

# Municipality of North Grenville

## Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

### 2024 Business Survey: COVID-19 Report



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

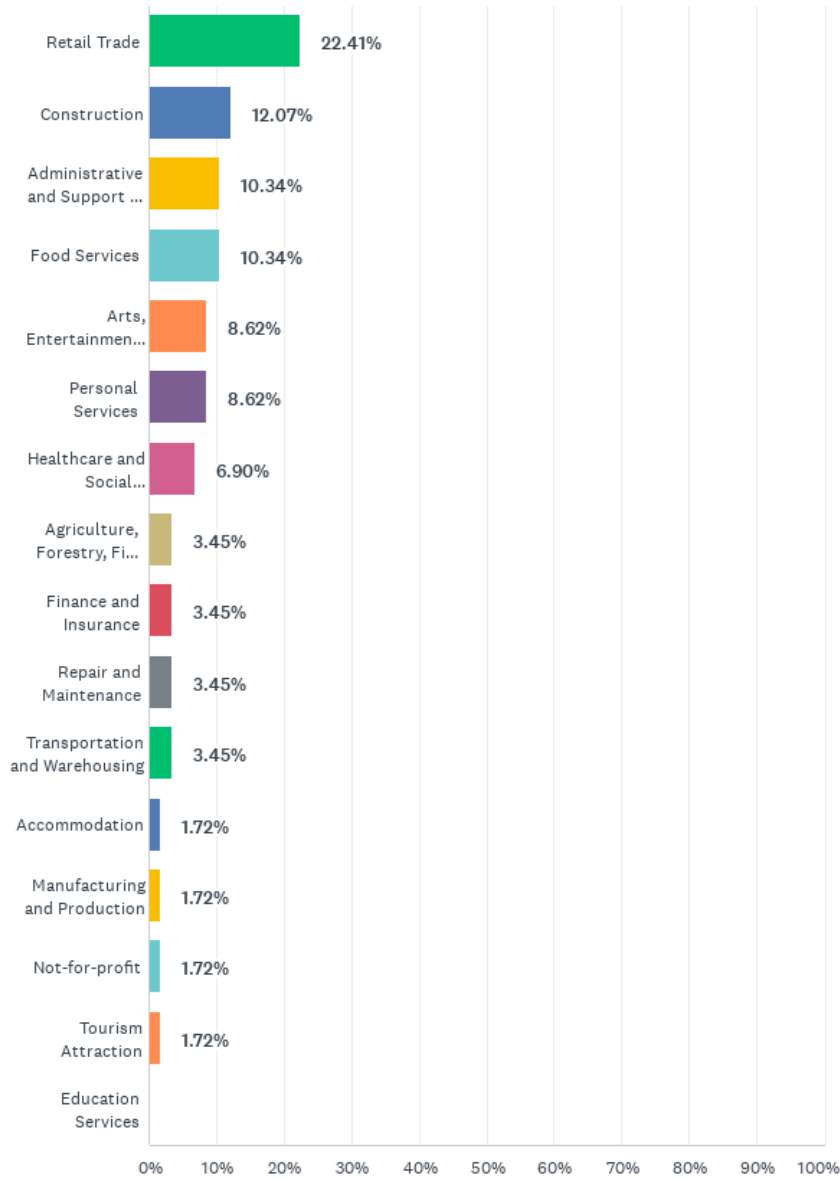


[invest.leadsgrenville.com/reportsandplans](https://invest.leadsgrenville.com/reportsandplans)

## #2 What sector is your business primarily operating in?

Answered: 58

Skipped: 1



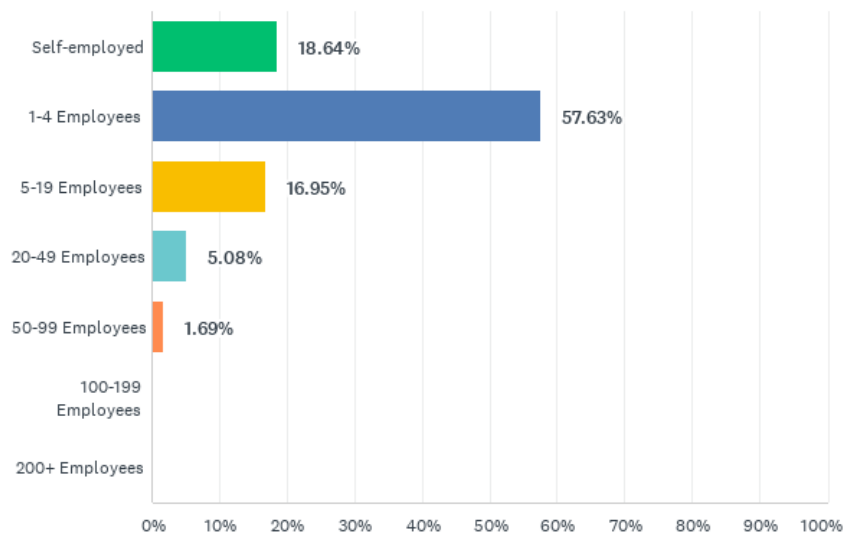
## #2 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Retail Trade	22.41% 13
Construction	12.07% 7
Administrative and Support - Business Services	10.34% 6
Food Services	10.34% 6
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	8.62% 6
Personal Services	8.62% 6
Healthcare and Social Assistance	6.90% 4
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	3.45% 2
Finance and Insurance	3.45% 2
Repair and Maintenance	3.45% 2
Transportation and Warehousing	3.45% 2
Accommodation	1.72% 1
Manufacturing and Production	1.72% 1
Not-for-profit	1.72% 1
Tourism Attraction	1.72% 1
Education Services	0.00% 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>

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

Answered: 59

Skipped: 0



### #3 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Self-employed	18.64% 11
1-4 Employees	57.63% 34
5-19 Employees	16.95% 10
20-49 Employees	5.08% 3
50-99 Employees	1.69% 1
100-199 Employees	0.00% 0
200+ Employees	0.00% 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59</b>

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

Answered: 0

No response.

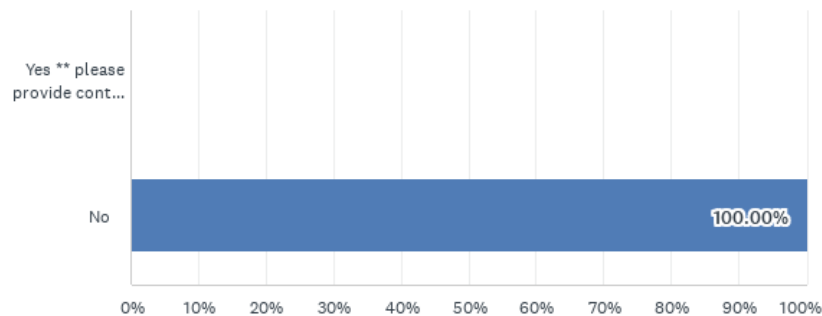
### #5 For medium / large business (50 and above employees) - What are your top infrastructure issues, and why? i.e. hydro, natural gas, rail, etc.

Answered: 1

- Hydro.

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

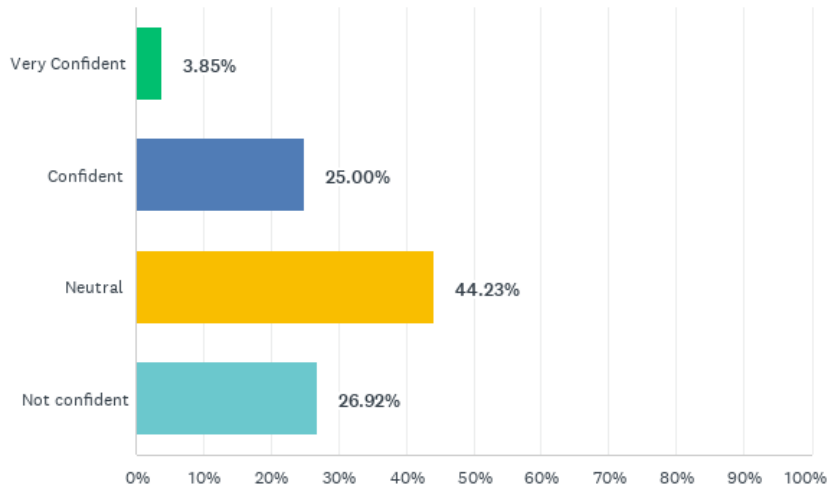
Answered: 1



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

Answered: 52

Skipped: 7

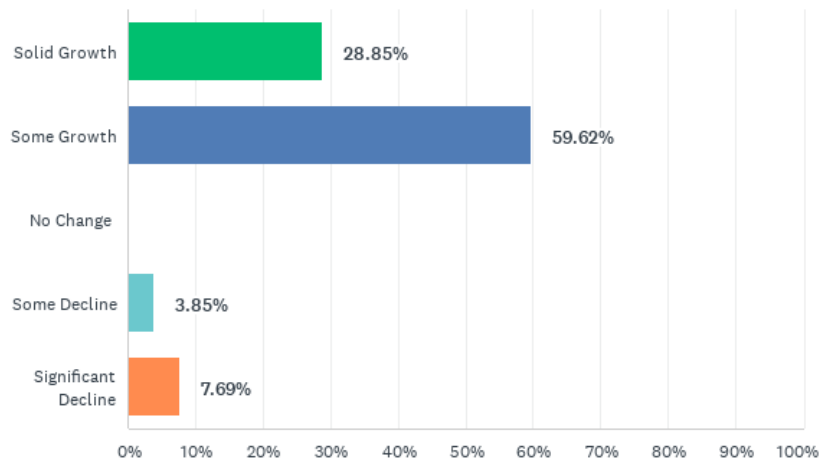


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very Confident	3.85% (2)
Confident	25.00% (13)
Neutral	44.23% (23)
Not confident	26.92% (14)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>

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

Answered: 52

Skipped: 7



## #8 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Solid Growth	28.85% 15
▼ Some Growth	59.62% 31
▼ No Change	0.00% 0
▼ Some Decline	3.85% 2
▼ Significant Decline	7.69% 4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>

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

Answered: 52 Skipped: 7

	1-NOT A CHALLENGE	2	3-SOMEWHAT CHALLENGING	4	5-VERY CHALLENGING	TOTAL
▼ Increasing overhead costs	5.77% 3	7.69% 4	36.54% 19	30.77% 16	19.23% 10	52
▼ Increasing product prices	7.69% 4	7.69% 4	21.15% 11	38.46% 20	25.00% 13	52
▼ Changes in demand for your product / service	17.31% 9	36.54% 19	25.00% 13	9.62% 5	11.54% 6	52
▼ Supply chain instability	26.92% 14	28.85% 15	28.85% 15	11.54% 6	3.85% 2	52
▼ Borrowing costs	21.57% 11	15.69% 8	25.49% 13	19.61% 10	17.65% 9	51
▼ Ability to find skilled employees	17.65% 9	13.73% 7	17.65% 9	19.61% 10	31.37% 16	51
▼ Ability to retain employees	35.29% 18	19.61% 10	23.53% 12	9.80% 5	11.76% 6	51
▼ Ability to offer competitive wages and benefits	16.00% 8	12.00% 6	32.00% 16	28.00% 14	12.00% 6	50
▼ Absenteeism due to reliable child care	70.00% 35	10.00% 5	8.00% 4	6.00% 3	6.00% 3	50
▼ Repayment of CEBA loan	57.14% 28	8.16% 4	6.12% 3	8.16% 4	20.41% 10	49

- No fault of our employees
- Most of the challenges above have been a direct result of all of the damages done during the pandemic and all of the knockdowns imposed on our business. Also, peoples' habits have changed.
- A pervasive sense of insecurity due to the wars in the Ukraine and in Palestine and the deterioration of the environment.

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

Answered: 52

Skipped: 7

	1-NOT A CHALLENGE	2	3-SOMEWHAT CHALLENGING	4	5- VERY CHALLENGING	TOTAL
Available housing / accommodation	36.54% 19	9.62% 5	19.23% 10	21.15% 11	13.46% 7	52
Available daycare	58.00% 29	4.00% 2	12.00% 6	16.00% 8	10.00% 5	50
Cost of Living ie. inflation	7.84% 4	7.84% 4	25.49% 13	31.37% 16	27.45% 14	51
Public transportation	50.00% 26	17.31% 9	9.62% 5	9.62% 5	13.46% 7	52
Caring for elders	56.00% 28	10.00% 5	20.00% 10	10.00% 5	4.00% 2	50

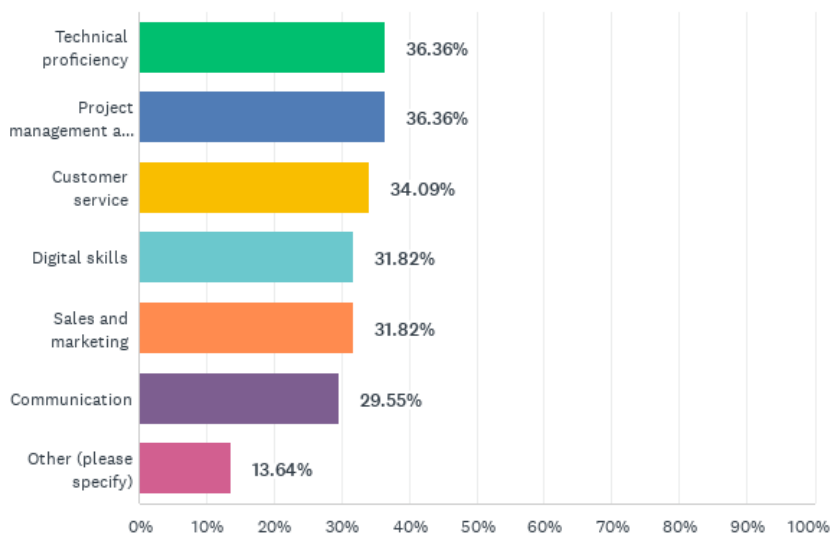
- Not applicable
- Our employees are treated as family members and we have been able to reduce their challenge levels by effective people management.
- Lack of medical/dental/health benefits

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

(Choose all that apply)

Answered: 44

Skipped: 15



## #11 continued...

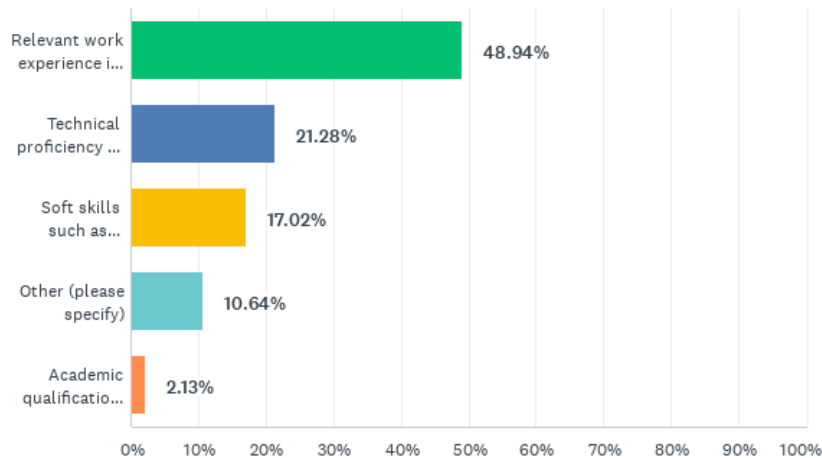
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Technical proficiency	36.36%	16
Project management and organization	36.36%	16
Customer service	34.09%	15
Digital skills	31.82%	14
Sales and marketing	31.82%	14
Communication	29.55%	13
Other (please specify)	Responses 13.64%	6
Total Respondents: 44		

- All of the above including poor reading and writing comprehension and skills
- Our current staff (albeit limited) is highly skilled and experienced where they need to be. Previous recent new hires (who are no longer with us) are a different story.
- Specific, I have a law practice and have many applicants with no law office experience
- Drive & motivation. Drive for financial success.

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

Answered: 47

Skipped: 12





## #12 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Relevant work experience in a similar role	48.94%	23
Technical proficiency and specific job-related skills	21.28%	10
Soft skills such as teamwork and communication	17.02%	8
Other (please specify)	10.64%	5
Academic qualifications and certifications	2.13%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>47</b>

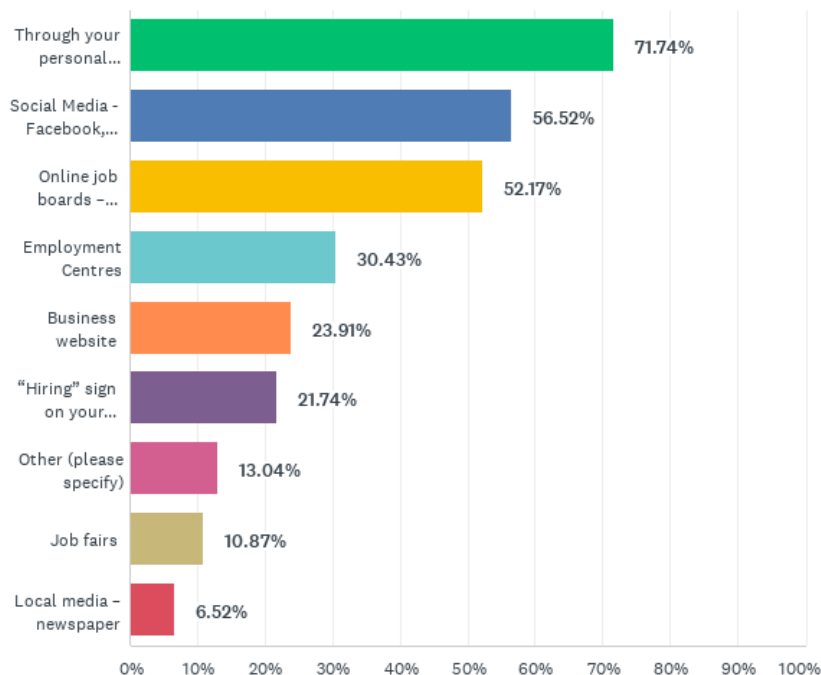
- All of the above
- Technical proficiency in terms of their specific job-related skills while also being able to market themselves and fill their practices.
- We have learned the hard way, through experience, that each of the above are almost of equal importance.
- Drive, motivation, willingness and eagerness to learn, personal drive to improve skillset for advancement

## #13 What methods do you utilize for employee recruitment?

(Choose all that apply)

Answered: 46

Skipped: 13



## #13 continued...

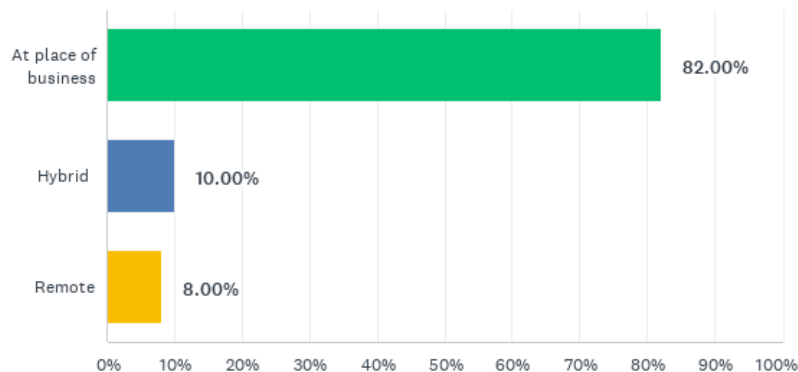
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Through your personal network	71.74% 33
Social Media - Facebook, Instagram	56.52% 26
Online job boards - Indeed, LinkedIn	52.17% 24
Employment Centres	30.43% 14
Business website	23.91% 11
"Hiring" sign on your premises	21.74% 10
Other (please specify) <a href="#">Responses</a>	13.04% 6
Job fairs	10.87% 5
Local media - newspaper	6.52% 3
<b>Total Respondents: 46</b>	

- Finding people has been, by far, the single most frustrating and disheartening part about being a business owner since our business reopened after the pandemic closures.
- Membership Newsletter, LMIA international hiring
- Have used all of the above with the exception of a job fair.

## #14 What type of work environment do you offer?

Answered: 50

Skipped: 9

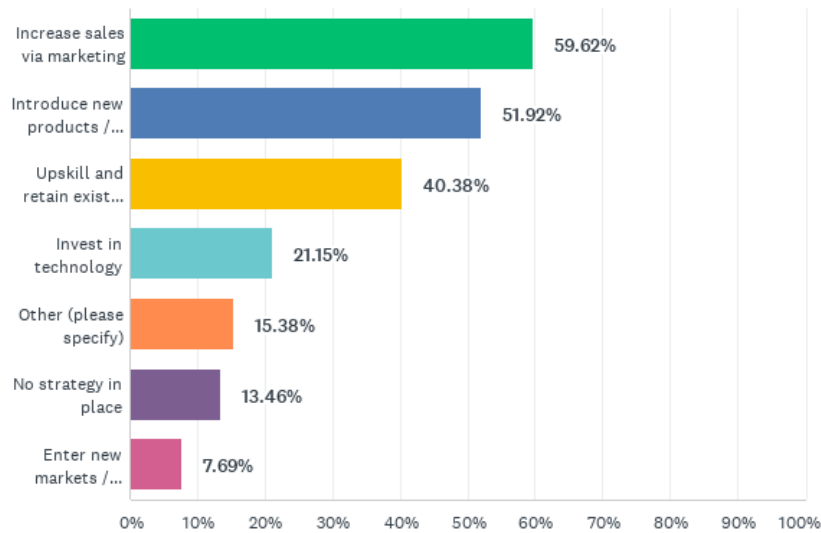


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
At place of business	82.00% 41
Hybrid	10.00% 5
Remote	8.00% 4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>

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

Answered: 52

Skipped: 7



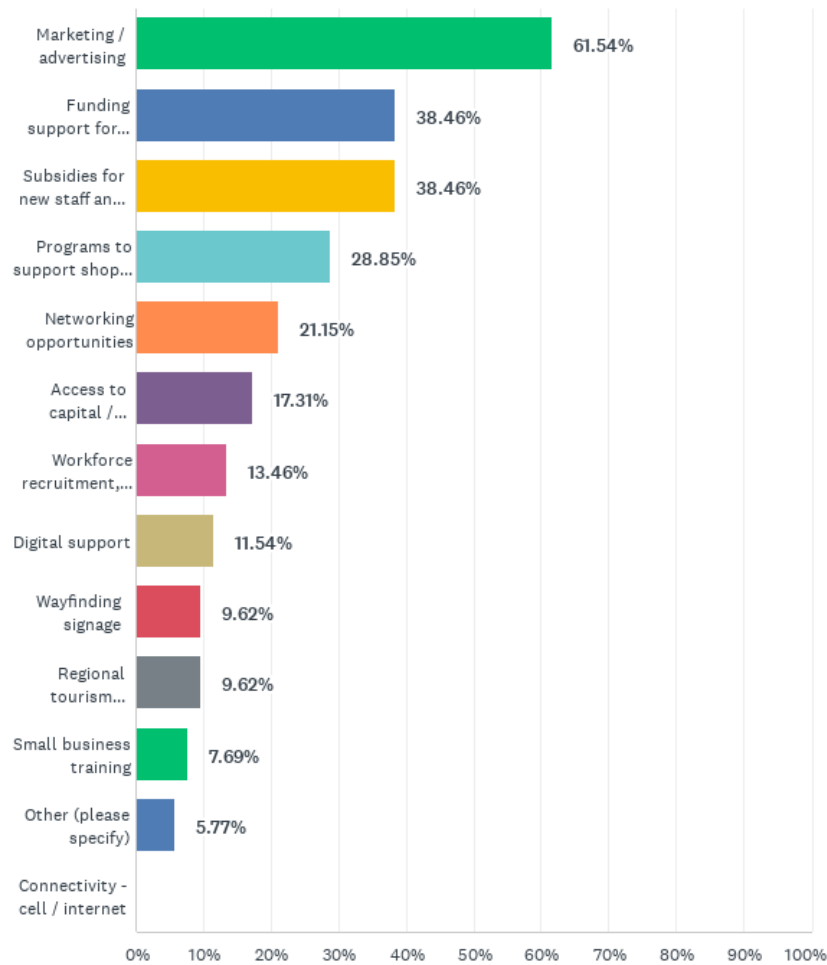
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Increase sales via marketing	59.62% 31
▼ Introduce new products / services	51.92% 27
▼ Upskill and retain existing talent	40.38% 21
▼ Invest in technology	21.15% 11
▼ Other (please specify)	<a href="#">Responses</a> 15.38% 8
▼ No strategy in place	13.46% 7
▼ Enter new markets / export	7.69% 4
Total Respondents: 52	

- Find 1 or 2 qualified trainers
- Status quo
- Bring on more practitioners offering additional services.
- Scale up/ hire
- To provide the very best quality training in a safe, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.
- Purchase other properties
- Only have 2
- Networking and references

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

Answered: 52

Skipped: 7



## #16 continued...

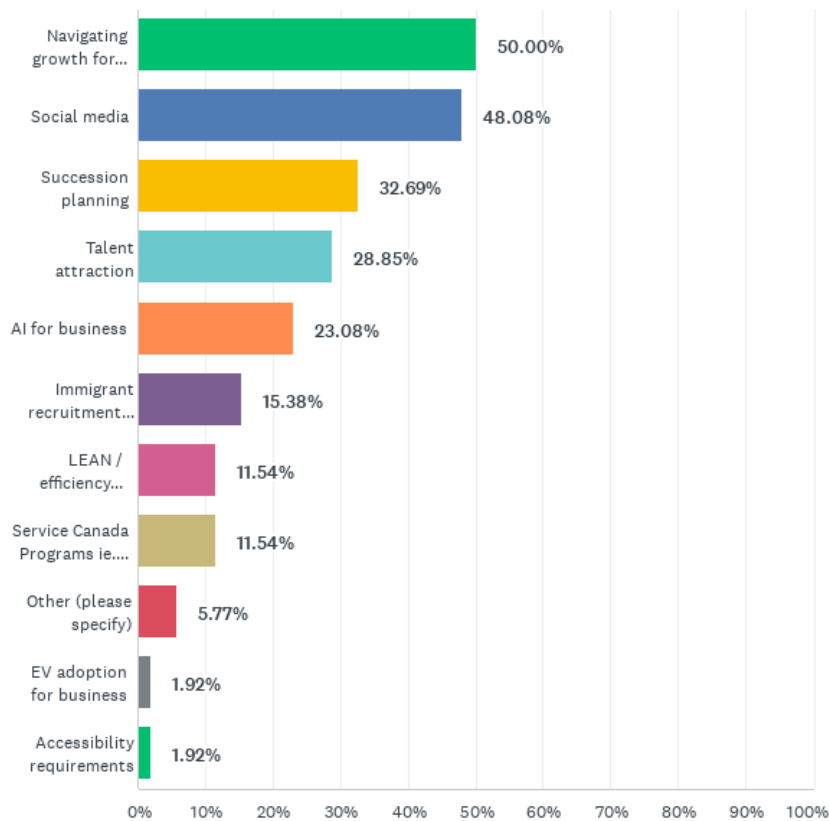
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Marketing / advertising	61.54% 32
Funding support for business expansion	38.46% 20
Subsidies for new staff and training	38.46% 20
Programs to support shop local	28.85% 15
Networking opportunities	21.15% 11
Access to capital / business loans	17.31% 9
Workforce recruitment, hiring and resourcing staff	13.46% 7
Digital support	11.54% 6
Wayfinding signage	9.62% 5
Regional tourism destination development - products, marketing	9.62% 5
Small business training	7.69% 4
Other (please specify)	Responses 5.77% 3
Connectivity - cell / internet	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 52	

- Funding support for business expansion and being able to access My Main Street and/or CIP or other grants.
- Specific opportunities for sole proprietors running virtual businesses to connect. We don't have storefronts or brick and mortar businesses and I feel our businesses and our needs as business owners are not seen or understood by business development organizations.
- Less taxes - less government intervention.

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

Answered: 52

Skipped: 7



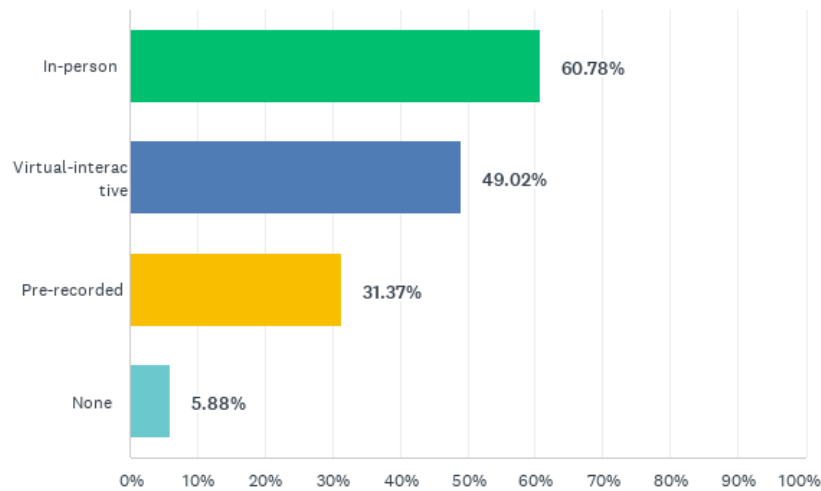
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Navigating growth for small business	50.00%	26
▼ Social media	48.08%	25
▼ Succession planning	32.69%	17
▼ Talent attraction	28.85%	15
▼ AI for business	23.08%	12
▼ Immigrant recruitment programs	15.38%	8
▼ LEAN / efficiency training	11.54%	6
▼ Service Canada Programs ie. work sharing, record of employment	11.54%	6
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 5.77%	3
▼ EV adoption for business	1.92%	1
▼ Accessibility requirements	1.92%	1
Total Respondents: 52		

- Scaling up for sole proprietors running virtual businesses
- Safety training

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

Answered: 51

Skipped: 8



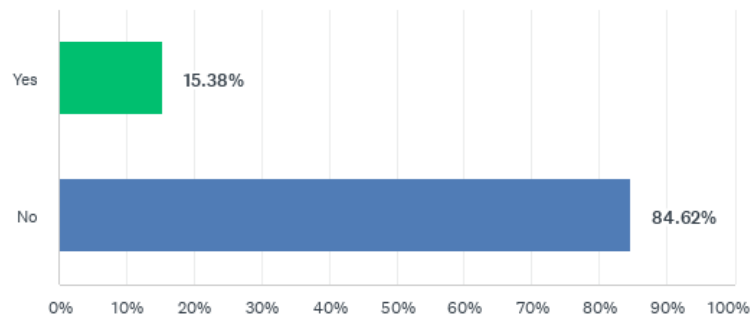
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
In-person	60.78% 31
Virtual-interactive	49.02% 25
Pre-recorded	31.37% 16
None	5.88% 3
Total Respondents: 51	

- I don't find workshops very helpful to be honest

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

Answered: 52

Skipped: 7

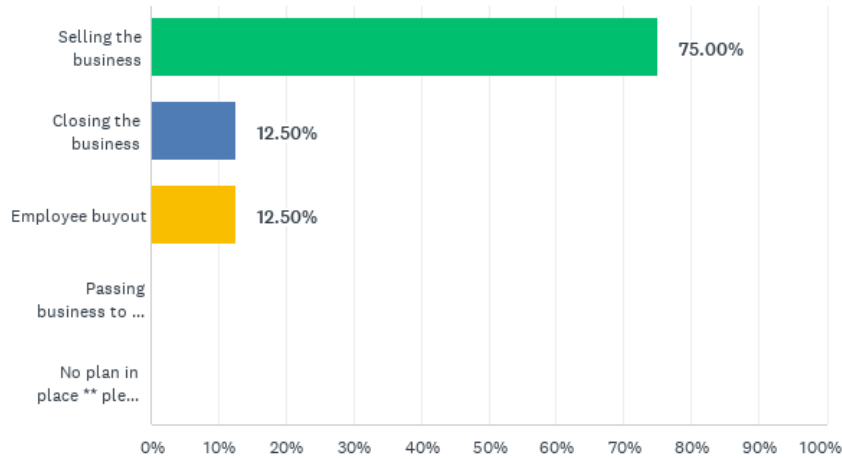


## #19 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	15.38% 8
No	84.62% 44
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>

## #20 If yes, what is your succession plan?

Answered: 8

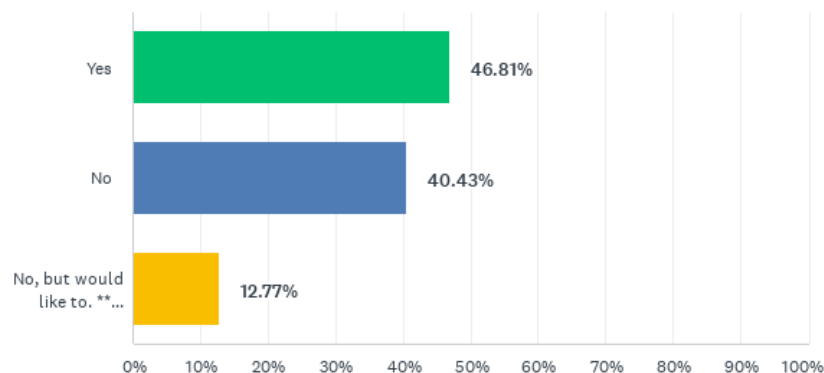


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Selling the business	75.00% 8
Closing the business	12.50% 1
Employee buyout	12.50% 1
Passing business to a family member	0.00% 0
No plan in place ** please provide contact info at end of survey for support	0.00% 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>

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

Answered: 47

Skipped: 12





## #21 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	46.81%	22
No	40.43%	19
No, but would like to. ** Please provide contact info at end of survey	12.77%	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>47</b>

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

Answered: 7

Skipped: 52

- Thankful for the support offered from the Municipality of North Grenville and their staff. They have helped me grow my business and learn more about the new digital world.
- Not getting an extension beyond January 18th on the CEBA loan was very difficult. It will take the business YEARS to recover from the damages/losses incurred since March 2020. Staffing has become a MAJOR challenge since March 2020. We offer competitive wages and hardly get any hits on our job ads.
- An increase to tourism strategy
- Don't feel the municipality has the small business success in mind, lots of obstacles and red tape.
- Our business is struggling with an absentee landlord who doesn't support necessary changes to the building we currently occupy, while asking for top dollars in rental fees
- I'm facing financial problems with the high price of everything. Finding good employees is a huge challenge.

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

Answered: 12

Skipped: 47

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Contact Name	Responses	100.00% 12
Business Name	Responses	100.00% 12
Contact Number	Responses	91.67% 11
Email	Responses	100.00% 12

## 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

W: [invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans](https://invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans) | E: [ann.weir@uclg.on.ca](mailto:ann.weir@uclg.on.ca)