

OCTOBER 2020

COVID-19

Dufferin County Business Retention & Expansion Report

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Project Summary

Project Background

This project was completed in partnership with the Town of Orangeville and the Town of Shelburne in an effort to connect with our local business owners in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The business interviews were conducted by phone, with Orangeville Economic Development staff connecting with Orangeville businesses, Shelburne Economic Development staff connecting with Shelburne businesses, and County Economic Development staff connecting with businesses in Amaranth, East Garafraxa, Grand Valley, Melancthon, Mono and Mulmur. A total of 142 surveys were completed throughout the County.

Project Goal

Over the last several months, business owners have been working in isolation as they pivot their business models, and adapt to the ever-changing policies and customer behaviors caused by the pandemic. It was therefore important for staff to connect with as many businesses as possible from each sector to understand how they are managing their businesses through the pandemic, and offer support where needed. Building relationships and trust with our business owners remains an essential piece of our project goal, and thus these interviews were conducted over the phone in an effort to personally connect with our business owners.

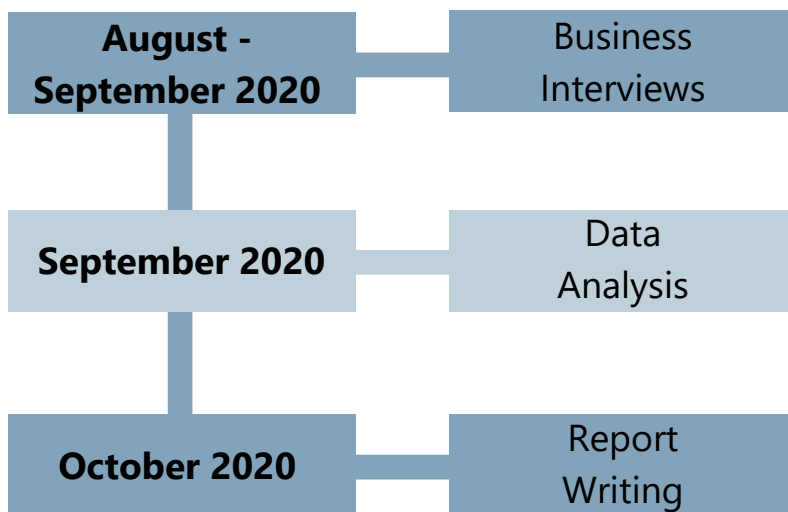
What is a BR+E?

The Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) project was developed by the Province of Ontario. It was created as an economic development tool to build relationships between the local government and business owners, as well as collect data on what business owners believe to be the current business environment. This project was based on the Ontario Ministry of Food and Rural Affairs BR+E program.

List of Sectors Interviewed

- 11 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
- 23 - Construction
- 31 - Manufacturing, (food, beverage, etc.)
- 32 - Manufacturing, (wood, paper, etc.)
- 33 - Manufacturing, (primary and fabricated metal, etc.)
- 42 - Wholesale Trade
- 44 - Retail Trade, (motor vehicle, furniture, etc.)
- 45 - Retail Trade, (sporting goods, book, music, etc.)
- 48 - Transportation and Warehousing, (air, rail, truck, etc.)
- 51 - Information
- 52 - Finance and Insurance
- 53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
- 54 - Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- 55 - Management of Companies and Enterprises
- 56 - Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
- 61 - Educational Services
- 62 - Health Care and Social Assistance
- 71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
- 72 - Accommodation and Food Services
- 81 - Other Services (except Public Administration)

Project Timeline



Acknowledgements

Dufferin County Business Owners

This project would not have been possible without the wonderful business owners throughout Dufferin County. We are appreciative of the time these individuals took out of their busy schedules to provide us with the valuable information that allowed us to put this report together.

Local Municipalities

A special thank you to Orangeville and Shelburne who facilitated the business visits within their own municipalities and have provided us access to their data and findings so we were able to put together an inclusive County-wide report.

Business Interview Team

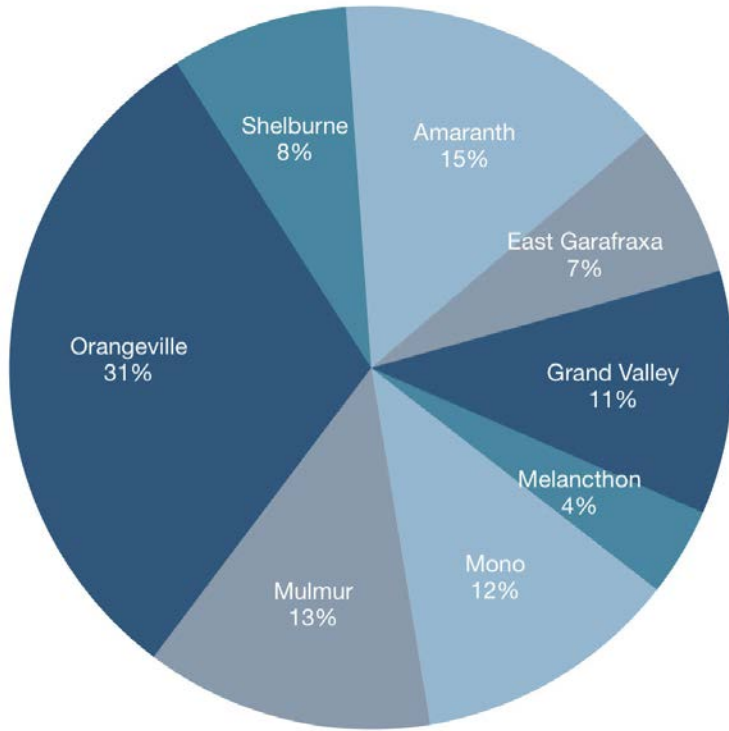
Carol Maitland	Economic Development and Marketing Coordinator - Town of Shelburne
Melissa Kenny	Administrative Assistance - Town of Shelburne
Ruth Philips	Manager of Economic Development - Town of Orangeville
Katrina Lemire	Coordinator, Business, Culture, Tourism - Town of Orangeville
Ellen Sinclair	Coordinator, Small Business Enterprise Centre - Town of Orangeville
Jasmine Nanda	Community Engagement Summer Student, Dufferin County
Karisa Downey	Economic Development Officer, Dufferin County
Jeremy Bullock	Business Retention & Expansion Coordinator, Dufferin County

OMAFRA

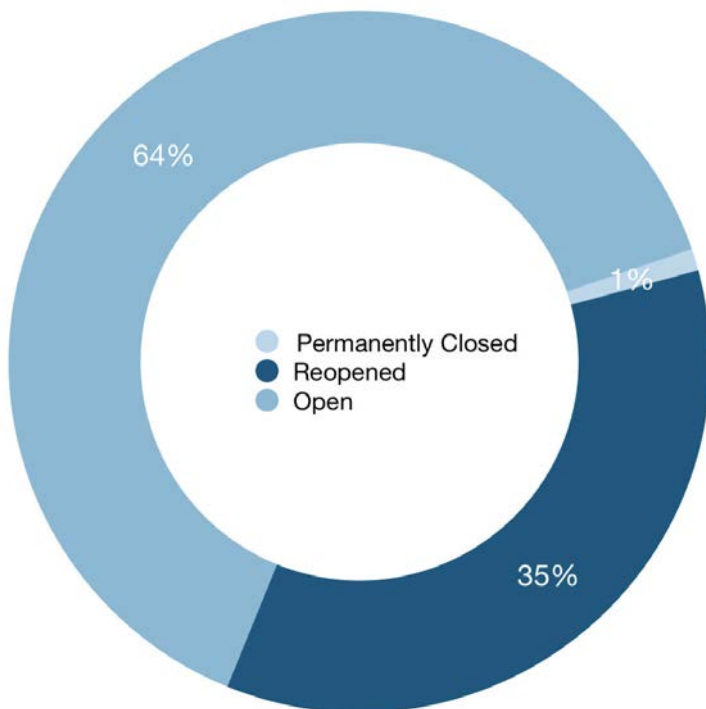
A special thank you to Rian Omollo at OMAFRA who assisted in the data analysis of this project and provided support throughout.

Business Information

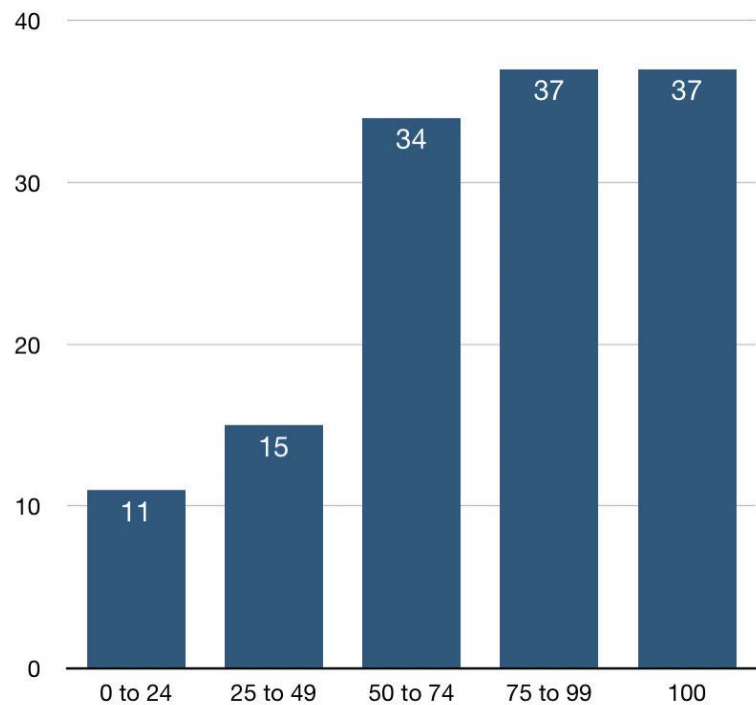
Primary Location of Business



Current Operating Status of Business

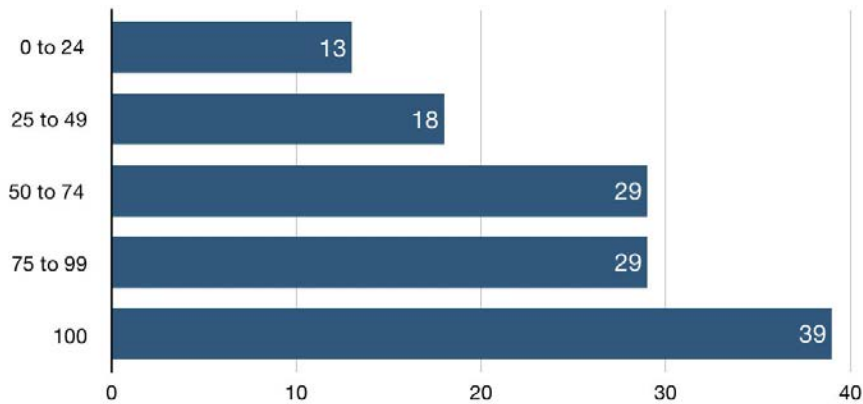


Current Operating Level in Comparison to Maximum Capacity



Industry Outlook

Current Monthly Revenue in Comparison to Last Year



42% of business owners in the County say they are able to receive necessary supplies and services

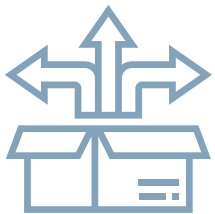
"Some of the food products are hard to get. Some vendors are no longer around or couldn't supply during the shut down"

"Parts for heavy equipment - several weeks late at least"



55% of business owners in the County say they are able ship/deliver their goods and services

"Lumber shortages and costs of lumber has doubled"

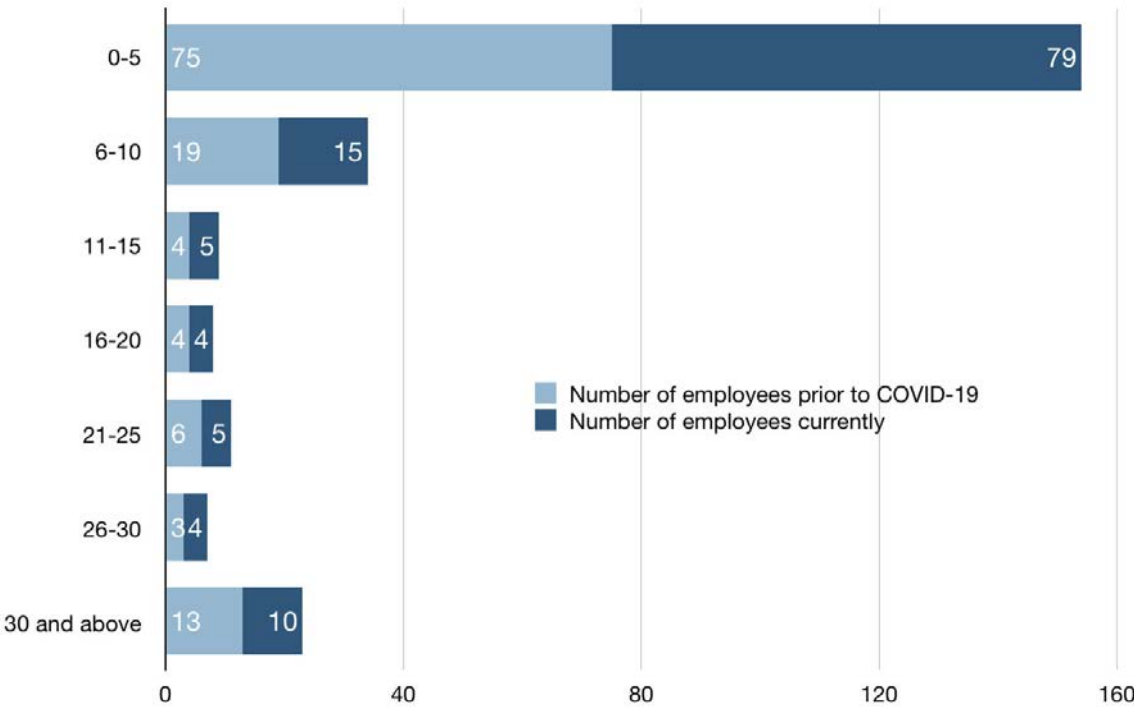


55% of business owners in the County say they are having difficulty procuring products



Workforce

Number of Employees



"Looking for customer service skills"

"Looking for general labour, manufacturing experience, ability to stand all day, and lifting"

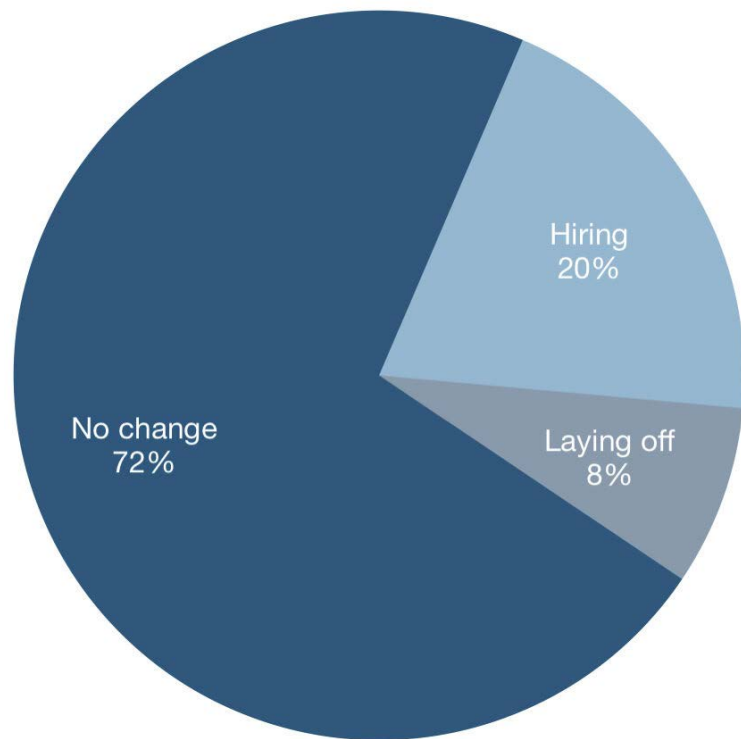
"Looking for social media, computer, and video skills"

"Looking for people skills, work ethics, and loyalty"

"Construction experience is an asset. Should have a desire to work, we can teach our skills"

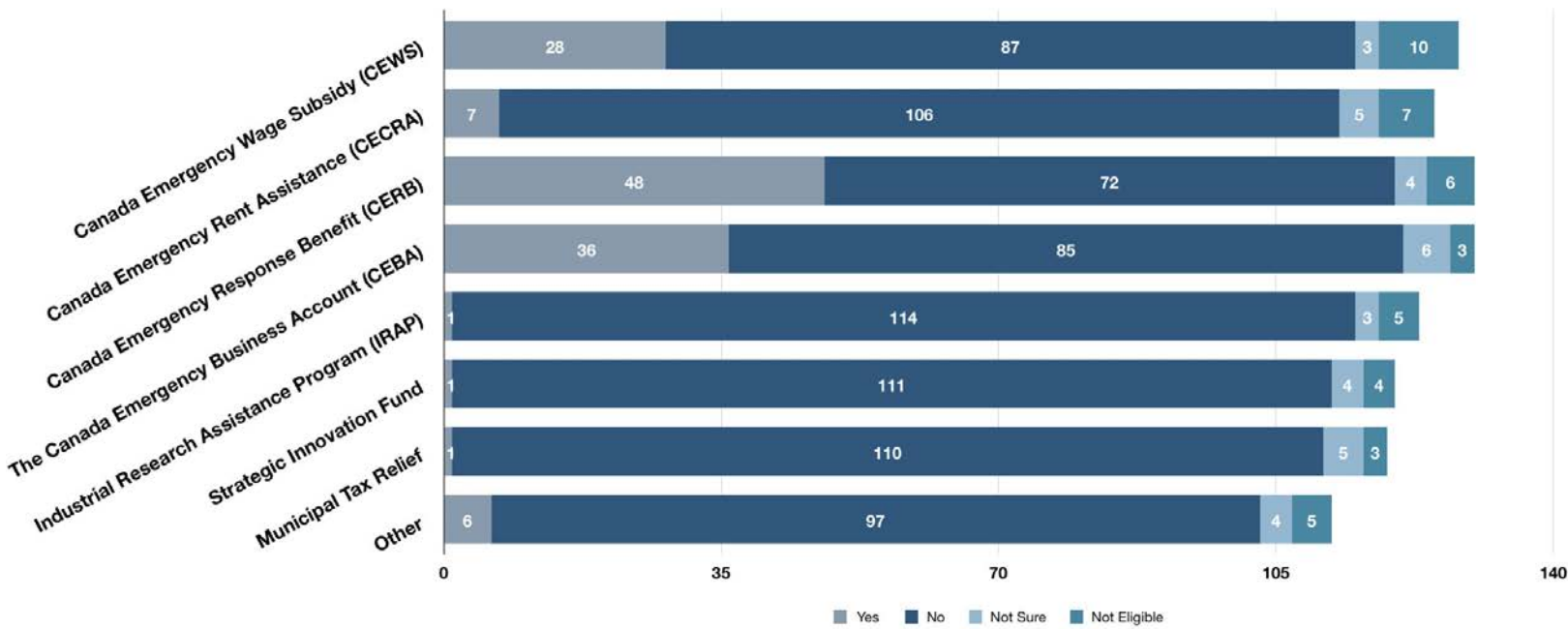


Hiring/Laying off Staff within Next 3 Months

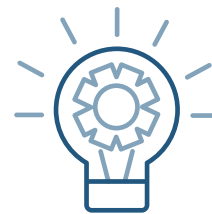
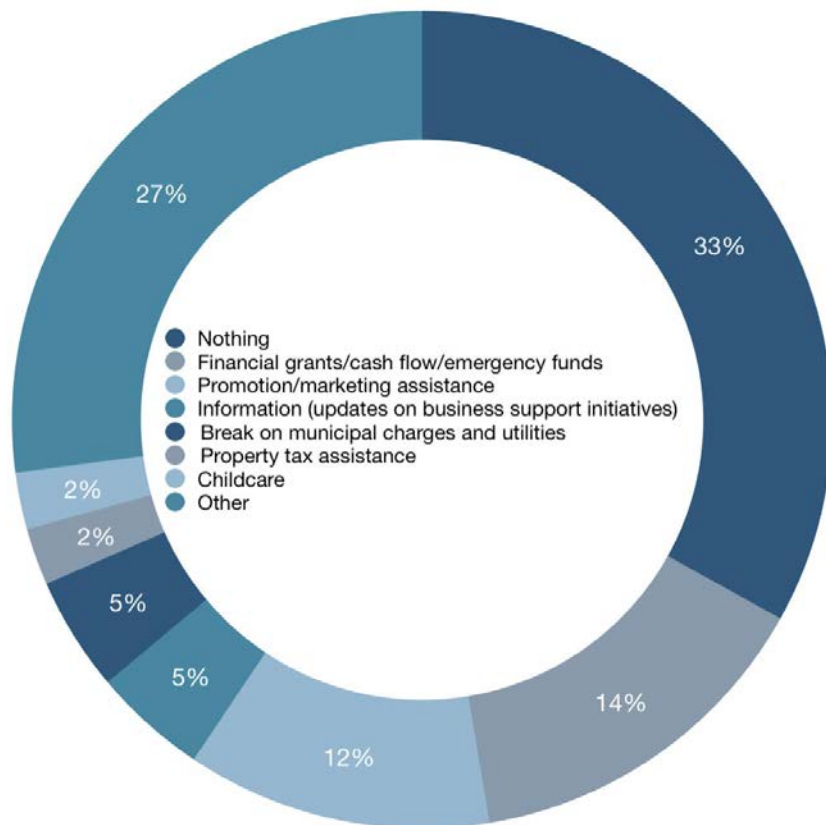


Business Supports

Business Supports Provided by the Government



Business Supports Required Currently



69% of business owners in the County say they do not want more information available on business resources

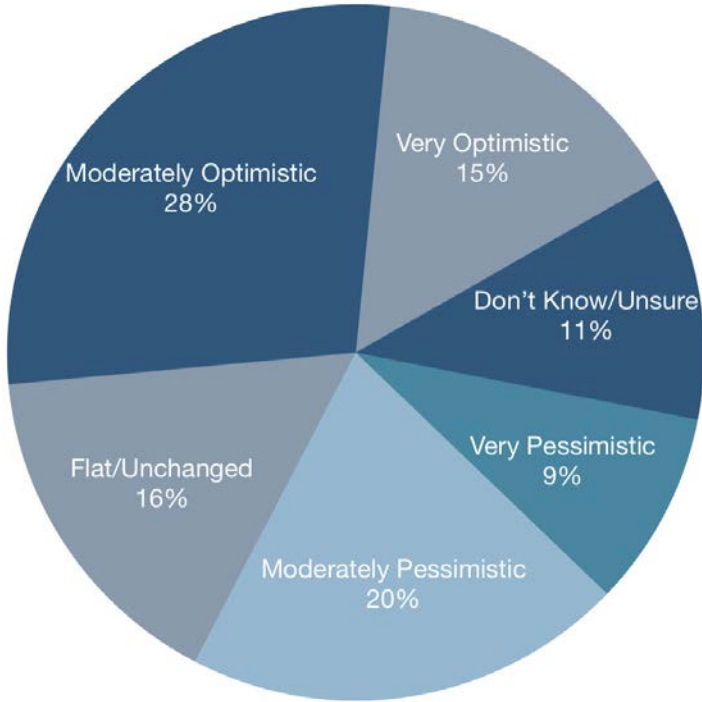
"Looking for more information on marketing and improving consumer confidence especially in our industry that is so high touch. There are a lot of concerns about using facilities and being safe"

"Looking for information on new grant programs to help businesses"

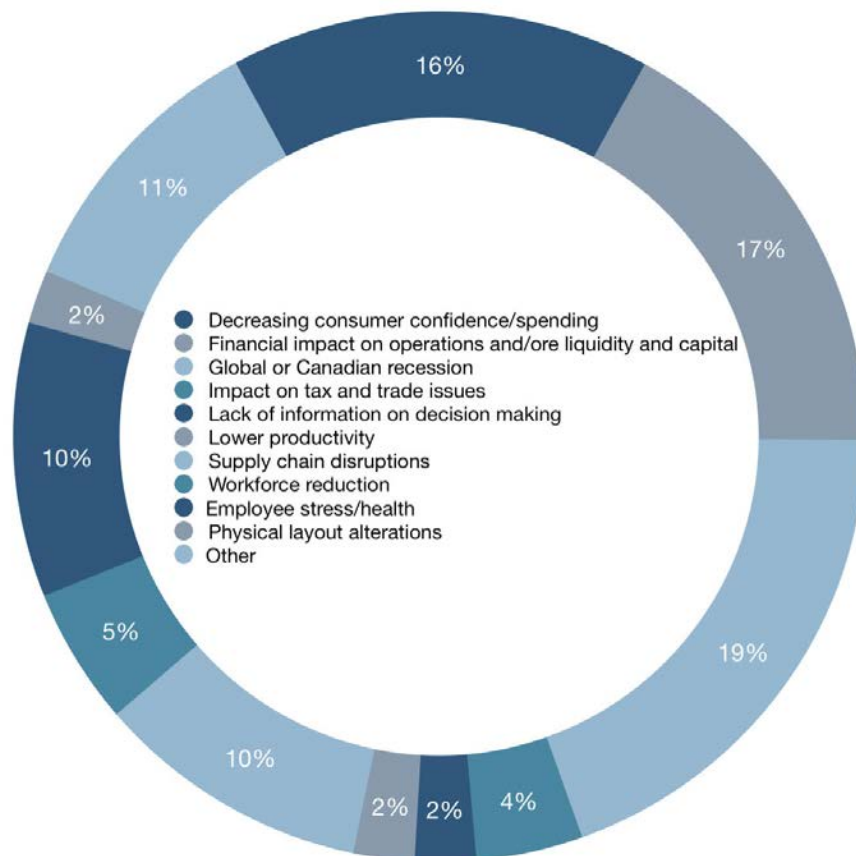
"Looking for information available for small businesses"

Business During COVID-19

Company's Outlook for 2021

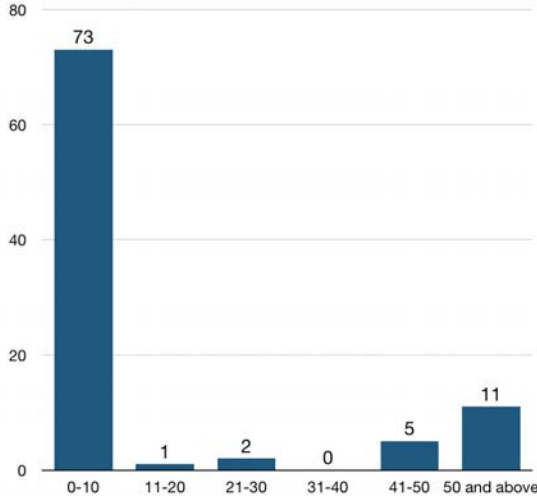


Concerns for the Future

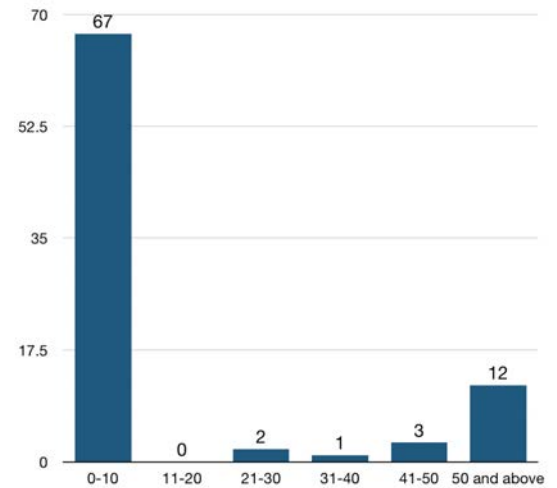


Shifting Business During COVID-19

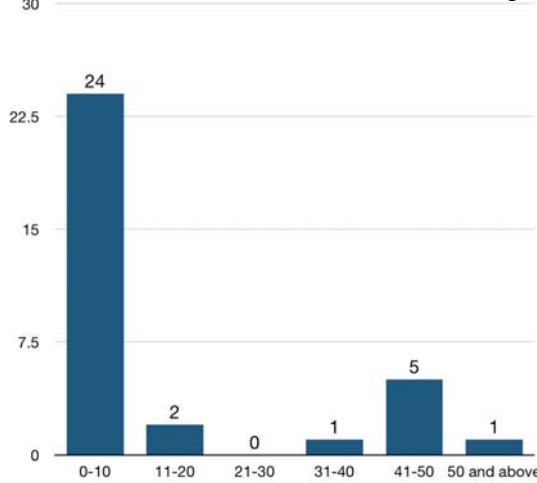
% of Workforce Working Remotely Prior to February 1, 2020



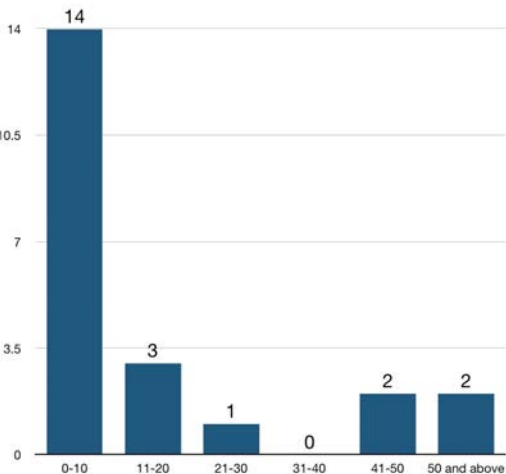
% of Workforce Expected to Work Remotely Once Pandemic is Over



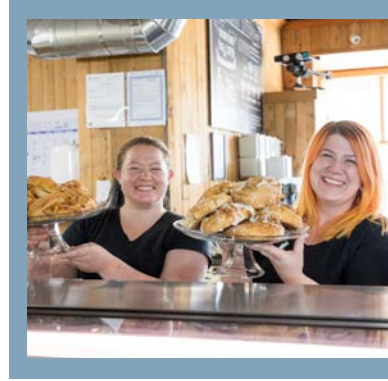
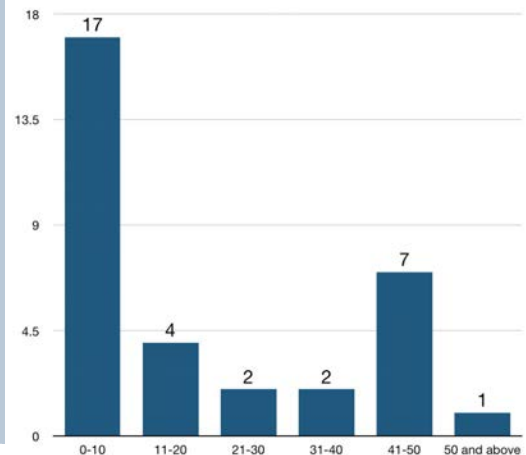
% of Business Gross Revenue Generated Online Prior to February 1, 2020



% of Business Gross Revenue Generated Online on June 30, 2020



% of Business Gross Revenue Expected Through Online Sales Once Pandemic is Over



Economic Opportunity Through COVID-19

Digital Markets



Opportunity to sell digitally as people move to spending money on line



Local Markets

Buyers are conscious of spending money locally and purchasing local products.



Local Tourism

Encourage Dufferin residents to explore their own community

Demand for Rural



People are more interested in living and visiting rural now more than ever before

New Product Lines



How people spend their time is changing, thus people are interested in purchasing different items than they traditionally have in the past.



Green Technology

Entrepreneurship and employment opportunities are on the rise as more businesses and resident invest in green technology



Innovation



Businesses have been forced to be innovative in the way they do business and many are better off because of it. They were forced to take a break from the hustle which allowed them to re-evaluate their operations

Challenges in the face of COVID-19

Internet

Businesses are becoming more and more reliant on internet, increasing the need for fast, reliable, affordable internet.



Re-Skilling

As businesses pivot, new skills are required to respond to the changes.

Supply Chain

Challenges procuring products and materials of all kinds.

Need for Change

Changes in business operations constantly need to be made.

Customer Anxiety

People are not comfortable participating in the same activities they once were.



Workforce

Challenges getting employees back to work and filling vacancies.



How do we move forward?

Workforce Issues

Require assistance in finding skilled labour.

Marketing and Advertizing

Assist businesses in marketing themselves and the community.
Provide advertising opportunities for local businesses.

Shop Local and Consumer Confidence

Promote shopping local and tips to help customers shop locally safely.

Abattoirs and Meat Processing

Attract abattoirs and meat processing facilities.

Internet

Invest in and advocate for high-speed, affordable, reliable internet.

Continue Providing Existing Programming

Continue hosting roundtable conversations and providing assistance to business owners.

As a Business Owner I Feel...



"Nervous we will have to shut down again"

"The need to adapt to any situation"



"We need to be reasonable with the language on how the media presents information and keep people calm as we move forward"

"We need to always be hopeful and find the gifts from the disaster - focus on the good that came out and the lessons learned for the future"



"Uncertain, stressed, worried. Only 3-4 of us work here, if one of us gets sick, we're shut down. This is my livelihood, and it would be gone"



"Positive. We should not worry about everything because we are not in control. We learn to deal with things one at a time and resolve problems as we go along"

"Struggling. Had to pivot more than once due operational objectives"



"Uncertain. Hopeful but uncertain what's going to happen"

"Great because real estate keeps going up as more population grows. But many friends and relatives not doing well at this time as no one wants to leave the house and online is becoming really competitive"



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