Village of Merrickville-Wolford
Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes
2022 Business Survey: Report

November 30, 2022

Survey Timeframe: October 4 – October 30, 2022

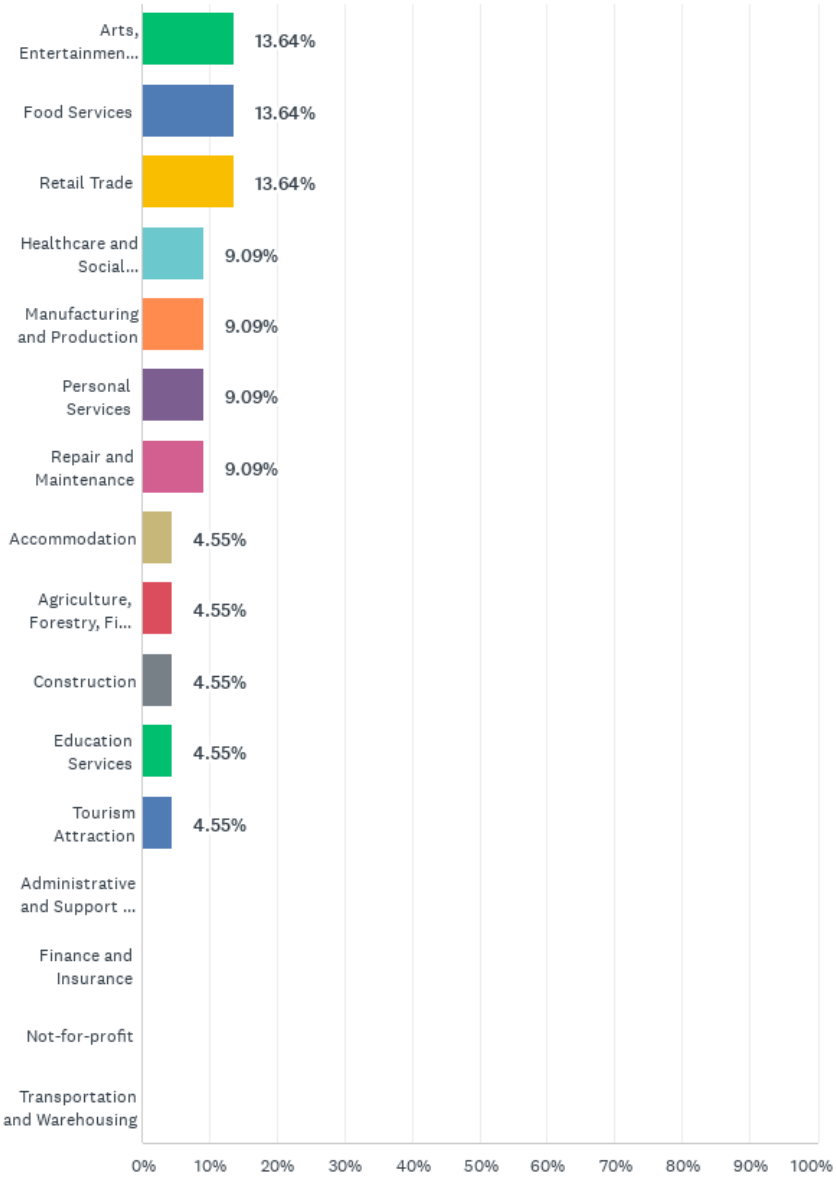
Prepared by:

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

invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans

#2 What sector is your business primarily operating in?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0

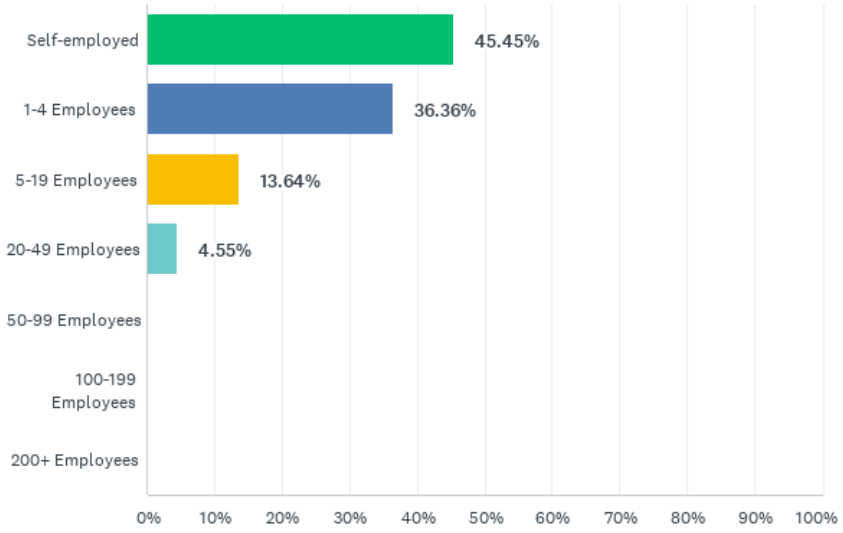


#2 continued…

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	13.64%	3
Food Services	13.64%	3
Retail Trade	13.64%	3
Healthcare and Social Assistance	9.09%	2
Manufacturing and Production	9.09%	2
Personal Services	9.09%	2
Repair and Maintenance	9.09%	2
Accommodation	4.55%	1
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	4.55%	1
Construction	4.55%	1
Education Services	4.55%	1
Tourism Attraction	4.55%	1
Administrative and Support - Business Services	0.00%	0
Finance and Insurance	0.00%	0
Not-for-profit	0.00%	0
Transportation and Warehousing	0.00%	0
TOTAL		22

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

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0

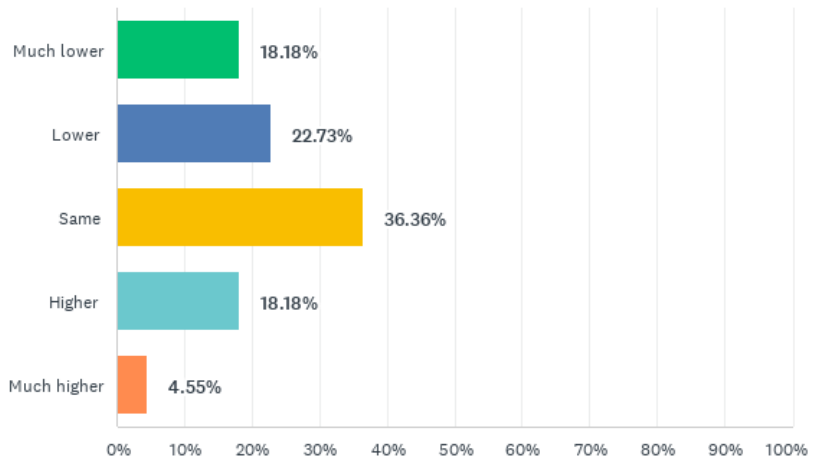


#3 continued…

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Self-employed	45.45%	10
1-4 Employees	36.36%	8
5-19 Employees	13.64%	3
20-49 Employees	4.55%	1
50-99 Employees	0.00%	0
100-199 Employees	0.00%	0
200+ Employees	0.00%	0
TOTAL		22

#4 Where is your business activity level today, compared with pre-COVID levels?

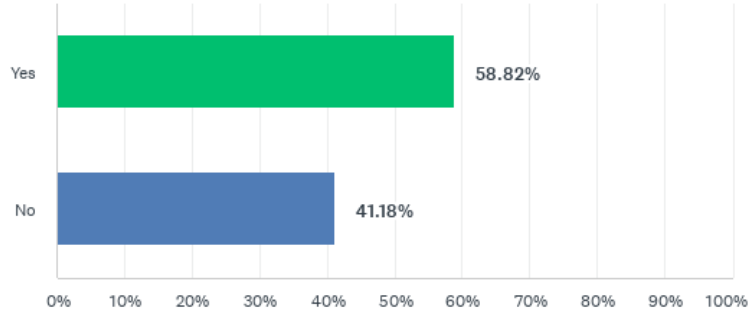
Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Much lower	18.18%	4
Lower	22.73%	5
Same	36.36%	8
Higher	18.18%	4
Much higher	4.55%	1
TOTAL		22

#5 If your business is growing, are you confident your demand levels will continue?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 5

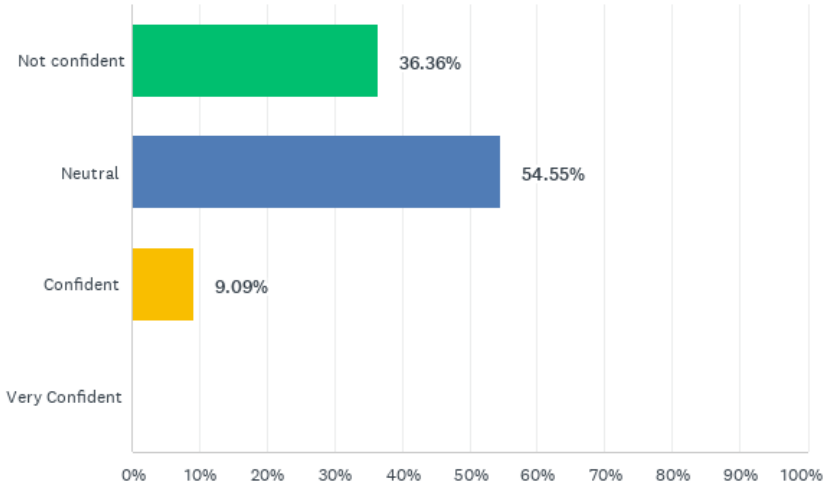


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	58.82%	10
No	41.18%	7
Total Respondents: 17		

- I just changed location to a store rental on St. Lawrence Street so this increases my walk-in sales.
- Foot traffic has decreased on our street.
- Wedding & events venue, decor rentals and cakes so I hope so.
- Demands levels will continue for my business if I spend more time networking and reaching out. So actually, the answer would be "yes". That being said I am working full time with no time to network or reach out due to my workload. The workload I have is enough to cover costs and barely profit. So, it is like a treadmill at the moment.

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

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0

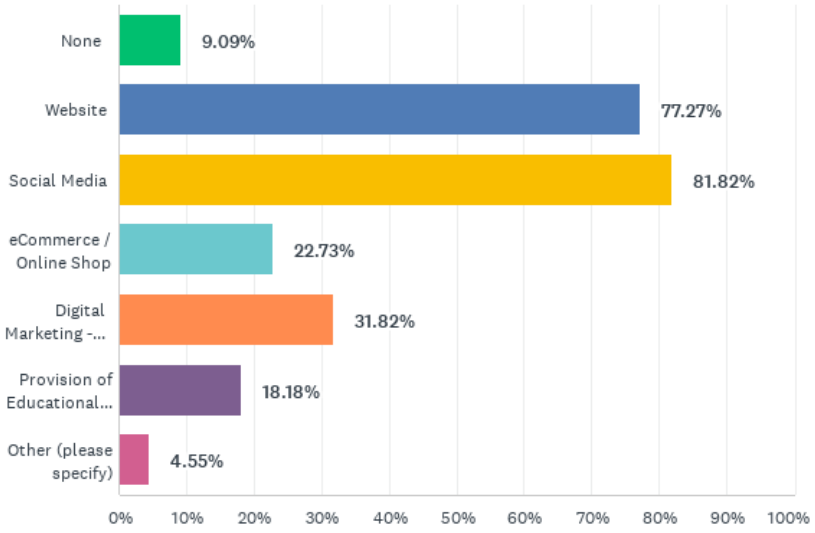


#6 continued…

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not confident	36.36%	8
Neutral	54.55%	12
Confident	9.09%	2
Very Confident	0.00%	0
TOTAL		22

#7 What type of online presence does your company have? (choose all that apply)

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0

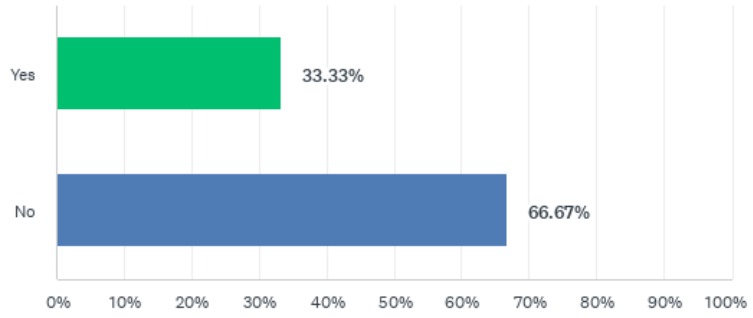


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
None		9.09%	2
Website		77.27%	17
Social Media		81.82%	18
eCommerce / Online Shop		22.73%	5
Digital Marketing - Advertising / Email		31.82%	7
Provision of Educational Webinars		18.18%	4
Other (please specify)	Responses	4.55%	1
Total Respondents: 22			

- Educational platforms like Applyboard, etc.

#8 Would you like to receive assistance with your online presence (website, social media, e-Commerce / online shop, digital marketing)? Please provide your contact information in #16.

Answered: 21 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	33.33%	7
No	66.67%	14
TOTAL		21

#9 Identify your biggest challenges using the rating scale for each item, with 1 being smallest and 10 being your biggest challenge.

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
Increasing product prices	9.52% 2	4.76% 1	4.76% 1	14.29% 3	9.52% 2	4.76% 1	9.52% 2	14.29% 3	19.05% 4	9.52% 2	21
Supply chain	9.52% 2	4.76% 1	0.00% 0	9.52% 2	19.05% 4	9.52% 2	9.52% 2	14.29% 3	19.05% 4	4.76% 1	21
Labour force	25.00% 5	10.00% 2	5.00% 1	10.00% 2	5.00% 1	5.00% 1	0.00% 0	10.00% 2	15.00% 3	15.00% 3	20
Changes in your product demand	9.09% 2	13.64% 3	4.55% 1	13.64% 3	18.18% 4	4.55% 1	9.09% 2	13.64% 3	4.55% 1	9.09% 2	22
Increased overhead costs	4.55% 1	9.09% 2	4.55% 1	0.00% 0	18.18% 4	4.55% 1	0.00% 0	22.73% 5	22.73% 5	13.64% 3	22
Debt servicing capacity	30.00% 6	10.00% 2	10.00% 2	10.00% 2	25.00% 5	5.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.00% 1	5.00% 1	20

- My biggest challenge is getting people to my website to buy my products.
- No funding for home-based businesses.
- Reductions in sales events and clientele due to restrictions.

#10 Identify your biggest workforce challenges using the rating scale for each item, with 1 being smallest and 10 being your biggest challenge.

Answered: 19 Skipped: 3

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
Employees returning to the workplace	68.42% 13	10.53% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.26% 1	0.00% 0	5.26% 1	10.53% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	19
Ability to offer competitive wages and benefits	36.84% 7	10.53% 2	0.00% 0	5.26% 1	10.53% 2	0.00% 0	5.26% 1	10.53% 2	10.53% 2	10.53% 2	19
Desire for hybrid workplace models	73.68% 14	5.26% 1	5.26% 1	5.26% 1	5.26% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.26% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	19
Attraction of new employees	52.63% 10	5.26% 1	0.00% 0	5.26% 1	10.53% 2	5.26% 1	0.00% 0	10.53% 2	0.00% 0	10.53% 2	19

- It's a family run business so no employees.
- Self employed.
- Our small retail business is too small for this to really apply.
- Employing persons at the same wage I make ($2-3 above minimum wage) (I make what I make because the industry can only charge so much for the services I produce) is not long-term viable or healthy.

#11 What should the region's focus be to address workforce shortages?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 14

- Grants for youth employment programs.
- Funding for existing businesses.
- Advertise that jobs are available.
- More sustainable business.
- Public transportation between towns would be a huge asset.
- Supporting local, less social assistance where not necessary and instead more incentive to be working.
- I think that living in this "rural" area can be an advantage and showing the pros of moving to this area.
- There are too many individuals making too much money as opposed to more people making enough. In my region specifically, the reputation for the municipal workers and services is not in positive light. It takes too long for people to respond to requests and there is no reason for them to worry about it, they get paid the salary regardless. There is no motivation for them to do better or be more reliable. They are short on staff and have no plans to grow (and probably can't when you are paying 1 individual 100K a year).

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

Answered: 13 Skipped: 9

Advertising/Marketing

- Marketing. x2
- Advertising.
- Attracting customers /return customers.
- Clients.
- Spreading the word about our business locally.

Digital Support

- Web design.
- Press/Internet/Social media presence.

Employer Services

- Help navigating any funding job boards.
- Help connecting qualified workers to job openings worker etiquette- proper replying to job applications, job offers, communicating with potential employers.
- Business plan / direction.

Other

- Funding.
- Business taxes.
- Increased online sales.
- Lower fuel costs.
- More emphasis on supporting local.
- Helping me to grow my business.
- Helping small business expand their buildings.
- Leeds Grenville community control and returning emails to resolve.
- Improve bottlenecks in supply chain especially due to net zero emissions politics.
- Foot traffic increases. Side street flowers, flags and road maintenance. Currently zero.
- Make all services and events open to all regardless of vaccination status going into the future.
- Rework of the bidding / tender system. All of the bids (and I am thankful to even be asked) go to the lowest bidder by default. This is a toxic and flawed system. If I outsource goods and services outside of my country (China) and resell them for the bare minimum increase / profit I will win the bid when someone using local product sand local workforce could have been given that bid.

#12 continued…

- There is little to no support for small businesses when it comes to hiring or employing individuals locally. When you are responsible for making enough to pay someone a competitive wage (benefits, health care, paid vacation and sick days) but struggle to pay yourself, that doesn't make sense does it? - Regional support for local businesses – buying products from the local businesses in your region as opposed to outsourcing thousands a year from other provinces would greatly improve the long-term success of said small businesses.

#13 What are your expectations for 2023?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 9

Positive

- Increased sales & profit.
- I am now selling my skincare line, bath & shower products and wellness creams in two Pharma Choice pharmacies. I would like to grow this to more locations. Since I am the only employee, I need to know how to do this and increase my inventory volume.
- Moderate.
- Slow growth is our hope.
- To double our numbers.
- To be better than 2022.

Survival

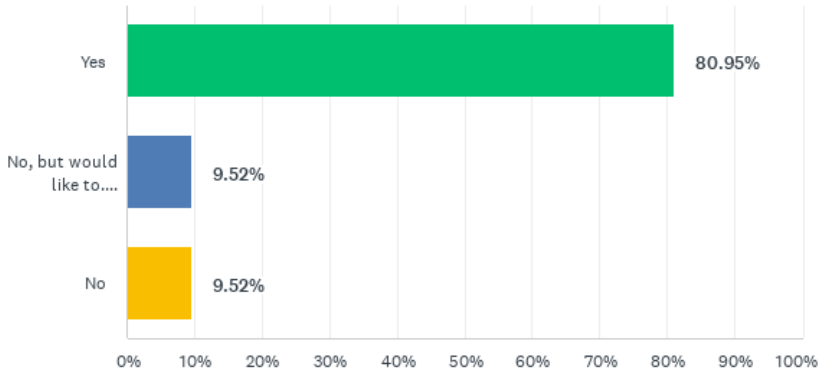
- To keep the doors open to provide the best brick and mortar floral service
- Stay afloat.
- Hope to keep head above water, return to normal.
- To hopefully not go bankrupt.

Other

- Big Recession!
- Municipality elections will bring changes.
- I expect that demand will stay the same with a little drop after 2023 due to the increase in costs, shipping, inflation and with the decrease in local spending compounded by international companies selling online.

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

Answered: 21 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	80.95%	17
No, but would like to. (please provide your contact information in #16)	9.52%	2
No	9.52%	2
TOTAL		21

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

Answered: 8 Skipped: 14

- Most of my business is person to person sales but slow times in the winter of a tourist town are a challenge. I make all of my products and also work the retail store paying a retail employee is a challenge but would be ideal.
- Not sure how to grow my business as it's starting to get overwhelming for me to supply the pharmacies and Ottawa Artisans stores. I am also selling my products in three Ottawa Artisans locations - Bayshore, St. Laurent and Tanger Outlets.
- I am currently selling my business. COVID was difficult, but we managed with a well-seasoned staff. This past season has been my biggest challenge in 20 years of running my business. Staffing was nearly impossible and we had to reduce our hours/days of the week. This obviously impacted our bottom line, but also disappointed our customers. While I had decided to sell before the summer, I am doubling my efforts now. I do not want to spend another summer like the last one!
- Biggest challenges for me is getting tourists to walk down Merrickville side streets. All decorations of flowers and streetscape, phone pole flags do not extend down our commercial side streets. Side streets with businesses are neglected and continually overlooked by municipality, and provinces.

#15 continued…

- The township is our highest liability… too much red tape.
- Gender bias against home-based businesses.
- This really covers some serious issues in my region as well as MANY regions throughout Ontario.

#16 If you would like to speak to someone regarding support available to business, or if you answered yes to question #8 or #14, please provide your contact information.

Answered: 9 Skipped: 13

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Contact Name	Responses	100.00%	9
Business Name	Responses	88.89%	8
Contact Number	Responses	88.89%	8
Email	Responses	100.00%	9

Additional Notes:

- Survey Timeframe: October 4, 2022 to October 30, 2022
- 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 | Grenville CFDC | Valley Heartland CFDC

Small Business Enterprise Centres
Leeds Grenville Small Business Centre
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

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

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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