Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands
Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes
2024 Business Survey: Report

Township of
Leeds and the
Thousand Islands

March 25, 2024

Survey Timeframe: February 6 – March 10, 2024

Prepared by:

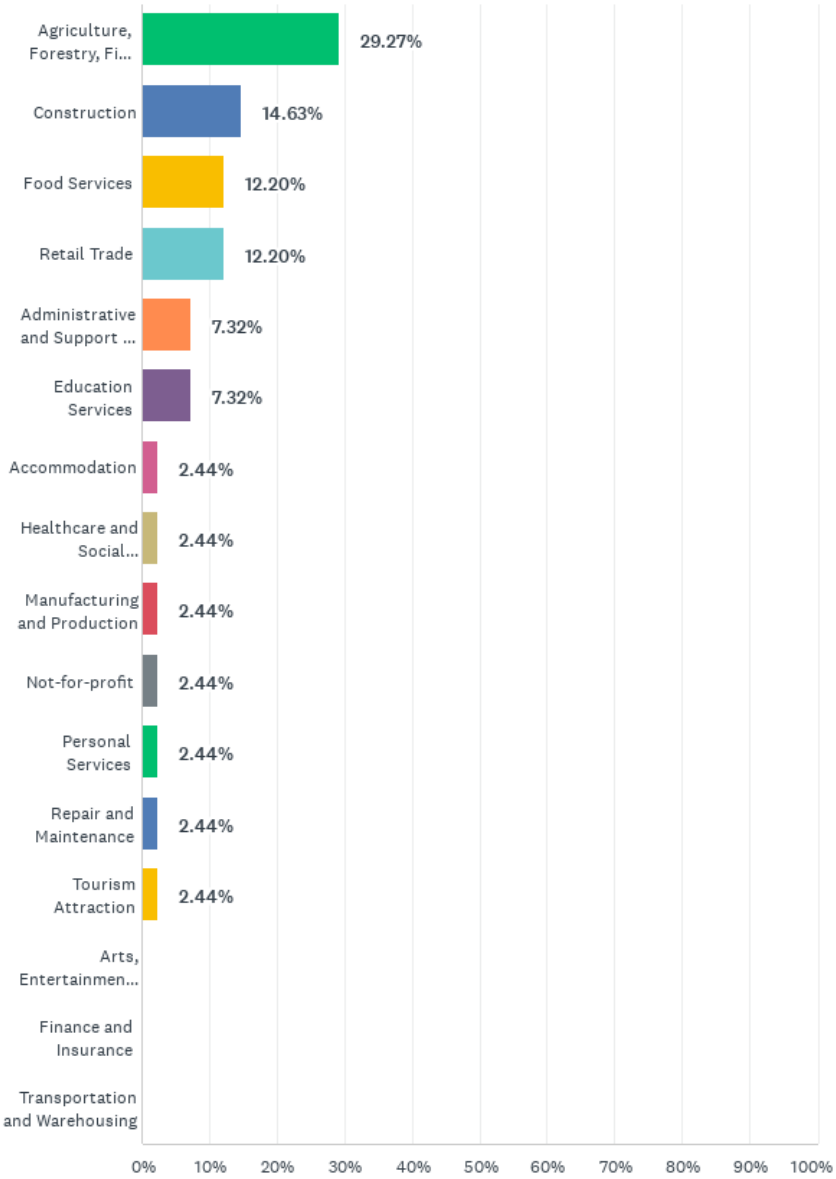
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
Economic Development Office
32 Wall Street, Suite 300, Brockville, ON

Leeds Grenville
where lifestyle grows good business

invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans

#2 What sector is your business primarily operating in?

Answered: 41 Skipped: 1

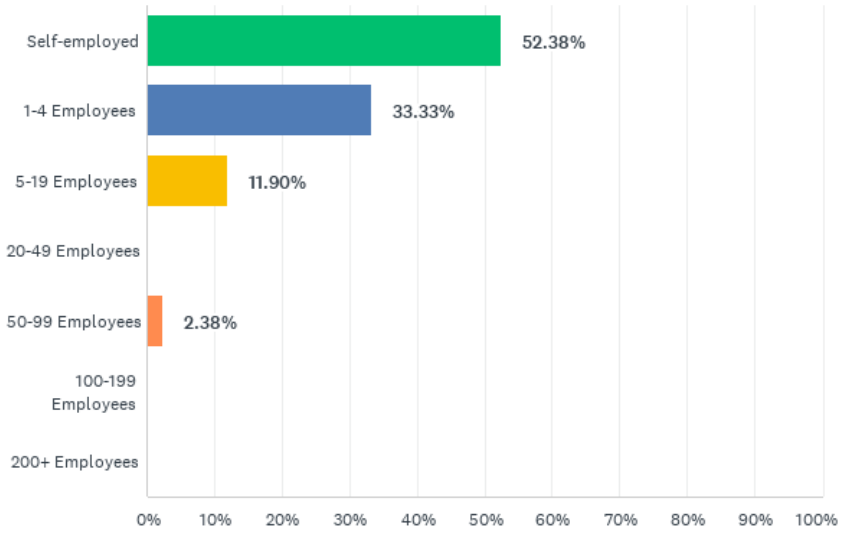


#2 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	29.27%	12
Construction	14.63%	6
Food Services	12.20%	5
Retail Trade	12.20%	5
Administrative and Support - Business Services	7.32%	3
Education Services	7.32%	3
Accommodation	2.44%	1
Healthcare and Social Assistance	2.44%	1
Manufacturing and Production	2.44%	1
Not-for-profit	2.44%	1
Personal Services	2.44%	1
Repair and Maintenance	2.44%	1
Tourism Attraction	2.44%	1
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	0.00%	0
Finance and Insurance	0.00%	0
Transportation and Warehousing	0.00%	0
TOTAL		41

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

Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



#3 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Self-employed	52.38%	22
1-4 Employees	33.33%	14
5-19 Employees	11.90%	5
20-49 Employees	0.00%	0
50-99 Employees	2.38%	1
100-199 Employees	0.00%	0
200+ Employees	0.00%	0
TOTAL		42

#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.

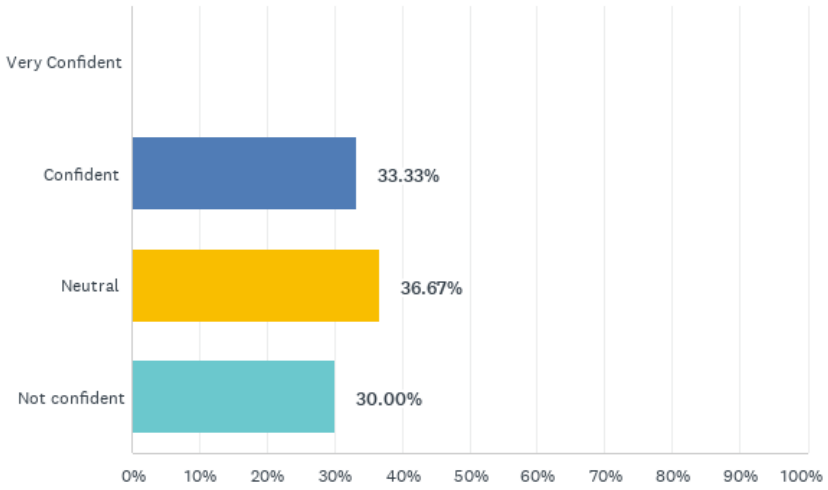
Answered: 0

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

Answered: 0

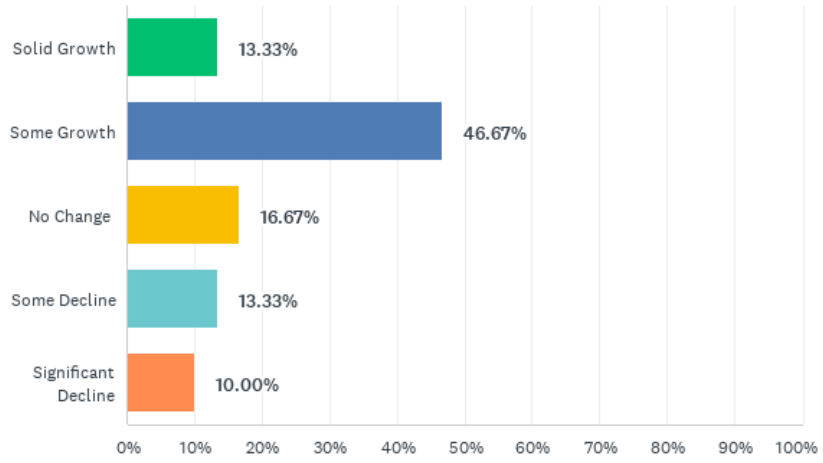
#7 How confident are you in the strength of the economy?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 12



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

Answered: 30 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Solid Growth	13.33%	4
Some Growth	46.67%	14
No Change	16.67%	5
Some Decline	13.33%	4
Significant Decline	10.00%	3
TOTAL		30

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

Answered: 30 Skipped: 12

	1-NOT A CHALLENGE	2	3-SOMEWHAT CHALLENGING	4	5-VERY CHALLENGING	TOTAL
Increasing product prices	0.00% 0	16.67% 5	33.33% 10	20.00% 6	30.00% 9	30
Changes in demand for your product / service	13.33% 4	20.00% 6	26.67% 8	30.00% 9	10.00% 3	30
Increasing overhead costs	10.34% 3	3.45% 1	27.59% 8	24.14% 7	34.48% 10	29
Borrowing costs	41.38% 12	10.34% 3	13.79% 4	10.34% 3	24.14% 7	29
Ability to offer competitive wages and benefits	41.38% 12	3.45% 1	13.79% 4	10.34% 3	31.03% 9	29
Repayment of CEBA loan	60.71% 17	0.00% 0	10.71% 3	3.57% 1	25.00% 7	28
Supply chain instability	28.57% 8	25.00% 7	25.00% 7	10.71% 3	10.71% 3	28
Ability to find skilled employees	46.43% 13	17.86% 5	7.14% 2	3.57% 1	25.00% 7	28
Ability to retain employees	57.14% 16	17.86% 5	3.57% 1	3.57% 1	17.86% 5	28
Absenteeism due to reliable child care	77.78% 21	3.70% 1	11.11% 3	0.00% 0	7.41% 2	27

- Water levels unpredictably low on St. Lawrence River
- No housing for employees
- No children
- The 'change in demand' increased to the point that I have trouble keeping up; and send some work elsewhere.
- N/A

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

Answered: 30 Skipped: 12

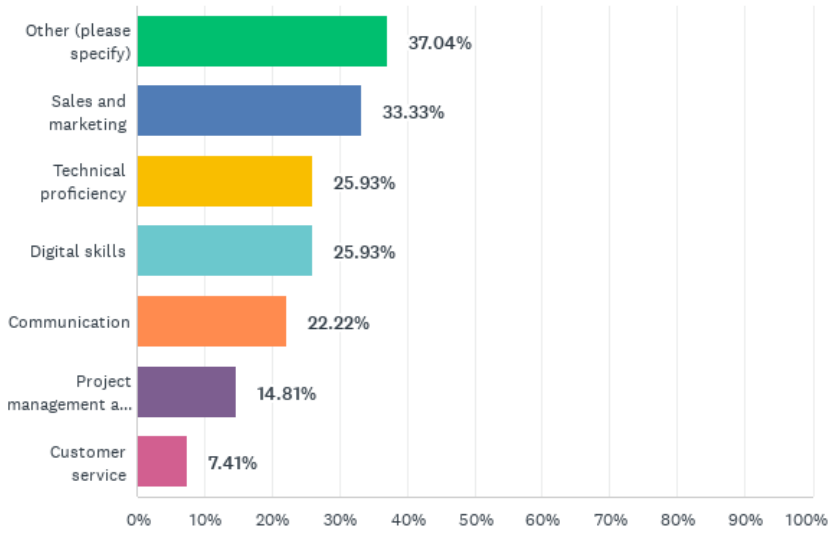
	1-NOT A CHALLENGE	2	3-SOMEWHAT CHALLENGING	4	5- VERY CHALLENGING	TOTAL
Available housing / accommodation	62.07% 18	6.90% 2	6.90% 2	10.34% 3	13.79% 4	29
Available daycare	82.76% 24	3.45% 1	10.34% 3	0.00% 0	3.45% 1	29
Cost of Living ie. inflation	10.00% 3	3.33% 1	23.33% 7	30.00% 9	33.33% 10	30
Public transportation	75.00% 21	3.57% 1	7.14% 2	3.57% 1	10.71% 3	28
Caring for elders	53.57% 16	3.57% 1	7.14% 2	28.57% 8	7.14% 2	28

- No doctors or NP available and not one of the 32 walk-in clinics are taking new patients! So, no health care for many, many thousands of people in this whole region. Disabled parent (legally blind, no doctors, so they can't get the disability forms signed by a GP!) so a legally blind person is without ANY disability supports or disability income too. We can't even get a disability parking permit without a GP Doctor! The MP and MPP have completely failed everyone in this region and are not honestly funding Canadians with the medical care they pay for in their taxes!

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

(Choose all that apply)

Answered: 27 Skipped: 15



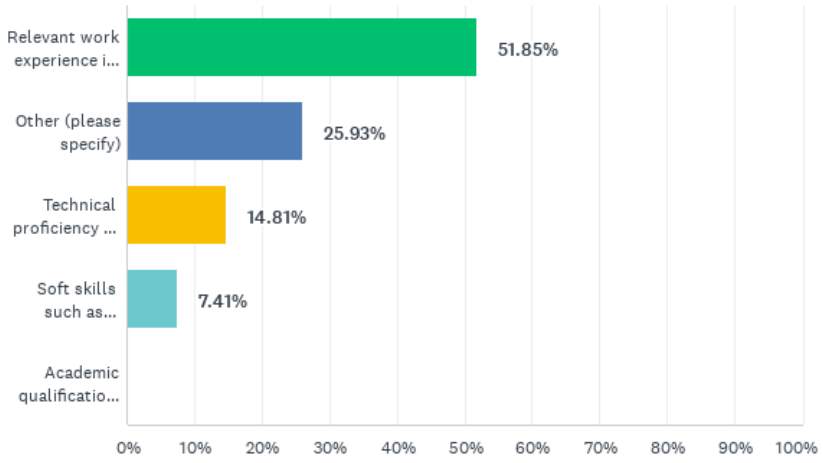
#11 continued…

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Other (please specify)	Responses	37.04%	10
Sales and marketing		33.33%	9
Technical proficiency		25.93%	7
Digital skills		25.93%	7
Communication		22.22%	6
Project management and organization		14.81%	4
Customer service		7.41%	2
Total Respondents: 27			

- No employees (x7)
- Wanting to do hard work
- As self-employed, I have skill gaps in all of the above areas and am always learning.
- Time - not really a skill, just not enough hours

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

Answered: 27 Skipped: 15



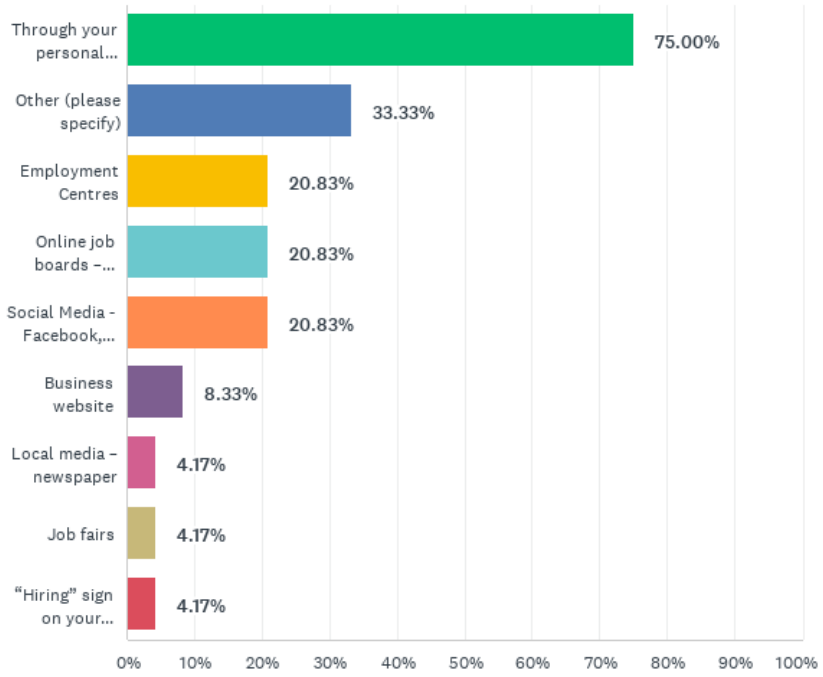
ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Relevant work experience in a similar role		51.85%	14
Other (please specify)	Responses	25.93%	7
Technical proficiency and specific job-related skills		14.81%	4
Soft skills such as teamwork and communication		7.41%	2
Academic qualifications and certifications		0.00%	0
TOTAL			27

- Attitude. We can train skills required.
- Willingness to learn.
- No employees now, nor for the short-term future

#13 What methods do you utilize for employee recruitment?

(Choose all that apply)

Answered: 24 Skipped: 18

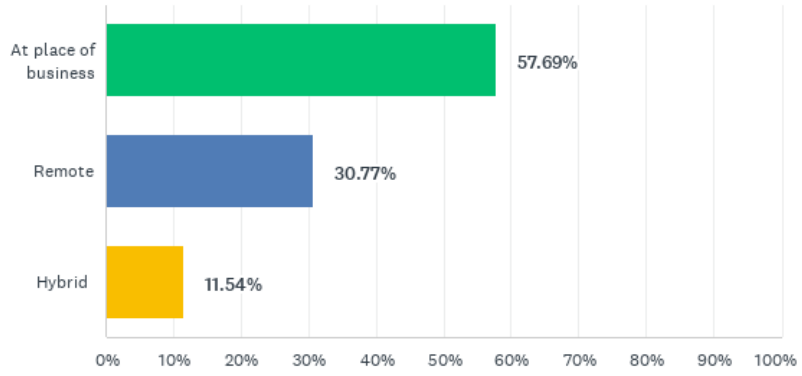


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Through your personal network		75.00%	18
Other (please specify)	Responses	33.33%	8
Employment Centres		20.83%	5
Online job boards – Indeed, LinkedIn		20.83%	5
Social Media - Facebook, Instagram		20.83%	5
Business website		8.33%	2
Local media – newspaper		4.17%	1
Job fairs		4.17%	1
"Hiring" sign on your premises		4.17%	1
Total Respondents: 24			

- Kijiji
- Government sites
- Referrals from existing employees

#14 What type of work environment do you offer?

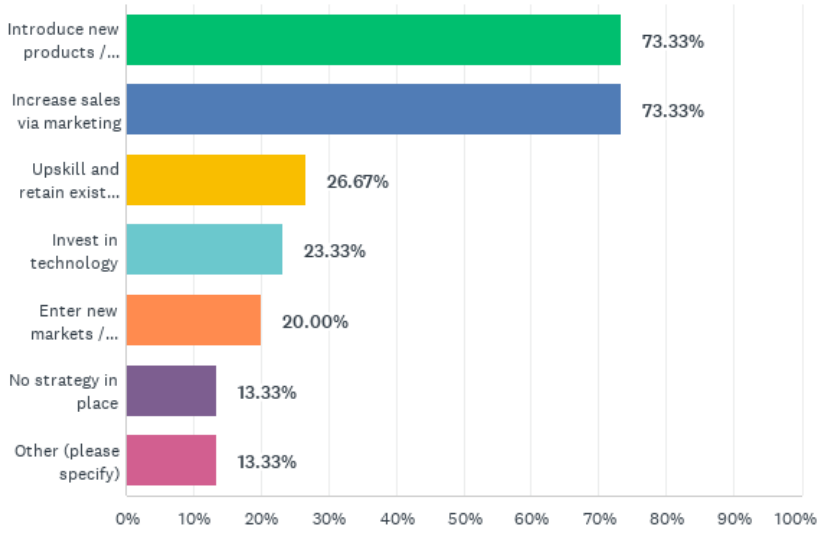
Answered: 26 Skipped: 16



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
At place of business	57.69%	15
Remote	30.77%	8
Hybrid	11.54%	3
TOTAL		26

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

Answered: 30 Skipped: 12



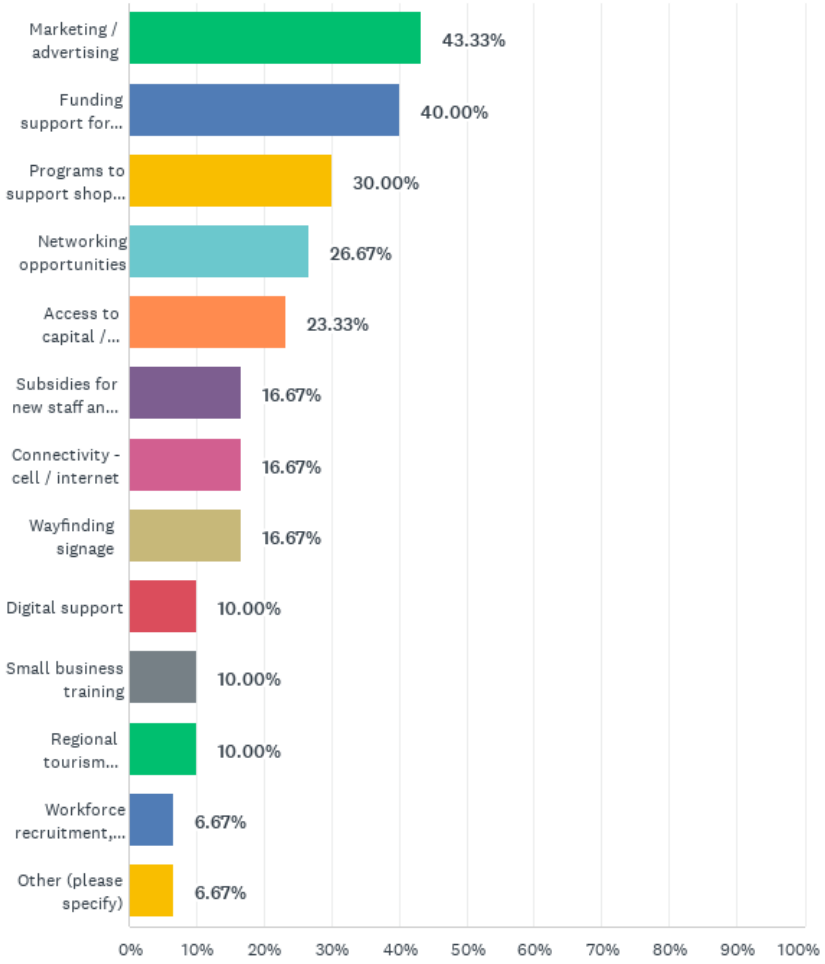
#15 continued…

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Introduce new products / services		73.33%	22
Increase sales via marketing		73.33%	22
Upskill and retain existing talent		26.67%	8
Invest in technology		23.33%	7
Enter new markets / export		20.00%	6
No strategy in place		13.33%	4
Other (please specify)	Responses	13.33%	4
Total Respondents: 30			

- Provide new products and services in response to current clients' requests.
- Raise the price
- My current strategies deliver the results I want.
- Upgrade equipment

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

Answered: 30 Skipped: 12



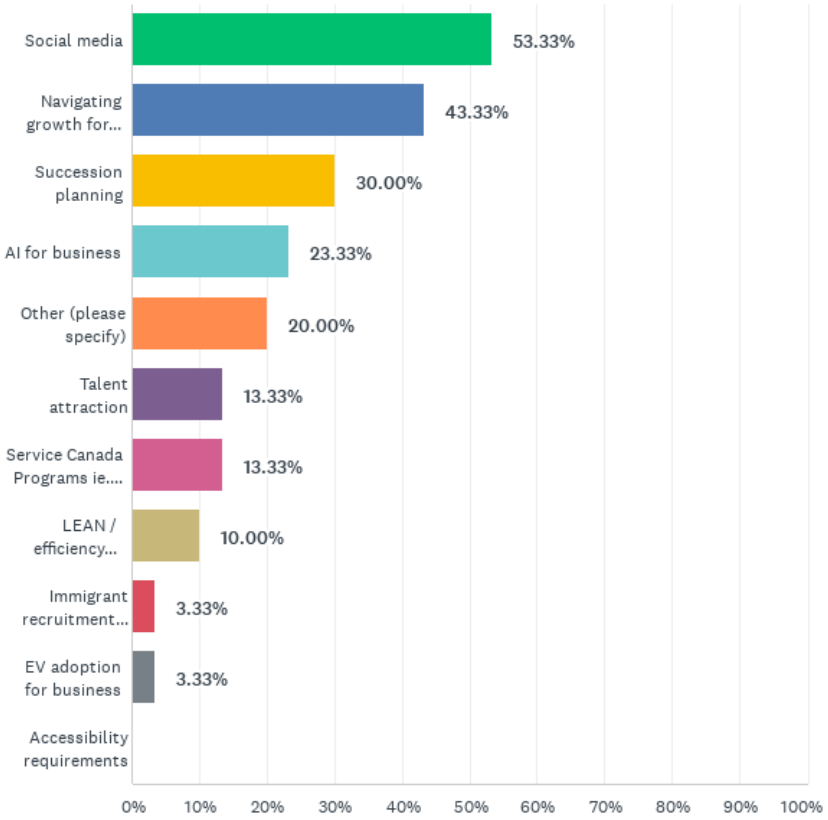
#16 continued…

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Marketing / advertising		43.33%	13
Funding support for business expansion		40.00%	12
Programs to support shop local		30.00%	9
Networking opportunities		26.67%	8
Access to capital / business loans		23.33%	7
Subsidies for new staff and training		16.67%	5
Connectivity - cell / internet		16.67%	5
Wayfinding signage		16.67%	5
Digital support		10.00%	3
Small business training		10.00%	3
Regional tourism destination development – products, marketing		10.00%	3
Workforce recruitment, hiring and resourcing staff		6.67%	2
Other (please specify)	Responses	6.67%	2
Total Respondents: 30			

- Funding assistance for specialized training for solopreneurs.
- I'm not in need of support

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

Answered: 30 Skipped: 12



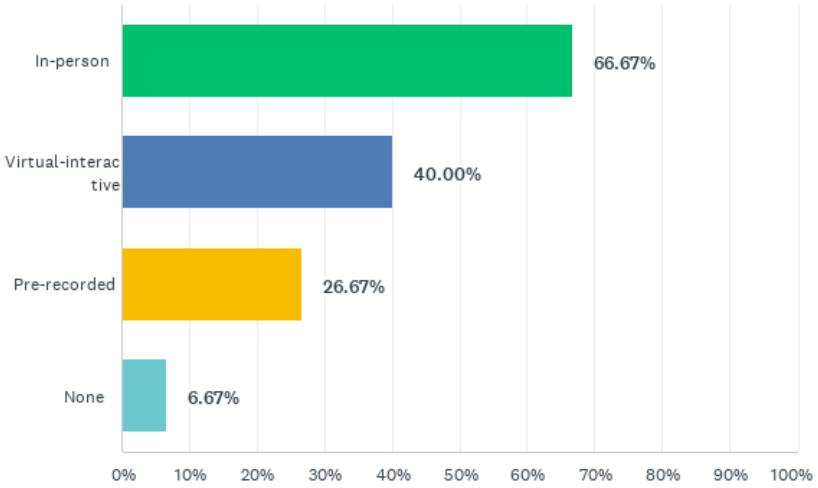
ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Social media		53.33%	16
Navigating growth for small business		43.33%	13
Succession planning		30.00%	9
AI for business		23.33%	7
Other (please specify)	Responses	20.00%	6
Talent attraction		13.33%	4
Service Canada Programs ie. work sharing, record of employment		13.33%	4
LEAN / efficiency training		10.00%	3
Immigrant recruitment programs		3.33%	1
EV adoption for business		3.33%	1
Accessibility requirements		0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 30			

#17 continued…

- Instagram training.
- Basic like accounting, administration, and marketing advice and training
- Programs for women owned business
- Communication skills
- We don't need workshops.
- There are lots of workshops and training offered online, more than I can attend. I think an approach of working directly on a problem or project or priority area would be more effective.

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

Answered: 30 Skipped: 12

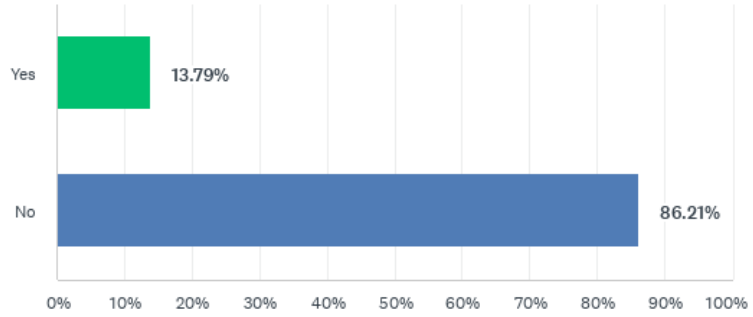


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
In-person	66.67%	20
Virtual-interactive	40.00%	12
Pre-recorded	26.67%	8
None	6.67%	2
Total Respondents: 30		

- And posted to economic development web sites short information and training videos 24/7

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

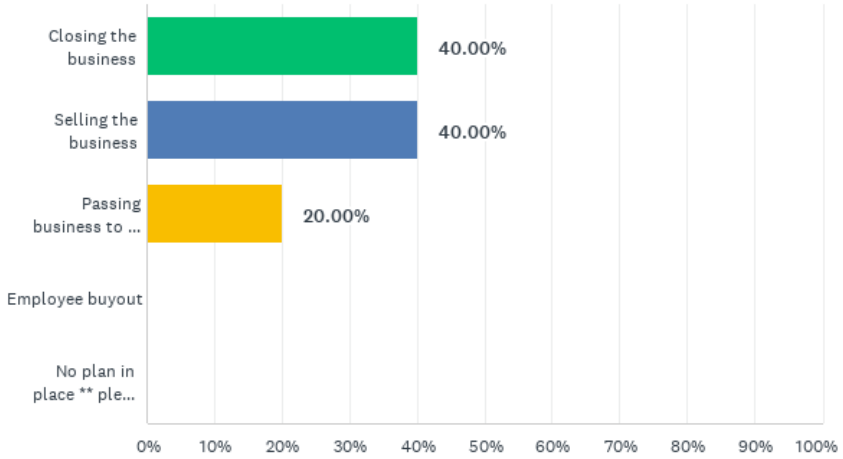
Answered: 29 Skipped: 13



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	13.79%	4
No	86.21%	25
TOTAL		29

#20 If yes, what is your succession plan?

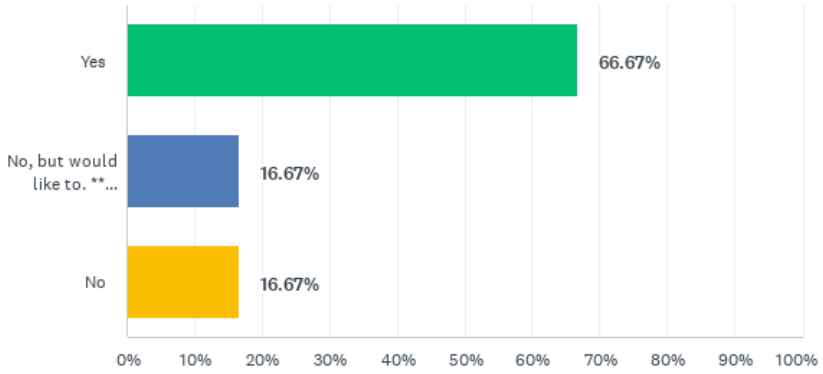
Answered: 5 Skipped: 37



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Closing the business	40.00%	2
Selling the business	40.00%	2
Passing business to a family member	20.00%	1
Employee buyout	0.00%	0
No plan in place ** please provide contact info at end of survey for support	0.00%	0
TOTAL		5

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

Answered: 30 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	66.67%	20
No, but would like to. ** Please provide contact info at end of survey	16.67%	5
No	16.67%	5
TOTAL		30

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

Answered: 10 Skipped: 32

- Stable water levels on the St. Lawrence River. Maintaining higher levels into the end of October each year. Start taking recreational use of this waterway seriously as a commodity.
- Townships are killing small businesses in villages settlement areas with Planning and Building Departments excessive use of additional permits and fees created since the pandemic started. Township are being aggressive, and the Mayors and Councils are out of touch with reality, and are no longer even listening to the people they are supposed to serve. Townships Mayors and Councils are ONLY listening to staff who are killing businesses with no internet, and excessive damaging fees, permits, and a utter lack of housing available again due to land Planning and ridiculous issues with red tape hence cost out of control via massive delays, egregious additional fees created, excessive permits, and Building Departments refusing illegally to inspect, and demanding Engineers to do their job and inspect, and write reports all which cost many, many thousands hence costs businesses way too much unfairly as well.
- I've seen growth every year since opening but have not made any money yet. The township has too many permit fees for expansion, does nothing to help businesses exist or grow, does not do the right things to promote tourism or encourage people to spend time in our villages. TLTI is not small business friendly.

#22 continued…

- Too much bureaucracy when trying to add some accommodation.
- As a business owner in the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, I'm disappointed by the lack of recognition that is given to small businesses. I see other neighbouring townships (Rideau Lakes and Front of Yonge) recognizing their small businesses annually with events and awards. To my knowledge, no such events occur in TLTI. While my motivation to be an entrepreneur and to operate a small business is not driven by whether or not I receive awards, holding recognition events is a nice way to thank small businesses for making contributions to the community. Do better TLTI.
- On your Opening page - Gardening/ Landscaping aren't even listed as a business option! Supporting businesses that are providing service or teaching to build sustainable food networks in our communities has to be priority. Planting properties for biodiversity must start happening to ensure pollinators thrive. This survey doesn't address the need for businesses that exist to ensure our sustainability.
- It has been a challenge to assess sales demographics; poor investments on my part for retail end of business. We will be moving to another province in the fall and I would like information regarding new location.
- I am a new sole proprietor and have had a successful launch. My goal at this time is to ensure sustainability and growth in a manageable way
- We need additional businesses in our area to attract tourists.
- We expect to grow. The area we work in (sustainability) is growing exponentially. The sub-area (Circular Economy) likewise. We are a 're-startup' and our challenges right now is that there is more opportunity than we can address, and we are undercapitalized.

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

Answered: 3 Skipped: 34

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

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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