

Village of Westport

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

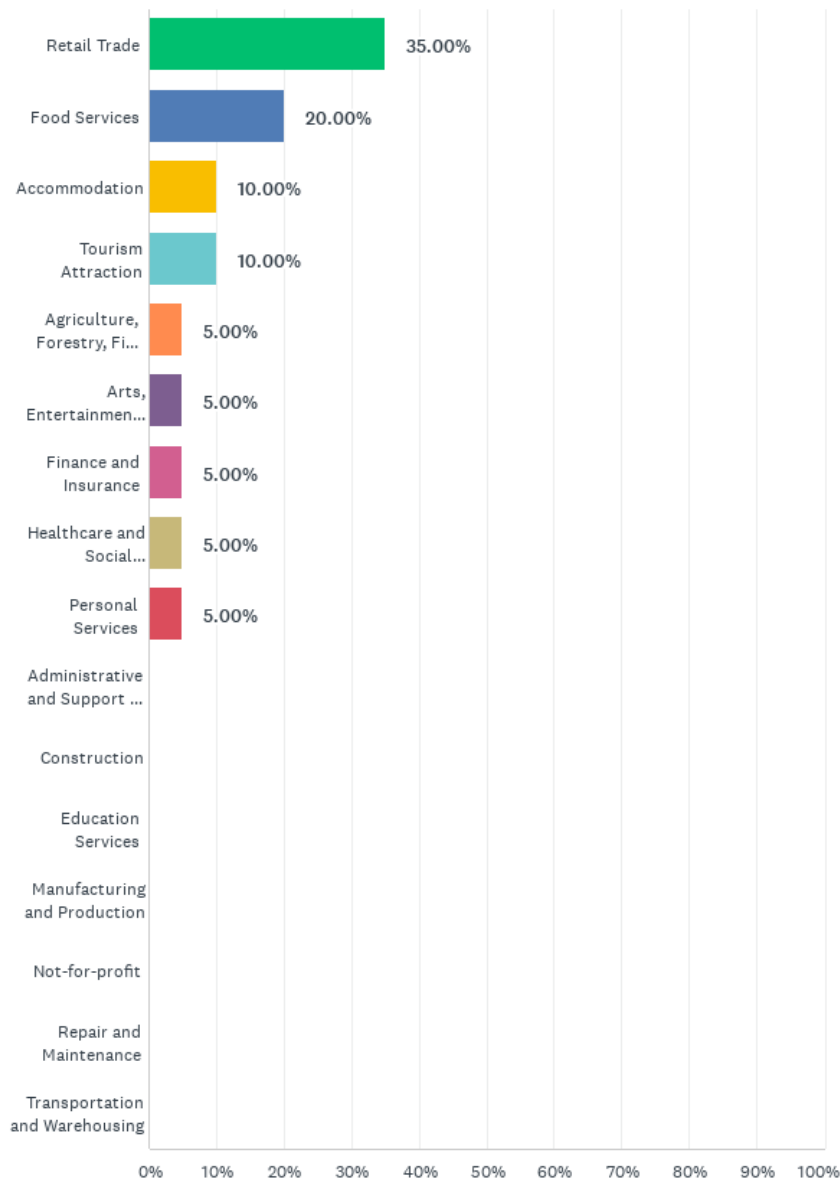


invest.leadsgrenville.com/reportsandplans

#2 What sector is your business primarily operating in?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 1



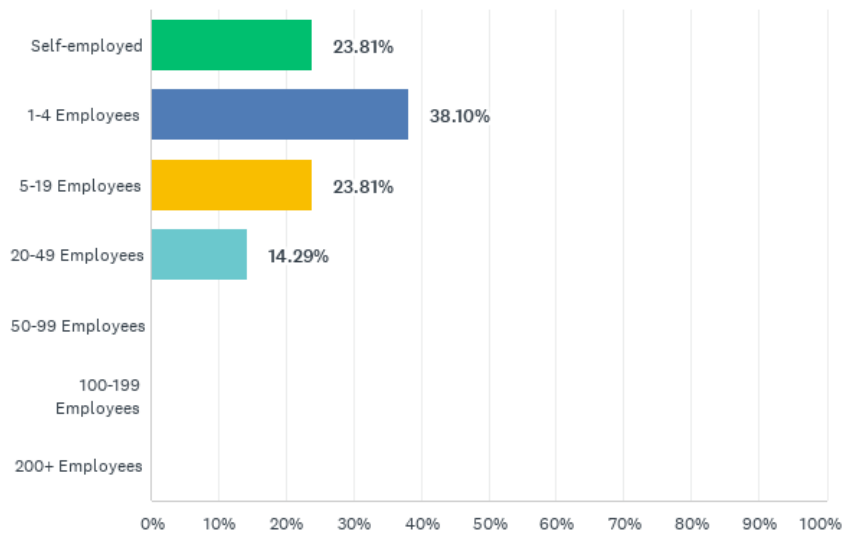
#2 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Retail Trade	35.00% 7
Food Services	20.00% 4
Accommodation	10.00% 2
Tourism Attraction	10.00% 2
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	5.00% 1
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	5.00% 1
Finance and Insurance	5.00% 1
Healthcare and Social Assistance	5.00% 1
Personal Services	5.00% 1
Administrative and Support - Business Services	0.00% 0
Construction	0.00% 0
Education Services	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	20

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

Answered: 21

Skipped: 0



#3 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Self-employed	23.81% 5
1-4 Employees	38.10% 8
5-19 Employees	23.81% 5
20-49 Employees	14.29% 3
50-99 Employees	0.00% 0
100-199 Employees	0.00% 0
200+ Employees	0.00% 0
TOTAL	21

#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?

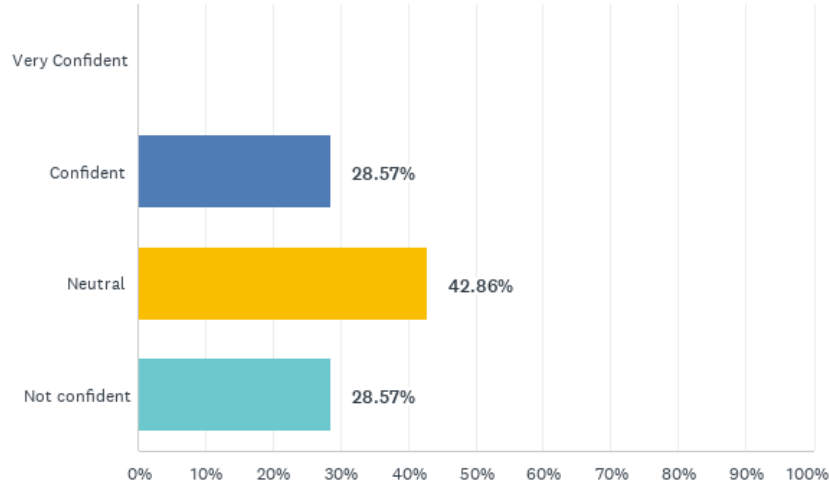
Answered: 0

No response.

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

Answered: 14

Skipped: 7

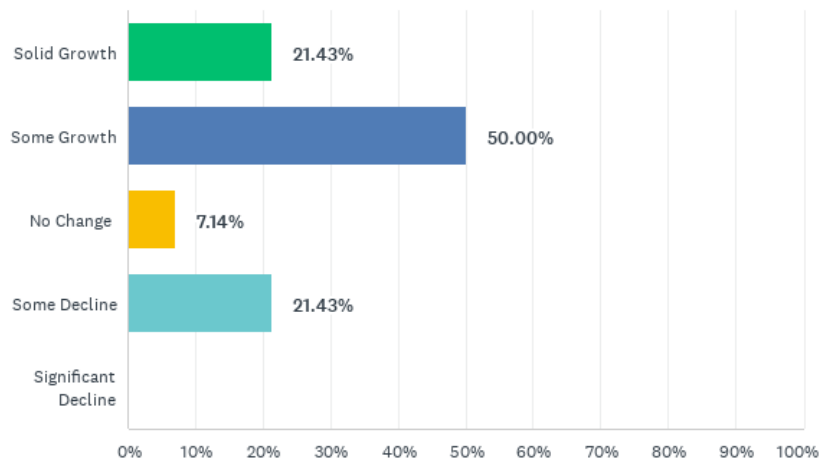


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very Confident	0.00% 0
Confident	28.57% 4
Neutral	42.86% 6
Not confident	28.57% 4
TOTAL	14

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

Answered: 14

Skipped: 7



#8 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Solid Growth	21.43% 3
Some Growth	50.00% 7
No Change	7.14% 1
Some Decline	21.43% 3
Significant Decline	0.00% 0
TOTAL	14

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

Answered: 14 Skipped: 7

	1-NOT A CHALLENGE	2	3-SOMEWHAT CHALLENGING	4	5-VERY CHALLENGING	TOTAL
Increasing overhead costs	0.00% 0	7.14% 1	35.71% 5	7.14% 1	50.00% 7	14
Increasing product prices	7.14% 1	0.00% 0	21.43% 3	14.29% 2	57.14% 8	14
Changes in demand for your product / service	14.29% 2	14.29% 2	50.00% 7	21.43% 3	0.00% 0	14
Borrowing costs	35.71% 5	14.29% 2	21.43% 3	0.00% 0	28.57% 4	14
Repayment of CEBA loan	71.43% 10	7.14% 1	7.14% 1	7.14% 1	7.14% 1	14
Supply chain instability	14.29% 2	7.14% 1	35.71% 5	35.71% 5	7.14% 1	14
Ability to find skilled employees	14.29% 2	0.00% 0	21.43% 3	35.71% 5	28.57% 4	14
Ability to offer competitive wages and benefits	14.29% 2	0.00% 0	35.71% 5	42.86% 6	7.14% 1	14
Ability to retain employees	14.29% 2	7.14% 1	35.71% 5	35.71% 5	7.14% 1	14
Absenteeism due to reliable child care	64.29% 9	7.14% 1	28.57% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	14

- Municipal government...toooo big, uneducated
- Seasonal flux is a high challenge of a tourist area (very busy in summer, very quiet in winter)
- Off season support of our business

#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	21.43% 3	0.00% 0	42.86% 6	14.29% 2	21.43% 3	14
Available daycare	46.15% 6	15.38% 2	30.77% 4	0.00% 0	7.69% 1	13
Cost of Living ie. inflation	7.69% 1	0.00% 0	30.77% 4	15.38% 2	46.15% 6	13
Public transportation	35.71% 5	0.00% 0	21.43% 3	0.00% 0	42.86% 6	14
Caring for elders	38.46% 5	7.69% 1	46.15% 6	0.00% 0	7.69% 1	13

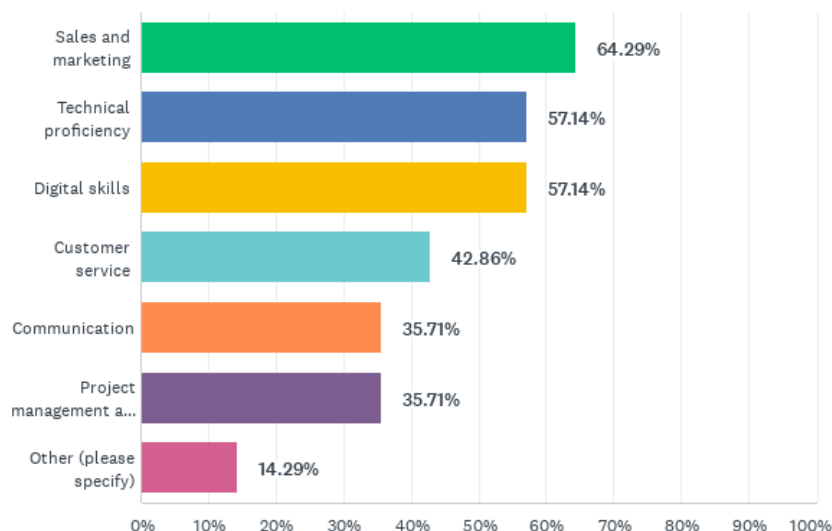
- Sustaining full time employment during slow season is very challenging keeping competitive with wages/perks
- I employ 1 part time individual
- Finding younger workers that aren't nearly at retirement age

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

(Choose all that apply)

Answered: 14

Skipped: 7



#11 continued...

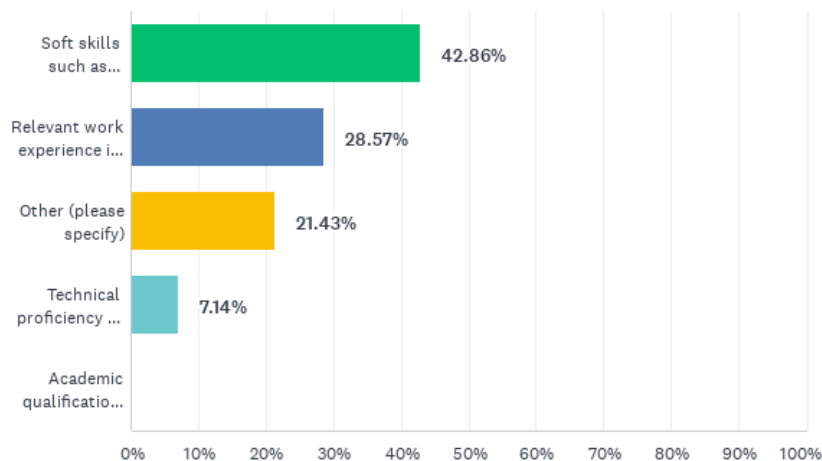
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Sales and marketing	64.29%	9
Technical proficiency	57.14%	8
Digital skills	57.14%	8
Customer service	42.86%	6
Communication	35.71%	5
Project management and organization	35.71%	5
Other (please specify)	Responses 14.29%	2
Total Respondents: 14		

- Leadership

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

Answered: 14

Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Soft skills such as teamwork and communication	42.86%	6
Relevant work experience in a similar role	28.57%	4
Other (please specify)	Responses 21.43%	3
Technical proficiency and specific job-related skills	7.14%	1
Academic qualifications and certifications	0.00%	0
TOTAL		14

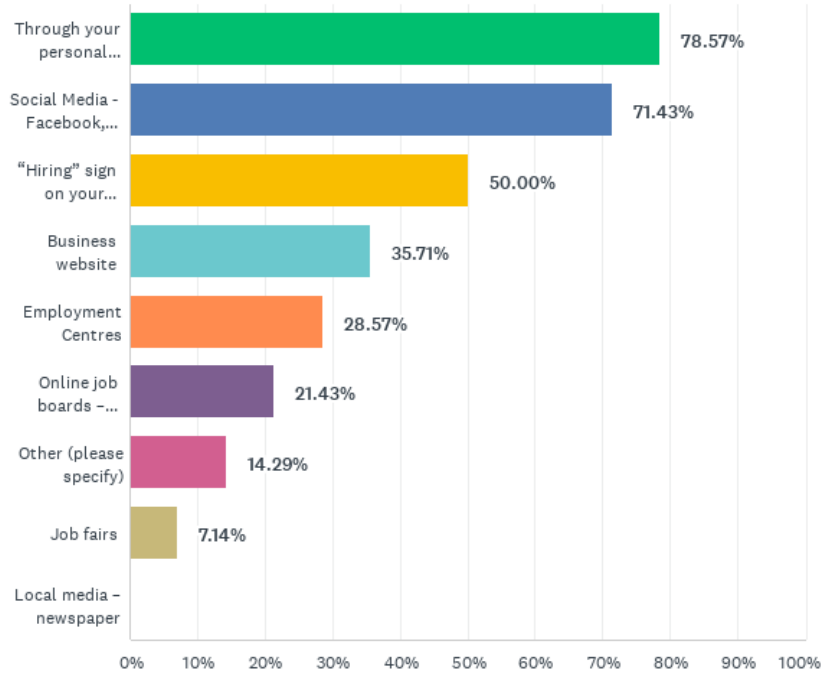
- A pulse. The market is so tight we basically hire anyone.

#13 What methods do you utilize for employee recruitment?

(Choose all that apply)

Answered: 14

Skipped: 7



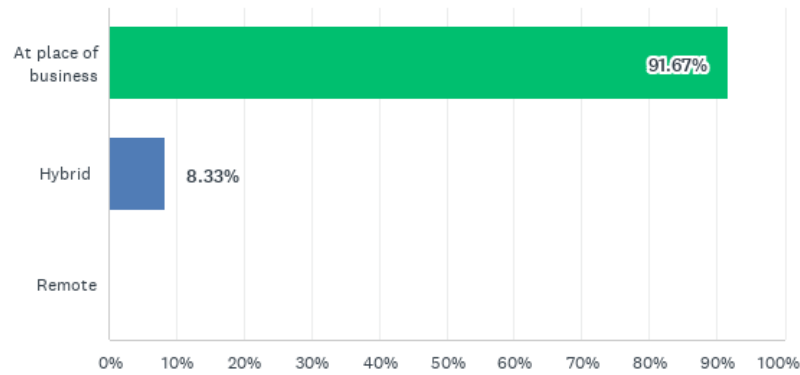
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Through your personal network	78.57% 11
Social Media - Facebook, Instagram	71.43% 10
"Hiring" sign on your premises	50.00% 7
Business website	35.71% 5
Employment Centres	28.57% 4
Online job boards - Indeed, LinkedIn	21.43% 3
Other (please specify)	Responses 14.29% 2
Job fairs	7.14% 1
Local media - newspaper	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 14	

- N/A

#14 What type of work environment do you offer?

Answered: 12

Skipped: 9

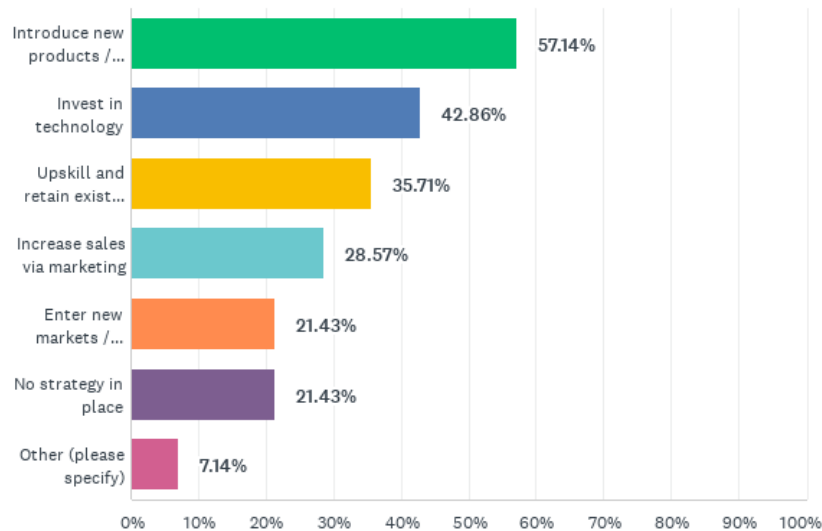


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
At place of business	91.67% 11
Hybrid	8.33% 1
Remote	0.00% 0
TOTAL	12

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

Answered: 14

Skipped: 7



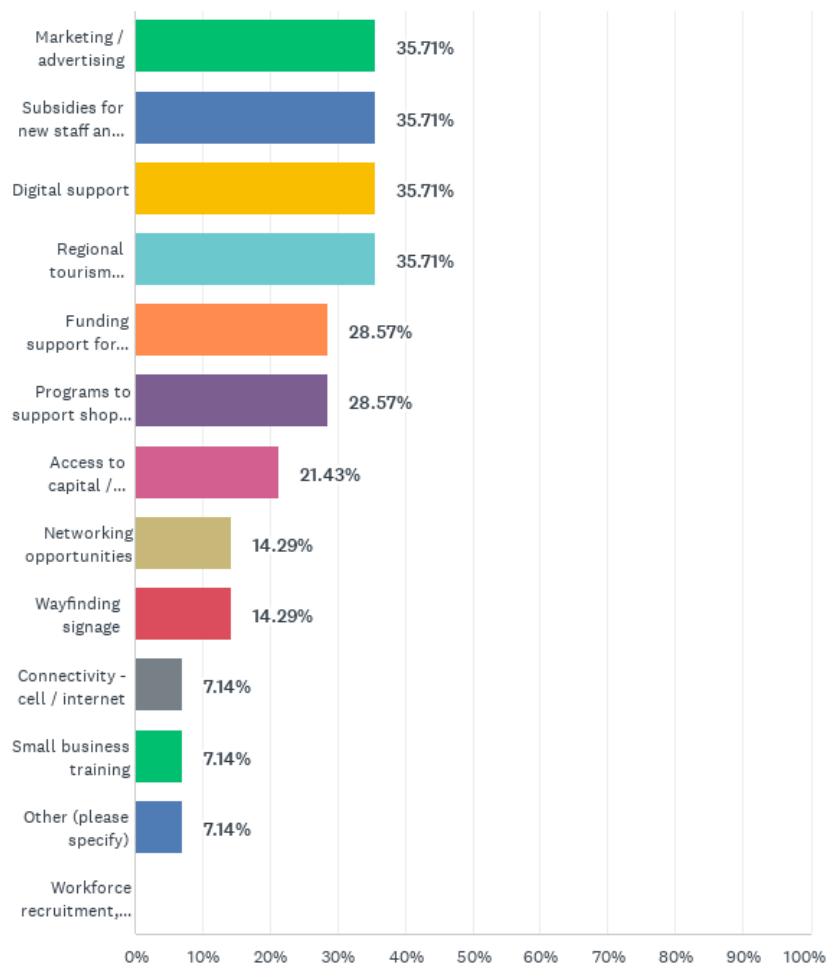
#15 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Introduce new products / services	57.14%	8
Invest in technology	42.86%	6
Upskill and retain existing talent	35.71%	5
Increase sales via marketing	28.57%	4
Enter new markets / export	21.43%	3
No strategy in place	21.43%	3
Other (please specify)	Responses 7.14%	1
Total Respondents: 14		

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

Answered: 14

Skipped: 7



#16 continued...

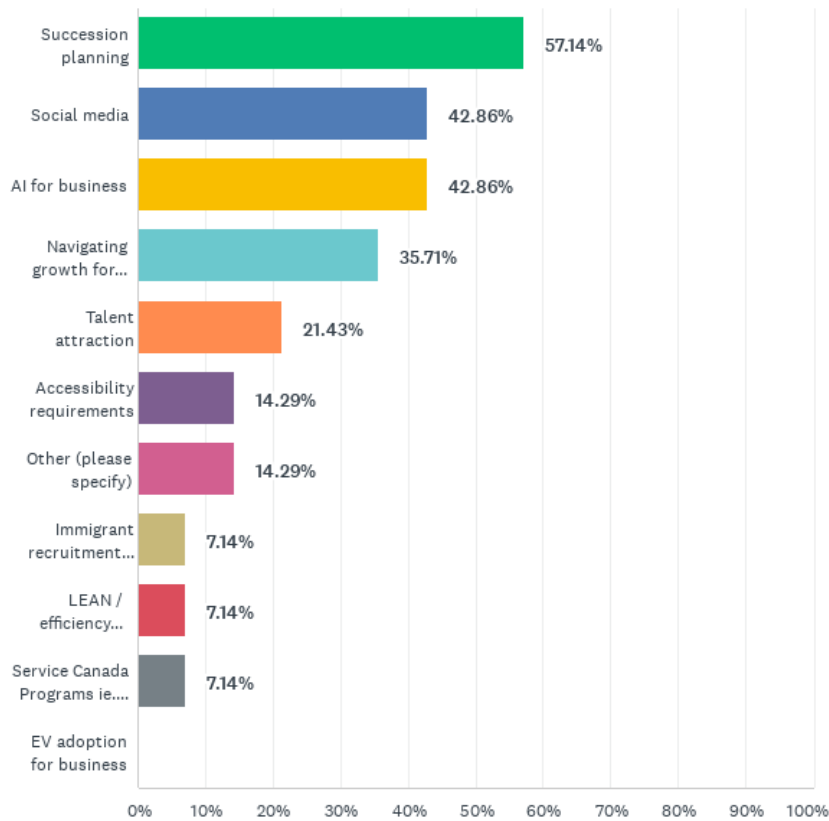
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Marketing / advertising	35.71% 5
Subsidies for new staff and training	35.71% 5
Digital support	35.71% 5
Regional tourism destination development - products, marketing	35.71% 5
Funding support for business expansion	28.57% 4
Programs to support shop local	28.57% 4
Access to capital / business loans	21.43% 3
Networking opportunities	14.29% 2
Wayfinding signage	14.29% 2
Connectivity - cell / internet	7.14% 1
Small business training	7.14% 1
Other (please specify) Responses	7.14% 1
Workforce recruitment, hiring and resourcing staff	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 14	

- Housing, housing, housing. Did I mention housing?

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

Answered: 14

Skipped: 7



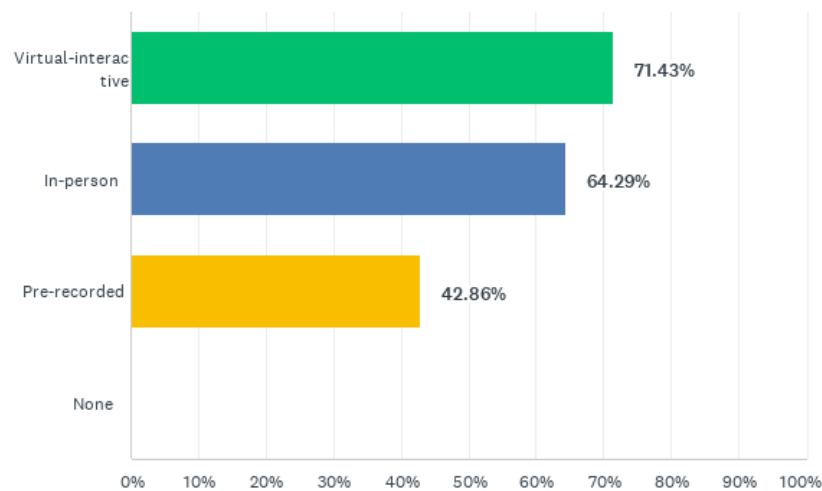
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Succession planning	57.14% 8
Social media	42.86% 6
AI for business	42.86% 6
Navigating growth for small business	35.71% 5
Talent attraction	21.43% 3
Accessibility requirements	14.29% 2
Other (please specify)	14.29% 2
Immigrant recruitment programs	7.14% 1
LEAN / efficiency training	7.14% 1
Service Canada Programs ie. work sharing, record of employment	7.14% 1
EV adoption for business	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 14	

- Customer service programs
- How to attract labour to markets with no housing

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

Answered: 14

Skipped: 7



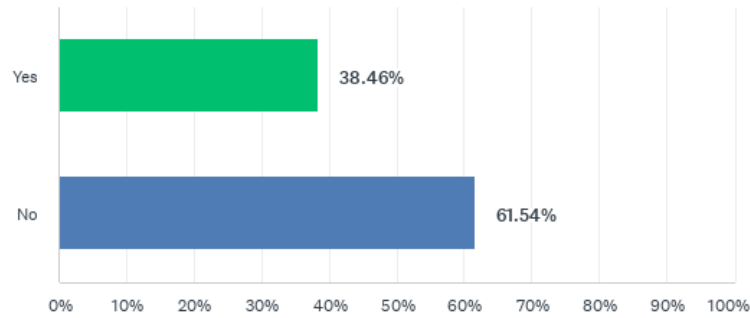
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Virtual-interactive	71.43% 10
In-person	64.29% 9
Pre-recorded	42.86% 6
None	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 14	

- All of this is a waste of time if you don't address housing. I'm not doing any major capital investing in my business as long as there's no affordable housing in my community. Minimum income needed to live in Westport is a school teacher's salary.

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

Answered: 13

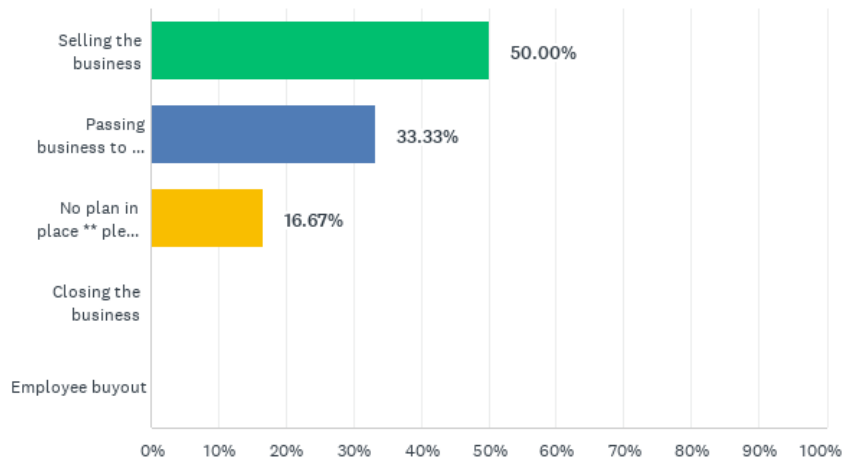
Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	38.46% 5
No	61.54% 8
TOTAL	13

#20 If yes, what is your succession plan?

Answered: 6



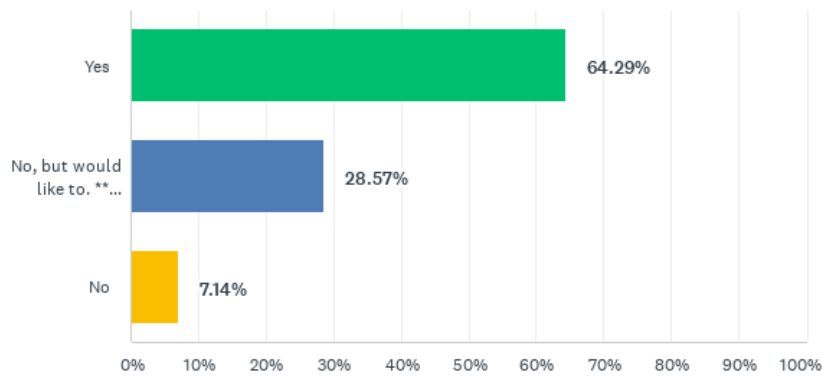
#20 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Selling the business	50.00% 3
Passing business to a family member	33.33% 2
No plan in place ** please provide contact info at end of survey for support	16.67% 1
Closing the business	0.00% 0
Employee buyout	0.00% 0
TOTAL	6

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

Answered: 14

Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	64.29% 9
No, but would like to. ** Please provide contact info at end of survey	28.57% 4
No	7.14% 1
TOTAL	14

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

Answered: 2

Skipped: 19

- Brick and mortar stores, independently owned by locals, and selling retail goods like clothing, jewelry, gift items etc. are being undermined in the recent explosion of craft and farmers' markets in small and medium-sized towns on weekends and across the warmer months at festivals. These markets have become prolific in recent years as more people look to add another income source to help make ends meet. Often the market promoters/owners as well as the vendors are not subject to municipal fees or tax collection requirements. In addition, these markets are allowed to advertise on social media pages which do not allow brick and mortar stores to do the same. This creates an unfair playing field. While weekend markets can be a great draw for a small town, they can also divert shoppers away from the downtown stores, and they tend to be perceived as less expensive sales-tax-free "supporting local growers and makers" alternatives. Fees for the smaller market vendors tend to be small. A town that doesn't promote and help its brick and mortars but is all gung-ho to encourage more craft festivals and markets is in danger of ending up with a hollowed-out shopping core that looks dismally unattractive.
- I am actively trying to sell the store because the county and municipality aren't listening and there's no prospect of having access to a work force to support the growth of my business.

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

Answered: 4

Skipped: 17

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Contact Name	Responses	75.00%	3
Business Name	Responses	75.00%	3
Contact Number	Responses	75.00%	3
Email	Responses	100.00%	4

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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