

Village of Merrickville-Wolford

Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

2024 Business Survey: 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**

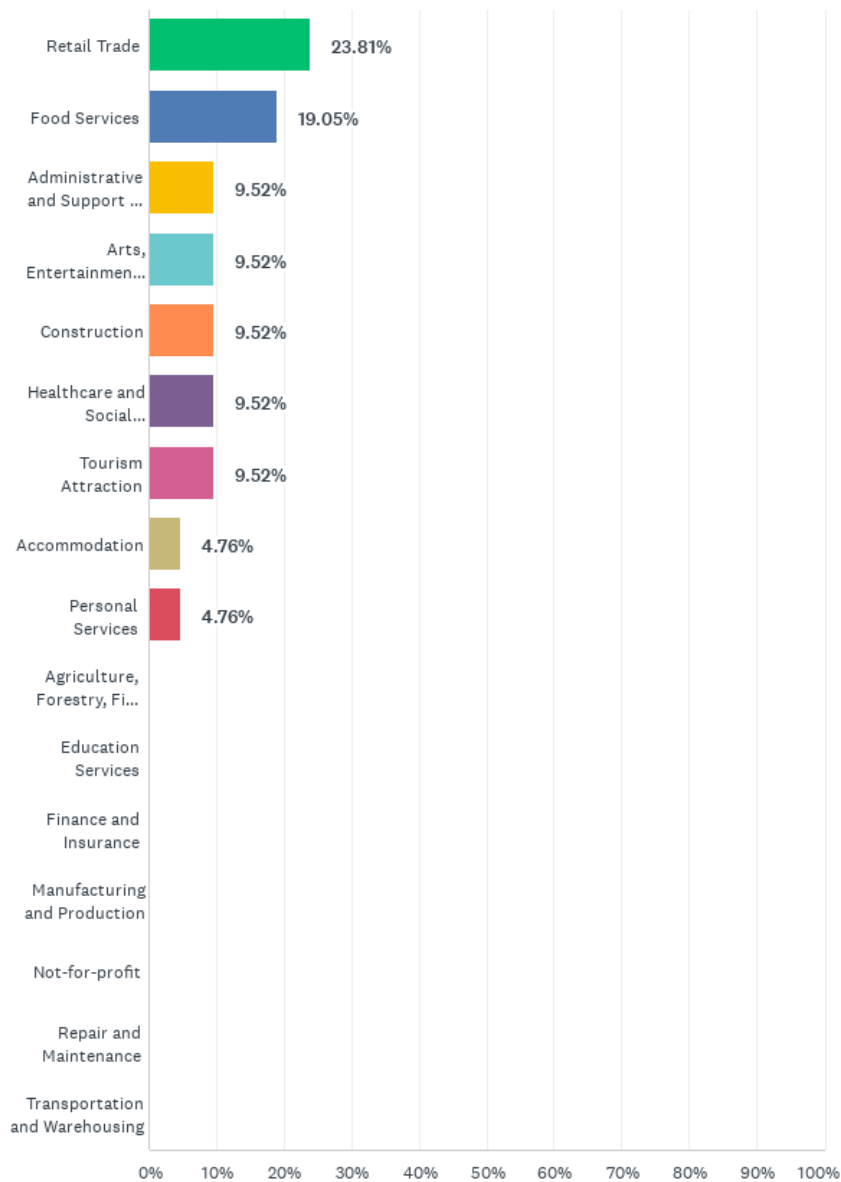


invest.leadsgrenville.com/reportsandplans

#2 What sector is your business primarily operating in?

Answered: 21

Skipped: 0



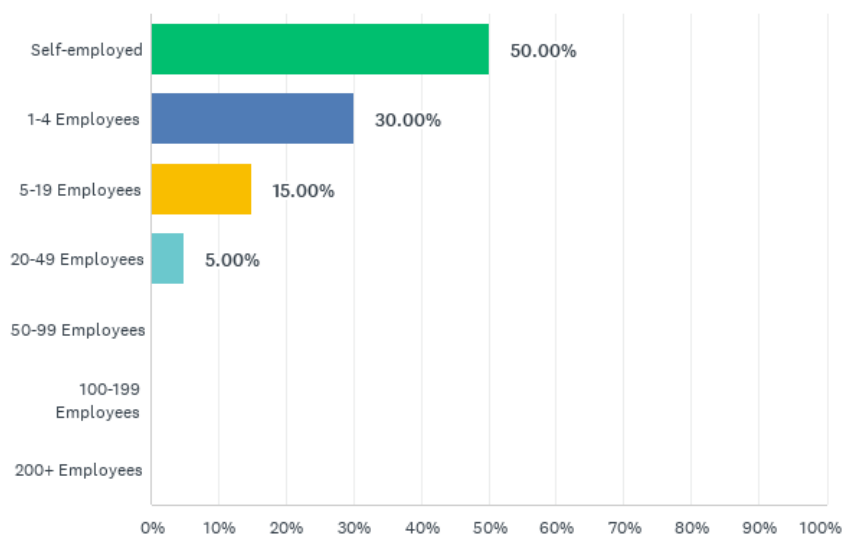
#2 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Retail Trade	23.81%	5
▼ Food Services	19.05%	4
▼ Administrative and Support - Business Services	9.52%	2
▼ Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	9.52%	2
▼ Construction	9.52%	2
▼ Healthcare and Social Assistance	9.52%	2
▼ Tourism Attraction	9.52%	2
▼ Accommodation	4.76%	1
▼ Personal Services	4.76%	1
▼ Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	0.00%	0
▼ Education Services	0.00%	0
▼ Finance and Insurance	0.00%	0
▼ Manufacturing and Production	0.00%	0
▼ Not-for-profit	0.00%	0
▼ Repair and Maintenance	0.00%	0
▼ Transportation and Warehousing	0.00%	0
TOTAL		21

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

Answered: 20

Skipped: 1



#3 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Self-employed	50.00%	10
1-4 Employees	30.00%	6
5-19 Employees	15.00%	3
20-49 Employees	5.00%	1
50-99 Employees	0.00%	0
100-199 Employees	0.00%	0
200+ Employees	0.00%	0
TOTAL		20

#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: 0

No response.

#6 For medium / large business (50 and above employees) -

Are you interested in participating in an Ottawa job fair in October?

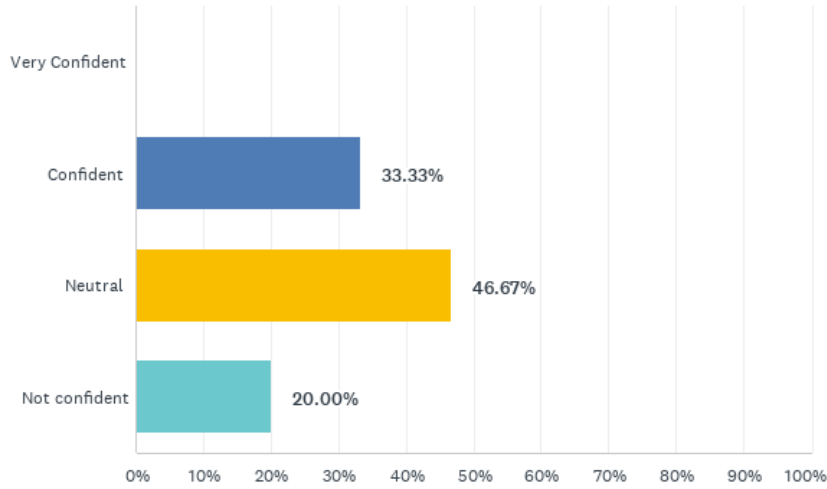
Answered: 0

- No response.

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

Answered: 15

Skipped: 6

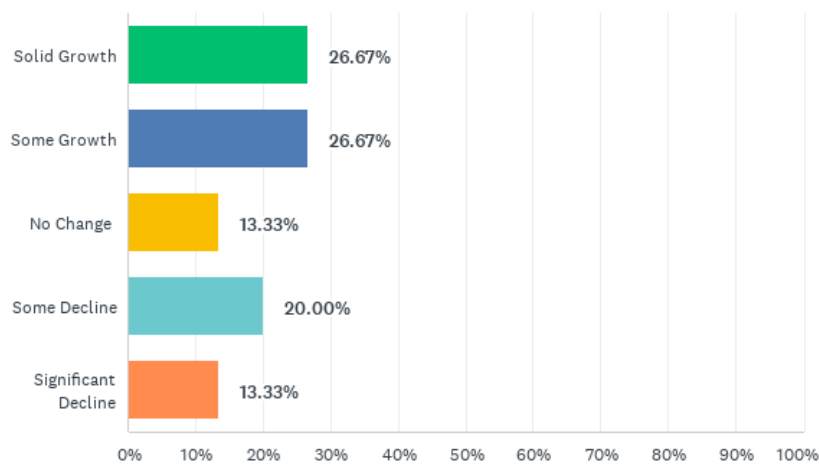


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very Confident	0.00% 0
Confident	33.33% 5
Neutral	46.67% 7
Not confident	20.00% 3
TOTAL	15

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

Answered: 15

Skipped: 6



#8 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Solid Growth	26.67% 4
▼ Some Growth	26.67% 4
▼ No Change	13.33% 2
▼ Some Decline	20.00% 3
▼ Significant Decline	13.33% 2
TOTAL	15

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

Answered: 16

Skipped: 6

	1-NOT A CHALLENGE	2	3-SOMEWHAT CHALLENGING	4	5-VERY CHALLENGING	TOTAL
▼ Increasing overhead costs	6.67% 1	0.00% 0	40.00% 6	13.33% 2	40.00% 6	15
▼ Increasing product prices	20.00% 3	13.33% 2	13.33% 2	13.33% 2	40.00% 6	15
▼ Changes in demand for your product / service	13.33% 2	33.33% 5	33.33% 5	6.67% 1	13.33% 2	15
▼ Borrowing costs	26.67% 4	0.00% 0	33.33% 5	6.67% 1	33.33% 5	15
▼ Supply chain instability	46.67% 7	13.33% 2	20.00% 3	20.00% 3	0.00% 0	15
▼ Ability to find skilled employees	33.33% 5	0.00% 0	26.67% 4	26.67% 4	13.33% 2	15
▼ Ability to offer competitive wages and benefits	26.67% 4	6.67% 1	26.67% 4	26.67% 4	13.33% 2	15
▼ Ability to retain employees	53.33% 8	26.67% 4	20.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15
▼ Absenteeism due to reliable child care	73.33% 11	6.67% 1	0.00% 0	13.33% 2	6.67% 1	15
▼ Repayment of CEBA loan	64.29% 9	7.14% 1	7.14% 1	7.14% 1	14.29% 2	14

Comments:

- The interest rates on the Covid loans has doubled and combined with decreased consumer spending because of a lagging economy it is almost impossible to make our monthly payments.

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

Answered: 14

Skipped: 7

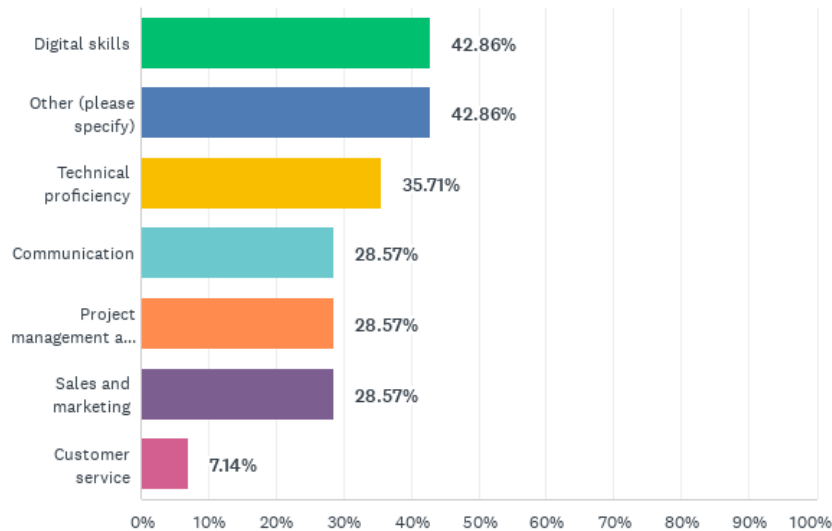
	1-NOT A CHALLENGE	2	3-SOMEWHAT CHALLENGING	4	5- VERY CHALLENGING	TOTAL
Available housing / accommodation	64.29% 9	7.14% 1	14.29% 2	0.00% 0	14.29% 2	14
Available daycare	64.29% 9	7.14% 1	0.00% 0	7.14% 1	21.43% 3	14
Cost of Living ie. inflation	14.29% 2	7.14% 1	28.57% 4	7.14% 1	42.86% 6	14
Public transportation	42.86% 6	0.00% 0	7.14% 1	0.00% 0	50.00% 7	14
Caring for elders	71.43% 10	7.14% 1	7.14% 1	7.14% 1	7.14% 1	14

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

(Choose all that apply)

Answered: 14

Skipped: 7



#11 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Digital skills	42.86% 6
Other (please specify)	42.86% 6
Technical proficiency	35.71% 5
Communication	28.57% 4
Project management and organization	28.57% 4
Sales and marketing	28.57% 4
Customer service	7.14% 1
Total Respondents: 14	

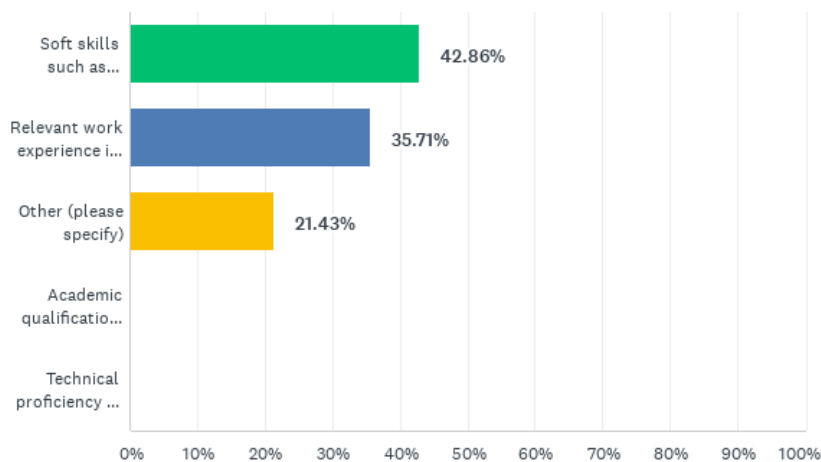
Comments:

- No employees
- Experience
- Lack of dedication and devotion to the employer and the employment agreement.
- We have laid off all staff. There is enough income to support payroll with decreased consumer spending and increased cost of doing business.
- Wedding venue so I take care of all that
- Technology advancements

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

Answered: 14

Skipped: 7



#12 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Soft skills such as teamwork and communication	42.86%	6
Relevant work experience in a similar role	35.71%	5
Other (please specify)	21.43%	3
Academic qualifications and certifications	0.00%	0
Technical proficiency and specific job-related skills	0.00%	0
TOTAL		14

Other, please specify:

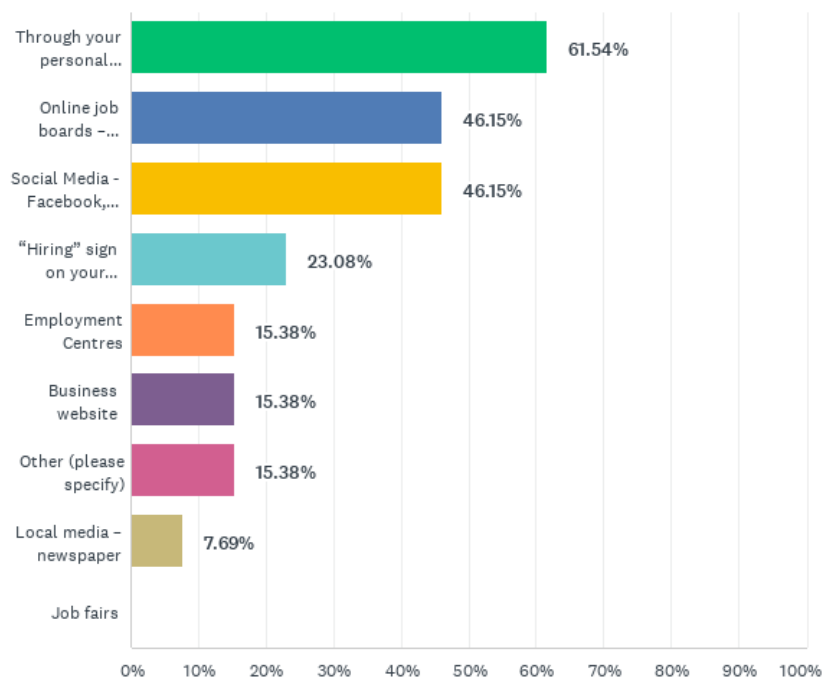
- No paid employees.
- Finding services in Canadian dollars.
- We aren't generating enough income to support staff.

#13 What methods do you utilize for employee recruitment?

(Choose all that apply)

Answered: 13

Skipped: 8



#13 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Through your personal network	61.54% 8
Online job boards - Indeed, LinkedIn	46.15% 6
Social Media - Facebook, Instagram	46.15% 6
"Hiring" sign on your premises	23.08% 3
Employment Centres	15.38% 2
Business website	15.38% 2
Other (please specify) Responses	15.38% 2
Local media - newspaper	7.69% 1
Job fairs	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 13	

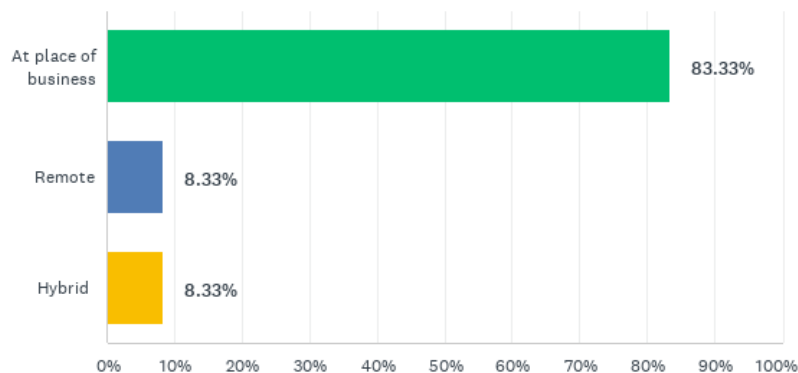
Other, please specify:

- Resumes

#14 What type of work environment do you offer?

Answered: 12

Skipped: 9

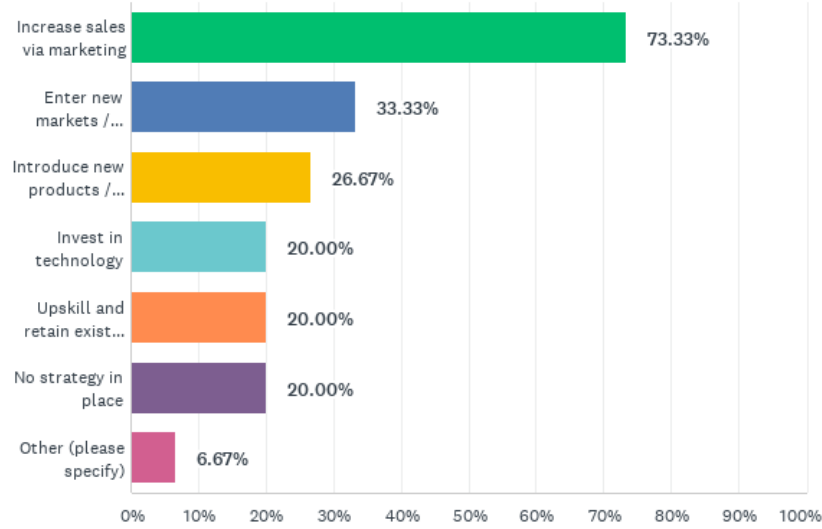


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
At place of business	83.33% 10
Remote	8.33% 1
Hybrid	8.33% 1
TOTAL	12

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

Answered: 15

Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Increase sales via marketing	73.33% 11
▼ Enter new markets / export	33.33% 5
▼ Introduce new products / services	26.67% 4
▼ Invest in technology	20.00% 3
▼ Upskill and retain existing talent	20.00% 3
▼ No strategy in place	20.00% 3
▼ Other (please specify) Responses	6.67% 1
Total Respondents: 15	

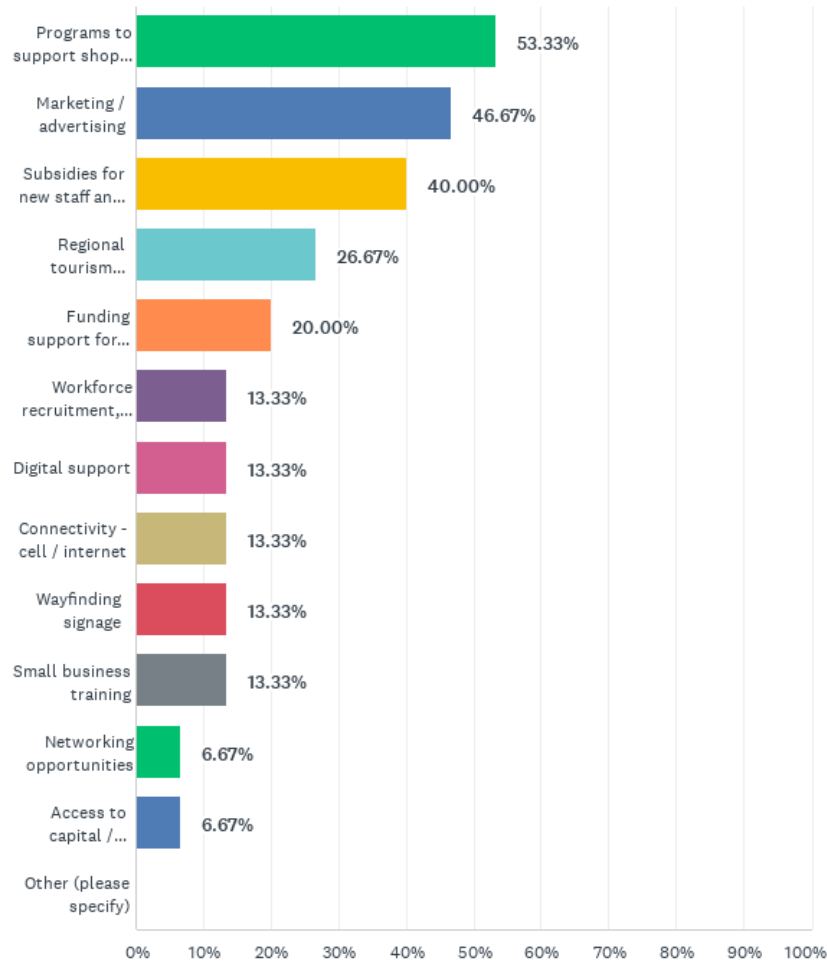
Other, please specify:

- We are just trying to pay our monthly expenses at the moment.

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

Answered: 15

Skipped: 6



#16 continued...

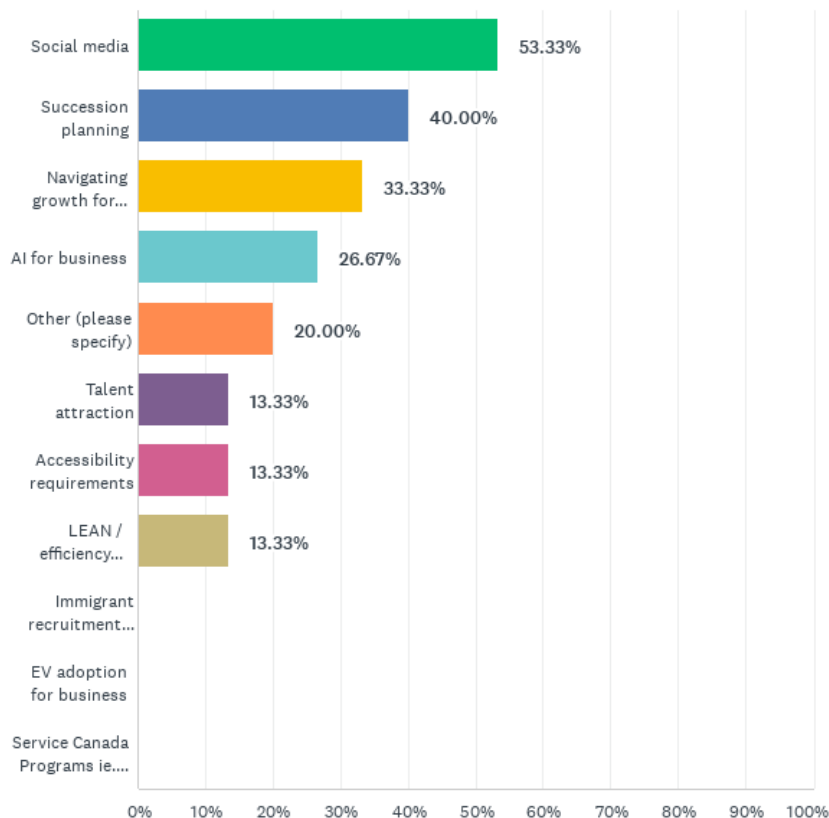
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Programs to support shop local	53.33%	8
Marketing / advertising	46.67%	7
Subsidies for new staff and training	40.00%	6
Regional tourism destination development - products, marketing	26.67%	4
Funding support for business expansion	20.00%	3
Workforce recruitment, hiring and resourcing staff	13.33%	2
Digital support	13.33%	2
Connectivity - cell / internet	13.33%	2
Wayfinding signage	13.33%	2
Small business training	13.33%	2
Networking opportunities	6.67%	1
Access to capital / business loans	6.67%	1
Other (please specify)	Responses 0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 15		

#17 What type of workshops / training would you like to see offered?

(Choose 3)

Answered: 15

Skipped: 6



#17 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Social media	53.33% 8
Succession planning	40.00% 6
Navigating growth for small business	33.33% 5
AI for business	26.67% 4
Other (please specify) Responses	20.00% 3
Talent attraction	13.33% 2
Accessibility requirements	13.33% 2
LEAN / efficiency training	13.33% 2
Immigrant recruitment programs	0.00% 0
EV adoption for business	0.00% 0
Service Canada Programs ie. work sharing, record of employment	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 15	

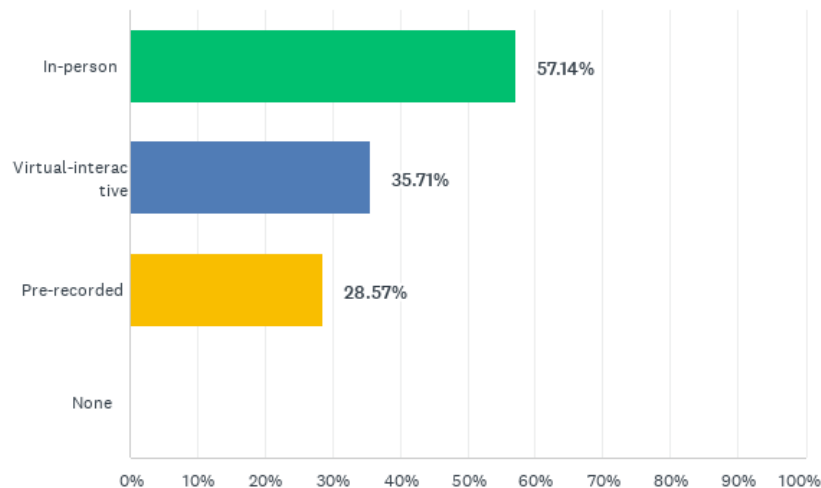
Other, please specify:

- How to survive high interest rates on debit accumulated because of repeated mandatory lockdowns.
- How a small business can survive when the government t refused to extend the CEBA loan when small businesses are already drowning in debt.

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

Answered: 14

Skipped: 7

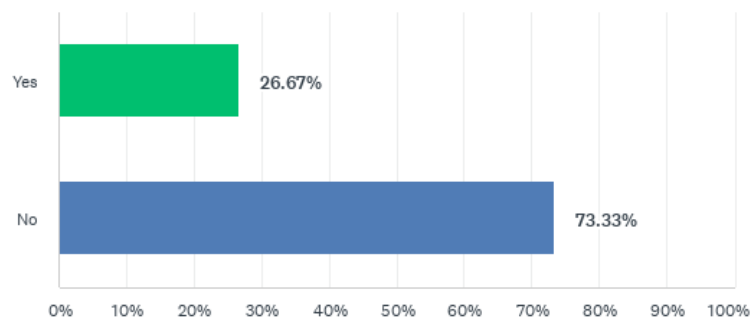


#18 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
In-person	57.14% 8
Virtual-interactive	35.71% 5
Pre-recorded	28.57% 4
None	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 14	

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

Answered: 15

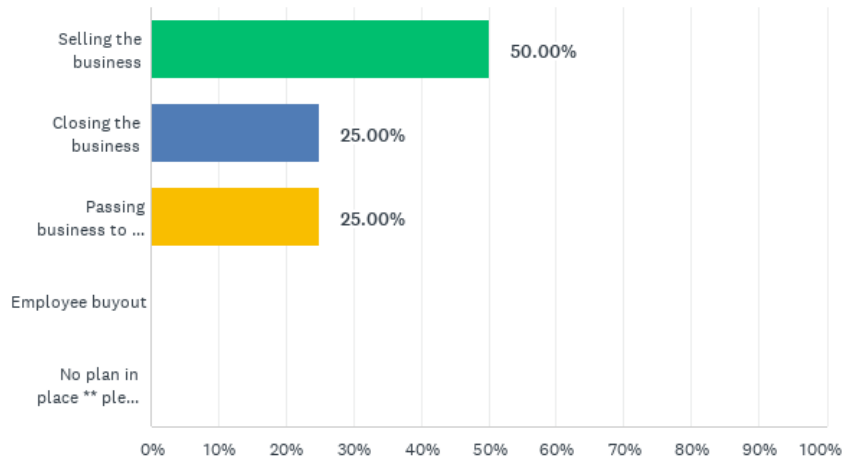


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	26.67% 4
No	73.33% 11
TOTAL	15

#20 If yes, what is your succession plan?

Answered: 4

Skipped: 17

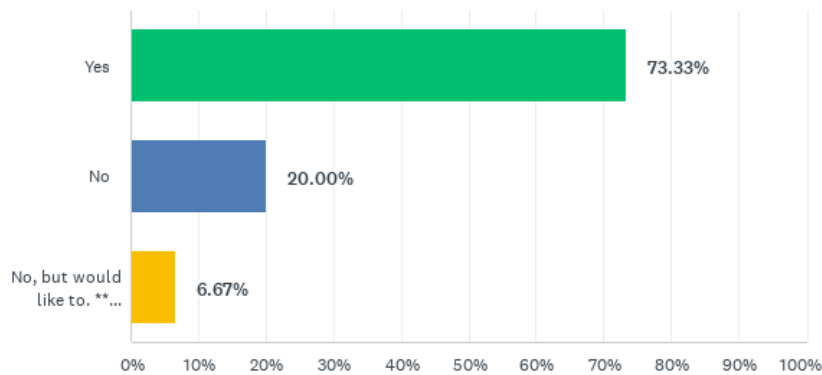


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Selling the business	50.00% 2
▼ Closing the business	25.00% 1
▼ Passing business to a family member	25.00% 1
▼ Employee buyout	0.00% 0
▼ No plan in place ** please provide contact info at end of survey for support	0.00% 0
TOTAL	4

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

Answered: 15

Skipped: 6



#21 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	73.33% 11
No	20.00% 3
No, but would like to. ** Please provide contact info at end of survey	6.67% 1
TOTAL	15

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

Answered: 3 Skipped: 18

- Increased interest rates on the debit accumulated during mandatory lockdowns is unsustainable. Consumer spending is down - people are struggling to meet their basic needs leaving little left to spend on extras. We have no choice but to sell our property to pay back debit as the monthly payments are unsustainable. The water/sewer bills are outrageously high. Energy bills have doubled. We can't afford to stay in business.
- Consumer spending is down over 50% not just with our business but with all the others we've spoken to. Our small towns and villages will be forever changed if small family businesses are lost, replaced with big box stores. Our municipalities need to lobby the government to take the pressure off loan repayment. We haven't come close to reaching pre-pandemic sales yet with a dragging economy. Consumers have no money left over after basic expenses to spend. The government's refusal to extend the CEBA loan is going to cause a bloodbath of small business bankruptcies. We don't need your help expanding. We need you to fight for us to stay viable until consumers feel financially confident spending money again.

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

Answered: 2 Skipped: 19

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Contact Name	Responses 100.00% 2
Business Name	Responses 100.00% 2
Contact Number	Responses 100.00% 2
Email	Responses 100.00% 2

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 | E: ann.weir@uclg.on.ca