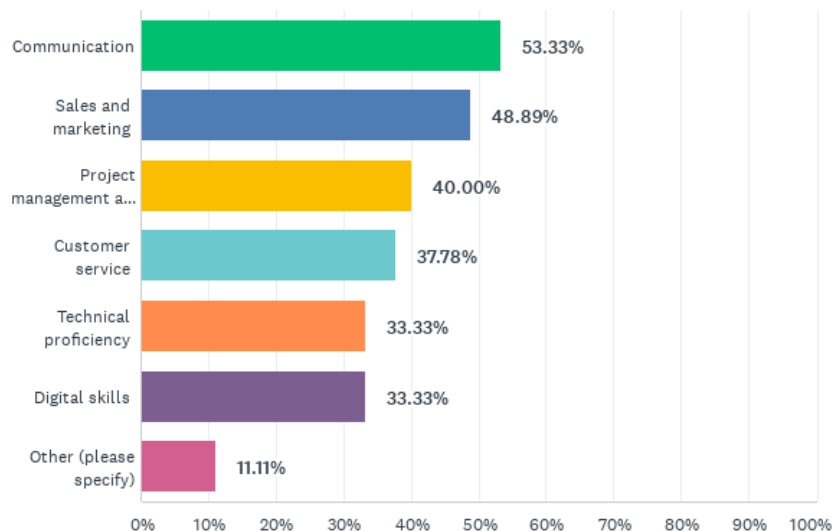
- None of my employees use Brockville Transit. I don't believe any of them have ever used Brockville Transit.

#11 What skill gaps do you believe exist within your employees?

(Choose all that apply)

Answered: 45

Skipped: 23



#11 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Communication	53.33%	24
Sales and marketing	48.89%	22
Project management and organization	40.00%	18
Customer service	37.78%	17
Technical proficiency	33.33%	15
Digital skills	33.33%	15
Other (please specify)	Responses 11.11%	5
Total Respondents: 45		

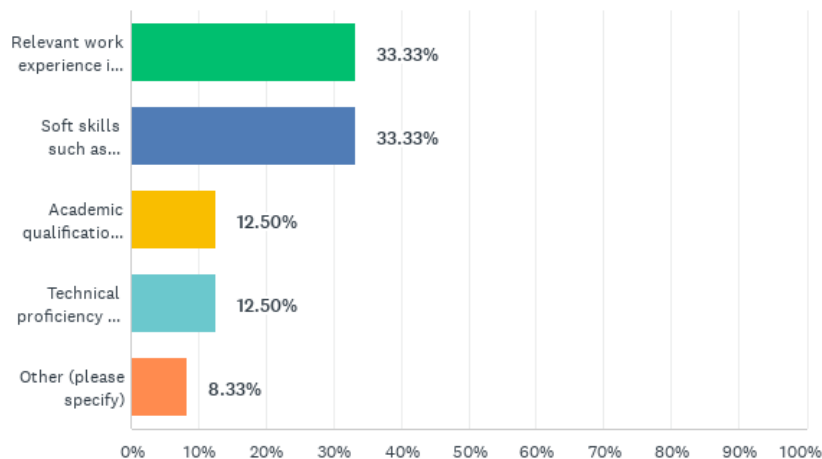
Comments:

- Understanding the whole concept of running a small business.
- None.
- No skill gaps.
- No employees (x3)

#12 When hiring new employees, which is the most significant? (Choose 1)

Answered: 48

Skipped: 20



#12 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Relevant work experience in a similar role	33.33%	16
Soft skills such as teamwork and communication	33.33%	16
Academic qualifications and certifications	12.50%	6
Technical proficiency and specific job-related skills	12.50%	6
Other (please specify)	8.33%	4
TOTAL		48

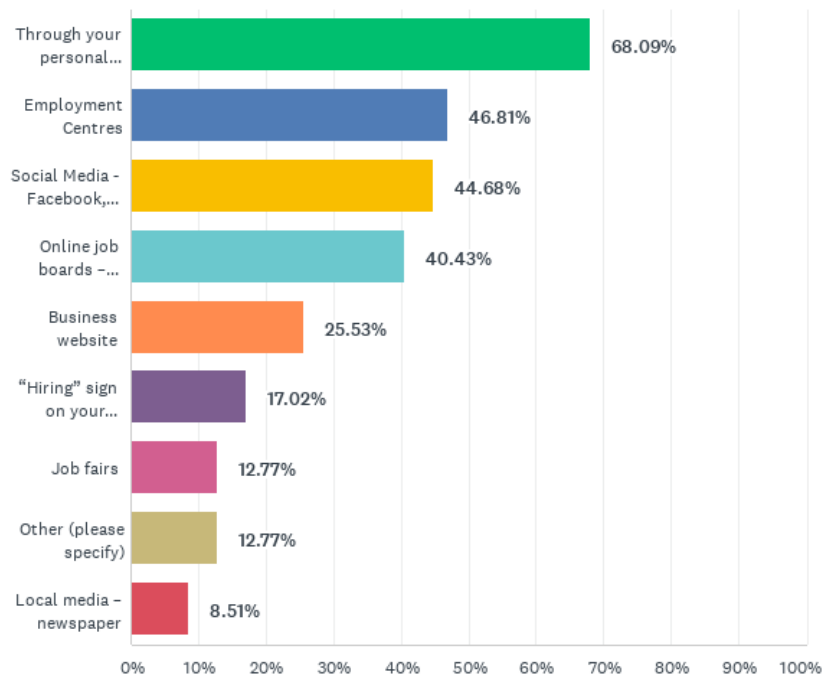
- Transportation.
- Ability and willingness to learn.
- Meet Rotary's objectives.

#13 What methods do you utilize for employee recruitment?

(Choose all that apply)

Answered: 47

Skipped: 21



#13 continued...

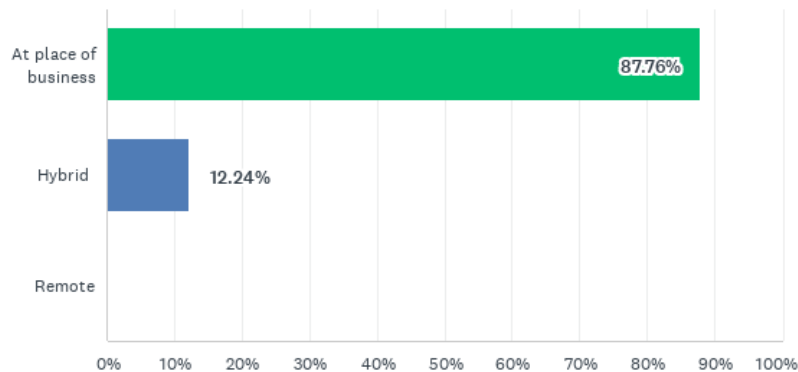
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Through your personal network	68.09% 32
Employment Centres	46.81% 22
Social Media - Facebook, Instagram	44.68% 21
Online job boards - Indeed, LinkedIn	40.43% 19
Business website	25.53% 12
"Hiring" sign on your premises	17.02% 8
Job fairs	12.77% 6
Other (please specify) Responses	12.77% 6
Local media - newspaper	8.51% 4
Total Respondents: 47	

- No employees (x2)
- Headhunter.
- Walk-ins.
- Not hiring yet.
- Not hiring.

#14 What type of work environment do you offer?

Answered: 49

Skipped: 19

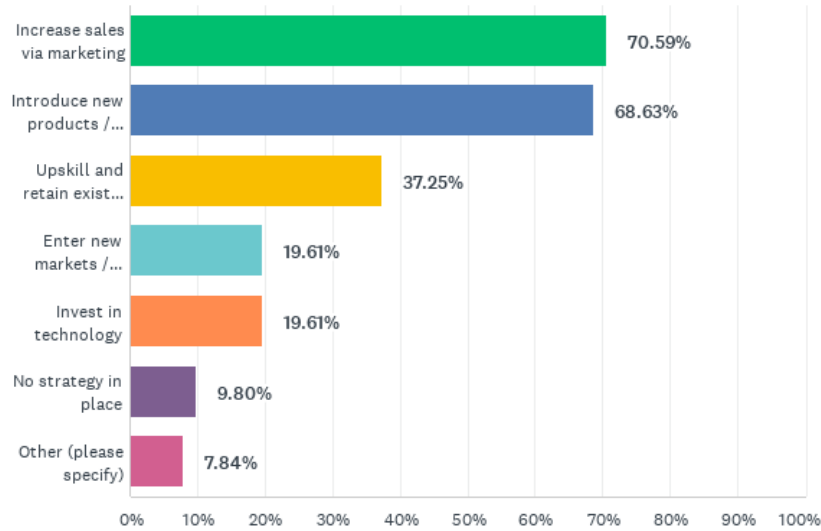


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
At place of business	87.76% 43
Hybrid	12.24% 6
Remote	0.00% 0
TOTAL	49

#15 What are your top 3 strategies for growing your business. (Choose 3)

Answered: 51

Skipped: 17



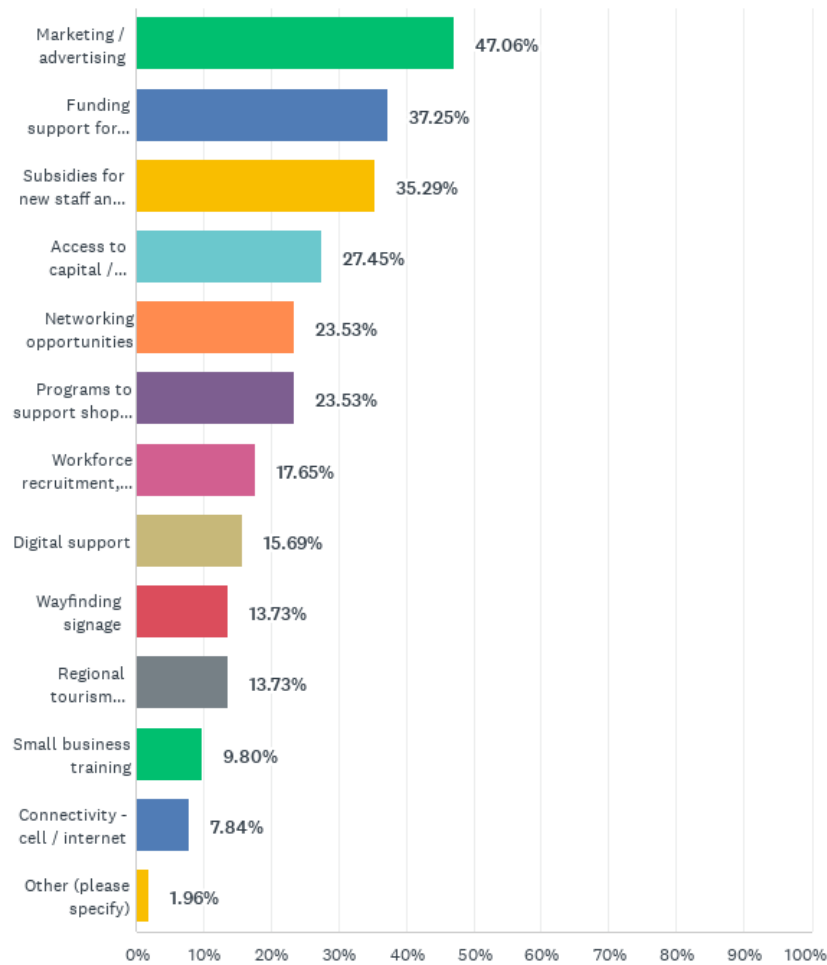
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Increase sales via marketing	70.59% 36
▼ Introduce new products / services	68.63% 35
▼ Upskill and retain existing talent	37.25% 19
▼ Enter new markets / export	19.61% 10
▼ Invest in technology	19.61% 10
▼ No strategy in place	9.80% 5
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 7.84% 4
Total Respondents: 51	

- Cost control.
- Online advertising.
- Customer service.

#16 What are the 3 top areas of support that would be most helpful to your business right now? (Choose 3)

Answered: 31

Skipped: 17



#16 continued...

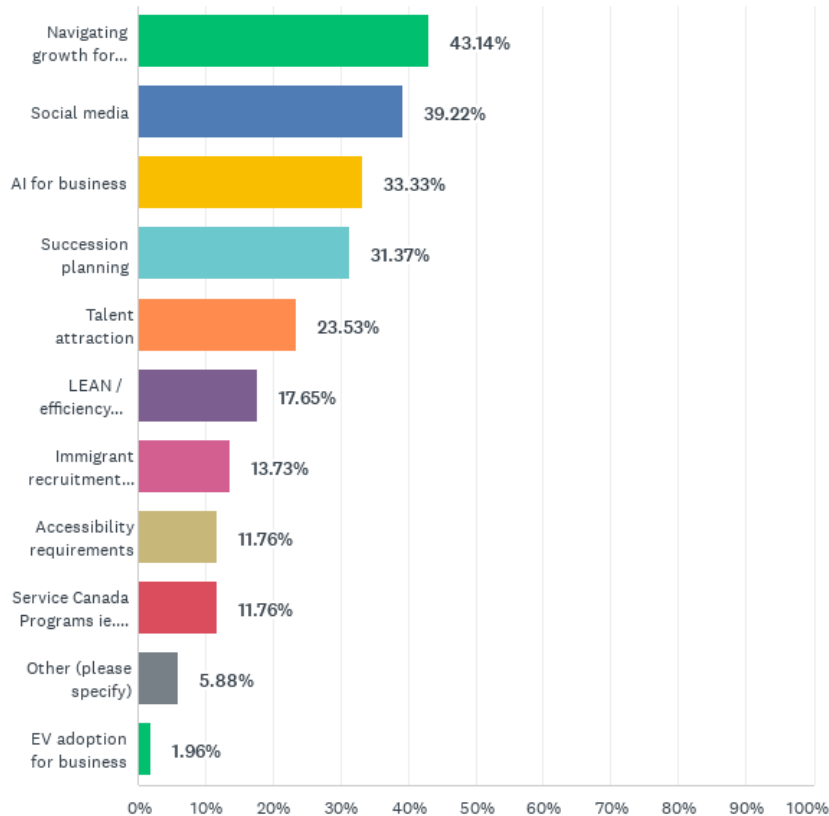
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Marketing / advertising	47.06% 24
Funding support for business expansion	37.25% 19
Subsidies for new staff and training	35.29% 18
Access to capital / business loans	27.45% 14
Networking opportunities	23.53% 12
Programs to support shop local	23.53% 12
Workforce recruitment, hiring and resourcing staff	17.65% 9
Digital support	15.69% 8
Wayfinding signage	13.73% 7
Regional tourism destination development - products, marketing	13.73% 7
Small business training	9.80% 5
Connectivity - cell / internet	7.84% 4
Other (please specify)	Responses 1.96% 1
Total Respondents: 51	

- Scrap the carbon tax.

#17 What type of workshops / training would you like to see offered? (Choose 3)

Answered: 51

Skipped: 17



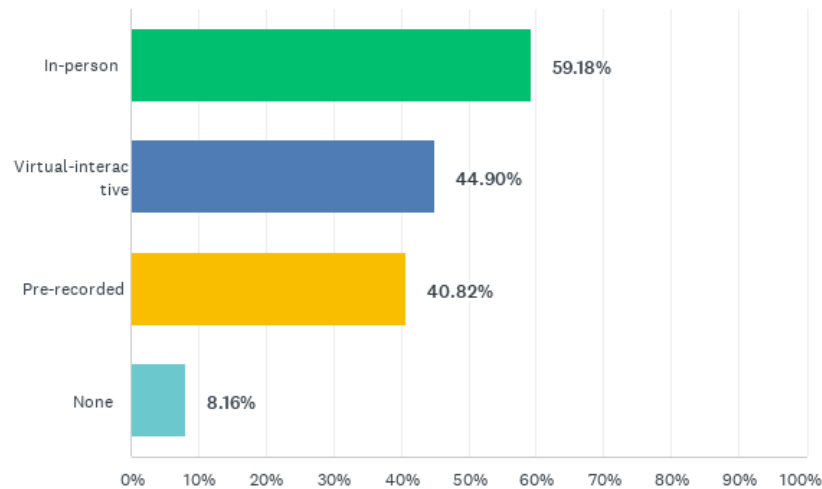
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Navigating growth for small business	43.14%	22
▼ Social media	39.22%	20
▼ AI for business	33.33%	17
▼ Succession planning	31.37%	16
▼ Talent attraction	23.53%	12
▼ LEAN / efficiency training	17.65%	9
▼ Immigrant recruitment programs	13.73%	7
▼ Accessibility requirements	11.76%	6
▼ Service Canada Programs ie. work sharing, record of employment	11.76%	6
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 5.88%	3
▼ EV adoption for business	1.96%	1
Total Respondents: 51		

- Cap and Trade/Carbon tax avoidance.
- Newcomer education credential equivalency and assessments.

#18 How do you prefer the delivery of workshops / training? (Choose all that apply)

Answered: 49

Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
In-person	59.18% 29
Virtual-interactive	44.90% 22
Pre-recorded	40.82% 20
None	8.16% 4
Total Respondents: 49	

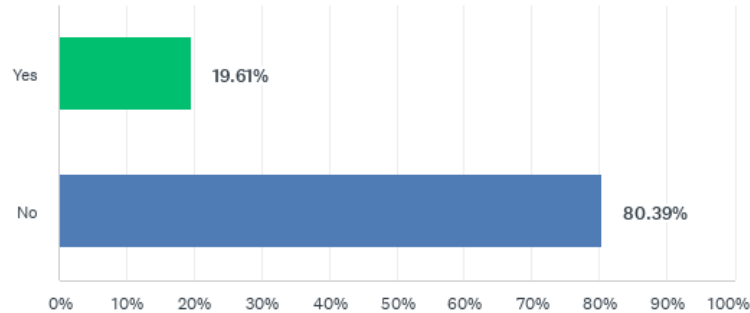
Comments:

- In my business my schedule is set 2 months in advance so by the time I see the workshops in the newsletters it's difficult to work it into the schedule. I like workshops because it also can be a networking opportunity vs online.
- All
- Open to any delivery method

#19 Do you have plans to close your business or transfer ownership in the next 3-5 years?

Answered: 51

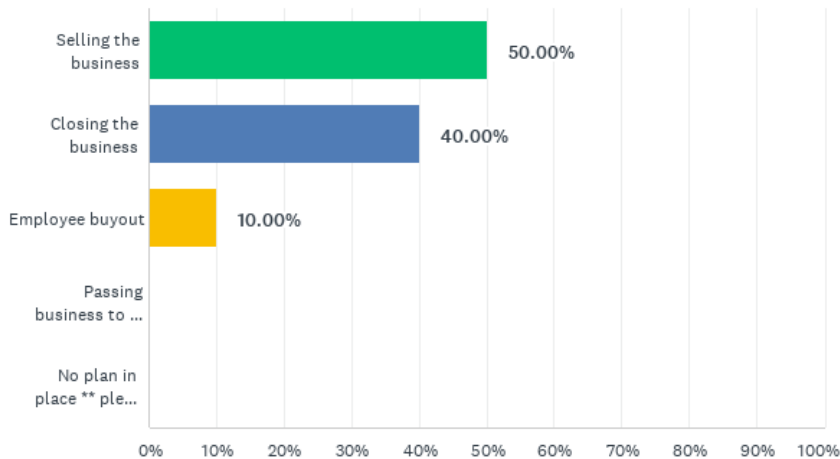
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	19.61%	10
No	80.39%	41
TOTAL		51

#20 If yes, what is your succession plan?

Answered: 10



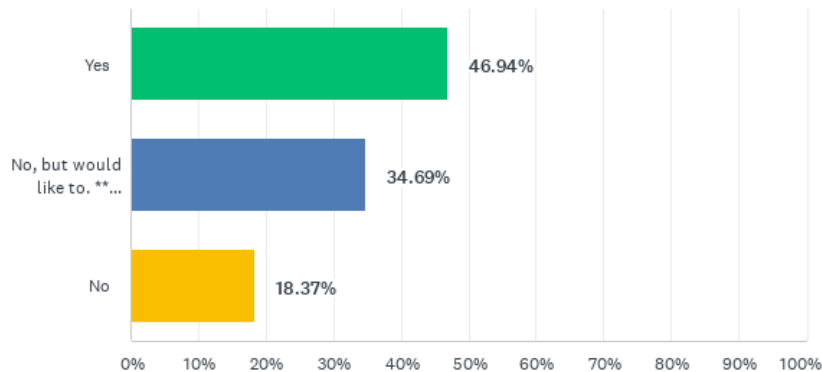
#20 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Selling the business	50.00%	5
Closing the business	40.00%	4
Employee buyout	10.00%	1
Passing business to a family member	0.00%	0
No plan in place ** please provide contact info at end of survey for support	0.00%	0
TOTAL		10

#21 Do you currently receive the Leeds Grenville business eNewsletter?

Answered: 49

Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	46.94%	23
No, but would like to. ** Please provide contact info at end of survey	34.69%	17
No	18.37%	9
TOTAL		49

#22 Please provide any additional comments related to your business viability and your challenges as a business owner.

Answered: 10

Skipped: 58

- World events, the economy in general and financing
- The homeless population often try to find refuge from the elements, and hang out in my front door, falling asleep, and leaving garbage, creating a mess.
- Competition in the field. Local businesses are not actually locally owned but some have ownership out of county but have local employees.

#22 continued...

- The big problem for my industry is beauty has been deemed “non-essential” thus with cost of living the industry as a whole has suffered with clients cutting back, and wages and products increasing revenue is stagnant
- Starter Company Plus program has helped in so many ways.
- Our firm built the plant in 1985 producing business forms. Our relationship with many businesses from BC to Newfoundland developed with Canadian Tire stores. We now provide many Government required business forms related to Environmental policy, (Ozone Emission Control Service Logs & Driver's Vehicle Inspection Report Books) The business related to that fact alone makes us proud to taking part in this important field of work.
- Internet is the biggest concern as always. It's impossible to efficiently run a business without good internet.
- The current economic situation and lack of operational funding are our greatest challenges.

#23 If you would like to speak to someone regarding support available to business

Answered: 13

Skipped: 55

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Contact Name	Responses	100.00%	13
Business Name	Responses	100.00%	13
Contact Number	Responses	100.00%	13
Email	Responses	100.00%	13

Additional Notes:

- Survey Timeframe: February 6, 2024 to March 10, 2024
- Survey Distribution: Businesses that were part the Counties Economic Development business directory, with active email addresses, received the survey directly. In addition, some members of Business Support Working Group distributed the survey through their membership lists and social media channels.

Business Support Working Group:

Municipalities

Athens | Augusta | Brockville | Edwardsburgh Cardinal | Elizabethtown-Kitley | Front of Yonge | Gananoque | Leeds and the Thousand Islands | Merrickville-Wolford | North Grenville | Prescott | Rideau Lakes | Westport

MP / MPP

MP Office of Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes
MPP Office of Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

Community Futures Development Corporations

1000 Islands CDC | Community Futures Grenville | Valley Heartland CFDC

Small Business Centres

Leeds Grenville Small Business
Small Business Advisory Centre – Smiths Falls | Lanark

Chambers of Commerce

1000 Islands Gananoque | Brockville and District | Lyndhurst, Seeley's Bay & District | Merrickville and District | North Grenville | South Grenville | Smiths Falls

BIAs

Downtown Brockville | Downtown Gananoque | Downtown Prescott | Old Town Kemptville

Employment Services

CSE Consulting | Employment and Education Centre | KEYS Job Centre

Other Business & Education Agencies

Regional Tourism Organization 9 | St. Lawrence Corridor Economic Development Commission | Eastern Ontario Workforce Innovation Board | St. Lawrence College | Kemptville Campus Education and Community Hub | Ontario Tourism Education Corporation | St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership | Ministry of Economic Development Job Creation and Trade – East Region

THANK-YOU!

On behalf of the Business Support Working Group, I would like to thank each business who took the time to complete the survey. Members of the Working Group will be reaching out to assist businesses who indicated they would like assistance. The Working Group contact list is available on the webpage, along with any new programs and resources as they become available.

Ann Weir, Economic Development Manager
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville

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