

Municipality of North Grenville

Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

2022 Business Survey: COVID-19 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

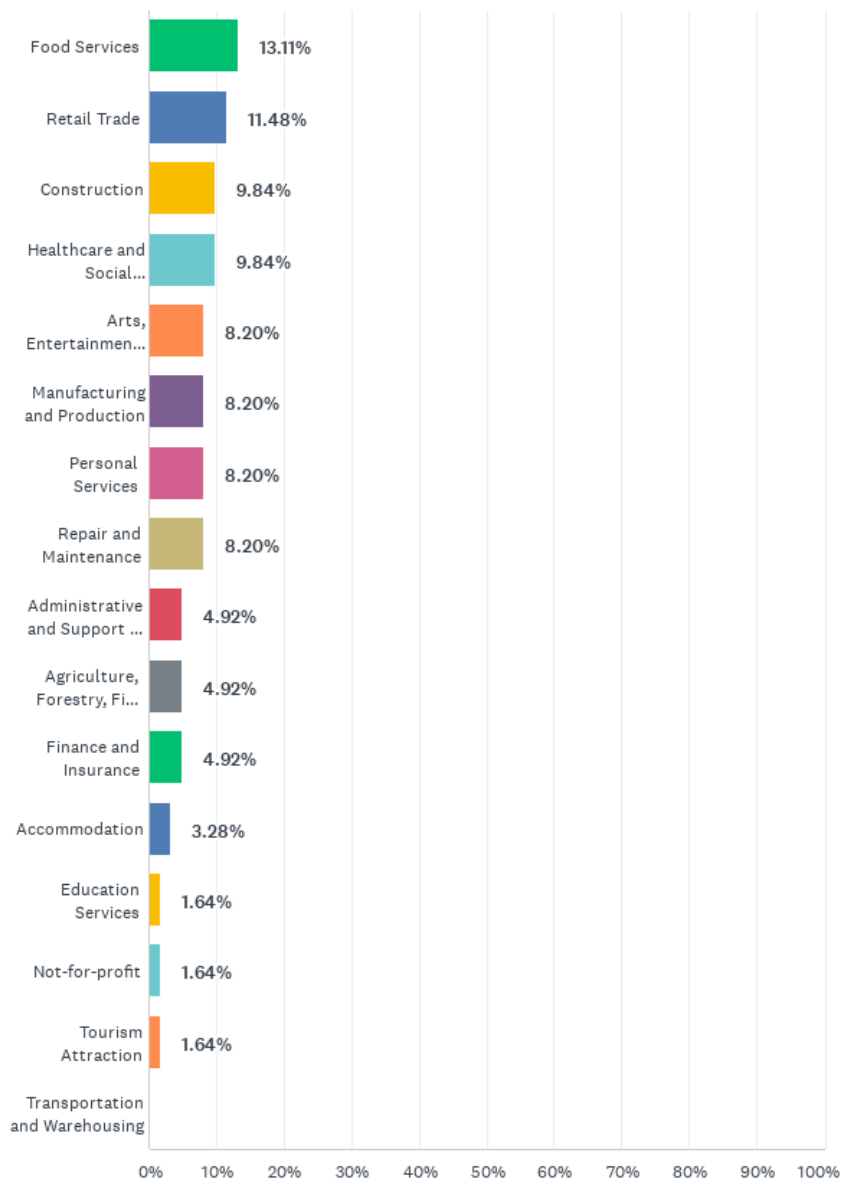


invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans

#2 What sector is your business primarily operating in?

Answered: 61

Skipped: 0



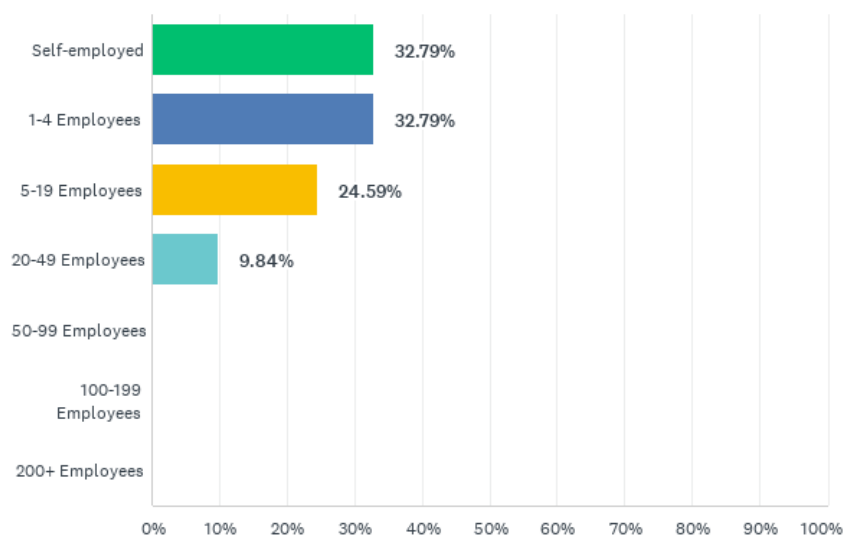
#2 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Food Services	13.11%	8
Retail Trade	11.48%	7
Construction	9.84%	6
Healthcare and Social Assistance	9.84%	6
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	8.20%	5
Manufacturing and Production	8.20%	5
Personal Services	8.20%	5
Repair and Maintenance	8.20%	5
Administrative and Support - Business Services	4.92%	3
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	4.92%	3
Finance and Insurance	4.92%	3
Accommodation	3.28%	2
Education Services	1.64%	1
Not-for-profit	1.64%	1
Tourism Attraction	1.64%	1
Transportation and Warehousing	0.00%	0
TOTAL		61

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

Answered: 61

Skipped: 0



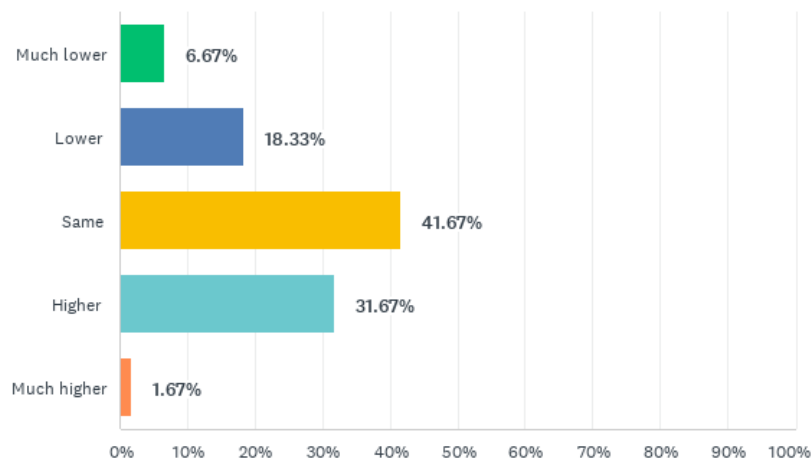
#3 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Self-employed	32.79%	20
1-4 Employees	32.79%	20
5-19 Employees	24.59%	15
20-49 Employees	9.84%	6
50-99 Employees	0.00%	0
100-199 Employees	0.00%	0
200+ Employees	0.00%	0
TOTAL		61

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

Answered: 60

Skipped: 1

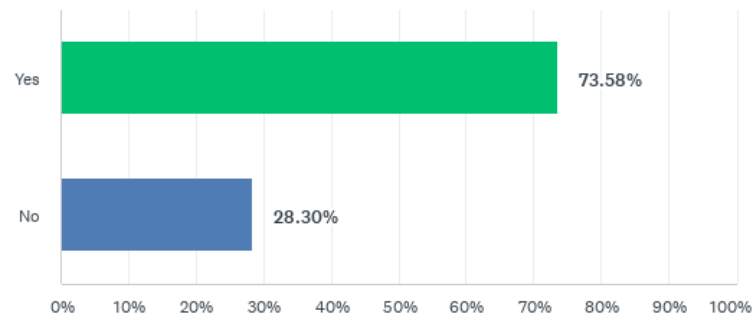


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Much lower	6.67%	4
Lower	18.33%	11
Same	41.67%	25
Higher	31.67%	19
Much higher	1.67%	1
TOTAL		60

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

Answered: 53

Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	73.58% 39
No	28.30% 15
Total Respondents: 53	

Comments Related to Growth

- As a new business I am hopeful for business growth.
- We are a new business we are very hopeful for growth.
- While this business started as a solo practice and existed before COVID, it's now grown from a solo practice into a multi-disciplinary clinic that isn't well known in the local area yet. Paying out of pocket for health services is often seen as an expense instead of what it actually is which is an investment.
- We are as confident as can be. Obviously having gone through a global pandemic, things are subject to change overnight, however business has been strong in the Renovation/Design industry as a whole, so we are optimistic we will continue to see growth.
- With the town of Kemptville growing in population, the demand for our product will increase.

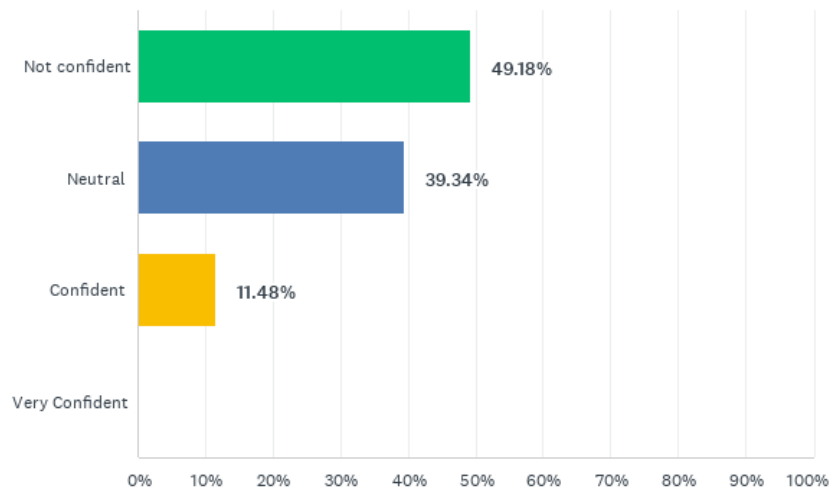
Other Comments

- Government grant programs are creating too much demand today. This increase demand will only take away from future business.
- Expanding this business in 2020 and being shut down for most of the following year and a bit - I think no matter how hard we are working the economy is unstable, the prices are high and people are uncomfortable...and yet we persevere.
- Looming recession will have an impact on future growth.
- Stop the prison development. Fix the basics, proper signage, paving repair, more parking signs, proper parking, more police patrolling, speeding fines, cameras to catch racers, noisy Harley and cars fines, garbage pickup at the wrong times, etc.
- With the COVID measures in place many people are working from home and not choosing to go back to the office so their vehicle stays parked, so as you see less people travelling the roads, less for us to work on.

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

Answered: 61

Skipped: 0

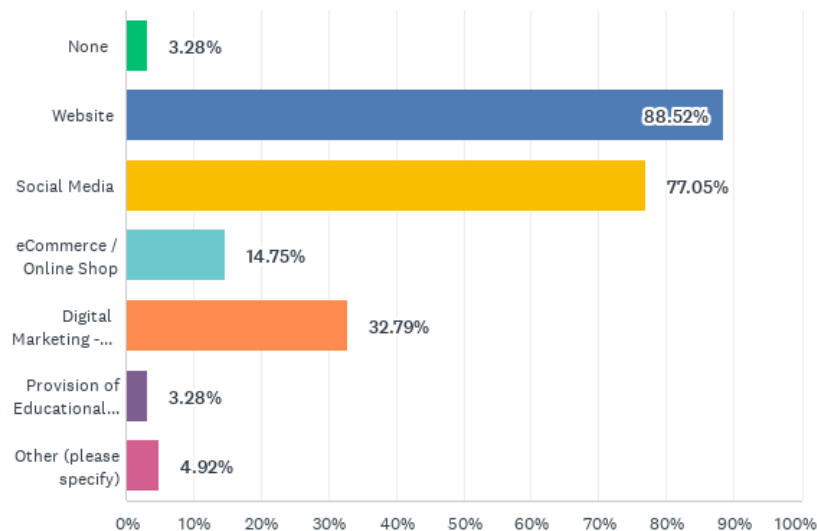


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Not confident	49.18% 30
Neutral	39.34% 24
Confident	11.48% 7
Very Confident	0.00% 0
TOTAL	61

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

Answered: 61

Skipped: 0



#7 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None	3.28%	2
Website	88.52%	54
Social Media	77.05%	47
eCommerce / Online Shop	14.75%	9
Digital Marketing - Advertising / Email	32.79%	20
Provision of Educational Webinars	3.28%	2
Other (please specify)	Responses 4.92%	3
Total Respondents: 61		

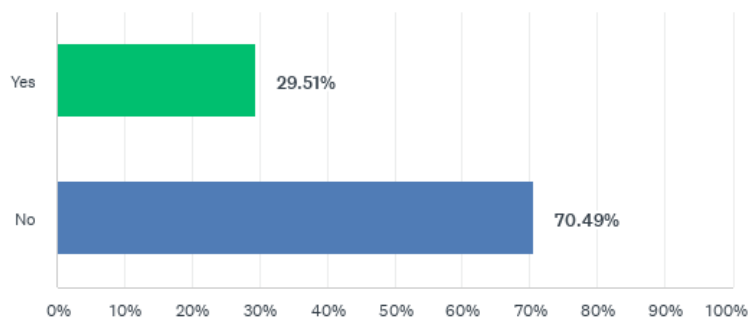
- Instagram.
- While we don't have an online shop, we do have an online booking system for booking appointments.
- E-commerce is a bust we tried it. Waste of money and time. People want to shop in store. Stop giving grants for this and give cash to traditional retailers with way less paperwork to get the money. The grants are too piddly to waste time on. Give more than \$2000.00 to convert to new lighting. This is so underfunded. Stop paying people to sit at home on poge. Stop raising the minimum wage.

#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: 61

Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	29.51%	18
No	70.49%	43
TOTAL		61

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

Answered: 59

Skipped: 2

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
Increasing product prices	13.79% 8	3.45% 2	3.45% 2	0.00% 0	5.17% 3	3.45% 2	18.97% 11	20.69% 12	13.79% 8	17.24% 10	58
Supply chain	17.54% 10	5.26% 3	8.77% 5	5.26% 3	5.26% 3	8.77% 5	8.77% 5	15.79% 9	15.79% 9	8.77% 5	57
Labour force	19.30% 11	5.26% 3	3.51% 2	1.75% 1	1.75% 1	3.51% 2	7.02% 4	12.28% 7	10.53% 6	35.09% 20	57
Changes in your product demand	20.37% 11	11.11% 6	3.70% 2	14.81% 8	18.52% 10	12.96% 7	9.26% 5	3.70% 2	1.85% 1	3.70% 2	54
Increased overhead costs	3.51% 2	1.75% 1	5.26% 3	3.51% 2	12.28% 7	7.02% 4	12.28% 7	14.04% 8	19.30% 11	21.05% 12	57
Debt servicing capacity	28.57% 16	12.50% 7	5.36% 3	12.50% 7	14.29% 8	3.57% 2	7.14% 4	8.93% 5	3.57% 2	3.57% 2	56

- Delays in Municipal approvals
- Using the loan money to keep things afloat and staff getting at least some hours, with a downturn in the market it is going to be impossible to pay it in full before next year.
- As a consultant, my biggest issue is work/life balance!
- Very difficult to get qualified employees.
- The interest rate increases are killing us. Inflation is not caused or prevented by this tactic. Reduce your crazy bylaws that are killing house building and development.

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

Answered: 54

Skipped: 7

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
Employees returning to the workplace	26.42% 14	3.77% 2	5.66% 3	0.00% 0	3.77% 2	9.43% 5	11.32% 6	5.66% 3	9.43% 5	24.53% 13	53
Ability to offer competitive wages and benefits	18.87% 10	3.77% 2	1.89% 1	1.89% 1	7.55% 4	11.32% 6	9.43% 5	7.55% 4	13.21% 7	24.53% 13	53
Desire for hybrid workplace models	63.27% 31	4.08% 2	4.08% 2	6.12% 3	8.16% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.08% 2	4.08% 2	6.12% 3	49
Attraction of new employees	15.69% 8	3.92% 2	3.92% 2	1.96% 1	5.88% 3	5.88% 3	5.88% 3	11.76% 6	19.61% 10	25.49% 13	51

#10 continued...

- No employees.
- Finding staff to work.
- My company is me, myself and I.
- Self-employed for now, so none of the above applies.
- I don't understand the 'Desire for hybrid workplace models.
- Total lack of available automotive technicians nobody getting into the trades.
- Dealing with a rotation of sick employees due to COVID and other respiratory viruses that are causing a shortage of staff.
- Health care, can not work from home, so hybrid model does not apply.
- No one wants to work. There is inadequate education in the schools. teach the basics from 1960's. Kids are coming out uneducated and useless for work world. They can't write, spell or do math or handle people. They are great at sitting in the basement gaming and whining that does not give you life skills.
- Nature of the business dictates part-time employment - even students not interested in so few hours per week.

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

Answered: 32

Skipped: 29

Financial Support

- Subsidies to Businesses for workforce .
- Free training to get more people in the trades.
- Supporting small businesses to be able to hire quality employees.
- Access to wage subsidies for small scale employers to be able to offer better wages...including new start-ups, not just those with COVID losses.
- Incentive programs for employers to recruit and train new staff. Financial assistance to bolster wages until unemployment returns to normal levels and there are once again more people looking for work than there are jobs.

Resident attraction/Population Growth

- Immigration. x2
- Attract more new Canadians to the region to offer their expertise.
- Sustain population growth of at least 2.1 children per couple. Give people a reason to stay in the community. Less government intervention.
- Attracting qualified people to the area, demographically we have a large senior population and our younger people can not find affordable housing and there is not enough public transit, so they can not afford to live in our smaller localities and we lose this work force to the larger cities.

Reduce Social Support

- Getting everyone back to work.
- Pay them less to stay home.
- Stop paying them to sit at home with their parents or on UI.
- Stop crushing business with taxes and fees and using the money to pay people to stay home.

#11 continued...

Housing

- Having affordable housing.
- Affordable housing, transportation (taxi services at a minimum)!!
- Housing and rental prices are insurmountable for many people, particularly those in lower paying jobs. We have a need for lower income housing and support. People can't move to the area due to cost of living.

Training/Skills

- Skills that suit our requirements.
- Development of skilled trades specific to automotive industry- not truck and coach.
- Enable young people to start working on their "careers" with or without the pre-req of formal secondary education. Apprenticeships to get them into the work area would be ideal. Funding to enable small companies such as mine to invest in apprenticeships would be needed. However, I also believe that at the entry level position, there are too many jobs available ... we live in a world of too much choice, too much convenience. How many Tim Horton's does any one town need? How many grocery stores? How many gas stations?

Employer Supports

- A proper guide to deal with paid days off, vacation pay, holiday pay for smaller business with both salary and part time workers.
- Coaching for small business to help them to maintain business, and support staff. Navigating the increased cost of doing business alongside increases in job estimates to clients.

Other Comments

- Public Transport.
- Cutting the red tape.
- Flexible hours and better wages.
- More available and less expensive childcare.
- Awareness, training, communication to business owners.
- Any business that requires staff needs to be paying more than the minimum requirement. The days are gone where business owners can keep the money in their pocket instead of paying staff. You want staff, respect them and know that without them you are out of business.

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

Answered: 37

Skipped: 24

Financial Support

- Subsidies and Grants.
- Financial support.
- Tax relief. Help with wages.
- Grants for capital and training opportunities.

#12 continued...

- Tax break for small business. Gov't supplement for new trades people.
- Municipal breaks or small grants.
- More grants for business/industries rebuilding.
- Financial incentive programs for recruitment and training. Financial assistance for wage/benefit enhancements.
- If somehow there could be decrease in business taxes or in payroll deduction costs or some bursary to tap into to attract practitioners to the area.
- New business subsidies and grants. The focus has been on businesses with at least 2years history or those who can demonstrate COVID losses, leaving new start-ups with few options for funding.
- Grants to pay the conversion to new cheaper lighting and AC/heating options. Drop the costs of utilities and water bills they are horrendous bills. Cut the costs for business banking – especially POS, VISA etc., It's out of control. Drop business tax costs, cut the city cost to get rid of our garbage. Help the businesses by cutting their costs. Drop capital gains taxes for businesses. Give people a reason to expect some profit after working for years in a small business. Stop giving handouts to the big companies. They are the ones using machines at the cash. They don't employ local people.

Labour

- More qualified employees.
- Access to staff.
- People, experience, the correct people.
- More employees.
- Finding workers.
- Hiring quality practitioners that are a great fit for the clinic.
- Attract more local labour pool.

Government

- Reduce red tape. Have municipalities have a sense of responsibility. Shorter approval process from municipal sector.
- Eliminate the red tape when processing governmental applications.
- Industry (Forestry/Wood Supply) Advocacy- Lobbying provincial support.
- Local governments need to support the concept of shopping locally, it is so easy for people to order on line and they do not realize that that hurts our small businesses
- Fiscally responsible and accountable government.
- Government intervention encouraging people to return to work.
- Persuade Province of Ontario to devote some of the school "catch up" funds to established for-profit businesses. Encourage Government of Ontario to make tuition payments a tax deduction / tax credit.

Marketing/Advertising

- Web and marketing.
- Advertising. x2
- Exposure so people know we exist.
- Advertising, support network.
- Marketing strategies best approach.

#12 continued...

Employer Supports

- Labour guidance and HST remittance for moneys that we accumulated during COVID but had to use as cash flow instead of submitting.
- Guidance/a checklist on hiring staff. What you need to do or have in place as an employer, help with figuring out payroll...
- Support to hire quality employees (i.e. reception).
- Understanding how to afford hiring staff.

Cost Reduction

- Less taxes. x2
- Less overhead expenses.
- Shipping and supplies costs being controlled.

Training

- Labour subsidy or apprentice program in plants for florist.
- Apprenticeship and training programs for automotive technicians.
- Better college in school training total lack of support for new apprentices from the colleges.

Digital Support

- Support for marketing and digital presence.
- Digital / social media presence and advertising - I don't know how!
- Website and promotion regionally.

Transportation

- Transportation.
- Transportation options for those who cannot drive. Many of our client's do not have a family physician which slows down our ability to provide care. Internet is too slow in the area.
- Public Transport.

Other

- Expanding business.
- Better signage, regional linkages.
- Affordable housing.
- Promoting "support local" businesses/producers.
- Better parking!
- Cost of living support.
- Increase in housing stock to allow for migration into our community.
- Attract more businesses to open in the local area.
- I would like to find an assistant to handle my invoicing and receipts. It would only be a couple hours per month.
- We are in a good position as we have a well-established business history, a bit of a tourism draw, but supply local restaurants. We don't really need support, but there are others that do. As a small food business, we have problems producing enough products during busy times especially during peak holidays. I guess it's a good thing. Having to turn customers away due to lack of product...

#12 continued...

- Greater presence on the Chamber of Commerce social media platforms and website referrals from clients (difficult to solicit as my business focuses on client confidentiality). Referrals that actually turn into solid leads!

#13 What are your expectations for 2023?

Answered: 38

Skipped: 23

Positive

- We are growing.
- Continue to grow and expand.
- To increase my business's revenue.
- Continued growth at a slow pace.
- Although recession is forecasted we expect growth.
- Increased awareness of our business and revenue growth.
- We hope to have our numbers back up to pre-pandemic levels.
- A decent year, if I am lucky I will be back to close to pre-COVID levels.
- Being a new business and looking to expand, we are hoping to double our sales.
- To have a stronger more streamlined business with trades and customer service.
- I hope that COVID is a memory and we can stay constantly busy and attract a new practitioner.
- We expect to continue to grow, despite having to adapt to inflating costs of goods.
- Continue with events and festivals and expand to offer wellness retreats.

Neutral

- Same.
- I expect little change.
- To match the sales of 2022.
- To continue to work hard.
- More of the same.
- A normal non-COVID year.
- I will do the same as last year due to staff shortages.
- To have adequate human resources to help run a profitable business.
- I am continuing on and do not foresee any changes to what I do or how I do it.
- We expect that we will continue to provide superior knowledge and customer service to excel in our field.
- I feel our business will stay the same till people are forced to go back to the office and our labour force returns to pre-COVID times.

Negative

- High taxes, high interest rates, little work.
- Having to scale back due to burn out.
- A slight decrease in sales from the 2022 post COVID.
- A recession commencing in Q2 that will last 2-3 years.

#13 continued...

- Bad news brought on by inaction or wrong action by elected officials.
- Same, ever increasing prices, labour costs and smaller and smaller profits.
- Cost of materials will skyrocket, interest rates will continue climbing, more people will be defaulting on payments.
- Costs will continue to rise, wages won't keep up and proportional product increases will not be supported industry wide.
- We may see a bit of a downturn in 2023, due to the economy, but, because we are a local producer of bakery goods, we always have the market covered.
- Expecting continued challenges to provide service without any additional trained technicians.

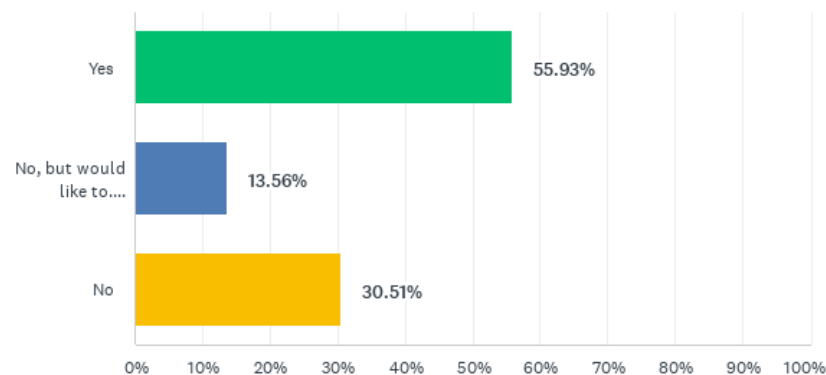
Survival

- Trying just to hold on.
- Keeping enough sales to not lay off stay as they have families to feed.
- Pay our bills and hopefully make a profit

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

Answered: 59

Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	55.93%	33
No, but would like to. (please provide your contact information in #16)	13.56%	8
No	30.51%	18
TOTAL		59

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

Answered: 17

Skipped: 44

Labour

- The biggest challenge is a shortage of trained professionals. As the economy declines, there is further demand from clients to repair vehicles. Demand for service increases with a diminished capacity to respond.
- Young people don't want to work. There is poor work ethic in our society. Our population has an entitled mentality. Our youth is more concerned about TikTok, YouTube and Facebook.
- With the closure of the local agricultural programs at the Kemptville College, our ability to recruit individuals with the skill set required for this business, we have been challenged to find a pool to draw from in Eastern Ontario. There needs to be a local educational institution that draws students who are interested in working in this industry.
- People.
- 20 years in business in North Grenville, hiring has never been this challenging!

Other Comments

- I have a very niche business and finding my clients is tricky.
- We're in the growth position of needing more support/staff than we have revenue to pay for.
- Big box stores making it more difficult for the little guys to compete. The cost of everything including the mortgage here is going through the roof.
- As a new business starting during the pandemic it has been a challenge to get visibility. Renovation delays and increased pandemic costs of renovations have caused challenges for our business. We hope this coming year will be a better one.
- The government loans deferred to Dec 2022 are still looming and I am likely not alone in wondering if the money will all be there to pay back. Debt from being closed yet paying rent etc. to remain viable and the extra costs are now being felt.
- We are in a somewhat "recession proof" industry. However, we will face challenges as consumers shift to essentials and stop purchasing luxury items. This will affect margins and gross profit.
- The government has to become honest and accountable and address the fiscal disaster they have created and lead by example rather than have every level of government leveraged to the max and using valuable tax revenues to service debt.
- Everyone talks about supporting small business and then everyone helps themselves to taking more money away from them, no one is really doing anything to help. It will take courage and not focusing on being elected.
- It has been an uphill battle ever since I launched my business earlier this year. Expectations that an event like the IPM might pay off seem quite futile. Even though I have contacts locally in many of the areas where my services are needed, for example lawyers and insurance agents, referrals from same are very sparse on the ground. Most of my referrals have come from other appraisers.
- The ever demanding need to market effectively, with high costs to advertise, staff overhead costs, maintaining staff with appropriate pay.

#15 continued...

- Currently the last-minute appointment cancellations due to COVID/exposure to COVID are a challenge for staffing. The cost of all our medical supplies have doubled or in some cases more than doubled since COVID. The fact that everything has gone up and many people are struggling, means that if we put our prices up we may get people not coming for care when they should, adding a bigger burden to the health care system down the road.
- We are a new Bed and Breakfast business that has struggled with renovation delays through 2021 and 2022. This has caused us to miss the entire spring, summer, and most of fall travel season since we will only open on Nov 16, 2022 We intended to open July 1st, 2022. This has had a significant impact on revenue and cash flow that has put us way behind before we really start. We are hopeful, but it is concerning and some means of cash flow relief would be welcome. Unfortunately, since we are not yet open we don't qualify for any COVID relief payments.

#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: 16 Skipped: 44

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Contact Name	Responses	100.00%	15
Business Name	Responses	100.00%	15
Contact Number	Responses	93.33%	14
Email	Responses	100.00%	15

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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