Township of Rideau Lakes

Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

2024 Business Survey: Report

Rideau Lakes

March 25, 2024

Survey Timeframe: February 6 – March 10, 2024

Prepared by:

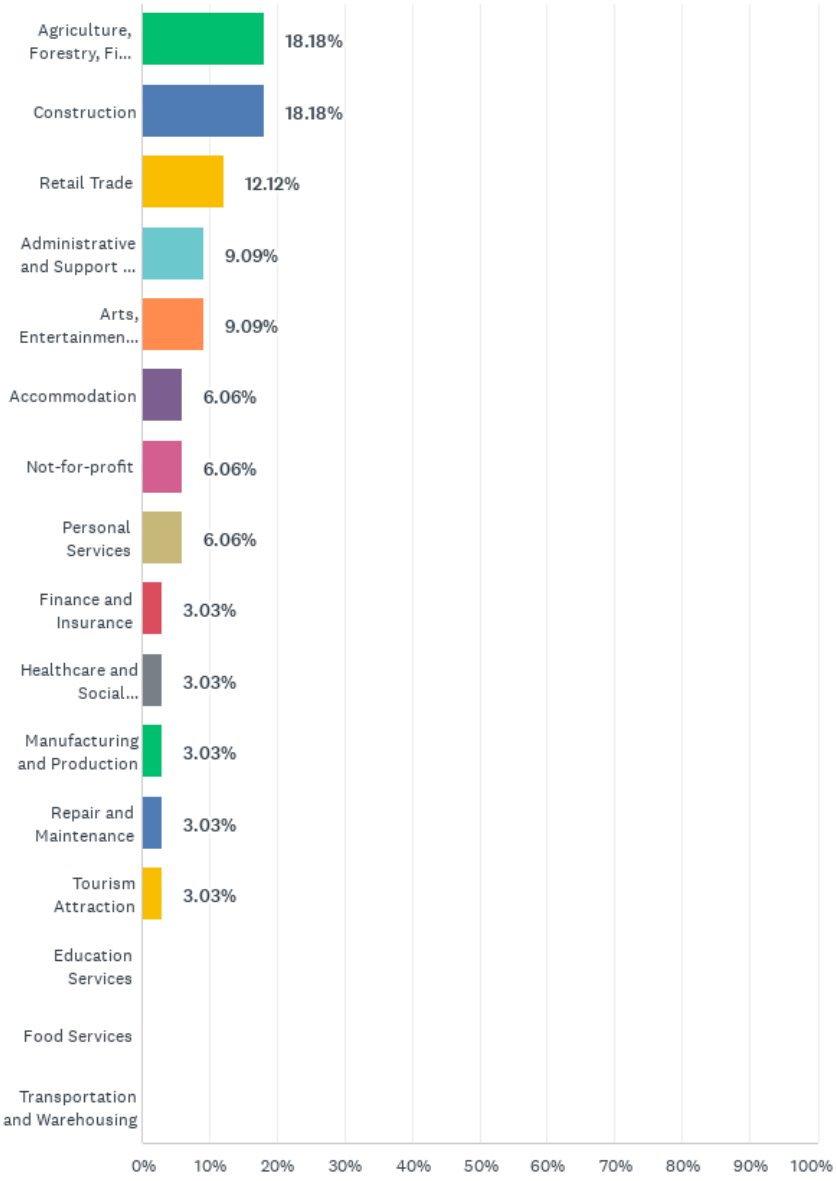
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
Economic Development Office
32 Wall Street, Suite 300, Brockville, ON

Leeds Grenville
where lifestyle grows good business

invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans

#2 What sector is your business primarily operating in?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 0

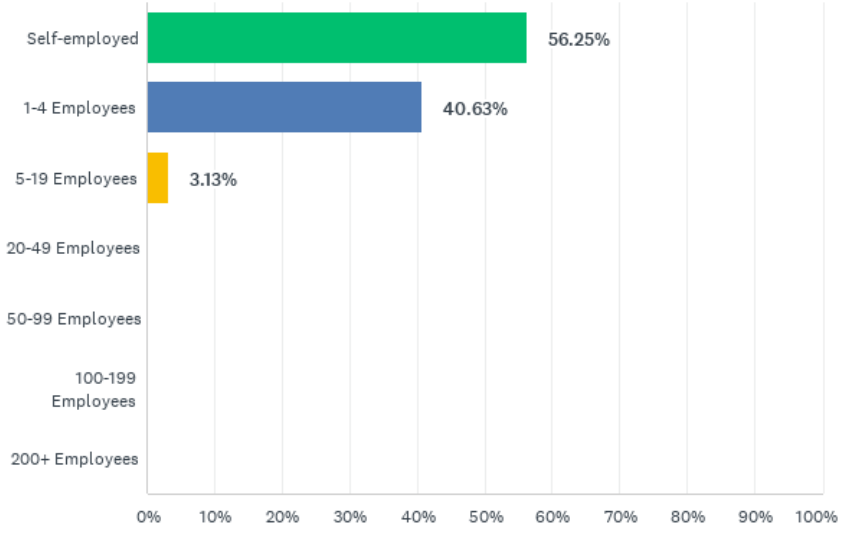


#2 continued…

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	18.18%	6
Construction	18.18%	6
Retail Trade	12.12%	4
Administrative and Support - Business Services	9.09%	3
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	9.09%	3
Accommodation	6.06%	2
Not-for-profit	6.06%	2
Personal Services	6.06%	2
Finance and Insurance	3.03%	1
Healthcare and Social Assistance	3.03%	1
Manufacturing and Production	3.03%	1
Repair and Maintenance	3.03%	1
Tourism Attraction	3.03%	1
Education Services	0.00%	0
Food Services	0.00%	0
Transportation and Warehousing	0.00%	0
TOTAL		33

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

Answered: 32 Skipped: 1



#3 continued…

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Self-employed	56.25%	18
1-4 Employees	40.63%	13
5-19 Employees	3.13%	1
20-49 Employees	0.00%	0
50-99 Employees	0.00%	0
100-199 Employees	0.00%	0
200+ Employees	0.00%	0
TOTAL		32

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

Answered: 0

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

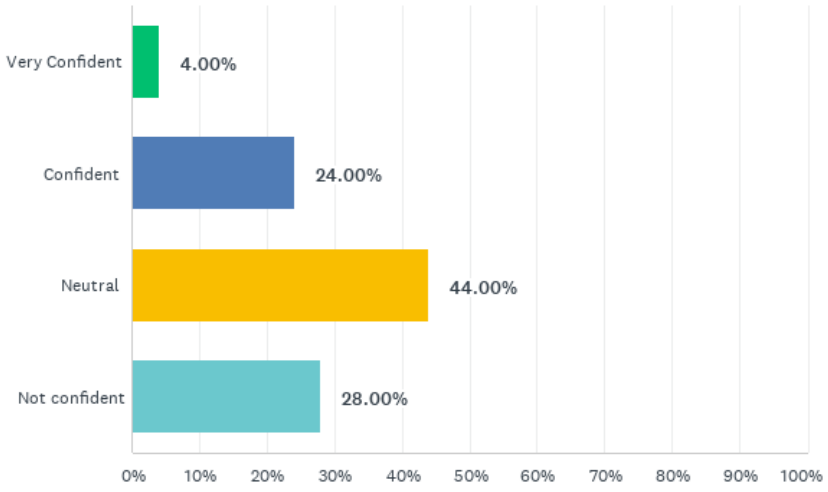
Answered: 0

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

Answered: 0

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

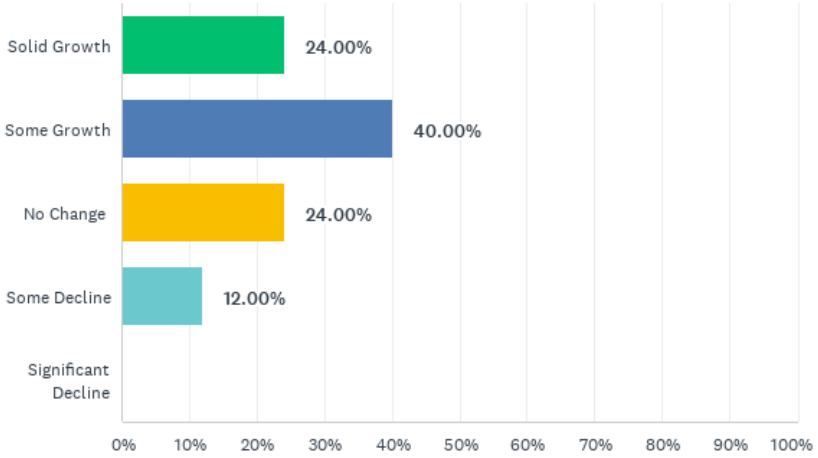
Answered: 25 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very Confident	4.00%	1
Confident	24.00%	6
Neutral	44.00%	11
Not confident	28.00%	7
TOTAL		25

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

Answered: 25 Skipped: 8



#8 continued…

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Solid Growth	24.00%	6
Some Growth	40.00%	10
No Change	24.00%	6
Some Decline	12.00%	3
Significant Decline	0.00%	0
TOTAL		25

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

Answered: 25 Skipped: 8

	1-NOT A CHALLENGE	2	3-SOMEWHAT CHALLENGING	4	5-VERY CHALLENGING	TOTAL
Increasing overhead costs	0.00% 0	24.00% 6	28.00% 7	28.00% 7	20.00% 5	25
Increasing product prices	4.00% 1	12.00% 3	28.00% 7	32.00% 8	24.00% 6	25
Changes in demand for your product / service	36.00% 9	32.00% 8	12.00% 3	20.00% 5	0.00% 0	25
Borrowing costs	25.00% 6	12.50% 3	25.00% 6	29.17% 7	8.33% 2	24
Repayment of CEBA loan	91.67% 22	4.17% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	24
Supply chain instability	50.00% 12	20.83% 5	16.67% 4	8.33% 2	4.17% 1	24
Ability to find skilled employees	41.67% 10	12.50% 3	25.00% 6	8.33% 2	12.50% 3	24
Ability to offer competitive wages and benefits	37.50% 9	8.33% 2	25.00% 6	16.67% 4	12.50% 3	24
Ability to retain employees	58.33% 14	12.50% 3	12.50% 3	8.33% 2	8.33% 2	24
Absenteeism due to reliable child care	83.33% 20	12.50% 3	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	0.00% 0	24

- Access to grants for non-profit corporations that have a business side.
- All of these are N/A
- Government legislation and red tape
- Specialized training costs and time are very challenging

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

Answered: 25 Skipped: 8

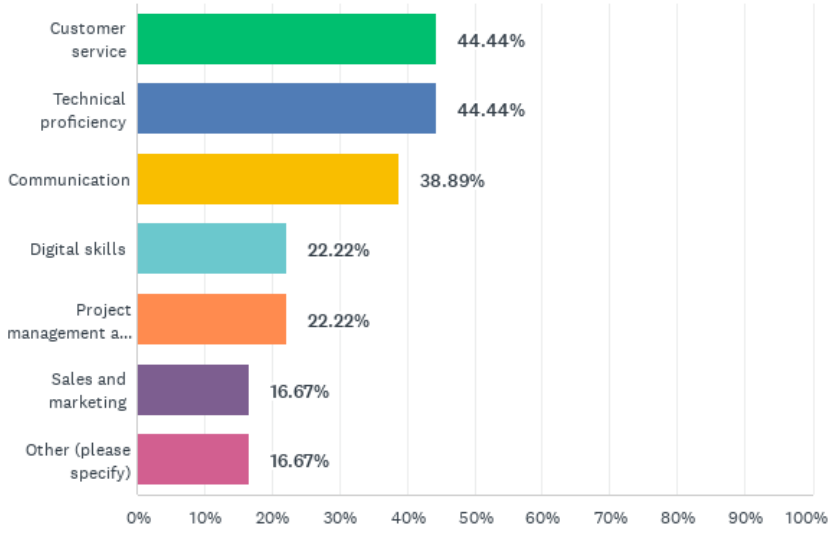
	1-NOT A CHALLENGE	2	3-SOMEWHAT CHALLENGING	4	5- VERY CHALLENGING	TOTAL
Available housing / accommodation	66.67% 16	4.17% 1	16.67% 4	8.33% 2	4.17% 1	24
Available daycare	79.17% 19	8.33% 2	4.17% 1	8.33% 2	0.00% 0	24
Cost of Living ie. inflation	12.00% 3	12.00% 3	20.00% 5	36.00% 9	20.00% 5	25
Public transportation	73.91% 17	4.35% 1	13.04% 3	0.00% 0	8.70% 2	23
Caring for elders	50.00% 12	8.33% 2	16.67% 4	20.83% 5	4.17% 1	24

- Township of Rideau Lakes Bureaucracy
- Employee commuting costs are very high; no public transit in rural Ontario. Need the provincial government to offer rebate/ tax break for employee commuting expenses.

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

(Choose all that apply)

Answered: 18 Skipped: 15



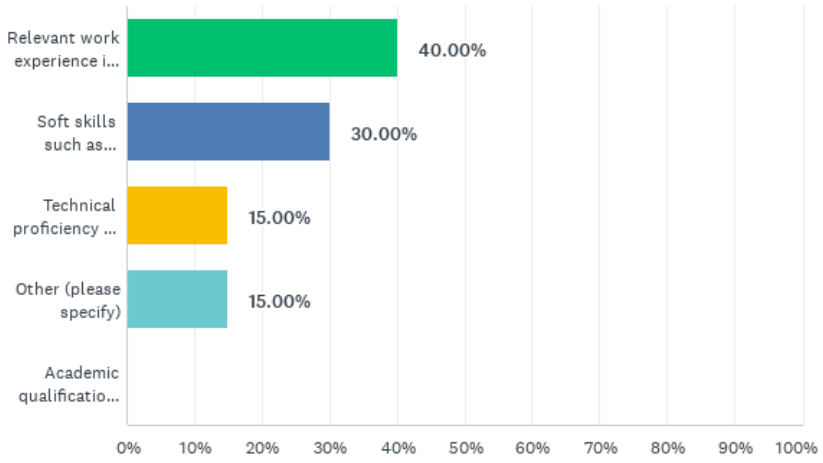
#11 continued…

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Customer service		44.44%	8
Technical proficiency		44.44%	8
Communication		38.89%	7
Digital skills		22.22%	4
Project management and organization		22.22%	4
Sales and marketing		16.67%	3
Other (please specify)	Responses	16.67%	3
Total Respondents: 18			

- Trades
- Skilled labourers
- Penmanship of students and young adults is not legible; leading to many problems and concerns.

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

Answered: 20 Skipped: 13



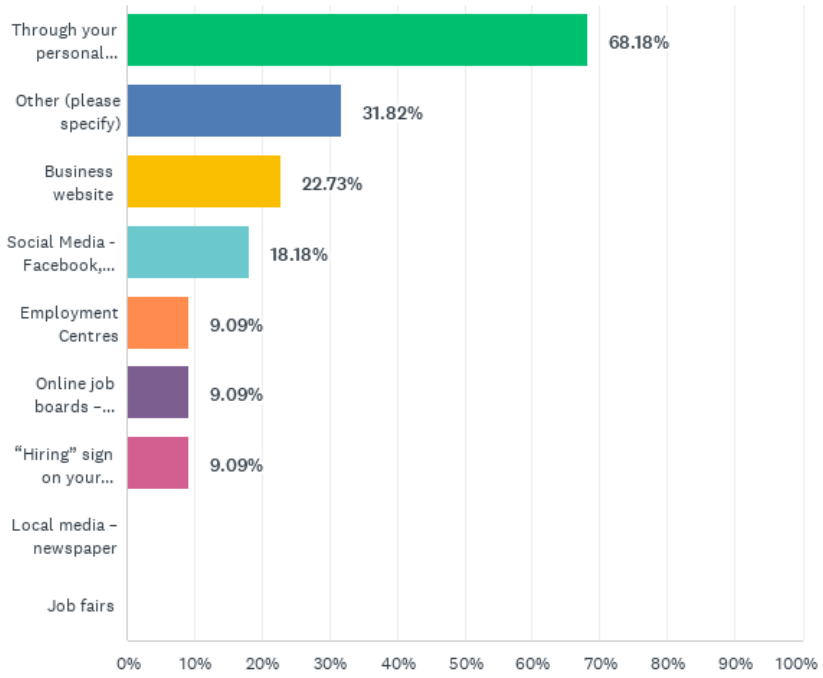
ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Relevant work experience in a similar role		40.00%	8
Soft skills such as teamwork and communication		30.00%	6
Technical proficiency and specific job-related skills		15.00%	3
Other (please specify)	Responses	15.00%	3
Academic qualifications and certifications		0.00%	0
TOTAL			20

- Willing to show up and work. Grow with the business.

#13 What methods do you utilize for employee recruitment?

(Choose all that apply)

Answered: 22 Skipped: 11

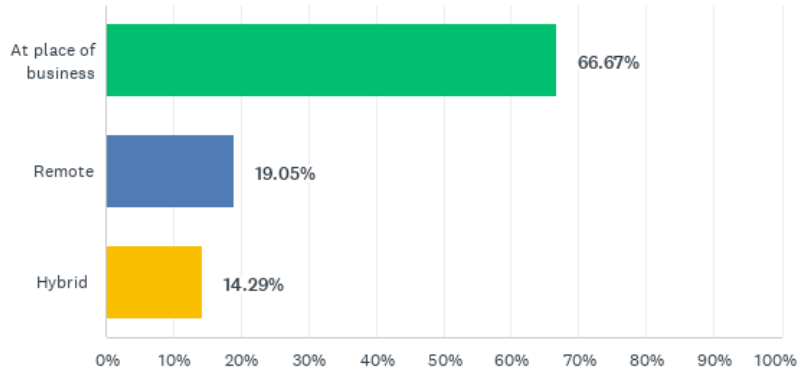


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Through your personal network		68.18%	15
Other (please specify)	Responses	31.82%	7
Business website		22.73%	5
Social Media - Facebook, Instagram		18.18%	4
Employment Centres		9.09%	2
Online job boards – Indeed, LinkedIn		9.09%	2
"Hiring" sign on your premises		9.09%	2
Local media – newspaper		0.00%	0
Job fairs		0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 22			

- Not actively recruiting. Mostly a one-person operation.
- Always have resumes on file.
- Family
- No employees (self-employed)
- Word of mouth

#14 What type of work environment do you offer?

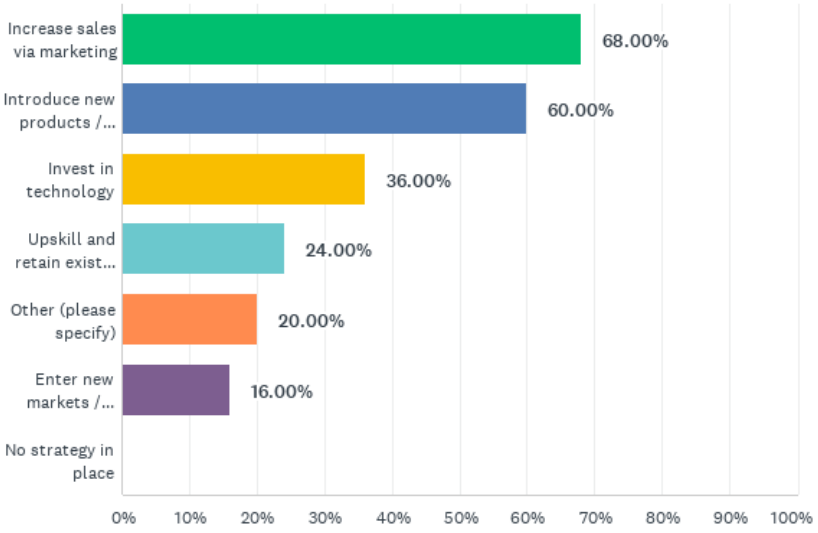
Answered: 21 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
At place of business	66.67%	14
Remote	19.05%	4
Hybrid	14.29%	3
TOTAL		21

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

Answered: 25 Skipped: 8



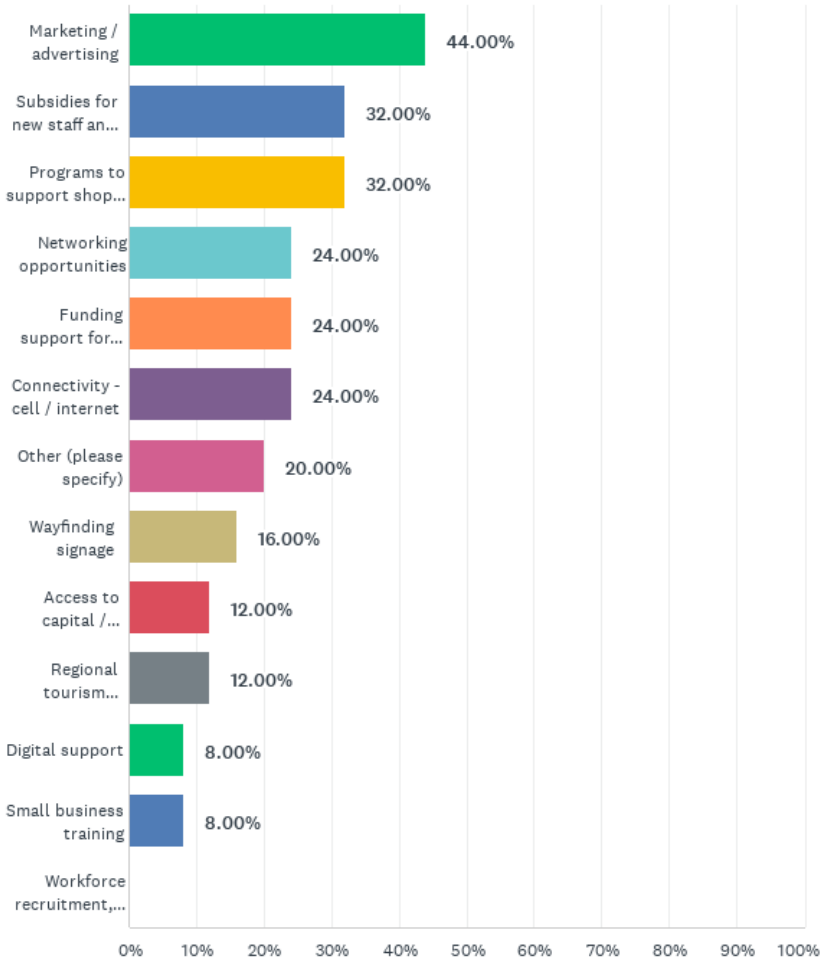
#15 continued…

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Increase sales via marketing		68.00%	17
Introduce new products / services		60.00%	15
Invest in technology		36.00%	9
Upskill and retain existing talent		24.00%	6
Other (please specify)	Responses	20.00%	5
Enter new markets / export		16.00%	4
No strategy in place		0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 25			

- My business grows as my skills have no competition.
- My business is where I want it to be. Growing through client referrals.
- Word of mouth.
- Build relationships to turn one-time customers into lifetime fans.
- Offer exceptional customer service from older knowledgeable employees.

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

Answered: 25 Skipped: 8



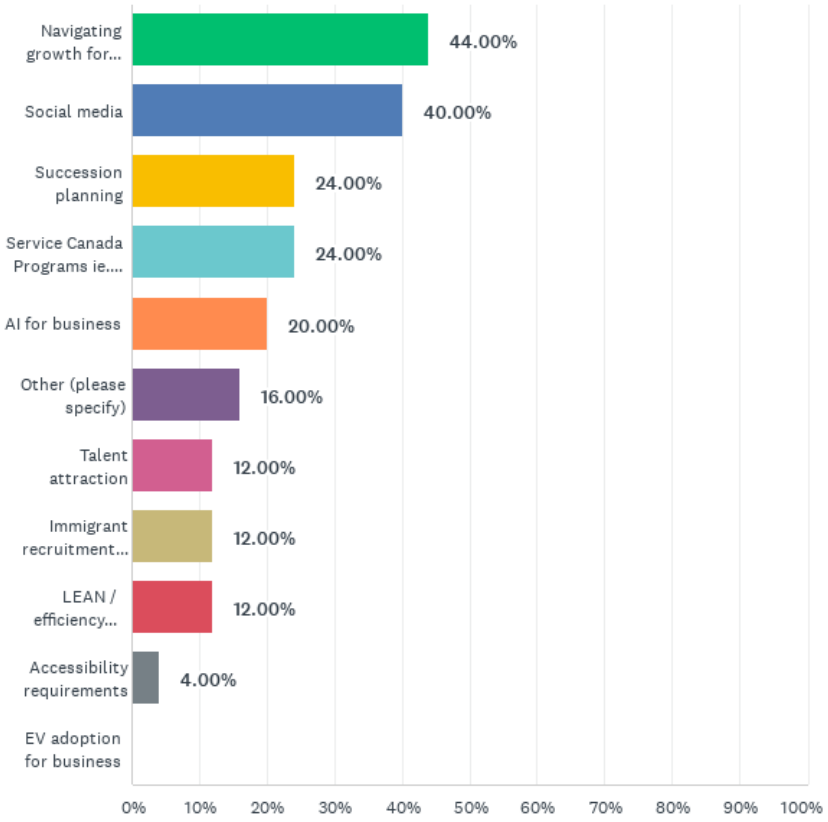
#16 continued…

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Marketing / advertising		44.00%	11
Subsidies for new staff and training		32.00%	8
Programs to support shop local		32.00%	8
Networking opportunities		24.00%	6
Funding support for business expansion		24.00%	6
Connectivity - cell / internet		24.00%	6
Other (please specify)	Responses	20.00%	5
Wayfinding signage		16.00%	4
Access to capital / business loans		12.00%	3
Regional tourism destination development – products, marketing		12.00%	3
Digital support		8.00%	2
Small business training		8.00%	2
Workforce recruitment, hiring and resourcing staff		0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 25			

- Keeping up with changing technology of computers, phones, tv monitor
- Non-profit access to all of the above.
- Ability to have temporary housing for farm partners, interns.
- Be nice if digital main street was an actual program.
- More focus on supporting local year-round; rather than focusing so much on a few months of tourists and seasonal.

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

Answered: 25 Skipped: 8

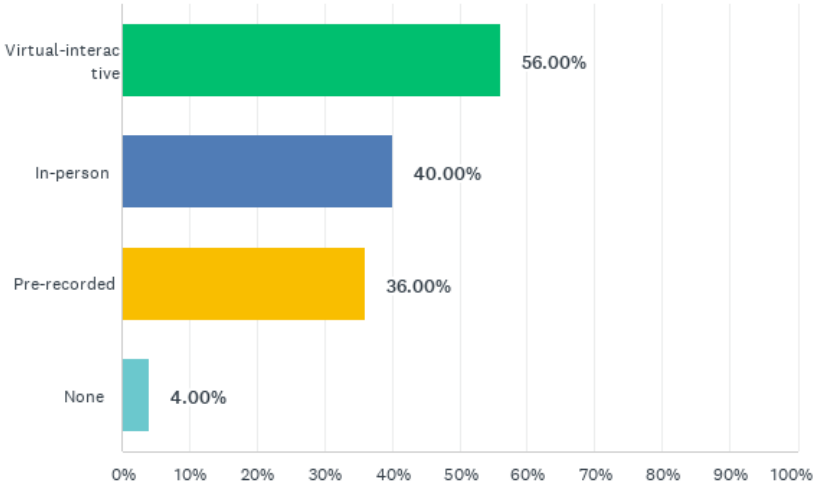


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Navigating growth for small business		44.00%	11
Social media		40.00%	10
Succession planning		24.00%	6
Service Canada Programs ie. work sharing, record of employment		24.00%	6
AI for business		20.00%	5
Other (please specify)	Responses	16.00%	4
Talent attraction		12.00%	3
Immigrant recruitment programs		12.00%	3
LEAN / efficiency training		12.00%	3
Accessibility requirements		4.00%	1
EV adoption for business		0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 25			

- Need people who can sew drapery and do upholstery
- Tax / Legislative Requirements
- Basic math and writing skills; without the use of phones and or calculator

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

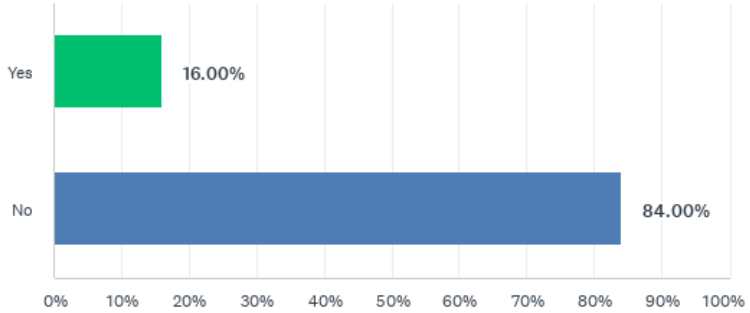
Answered: 25 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Virtual-interactive	56.00%	14
In-person	40.00%	10
Pre-recorded	36.00%	9
None	4.00%	1
Total Respondents: 25		

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

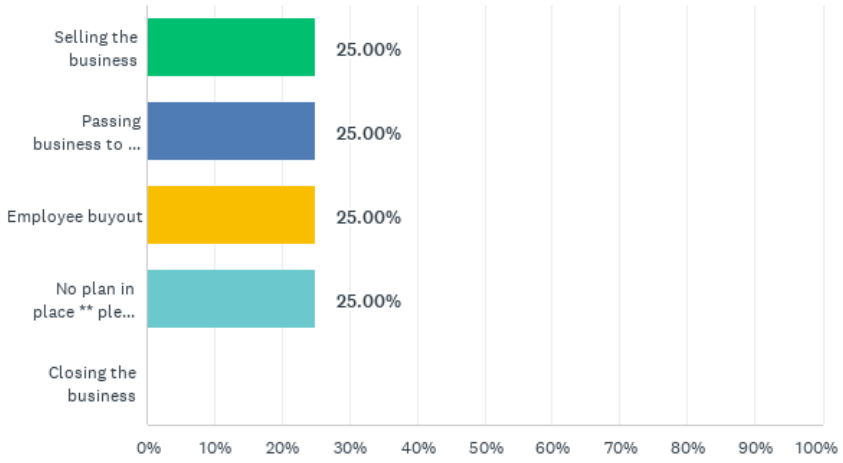
Answered: 25 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	16.00%	4
No	84.00%	21
TOTAL		25

#20 If yes, what is your succession plan?

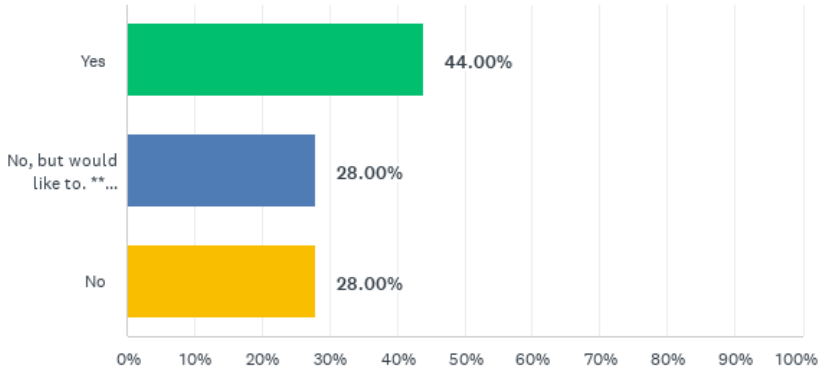
Answered: 4



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

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

Answered: 25 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	44.00%	11
No, but would like to. ** Please provide contact info at end of survey	28.00%	7
No	28.00%	7
TOTAL		25

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

Answered: 8 Skipped: 25

- Short of my frustration keeping up with daily changes on my computer, phone and tv, my business is thriving and I love it here.
- We sell books, which is how we are able to fund our work as a non-profit, but everything is so focused on the idea that a business must have employees. We're a volunteer-run organization, but have many of the same challenges, yet because we're a non-profit we're not given access to the same resources - when arguably we need them more.
- Making our sanctuary accessible when grants from Rideau Lakes township are not extended to our street. We could offer an incredible opportunity for classrooms and retirement homes and other community members to experience an educational sanctuary tour, but are limited by our non-profit budget.
- This business just started in 2020, so we are learning as we go...it's gotten better each year for expenses and hopefully we get to a place where we can pay down our business loans significantly. Overhead and start-up costs were huge and now we are maintaining equipment and not thinking too big for our business future just yet. Making ends meet in this climate is a goal in itself.
- Cell phone coverage in Elgin is basically non-existent. This impacts the ability to run the business properly and also impacts the attraction of customers since they can't use mobile navigation or search online while in this area.
- Need more abattoirs, especially poultry. Need to have more flexible housing arrangements to allow tiny houses, bunkies, etc. for potential farm partners.
- Semi-retired, busy with volunteer work when not working for pay. Restricted by health issues. Hard to find well-paying part-time gigs in my field (editing, mainly medical, but experienced in many genres).
- Main challenge is balancing time/cost of apprenticing/training employees.
- Back to basics

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

Answered: 10 Skipped: 23

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Contact Name	Responses	100.00%	10
Business Name	Responses	100.00%	10
Contact Number	Responses	100.00%	10
Email	Responses	100.00%	10

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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