Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

2025 Business Survey Report

July 3, 2025

Small Business
1 - 49 full-time equivalent employees

Survey Timeframe: April 29 – June 4, 2025

Communities

Athens | Augusta | Brockville | Edwardsburgh Cardinal | Elizabethtown-Kitley | Front of Yonge Gananoque | Leeds and the Thousand Islands | Merrickville-Wolford | North Grenville | Prescott Rideau Lakes | Westport

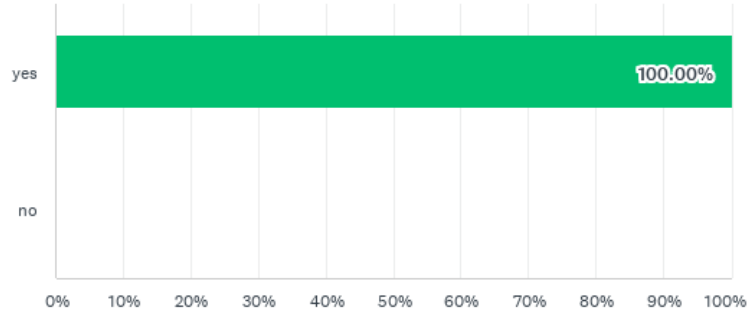
Prepared by:

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
Economic Development Office
32 Wall Street, Suite 300, Brockville, ON
econdev@uclg.on.ca

invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans

Is your organization a for-profit business registered to carry out business in Ontario? (required)

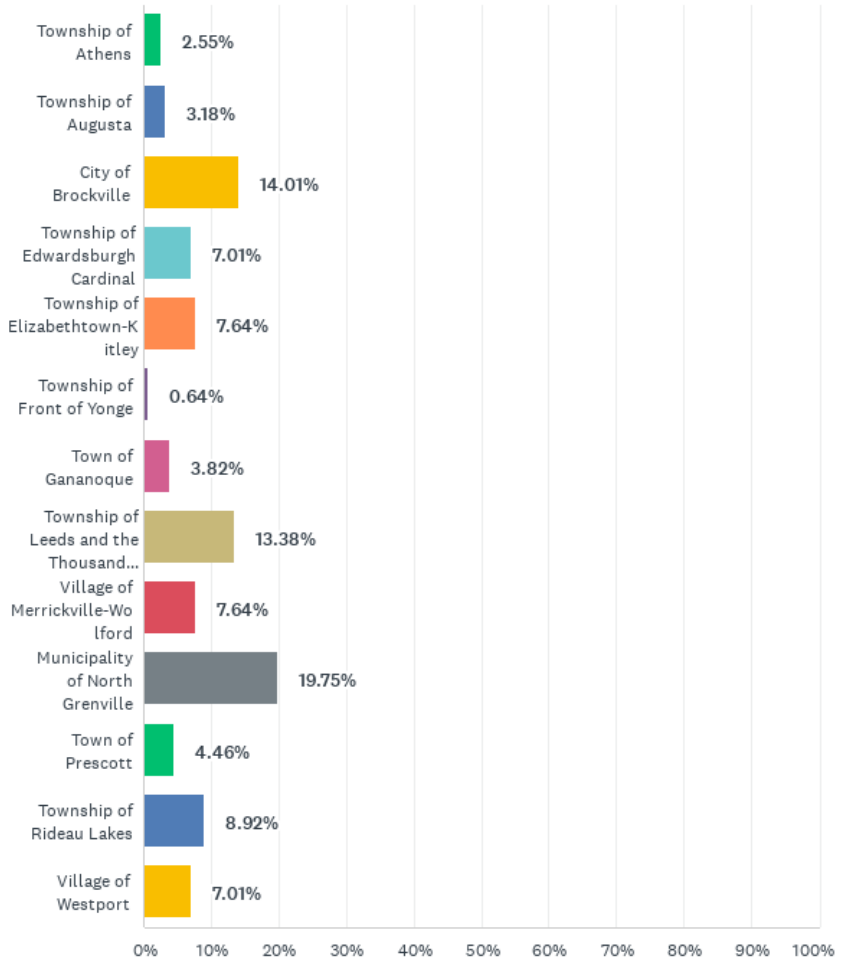
Answered: 158 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	158
no	0.00%	0
TOTAL		158

#G1. Where is your business located? (if servicing multiple communities, please identify location of your main office)

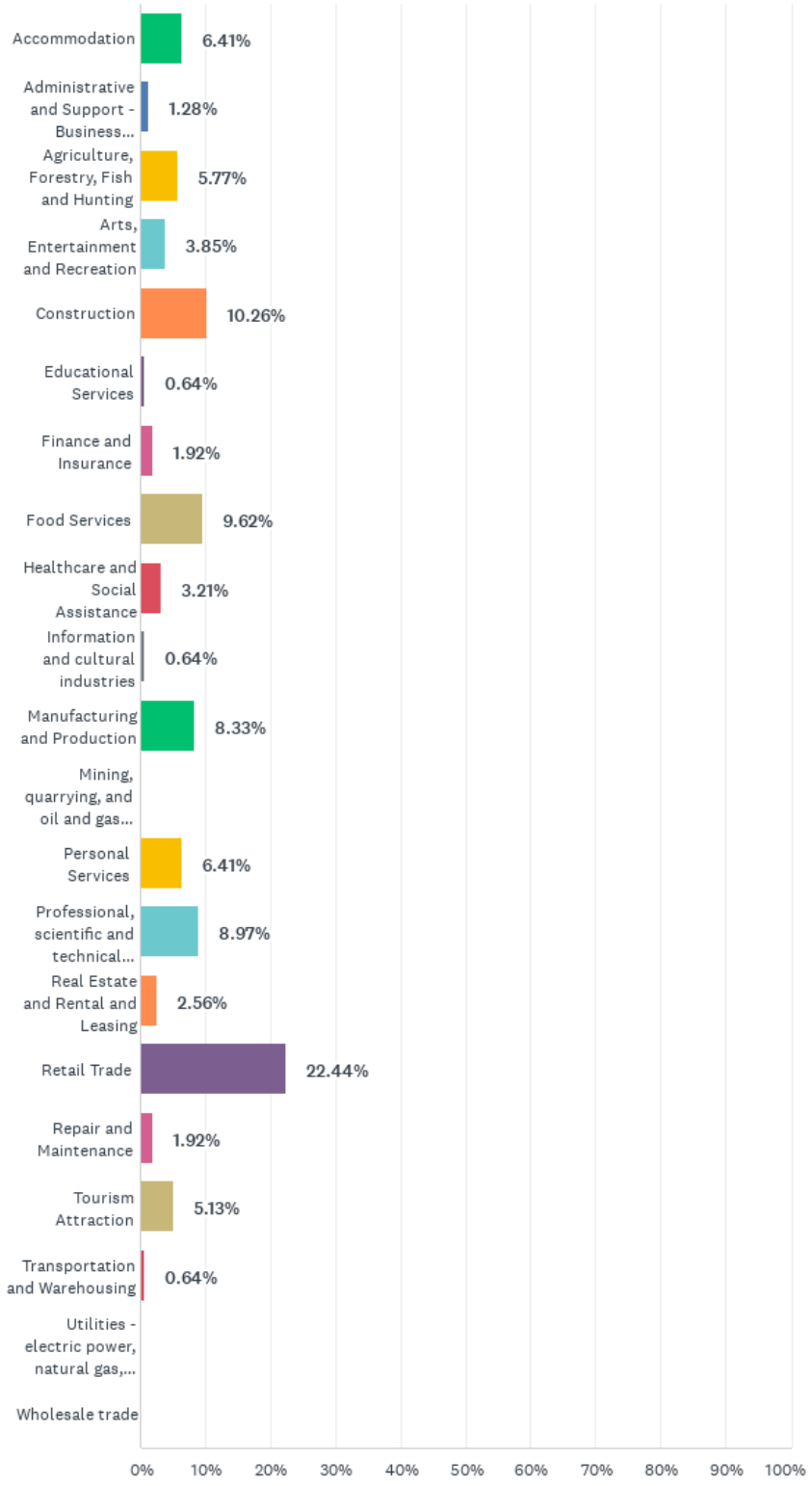
Answered: 157 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Township of Athens	2.55%	4
Township of Augusta	3.18%	5
City of Brockville	14.01%	22
Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal	7.01%	11
Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley	7.64%	12
Township of Front of Yonge	0.64%	1
Town of Gananoque	3.82%	6
Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands	13.38%	21
Village of Merrickville-Wolford	7.64%	12
Municipality of North Grenville	19.75%	31
Town of Prescott	4.46%	7
Township of Rideau Lakes	8.92%	14
Village of Westport	7.01%	11
TOTAL		157

#G2. What sector is your business primarily operating in?(find your business category here)

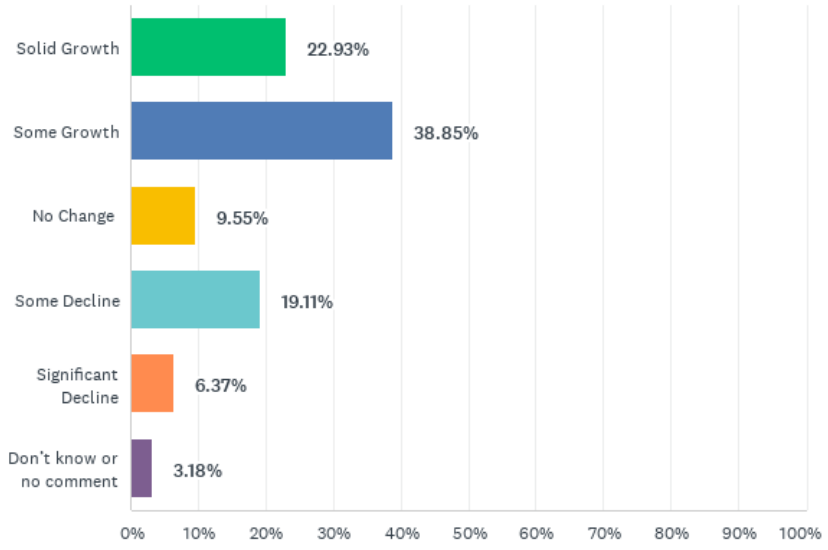
Answered: 156 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Accommodation	6.41%	10
Administration and Support – Business Services	1.28%	2
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	5.77%	9
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	3.85%	6
Construction	10.26%	16
Educational Services	0.64%	1
Finance and Insurance	1.92%	3
Food Services	9.62%	15
Healthcare and Social Assistance	3.21%	5
Information and cultural industries	0.64%	1
Manufacturing and Production	8.33%	13
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.00%	0
Personal Services	6.41%	10
Professional, scientific and technical services	8.97%	14
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2.56%	4
Retail Trade	22.44%	35
Repair and Maintenance	1.92%	3
Tourism Attraction	5.13%	8
Transportation and Warehousing	0.64%	1
Utilities – electric power, natural gas, water-sewage	0.00%	0
Wholesale trade	0.00%	0
TOTAL		156

#G3. In your last fiscal year, how did your sales / revenues perform?

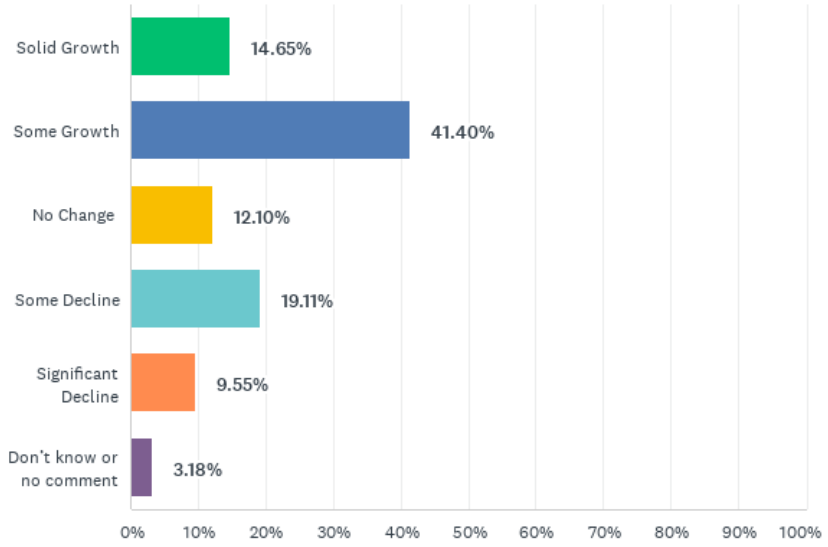
Answered: 157 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Solid Growth	22.93%	36
Some Growth	38.85%	61
No Change	9.55%	15
Some Decline	19.11%	30
Significant Decline	6.37%	10
Don't know or no comment	3.18%	5
TOTAL		157

#G4. How did your net income in the last fiscal year compare to the previous year?

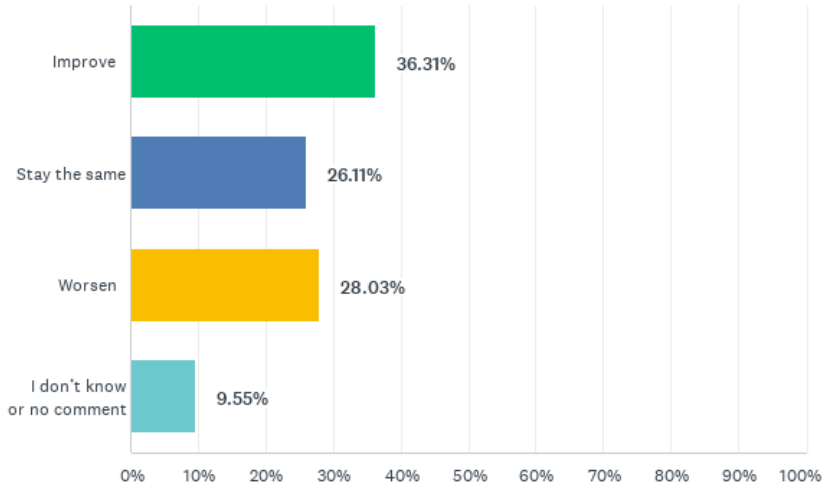
Answered: 157 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Solid Growth	14.65%	23
Some Growth	41.40%	65
No Change	12.10%	19
Some Decline	19.11%	30
Significant Decline	9.55%	15
Don't know or no comment	3.18%	5
TOTAL		157

#G5. Over the next year, do you expect the market for your business sector to:

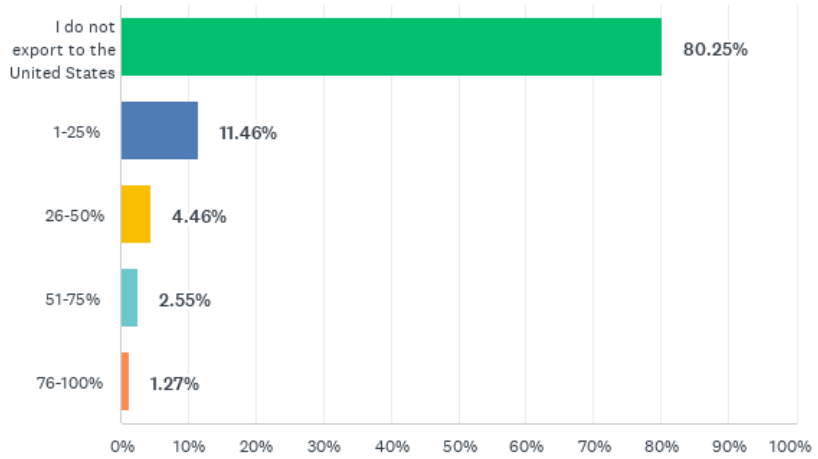
Answered: 157 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Improve	36.31%	57
Stay the same	26.11%	41
Worsen	28.03%	44
I don't know or no comment	9.55%	15
TOTAL		157

#G6. What percentage of your business's exports are directed to the United States?

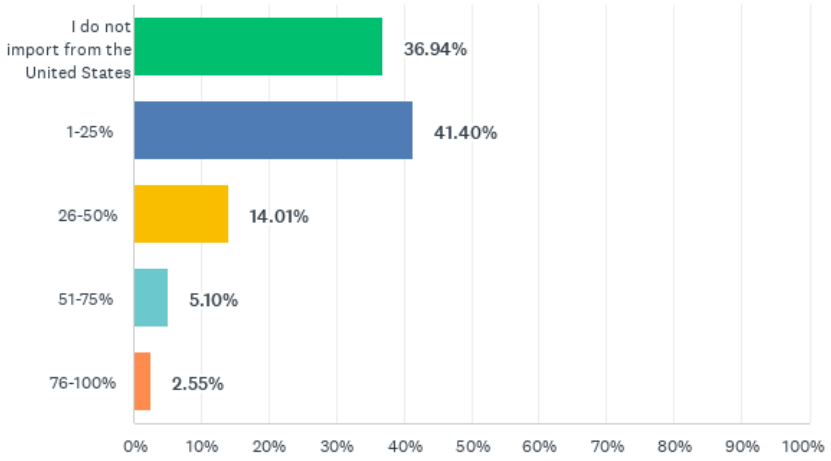
Answered: 157 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I do not export to the United States	80.25%	126
1-25%	11.46%	18
26-50%	4.46%	7
51-75%	2.55%	4
76-100%	1.27%	2
TOTAL		157

#G7. What percentage of your business relies on imports from the United States?

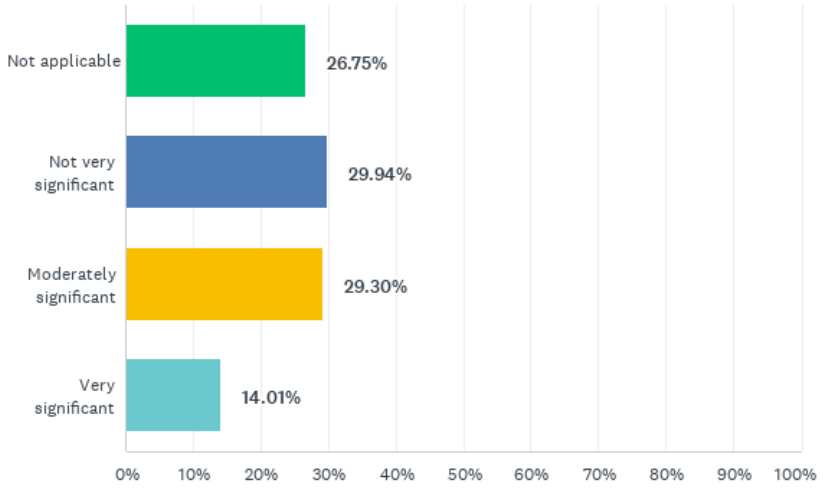
Answered: 157 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I do not import from the United States	36.94%	58
1-25%	41.40%	65
26-50%	14.01%	22
51-75%	5.10%	8
76-100%	2.55%	4
TOTAL		157

#G8. How significant is the U.S. market to your business's overall revenue?

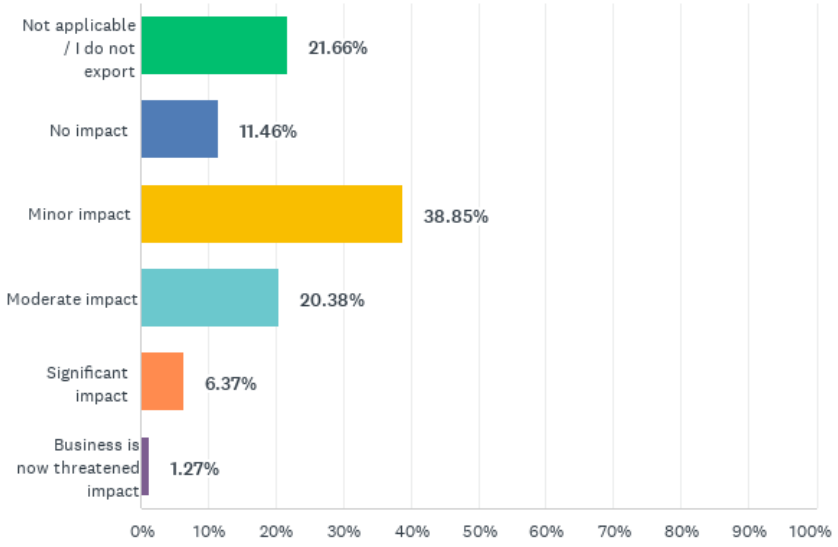
Answered: 157 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not applicable	26.75%	42
Not very significant	29.94%	47
Moderately significant	29.30%	46
Very significant	14.01%	22
TOTAL		157

#G9. Has the 25% tariff on Canadian goods impacted your business operations?

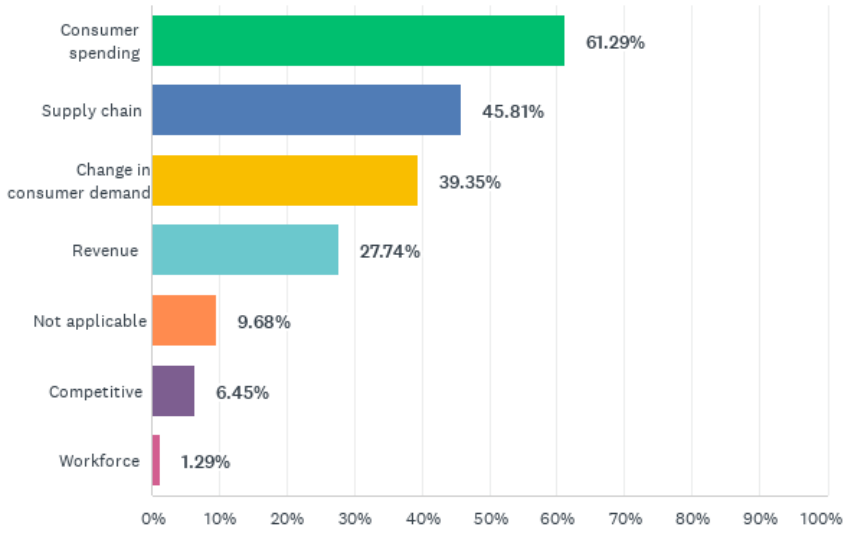
Answered: 157 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not applicable / I do not export	21.66%	34
No impact	11.46%	18
Minor impact	38.85%	61
Moderate impact	20.38%	32
Significant impact	6.37%	10
Business is now threatened impact	1.27%	2
TOTAL		157

#G10. What specific areas of your business are or will be most affected by the economic trade war? Choose all that apply.

Answered: 155 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Consumer spending	61.29%	95
Supply chain	45.81%	71
Change in consumer demand	39.35%	61
Revenue	27.74%	43
Not applicable	9.68%	15
Competitive	6.45%	10
Workforce	1.29%	2

Increased cost of doing business

- Cost of goods.
- Retail price.
- Equipment/parts pharmaceuticals, etc.
- Price of goods went up and less availability of US goods from suppliers.
- We may experience an increase in cost of supplies we order in order to run our business.
- We travel to the US from Feb–May approximately 4x for business and with the declining value of our dollar the expenses are overwhelming and swallowed all revenue this year.

Reduced consumer spending

- Clients are watching their disposable cash more closely.
- Fear in the marketplace for buying a new home. Panic. Confusion.

Tourism and cross-border travel impacts

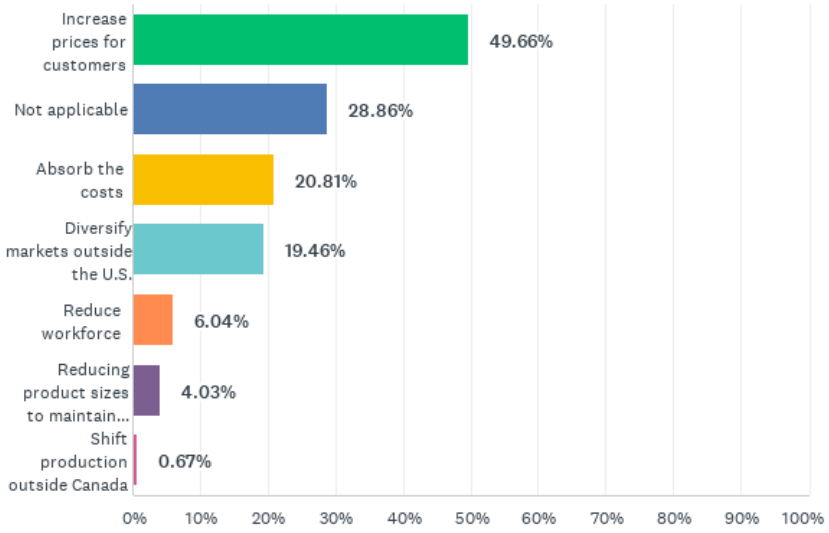
- US tourism traffic.
- Visitors to Gananoque from the U.S. may change.
- Cross Border Tourism Decline Expected.
- Unsure what the real impact will be with tourism.
- Canadians have drastically reduced travel to the USA, which has resulted in sales declines of 30–40%

Other

- Fees, Permits, Taxes.
- Stress impacting individual and community levels; heightened need for mental health support.

#G11. How is or will your business be responding to the tariffs? Choose all that apply.

Answered: 149 Skipped: 9



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Increase prices for customers	49.66%	74
Not applicable	28.86%	43
Absorb the costs	20.81%	31
Diversify markets outside the U.S.	19.46%	29
Reduce workforce	6.04%	9
Reducing product sizes to maintain price for customers	4.03%	6
Shift production outside Canada	0.67%	1

Raising Prices or Adjusting Pricing Strategy

- Some items, pricing have risen. Others we've eaten some of the tariffs. Other items our wholesalers have eaten some. No real consistent answer to this.

Avoiding or Replacing U.S. Products

- Avoiding U.S. imports for the time being.
- Eliminating all U.S. products, replacing with Canadian products.
- Stopped purchasing U.S. products when possible, increasing prices on them when a Canadian alternative is not available.

Exploring New Markets or Revenue Streams

- Diversification foremost.
- Focus on Canadian tourism, not increasing prices.

Improving Efficiency or Operational Changes

- Become more efficient to minimize the impact.
- Seeking alternative supply channel.

Limited Flexibility or Severe Consequences

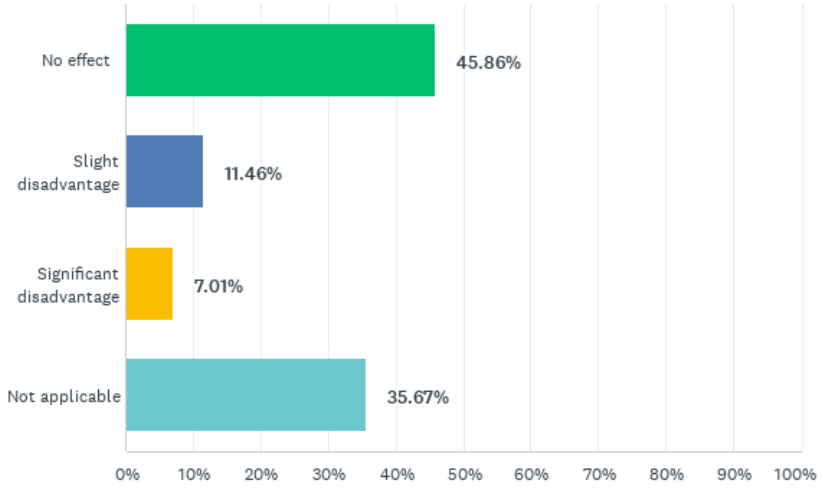
- If sales don't materialize, I may have to reduce workforce.
- We are 100% dependent on cross border traffic by federal regulation. We have no ability to pivot to new markets.

Other

- Not sure yet. Still waiting to see how it will affect us directly in terms of supplies.
- Fitness industry is mainly affected by other people's lack of disposable income.

G12. How will these tariffs affect your ability to compete with U.S. based companies in the U.S. market?

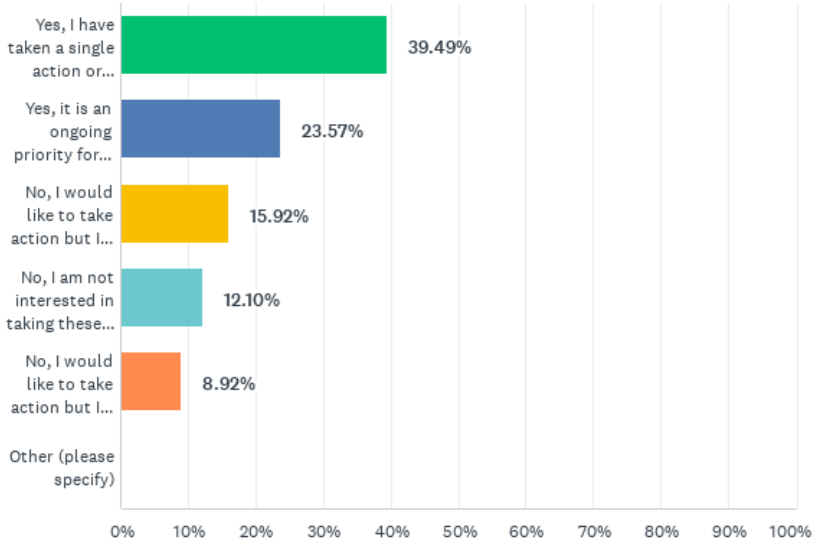
Answered: 157 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No effect	45.86%	72
Slight disadvantage	11.46%	18
Significant disadvantage	7.01%	11
Not applicable	35.67%	56
TOTAL		157

#G13. Have you taken action in the last 5 years to increase your business's energy efficiency and/or reduce your business's carbon emissions?

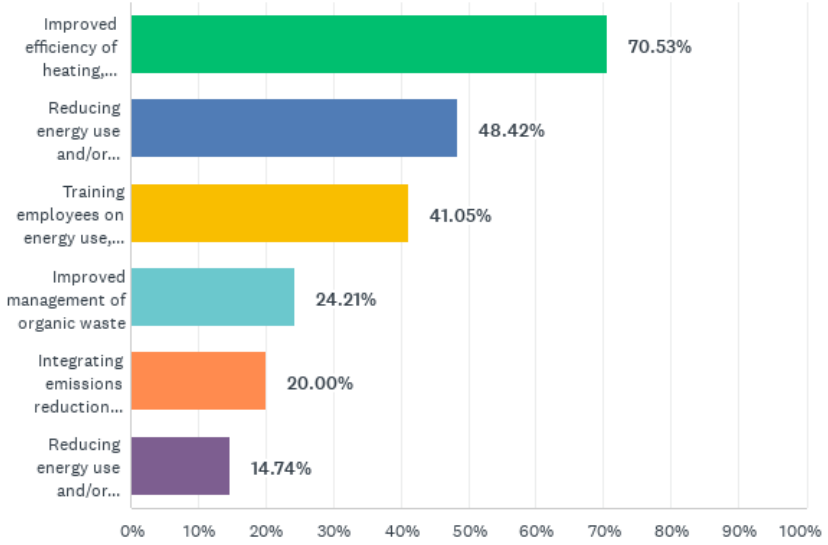
Answered: 157 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, I have taken a single action or multiple single actions when possible	39.49%	62
Yes, it is an ongoing priority for the business with multiple and/or impactful actions taken	23.57%	37
No, I would like to take action but I am not sure what action to take	15.92%	25
No, I am not interested in taking these actions	12.10%	19
No, I would like to take action but I am unable to at this time	8.92%	14
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0

#G13 a. If you have taken action, what were these actions? Check all that apply

Answered: 95 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Improved efficiency of heating, cooling and/or ventilation systems	70.53%	67
Reducing energy use and/or emissions from business operations	48.42%	46
Training employees on energy use, waste reduction, etc.	41.05%	39
Improved management of organic waste	24.21%	23
Integrating emissions reduction considerations into business strategy	20.00%	19
Reducing energy use and/or emissions from supply chain	14.74%	14

Energy Efficiency Upgrades

- Changing equipment.
- Installed new lighting in store.
- Conversion to all LED lighting, smart thermostats.
- Purchased newer equipment.
- Trying to install solar to offset energy use by Hydro One has been extremely unhelpful.
- The business building was designed from the start to be very energy-efficient.

Sustainable Transportation

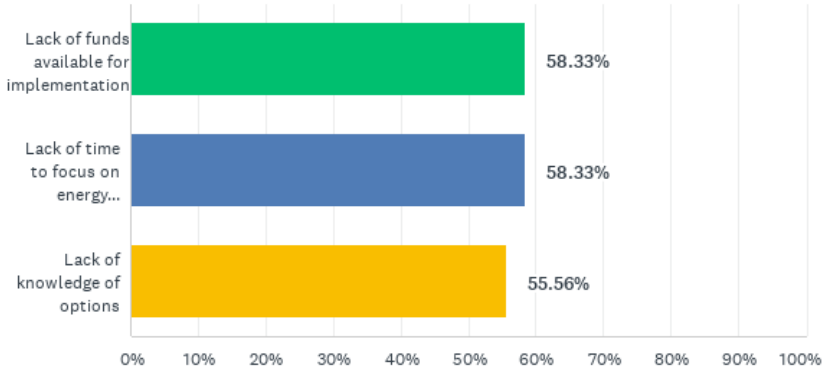
- Using freight delivery options instead of several courier deliveries.
- Multi-tasking more - deliveries linked with locations travelling to, pickups, etc.
- Looking for better ways to reduce vehicle emissions, however I can't afford battery powered cars.

Other

- We are a Regenerative farm, with NetZero emissions.
- Added a battery powered product line to our mix of offerings. Encouraging supplies to reduce landfill end products in shipping.

#G13 b. If you have not taken action and would like to, what is preventing you? Check all that apply.

Answered: 36 Skipped: 22



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Lack of funds available for implementation	58.33%	21
Lack of time to focus on energy efficiency and/or carbon emissions	58.33%	21
Lack of knowledge of options	55.56%	20

Home-Based Business Challenges

- My business is home-based, and I would like to improve energy efficiency within my home. I have purchased a more energy efficient auto for visits to clients.

Industry-Specific or Operational Limitations

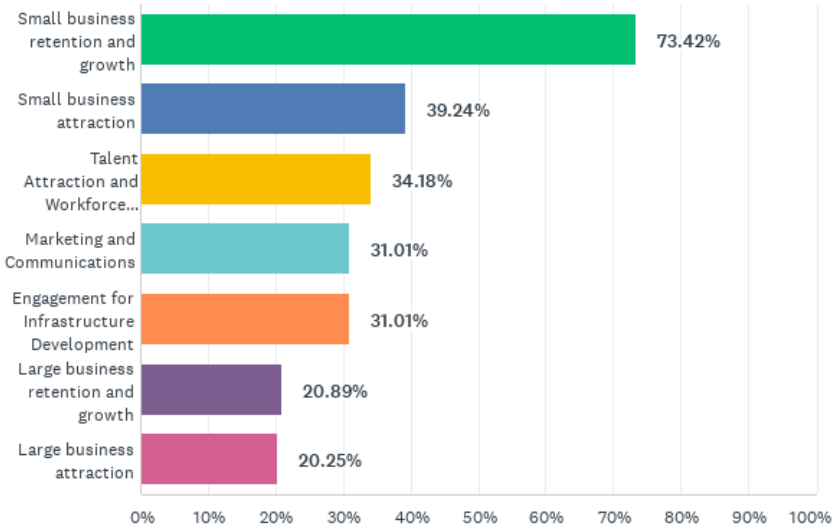
- We need certain supplies required to run our healthcare business.
- Our equipment is very industry specific.

Other

- I rent the space I'm working from and don't have a lot of control over our biggest energy efficiency issues (very large windows bleeding heat in winter and AC in summer).

#G16. What should the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Economic Development focus on for the next 5 years? Please pick top 3.

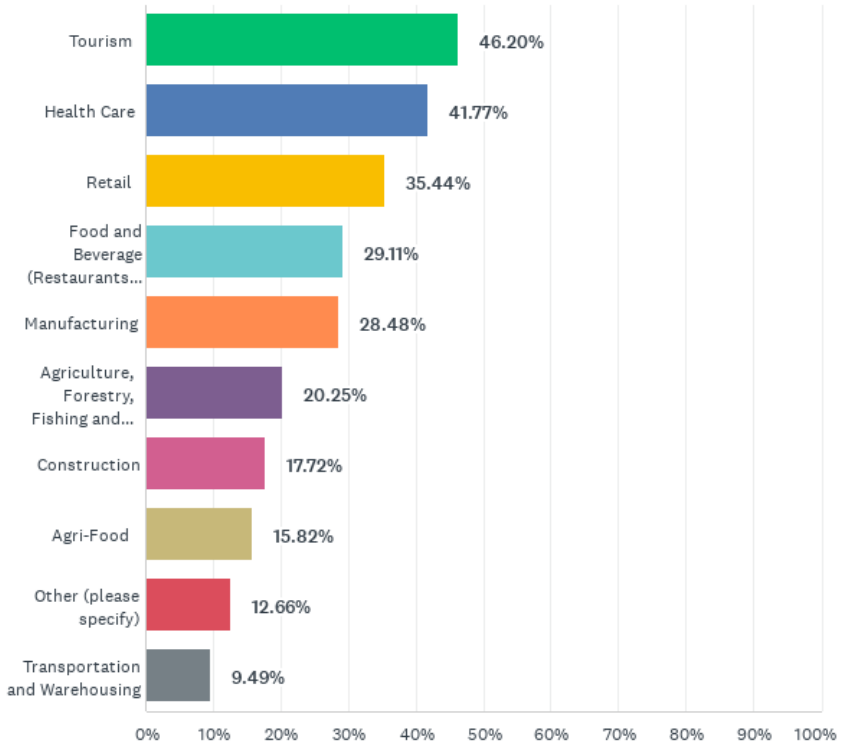
Answered: 158 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Small business retention and growth	73.42%	116
Small business attraction	39.24%	62
Talent Attraction and Workforce Development	34.18%	54
Marketing and Communications	31.01%	49
Engagement for Infrastructure Development	31.01%	49
Large business retention and growth	20.89%	33
Large business attraction	20.25%	32

#G17. In support of the Leeds Grenville diversified economy, what business sectors require Counties Economic Development support? Please pick top 3

Answered: 158 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Tourism	46.20%	73
Health Care	41.77%	66
Retail	35.44%	56
Food and Beverage (Restaurants, Bars, Catering, Food Service)	29.11%	46
Manufacturing	28.48%	45
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	20.25%	32
Construction	17.72%	28
Agri-Food	15.82%	25
Other (please specify)	12.66%	20
Transportation and Warehousing	9.49%	15

Health and Personal Services

- Personal Services.
- Complementary healthcare services that aren't OHIP funded.
- More help for seniors that financially need it.

Trades

- Trades training and business support.
- Labour support.
- Automotive service and repair trade support.

Financial and Professional Services

- Data. Huge opportunity for energy development and data storage.

Arts and Culture

- Culture and Arts.
- Arts and entertainment.
- Arts and Entertainment & programming for youth.

Tourism

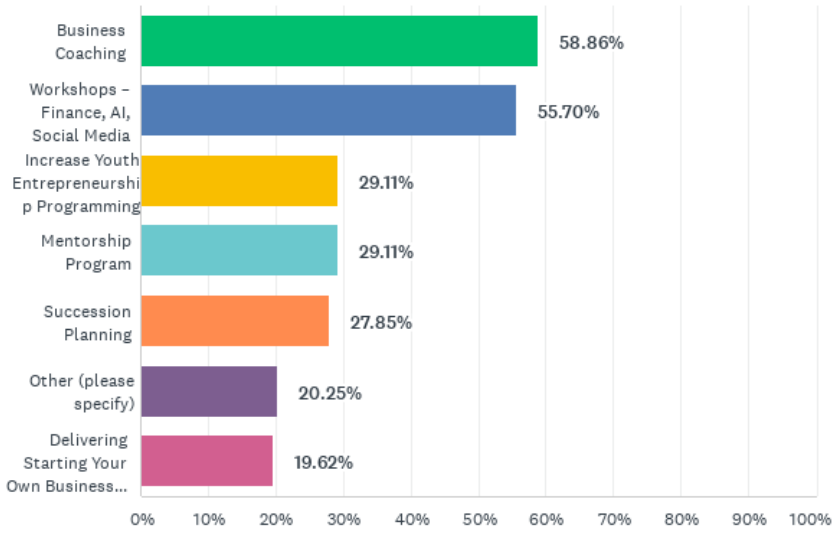
- Multi-use trails to retain/attract young families, health reasons and to improve tourism.
- Destination retail coaching is needed to educate/inform how our 25 new homes per year can help sustain and improve business.

Other

- All.
- Housing.
- Support not severing lots up and down the back Concession Roads!!
- Technology. Requires Restaurants and Bars to attract technical talent.
- We are a fitness and youth development company. If gyms and sport/fitness programs aren’t better supported there will simply be none.
- Work towards bringing branch campus of a university to the region.
- Day Care.

#G18. To grow small businesses, what areas should Counties support? Pick top 3

Answered: 158 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Business Coaching	58.86%	93
Workshops – Finance, AI, Social Media	55.70%	88
Increase Youth Entrepreneurship Programming	29.11%	46
Mentorship Program	29.11%	46
Succession Planning	27.85%	44
Other (please specify)	20.25%	32
Delivering Starting Your Own Business Workshops	19.62%	31

Grants, Funding, and Financial Support

- Grants. (3)
- Tax incentives.
- Financial support programs for S/M businesses.
- Financial support to counter tariffs, promote shop local.
- Small capital seed funding to kickstart small business and attract STEM based startups.
- Grants for physical signage, marketing and promotion.
- Grants and incentives.
- Funding, incubator program.
- How to access financial support to ALL small businesses regardless of how long they've been in business and not just those in tourism.

- Lower Business Taxes, Grant Programs for Small Business, Funding for Staff Training, Marketing the Area, Infrastructure Development and Maintenance.

Government Regulations

- Reduce regulation.
- Dealing with all levels of govt requirements assistance/training.
- Cut red tape, reduce building codes burdens w/ individualized deviations.
- Reduce the statutory and regulatory burden for small business by aligning with provincial and federal jurisdictions to reduce redundancy.
- Our issues have to do with regulatory hurdles (ESA code).
- Reduce 'Red Tape': Building permits, decks, outbuildings etc... $1500 for a deck permit (for a deck that cost less than $2000) - months of approval time, and public consult, presentation to council etc. It means people don't want to bother to upgrade and build small projects! This is revenue not spent and earned.
- Speak with Townships to set up and support business within the Township. Many Townships don't know how to strengthen existing and support new business to make each Township stronger in this area.

Training and Education

- Increase in trades training and education.
- Teach effective transformational methodologies to lower their costs and become more competitive. Remove the 'waste' in their processes - every company has more waste than non-waste in their internal processes and they need to learn how to 'see' and remove it effectively.
- It starts in the schools. Highschool should mandate 4 years of business classes.

Marketing, Promotion, and Visibility

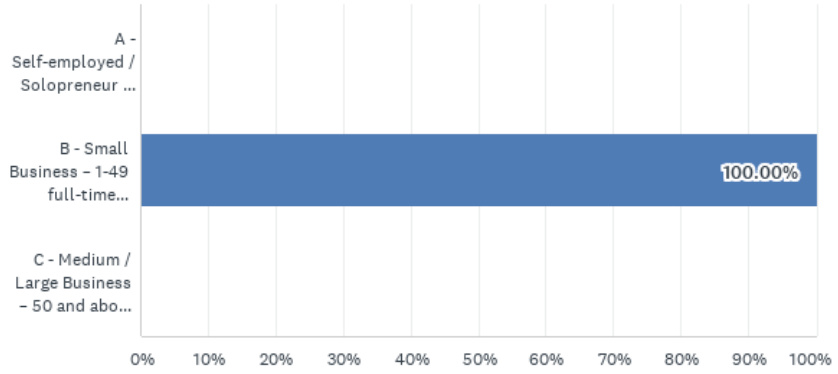
- Assist with marketing.
- Advertising, promotion, consumer awareness.
- Social media strategies to entice business retention, tourism and economic development.

Other

- Skilled workers.
- Business networking.
- Increase focus on small independent businesses in the hospitality and tourism sector.
- Invite successful business owners to present once a month a half hour long Lessons Learned as most will pack up as they do not have a business succession strategy. It is estimated 60% of these small shops and businesses will go unbought because no one gave them a transition strategy workshop. Yet successful business owners inspire others. But we need to give them a forum to network and share Lessons Learned.

G19. Identify your business size

Answered: 158 Skipped: 0

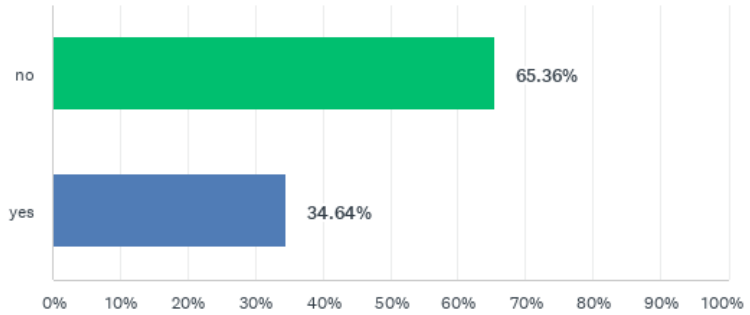


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A – Self-employed / Solopreneur / No employees	0.00%	0
B – Small Business – 1-49 full-time equivalent employees	100.0%	158
C – Medium / Large Business – 50 and above full-time equivalent employees	0.00%	0
TOTAL		158

B - Small Business – 1-49 full-time equivalent employees

#B1. Do you have broadband / internet connectivity challenges?

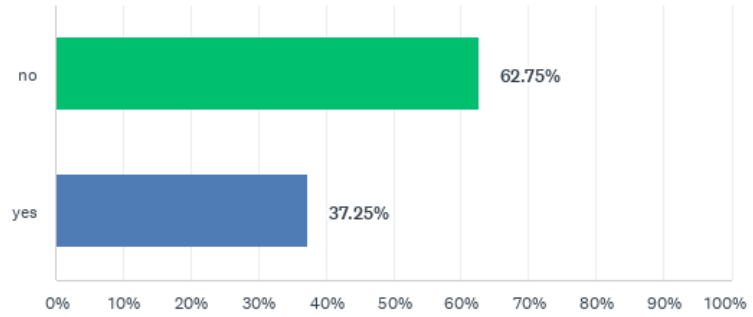
Answered: 153 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	65.36%	100
Yes	34.64%	53
TOTAL		153

#B2. Do you have cellular phone connectivity challenges?

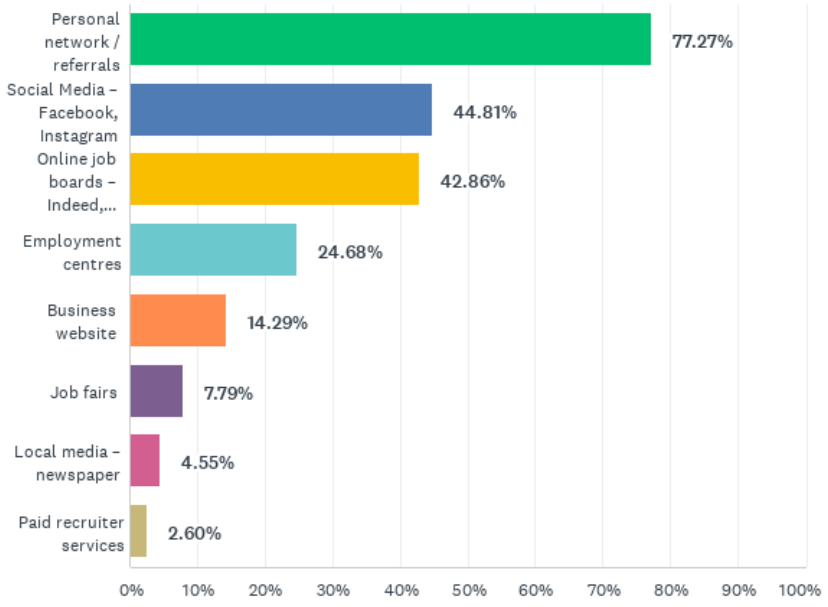
Answered: 153 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	62.75%	96
Yes	37.25%	57
TOTAL		153

#B3. What methods do you utilize for employee recruitment that gives you the best results? (Choose your top 3)

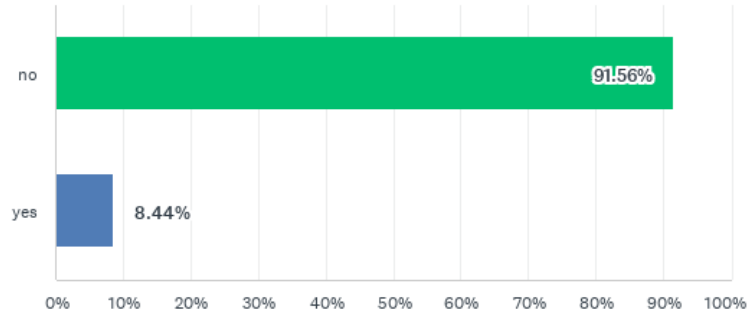
Answered: 154 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Personal network / referrals	77.27%	119
Social media – Facebook, Instagram	44.81%	69
Online job boards – Indeed, LinkedIn	42.86%	66
Employment centres	24.68%	38
Business website	14.29%	22
Job Fairs	7.79%	12
Local media – newspaper	4.55%	7
Paid recruiter services	2.60%	4

#B4. In the last 2 years have your hired foreign workers on permit, OR refugee / refugee claimants, OR international students?

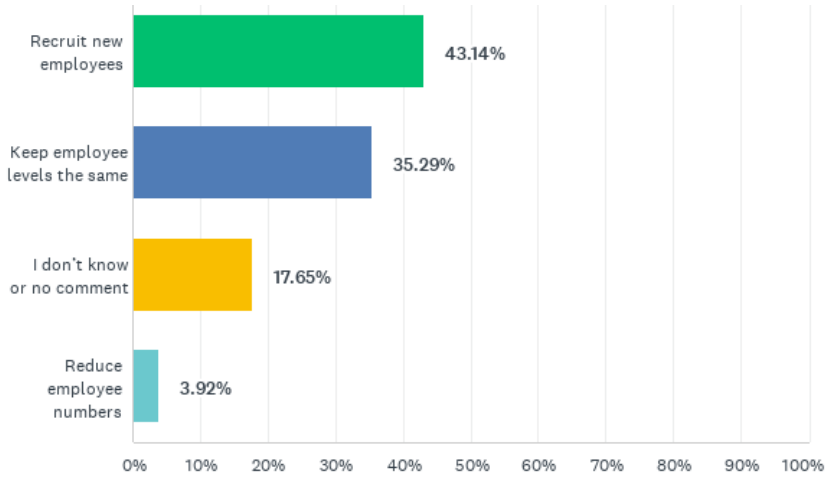
Answered: 154 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	91.56%	141
Yes	8.44%	13
TOTAL		154

#B5. In the next year do you plan to:

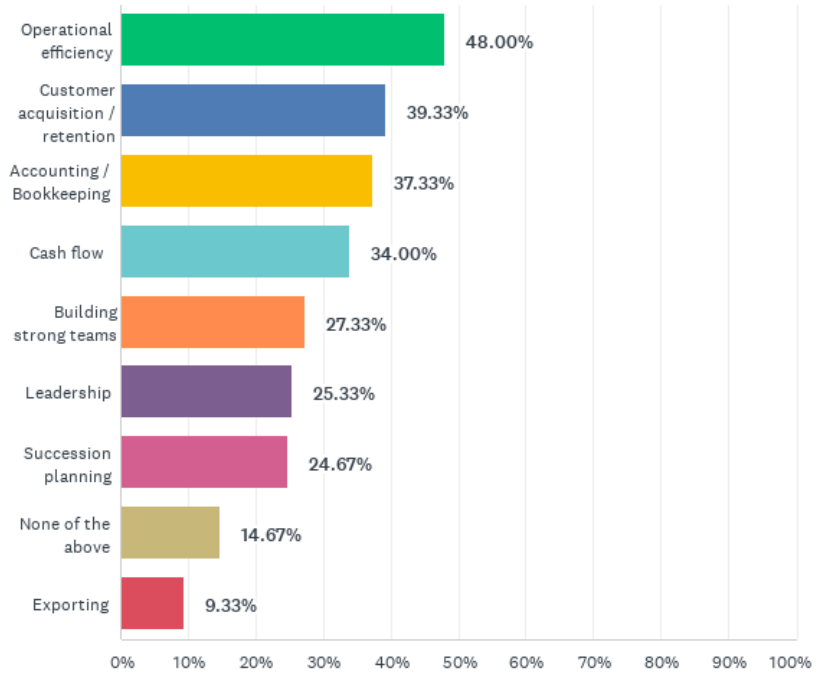
Answered: 153 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Recruit new employees	43.14%	66
Keep employee levels the same	35.29%	54
I don't know or no comment	17.65%	27
Reduce employee numbers	3.92%	6
TOTAL		153

#B6-a. What type of workshops / training would you like to see offered to support Small Business Growth? Choose all that apply.

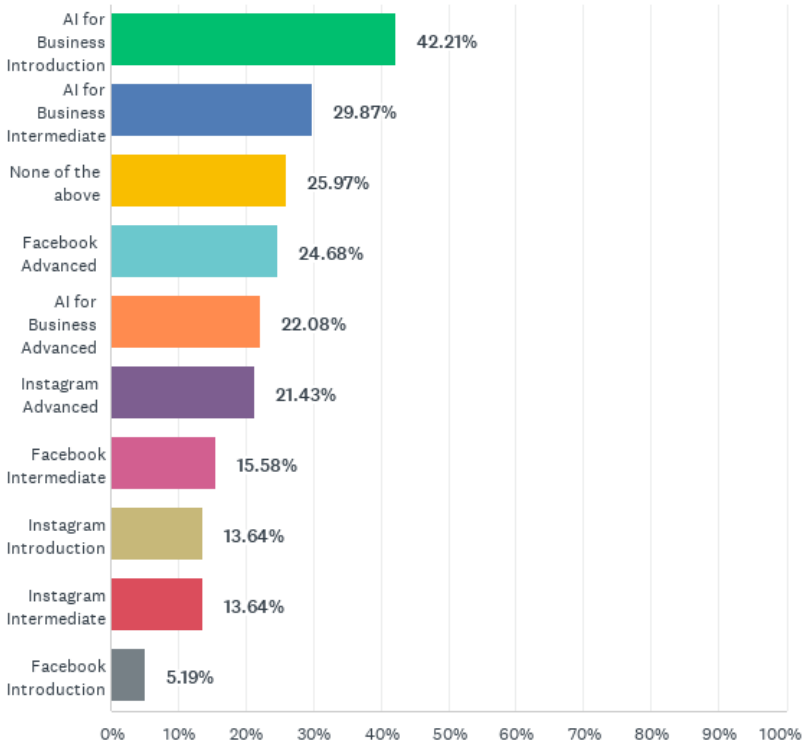
Answered: 150 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Operational efficiency	48.00%	75
Customer acquisition / retention	39.33%	59
Accounting / Bookkeeping	37.33%	56
Cash flow	34.00%	51
Building strong teams	27.33%	41
Leadership	25.33%	38
Succession planning	24.67%	37
None of the above	14.67%	22
Exporting	9.33%	14

#B6-b. What type of workshops / training would you like to see offered for Social Media or AI for Business? Choose up to 3

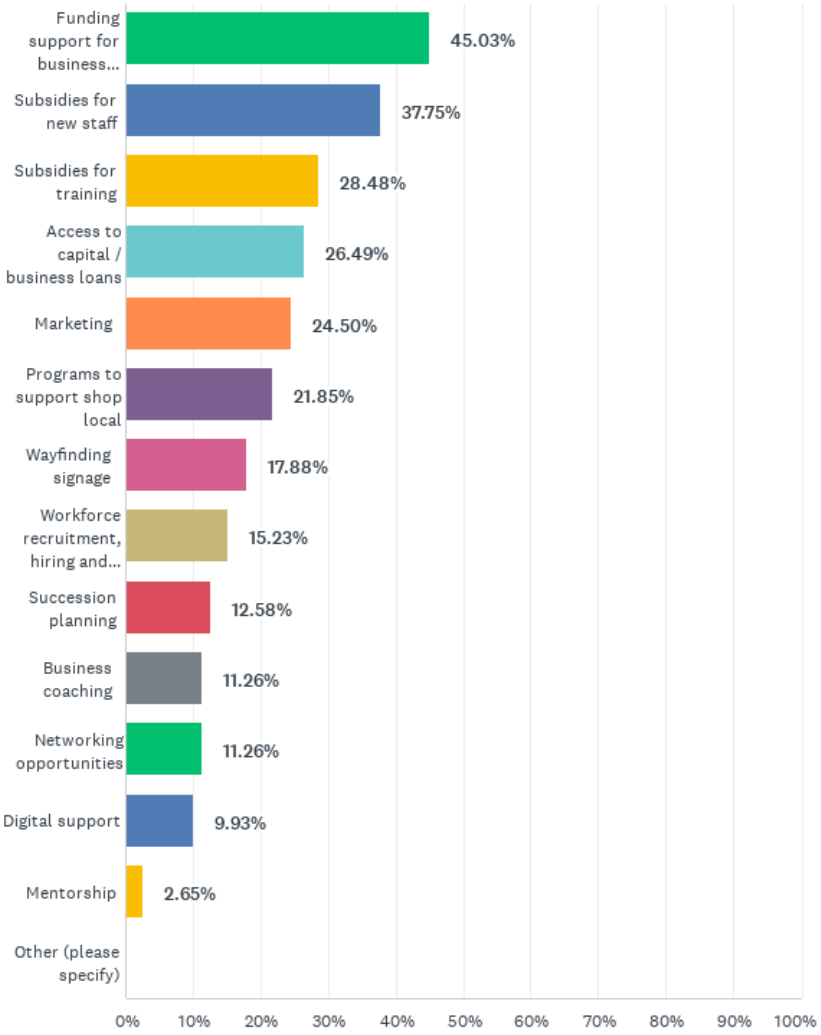
Answered: 154 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
AI for Business Introduction	42.21%	65
AI for Business Intermediate	29.87%	46
None of the above	25.97%	40
Facebook Advanced	24.68%	38
AI for Business Advanced	22.08%	34
Instagram Advanced	21.43%	33
Facebook Intermediate	15.58%	24
Instagram Introduction	13.64%	21
Instagram Intermediate	13.64%	21
Facebook Introduction	5.19%	8

#B7. What are the top 3 areas of support that would be most helpful to your business right now?

Answered: 151 Skipped: 7

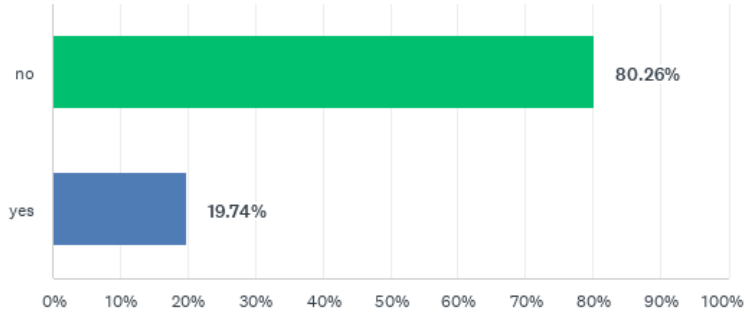


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Funding support for business expansion	45.03%	68
Subsidies for new staff	37.75%	57
Subsidies for training	28.48%	43
Access to capital / business loans	26.49%	40
Marketing	24.50%	37
Programs to support shop local	21.85%	33
Wayfinding signage	17.88%	27
Workforce recruitment, hiring and resourcing staff	15.23%	23
Succession planning	12.58%	19
Business coaching	11.26%	17
Networking opportunities	11.26%	17
Digital support	9.93%	15
Mentorship	2.65%	4
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0

- None. I am on track to retirement.
- Not really looking for support.
- Support dealing with regulations.
- Free up the Red Tape - Let people build, limit wait times for permits and remove permit fees!
- Subsidies for small businesses still recovering/affected by Covid lockdowns and now affected by customers having less available money to spend due to increase costs of gas and groceries.
- Improving tourism to the area, including improving the overall appearance, cleanliness, and perception of the towns.
- More focus on making existing businesses competitive.
- Equipment improvements.

#S1. Would you like to connect with a member of the Economic Development / Small Business teams?

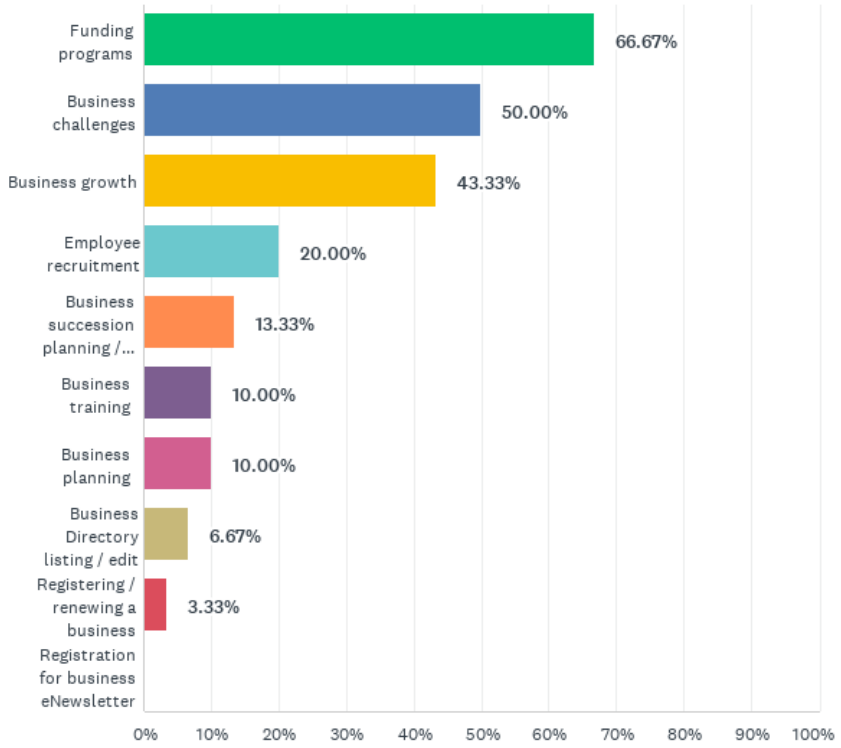
Answered: 152 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	80.26%	122
Yes	19.74%	30
TOTAL		152

#S1-b. I would like to discuss the following: (choose all that apply)

Answered: 30 Skipped: 128



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Funding programs	66.67%	20
Business challenges	50.00%	15
Business growth	43.33%	13
Employee recruitment	20.00%	6
Business succession planning / closing a business	13.33%	4
Business training	10.00%	3
Business planning	10.00%	3
Business Directory listing / edit	6.67%	2
Registering / renewing a business	3.33%	1
Registration for business eNewsletter	0.00%	0

Additional Notes:

- Survey Timeframe: April 29 to June 4, 2025
- 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.
- Economic implications impacting survey results: U.S. tariffs ranging from 10-25% on Canada products were introduced on March 4th, followed by Canadian 25% retaliatory tariffs on some U.S. products. Some CUSMA-compliant products were exempt. On June 3rd, U.S. announced a 50% tariff on steel and aluminum effective June 4th. Constant changes in tariff messaging occurred through the survey period.

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-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

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 | 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 completed the survey. This report provides the region with key data to help in plan future initiatives to support business.

Ann Weir, Economic Development Manager
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
W: **invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans** | E: ann.weir@uclg.on.ca