



COLUMBIA BASIN BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION PROJECT

REPORT ON LOWER COLUMBIA REGION BUSINESSES

(Including the communities of Fruitvale, Montrose, Trail, Warfield, Rossland, and Regional District of Kootenay Boundary Electoral Areas A&B)

MARCH 2013



The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute, at Selkirk College, is a regional centre of excellence in applied research and information provision focused on strengthening rural communities in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region. Visit www.cbrdi.ca for more information.



The result of a partnership between the City of Rossland, City of Trail, Villages of Warfield, Montrose and Fruitvale, and Electoral Areas A & B of the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, the Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation works collaboratively with communities, local agencies, organizations and businesses to develop and implement strategies that will assist in strengthening the Lower Columbia economy. Visit www.lcic.ca for more information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes findings from a 94-question Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) survey conducted at 147 businesses in the Lower Columbia Region in 2012. Research participants were drawn from the communities of Trail (104), Rossland (34), and Fruitvale/Montrose (12). BRE is an action-oriented and community-based approach to business and economic development. It promotes job growth by helping communities to learn about concerns of, as well as opportunities for, local businesses and to set priorities for projects to address those needs.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND POTENTIAL ACTION AREAS

Several key themes emerged during the analysis of survey results. These themes can be used by economic development organizations in the Lower Columbia Region to inform short- and long-term business retention and expansion action planning.

Business Expansion

Businesses in the region are planning significant investment (over \$560 million) in expansion over the next three years. It is important to note that out of the over \$560 million in planned investment, \$500 million in investment was reported by one business. Over half of respondents reported that the majority of their expansion budget will likely be spent on real estate. Sixteen businesses stated that they will be seeking a new site to accommodate their planned expansion and 15 indicated that a lack of suitable premises is actually preventing them from expanding. Results therefore suggest that Lower Columbia Region businesses could benefit from expansion assistance and, in particular, specific support targeted at real estate and land use. Actions on this theme could involve assisting businesses in locating potential expansion sites or working with governments to help their approval processes move “at the speed of business”; Government red tape was often cited by respondents as a barrier to local economic development.

Supply Sourcing and Buying Local

Data indicate that a tendency among Lower Columbia Region businesses to purchase supplies from outside the region may be shrinking the local economy. This is evidenced by the fact that, while 84% of respondents sell primarily to local markets, only a third buy primarily from local suppliers. Money from local customers is therefore exiting the region through supply imports. While the vast majority of respondents stated that the supplies they need are not available locally, some of the products businesses indicated they would like a local supplier for are in fact already available in the region. A potential action on this theme could involve connecting businesses with relevant suppliers, both to improve businesses’ knowledge of the types of supplies that are available locally, and to ensure suppliers’ product lines meet the needs of local businesses. Additional research could also help develop a better understanding of the barriers to businesses buying locally.

Training

A lack of skilled staff was commonly cited as a barrier to expansion of businesses and the vast majority of respondents said that workforce skill development is important to the competitiveness of their business. Data therefore indicate that there are opportunities to support businesses

through workforce training and professional development. Key training areas most often listed by businesses include retail/hospitality/customer service, business management and marketing/sales. Uptake on training opportunities can be low in the region due to the limited time and financial resources available to small businesses. Therefore, actions on this theme may be best received if they are adaptive, flexible and, in some cases, subsidized. Future initiatives could include supporting networks to help businesses identify shared training needs, and working with educational institutions to ensure local skill requirements are considered in programming.

Recruitment and Regional Promotion

While many respondents reported issues with retaining employees, a greater percentage—about half—indicated that recruitment of new employees has been a challenge. Among local businesses, the most challenging recruitment categories include mechanics and sales/service personnel. Since a strong majority of respondents acknowledged that expansion of the workforce is important to their company's competitiveness, providing recruitment support to businesses may help improve the Lower Columbia Region economic climate. Currently, respondents primarily recruit locally. Actions on this theme could therefore involve assisting businesses with recruiting further afield, either individually or as a business community. Recruitment initiatives could promote the business climate factors that respondents identified as strengths of the region (e.g., cultural/recreational amenities, schools).

Succession and Business Planning

Business and succession planning are critical to the health and longevity of businesses, yet less than a quarter of respondents indicated that they have a formal succession plan and more than half do not have an up-to-date business plan. Data therefore suggest that there are opportunities to support the business community by providing succession and business planning assistance. Open, instructive training sessions have the potential to provide a base level of support to a large number of businesses; however, given the importance of individual circumstances in business and succession planning, a more targeted, one-on-one assistance program could result in greater overall benefit by providing a higher level of support to 'at-risk' businesses. Any future planning support initiatives should be aggressively advertised to ensure uptake among local businesses.

NEXT STEPS

Many BRE programs ensure that follow-up actions occur as soon as possible following completion of the survey stage. This approach builds credibility, a sense of success and momentum to carry out long-term actions.

Local economic development organizations could further support BRE planning and action by:

- preparing a follow-up report to situate current research findings alongside other relevant regional economic development research;
- hosting forums and planning sessions with business stakeholders to share results and prioritize actions;
- updating existing economic development plans based on research findings;
- establishing relationships with a broader network of support providers to strengthen implementation efforts; and

- establishing a monitoring program to assess the impact of implementation efforts.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

This report describes findings from a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) survey conducted in the Lower Columbia Region in 2012. The Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation (LCIC) acted as the community lead for the Lower Columbia Region BRE project. The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute (RDI) provided training, data analysis and report writing support.

THE BRE CONCEPT

BRE is an action-oriented and community-based approach to business and economic development. It promotes job growth by helping communities to learn about the concerns of, as well as opportunities for, local businesses and to set priorities for projects to address those needs. Ultimately, communities will have greater success in attracting new businesses if existing businesses are content with local economic conditions and community support. Business development and job creation are key factors in fostering healthy and vibrant communities—depending on the characteristics of a community's economy, anywhere from 40 to 90 per cent of new jobs come from existing businesses.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Objectives specific to the Lower Columbia Region BRE project were as follows:

1. To provide data on key challenges, issues and opportunities faced by businesses in the Lower Columbia Region.
2. To develop data-supported recommendations regarding important future focus areas for strengthening the area's business climate.

RESEARCH CONSIDERATIONS

THE BRE SURVEY

The RDI has a licence agreement with the Economic Development Association of BC for BC Business Counts, a program that provides access to an online BRE survey, contact management, and reporting system called ExecutivePulse. Data presented in this report were collected as part of a comprehensive BRE survey that is aligned with surveys conducted by other participants in the BC Business Counts program across the province of BC. Survey data can therefore be analyzed at a community, sub-regional, regional and provincial level.

The base survey, consisting of 94 questions, includes modules for company information, the local workforce, sales, facilities and equipment, and future plans for growth or succession. Based on feedback from a BRE regional advisory group, ten region-specific questions were appended to the base BRE survey. A number of sector-specific add-on surveys were also made available, consisting of approximately 20 questions each. Researchers verified each business' North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code in advance of the interview to determine which sector-specific add on survey to include, if any. See Appendix A for a copy of the base BRE survey.

THE DATA SET

To generate an initial set of potential research participants, researchers reviewed local business license databases, Chamber of Commerce membership rosters and phone books. A cross-section of businesses were selected based on size (small, medium, large) and type (according to the NAICS system). One hundred seventy five businesses were sent an invitation letter and copy of the BRE survey, and 200 businesses were initially contacted by phone. All 375 businesses received a follow-up invite by telephone. In total, 148 Lower Columbia Region businesses were surveyed for this project (a 39% response rate). Respondent businesses were located in Trail (104), Rossland (34), and Fruitvale/Montrose (12).

DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected by LCIC researchers, including and as directed by the Lower Columbia Initiatives Economic Development Officer, using structured interviews that lasted approximately one hour and twenty minutes. The process in total took approximately four hours per business, including setting up interviews, the interview itself, and data input.

DATA INPUT, ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

Data were entered into the ExecutivePulse system by researchers following interviews. To ensure confidentiality and data security, company-level data were only made accessible to RDI staff and the LCIC Economic Development Officer.

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and qualitative data were analysed using the grounded theory method of generating key coding themes. Based on the results of data analysis activities, an initial set of recommendations was generated by RDI and then reviewed with LCIC. Findings and related recommendations were assembled into this report by RDI researchers.

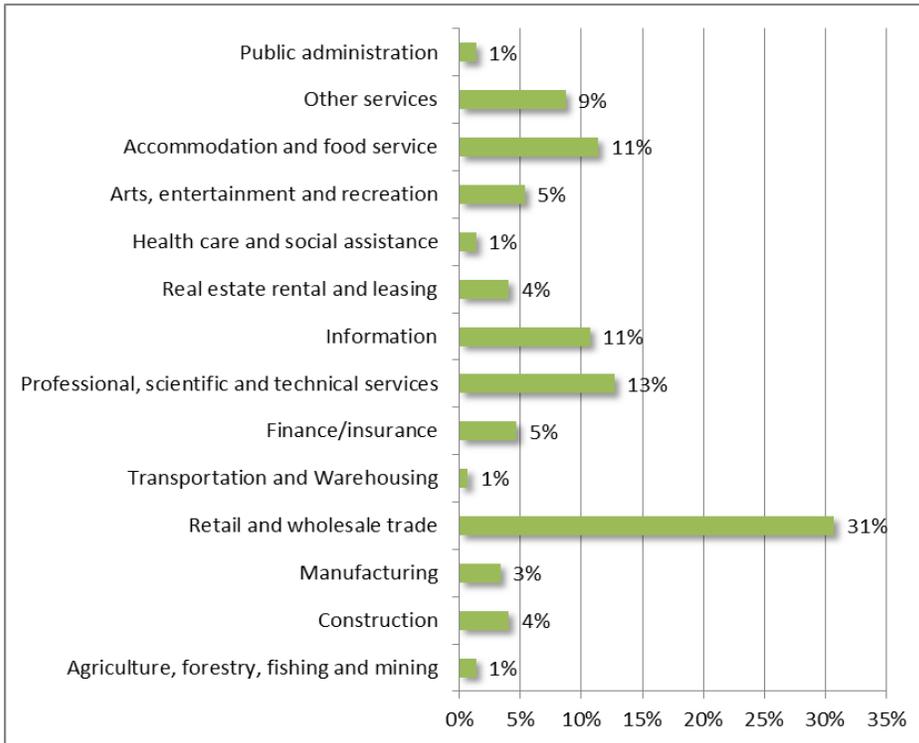
RESEARCH FINDINGS

COMPANY INFORMATION

Type of Product/Service Offered

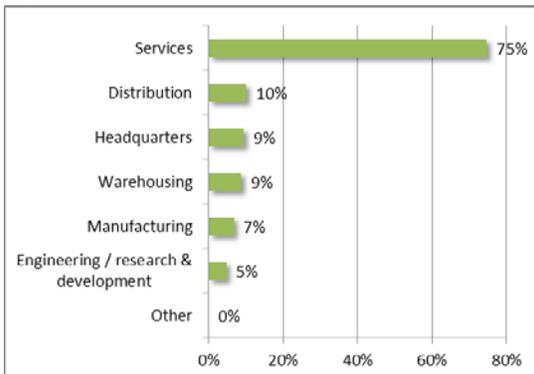
Businesses interviewed represented a diverse cross-section of industries. Most common were retail and wholesale trade (31% of businesses) and professional, scientific and technical services (13%).

Figure 1: Industry classification



A strong majority of respondents (75%) indicated that their facility primarily provides a service function. Fewer respondents indicated that their facility serves other common functions.

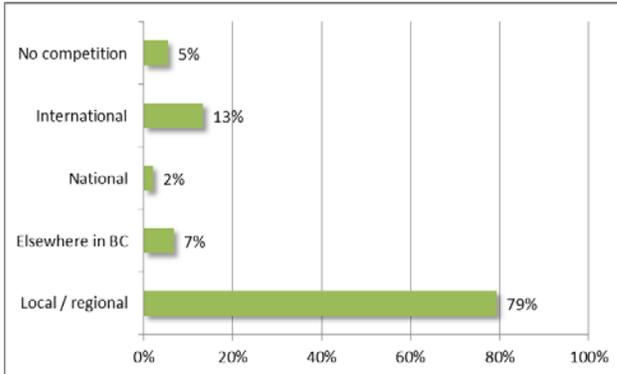
Figure 2: Facility function(s)



Competition

Seventy-nine percent of respondents reported that their primary competitors are located within the region. Thirteen percent indicated that their competitors are primarily located in other countries.

Figure 3: Location of primary competitors



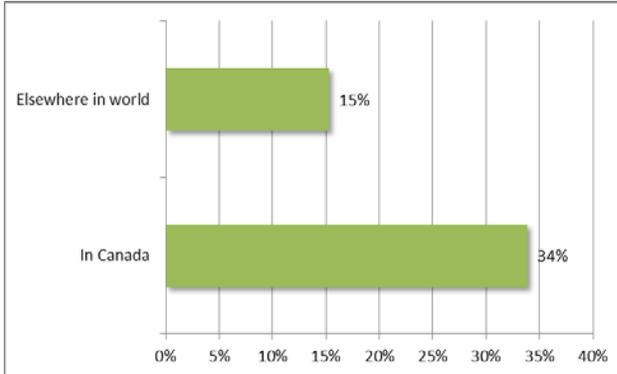
When asked what factors made their company successful in this region, the highest number of respondents (87) cited customer service, reputation or referrals. Experience/length of time in business (44 respondents) and product quality (29 respondents) were also discussed often.

Figure 4: Key words in respondents' discussions of the factors that make them successful in this region



Thirty-four percent of respondents indicated that their company has another similar location in Canada and 15% indicated that their company has another similar location in another country.

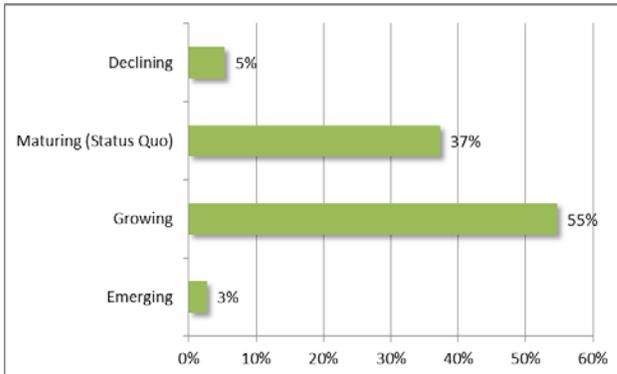
Figure 5: Other similar locations



Age and Life Cycle Stage

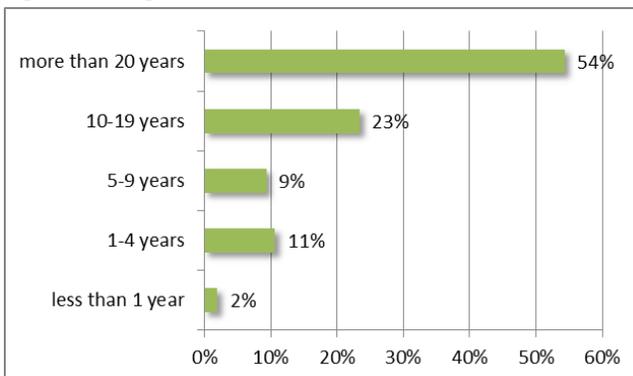
Over half of respondents (55%) reported that their business is in the 'growing' life cycle stage. Another 37% indicated that their business is in the 'maturing' stage. Fewer respondents (5% and 3%) indicated that they are in the 'declining' and 'emerging' stages, respectively.

Figure 6: Life cycle stage



Fifty-four percent of businesses reported that they have been in business for more than 20 years. Two percent indicated that they have been in business for less than 1 year.

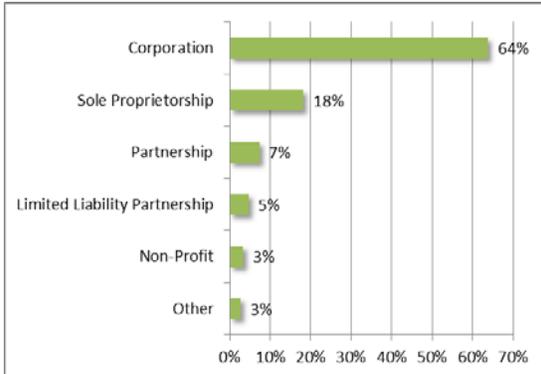
Figure 7: Length of time in business



Ownership and Management

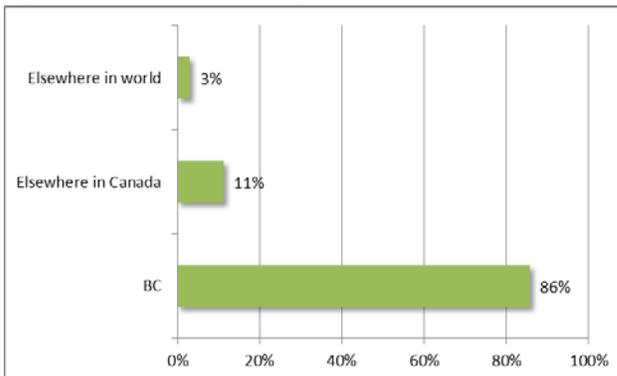
Most respondents (64%) indicated that their business is classified as a corporation, while 18% indicated that they are a sole proprietorship. The remainder of businesses are registered as a partnership (7%), limited liability partnership (5%), non-profit (3%) or other type of business (3%).

Figure 8: Type of business



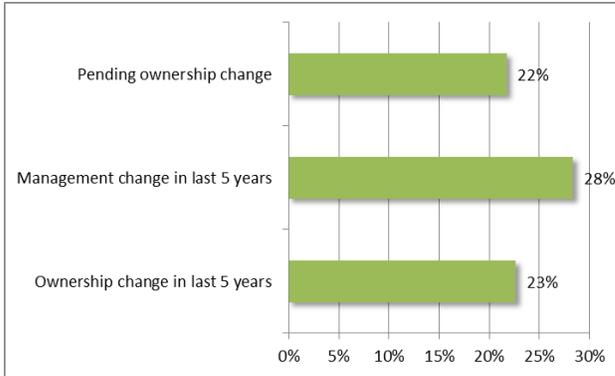
Eighty-six percent of respondents reported that their headquarters are located in British Columbia, 11% indicated that they are headquartered elsewhere in Canada and 3% indicated that their headquarters are located in another country.

Figure 9: Location of headquarters



Twenty-eight percent of businesses have seen a management change in the last 5 years, 23% have seen an ownership change and 22% are expecting an ownership change in the near future. Of the respondents that have seen a recent management change, 83% reported that the change has had a positive impact. Of the respondents that have seen an ownership change, 76% reported that the change has had a positive impact.

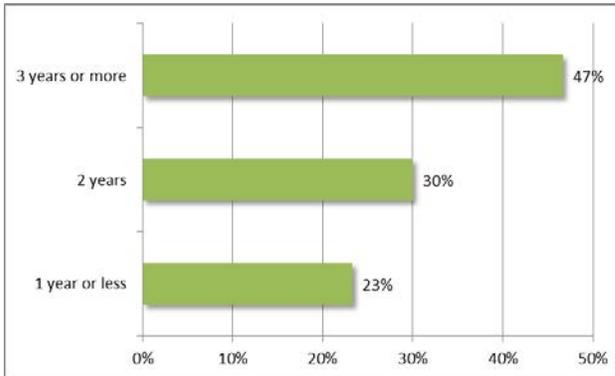
Figure 10: Ownership and management changes



Succession and Business Plans

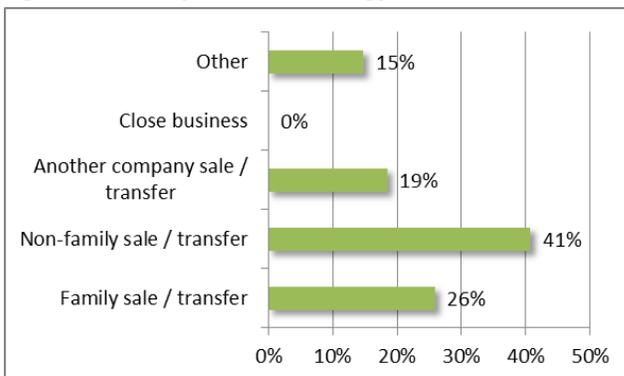
Of the businesses that reported a pending ownership change, 23% expect the change will happen in a year or less, 30% expect it to happen within 2 years and 47% expect the process to take 3 years or more.

Figure 11: Anticipated timeline for ownership change



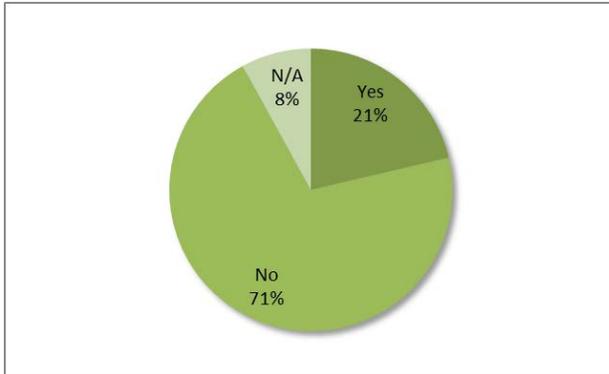
Forty-one percent of respondents expect that the current owner will exit the business by selling it to a non-family individual and 26% expect that the business will pass to another family member.

Figure 12: Anticipated exit strategy



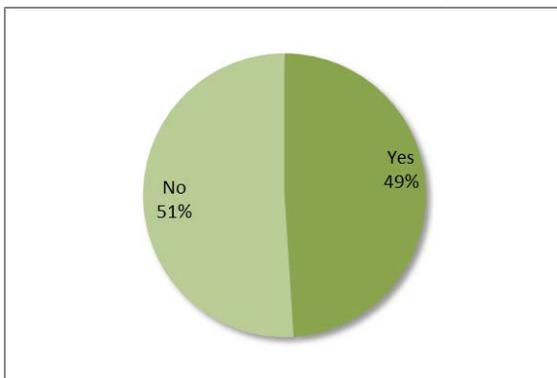
Twenty-three percent of respondents reported that they have identified a successor and 21% reported that they have a formal succession plan in place.

Figure 13: Existence of formal succession plan



Participation in formal business planning was higher among respondents than that for succession planning. Almost half of businesses (49%) reported that they have a current business plan in place.

Figure 14: Existence of current business plan

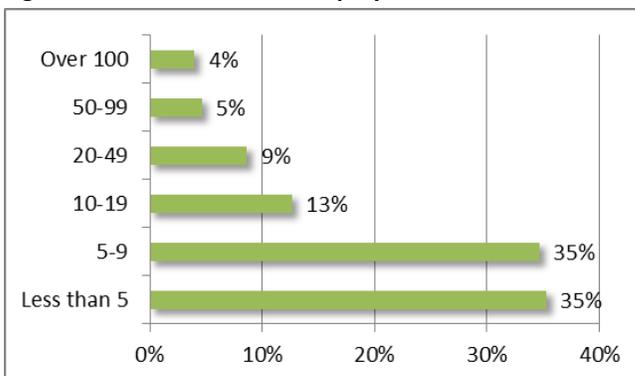


LOCAL WORKFORCE

Size of Workforce

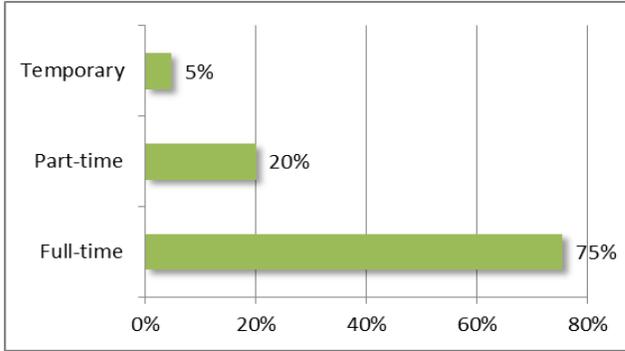
The 150 businesses interviewed reported a total of 4,141 employees. Seventy percent indicated that they have less than 10 employees and 4% indicated that they have over 100 employees.

Figure 15: Total number of employees



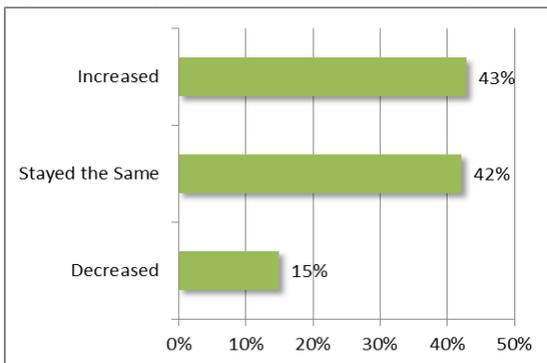
Three quarters of positions at surveyed business are full-time, 20% are part-time and 5% are temporary.

Figure 16: Nature of employment



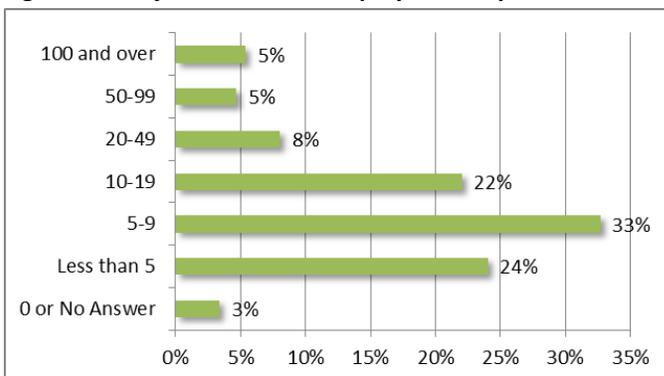
Forty-three percent of respondents indicated that the number of employees at their facility has increased over the past 10 years. Another 42% indicated that the size of their workforce has remained relatively stable.

Figure 17: Employment trend over last 10 years



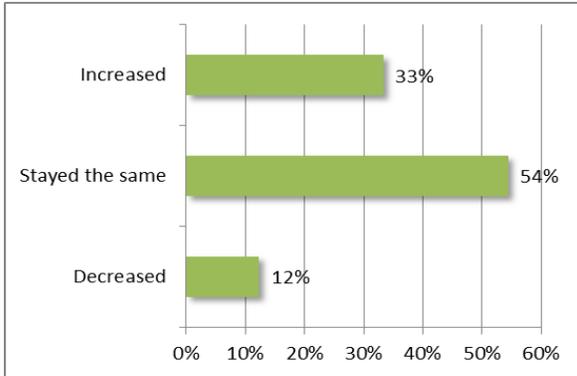
In general, data indicated that medium-sized businesses expect to see moderate growth in the size of their workforce over the next 3 years. The number of businesses with 10-19 employees is expected to grow from 13% to 22%. In total, the businesses interviewed expect to have 4,556 employees in 3 years' time.

Figure 18: Project number of employees in 3 years



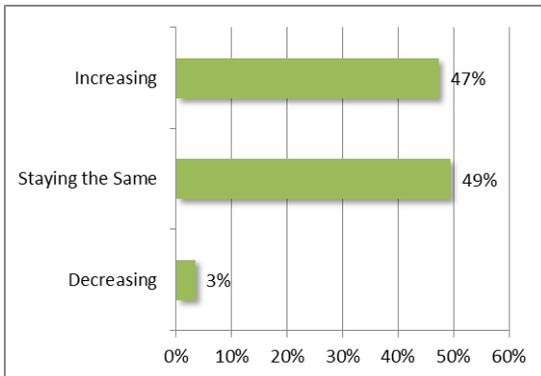
The majority of respondents (54%) indicated that the size of their full-time workforce has remained relatively constant over the past 3 years. Another 33% indicated that it has increased.

Figure 19: Full-time employment trend over last 3 years



Forty-nine percent of businesses interviewed expect the size of their full-time workforce to stay the same size over the next 3 years while another 47% expect it to increase.

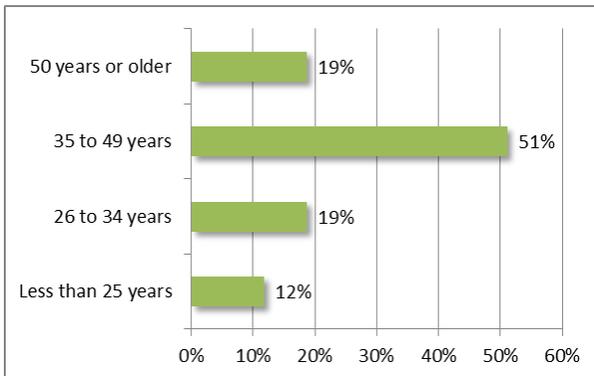
Figure 20: Full time employment trend over next 3 years



Workforce Demographics

Just over half of respondents (51%) indicated that the majority of their essential employees are between 35 and 49 years old. Twelve percent reported that their essential employees are generally less than 25 years old.

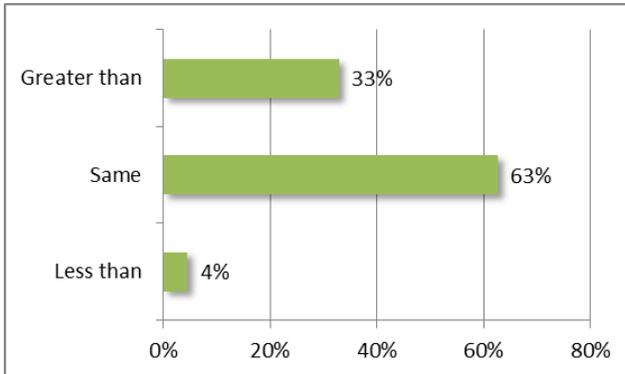
Figure 21: Age of the majority of essential employees



Wages

When reporting on average wages for skilled or professional workers, the highest number of respondents (22%) reported that they pay between \$20 and \$29 per hour. The most commonly reported average wage for semi-skilled workers (30% of respondents) was under \$20 and the most commonly reported average wage for entry-level workers (18% of respondents) was \$10-\$12. Most businesses (63%) reported that their wage scale is about the same as that for other businesses in the region.

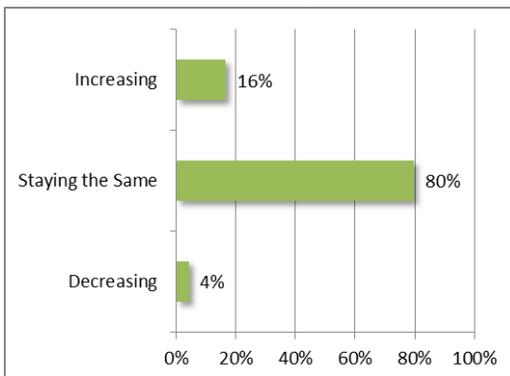
Figure 22: Wages in relation to other businesses in the region



Recruitment and Retention

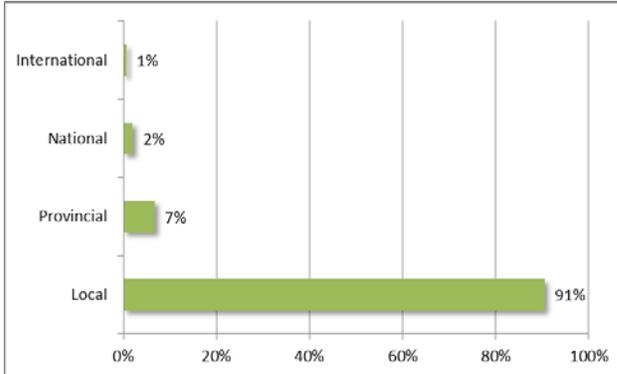
A strong majority of respondents (80%) agreed that the number of unfilled positions at their company has remained relatively constant.

Figure 23: Trend in unfilled positions



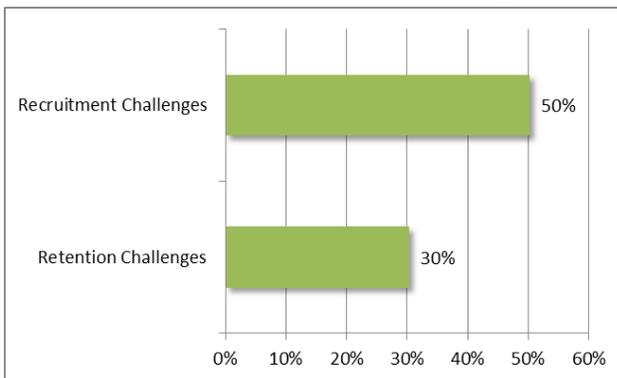
The vast majority of respondents (91%) reported that they primarily recruit employees from local labour markets. Seven percent of businesses recruit at a provincial scale and a small number (3%) recruit nationally or internationally.

Figure 24: Location of workforce recruitment



Fifty percent of respondents indicated that they have experienced recruitment challenges and 30% indicated that they have experienced retention challenges.

Figure 25: Recruitment and retention challenges



When asked what efforts their business has undertaken to retain employees, the highest number of respondents (41) shared that they have focused on offering competitive wages or benefits. Offering other perks (20), allowing a flexible schedule (19), creating an enjoyable or respectful workplace atmosphere (14) and offering training or professional development opportunities (13) are other factors that were also cited often.

Figure 26: Key words in respondents' discussion of retention efforts



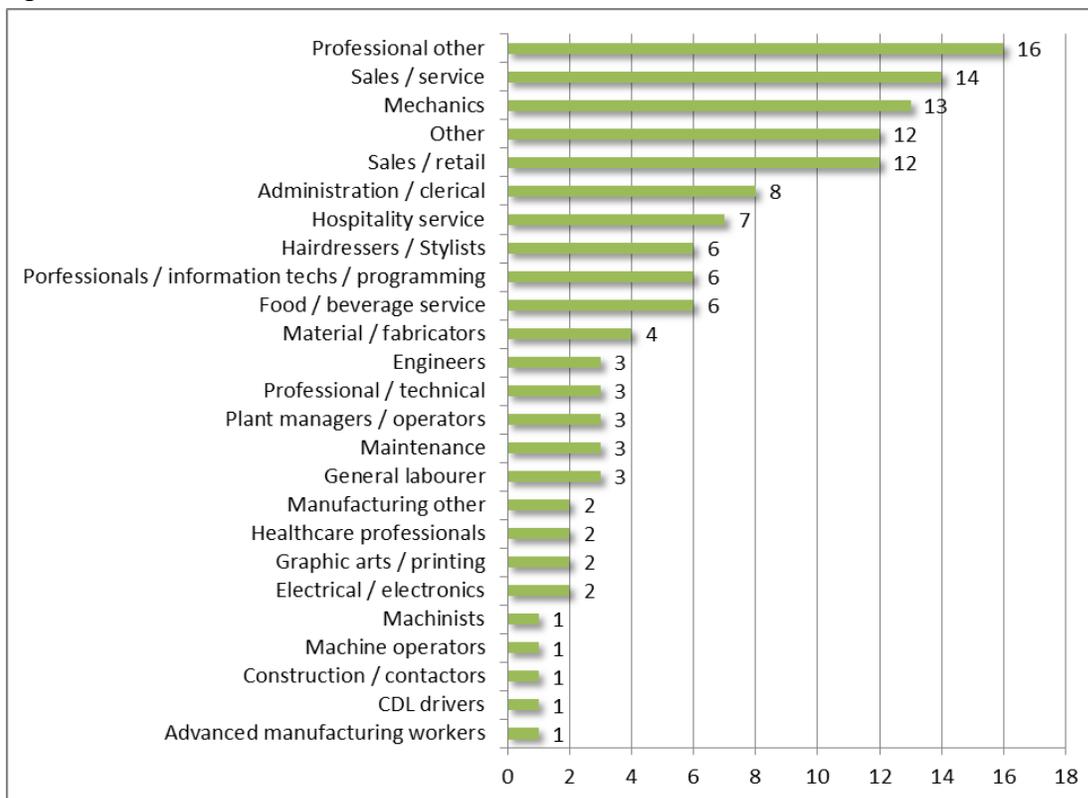
In their discussions of the perceived reasons for their retention challenges, respondents most often cited their inability to compete with larger employers, either within the region or outside of it, that offer attractive pay and benefits packages (17 respondents). The entry-level nature of positions offered by respondent businesses also factored heavily in these discussions (8 respondents). Some also shared their opinion that the younger demographic lacks loyalty or a strong work ethic (3 respondents) and some indicated that the income of their business is insufficient to generate full-time, stable work (2 respondents).

When asked what efforts businesses have undertaken to recruit employees, the themes that emerged most often were ads in print (26), word of mouth/referrals (21) and ads on the web/social media (19). The following excerpt from one business' survey data describes their approach to recruitment:

“Posters and ads in local and regional media. Beginning to make additional and deeper attempts at targeting specific people with the media they choose to advertise in. For example the people that they can attract typically come here for the lifestyle, so they are advertising more in skiing and biking.”

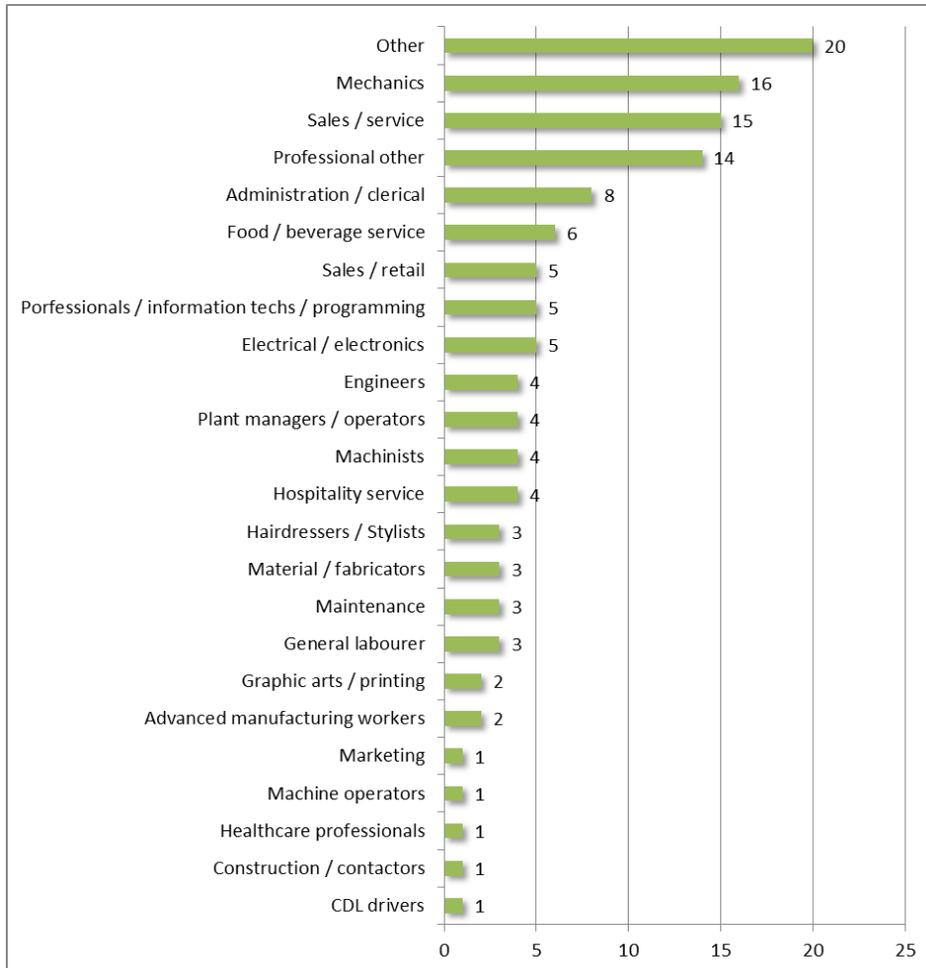
The most important recruitment areas among surveyed businesses include sales/service personnel (14 respondents) and mechanics (13). The responses included in the 'other' and 'professional other' categories charted below are detailed in Appendix B.

Figure 27: Current recruitment areas



Fifty-five percent of respondents expect future recruitment challenges. Anticipated recruitment areas are similar to future recruitment areas, with mechanics (16 respondents) and sales/service personnel (15) being listed most often.

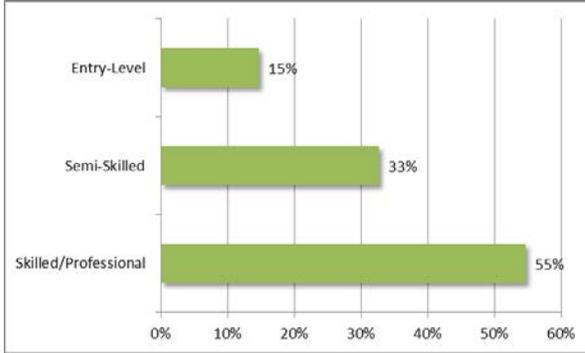
Figure 28: Future recruitment areas



Skills and Training

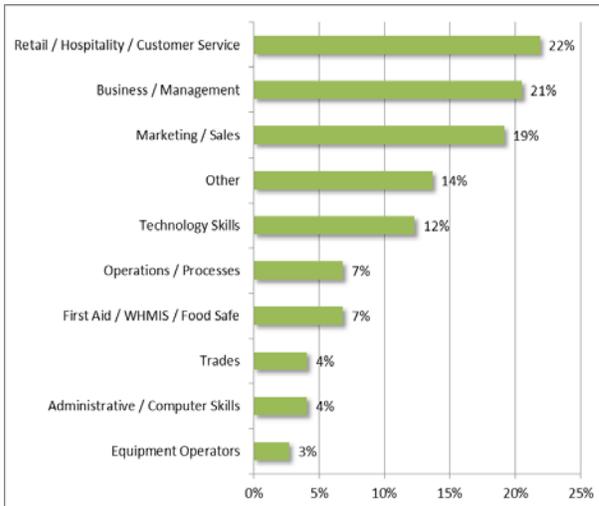
Over half of respondents (55%) indicated that the majority of their workforce is comprised of skilled or professional workers, 33% indicated that their workforce is mainly semi-skilled workers and 15% indicated that entry-level workers make up the majority of their workforce.

Figure 29: Skill level of majority of workforce



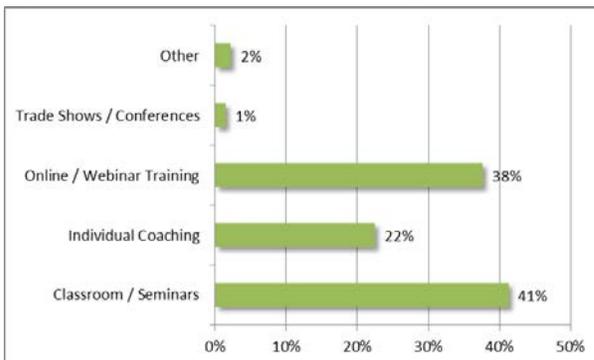
Sixty-three percent of respondents indicated that their company has a training budget and 54% of respondents indicated that there are areas of training or professional development that would benefit their employees. Most commonly listed among these areas were retail/hospitality/customer service training (22%), business/management training (21%) and marketing/sales training (19%).

Figure 30: Training or professional development needs



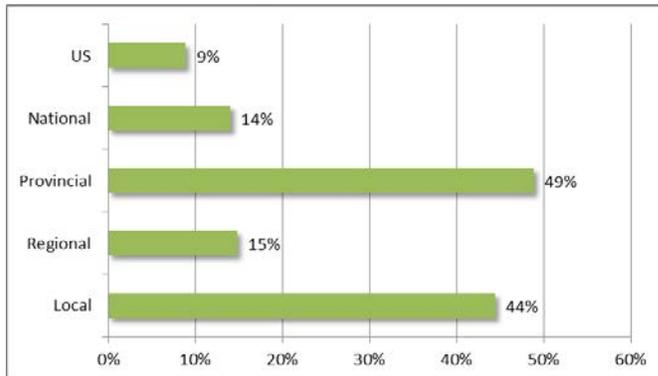
Forty-one percent of respondents prefer that their training be delivered through an in-person, seminar style format. Thirty-eight percent prefer online or webinar training.

Figure 31: Preferred modes of training



Forty-nine percent of respondents typically travel to other areas in BC for their training and 44% primarily seek training opportunities that are offered locally.

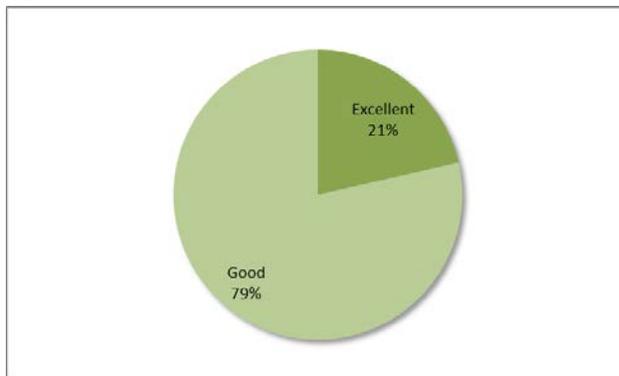
Figure 32: Usual training locations



Unions

Thirteen businesses reported that they have union status. Of those businesses, the majority (79%) indicated that the status of labour relations is good and 21% reported that it is excellent.

Figure 33: Status of labour relations

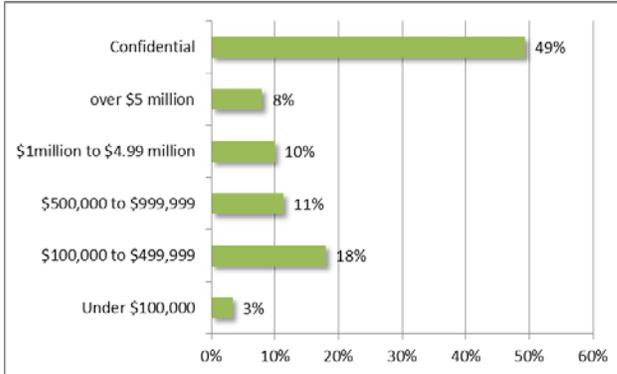


SALES

Market Size and Share

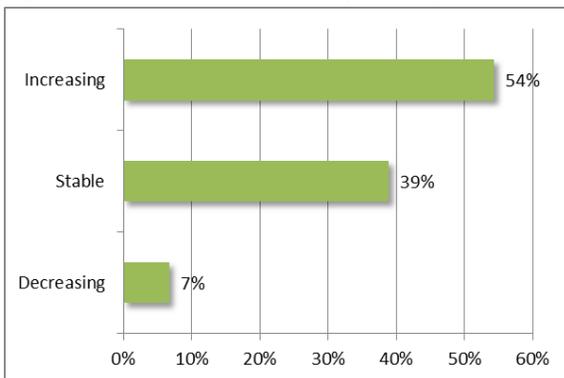
The highest number of respondents (18%) reported annual sales of between \$100,000 and \$499,999. The lowest number (3%) reported sales of less than \$100,000. Forty-nine percent of respondents did not share annual sales information.

Figure 34: Annual sales



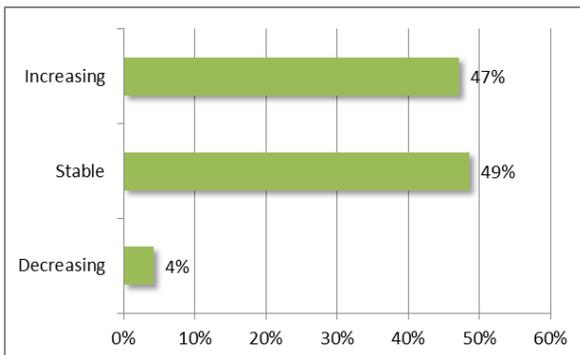
The majority of businesses interviewed (54%) indicated that the size of the market for their product or service is growing over time. Another 39% reported that the market is stable.

Figure 35: Status of market for product/service



Forty-seven percent of respondents indicated that their share of the market for their product is increasing while 49% indicated that it is stable. A small number of respondents (4%) indicated that their market share is decreasing.

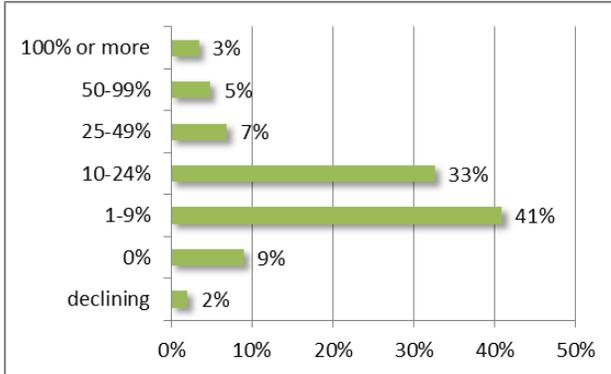
Figure 36: Status of market share



Growth

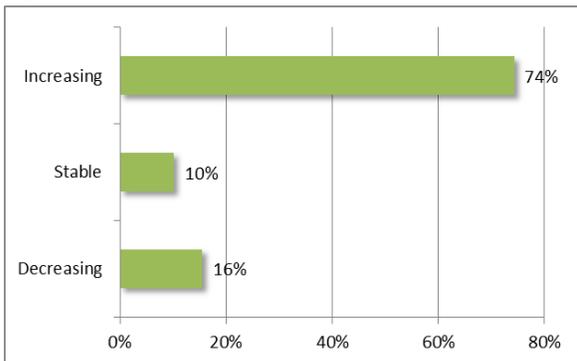
Forty-one percent of respondents expect to see moderate growth in sales of 1-9% over the next year and 33% expect to see higher growth of between 10 and 24%. Two percent of respondents expect their sales to decline.

Figure 37: Projected sales growth over next year



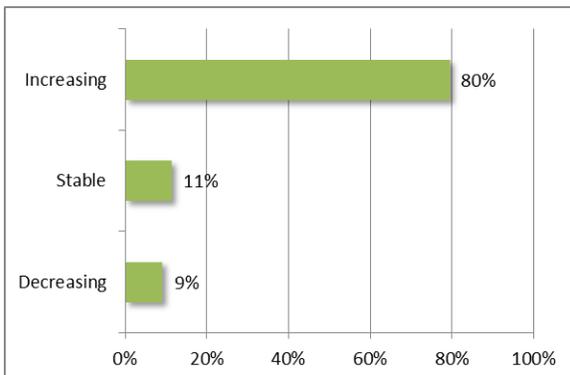
A strong majority of respondents indicated that sales at their business have increased over time, 10% indicated that sales have remained relatively stable and 16% reported that sales have been decreasing.

Figure 38: Historic sales trend at this location



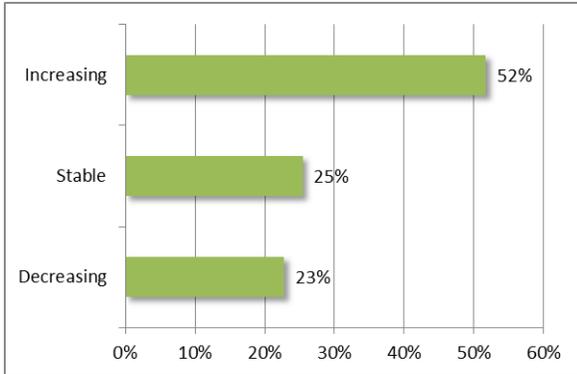
Data indicate that the sales trend at parent companies has been slightly more positive. Eighty percent of the 44 respondents for this question reported that sales at their parent company have historically increased and only 9% reported that they have decreased.

Figure 39: Historic sales trend at parent company



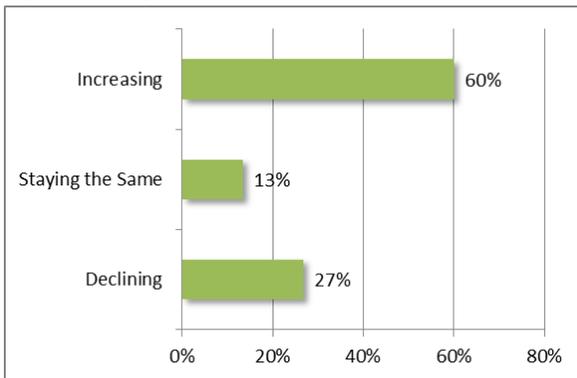
Data indicate that the sales trend within respondents' respective industries has been less positive. Fifty-two percent of respondents reported that sales within their industry have been increasing while 23% reported that they have been decreasing.

Figure 40: Historic sales trend in industry



Of the businesses that export to international markets, 60% indicated that their export sales have been increasing, 13% indicated that they have been stable and 27% indicated that they have been decreasing.

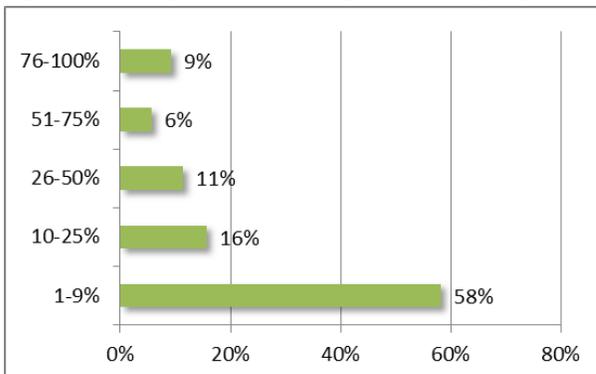
Figure 41: Export sales trend



Source of Sales

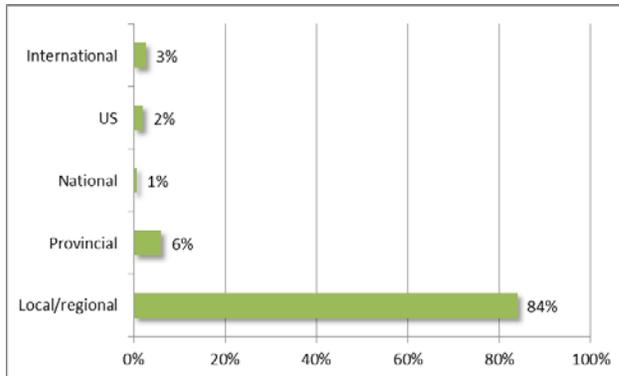
The customer base among Lower Columbia Region businesses seems to be diverse, with the majority of respondents (58%) indicating that less than 10% of their sales are generated by their top 3 customers.

Figure 42: Component of sales generated by top 3 customers



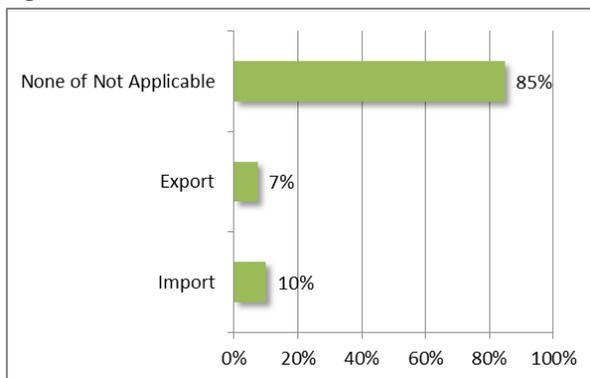
A strong majority of respondents (84%) indicated that over 50% of their sales are to customers within the community or region. Fewer respondents (6%, 1%, 2%, 3%) indicated that the majority of their sales are to provincial, national, US or international markets, respectively.

Figure 43: Geographic source of majority of sales



Fifteen respondents (10%) indicated that they import good or services from other countries and 11 respondents (7%) indicated that they export goods or services to other countries. Eighty-five percent of respondents did not indicate that they engage in international trade.

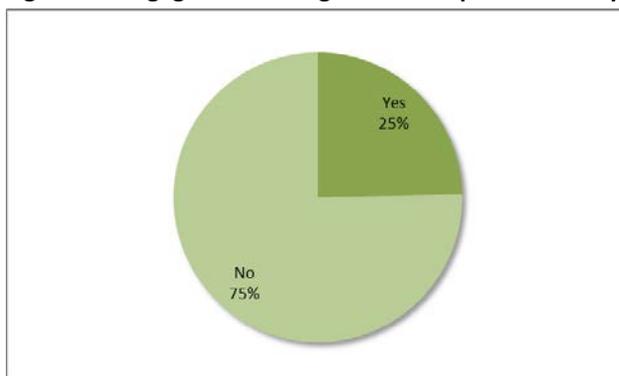
Figure 44: International trade status



Procurement

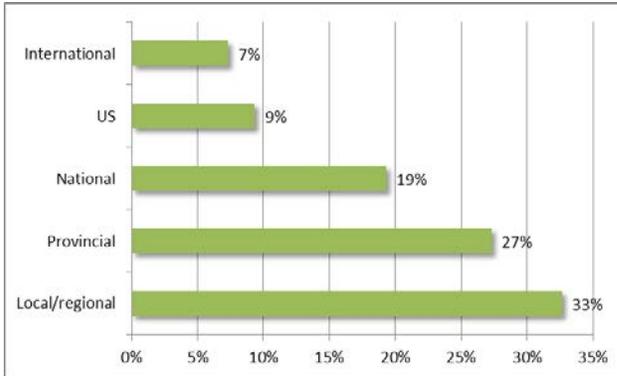
Three quarters of respondents indicated that they do not engage in government procurement.

Figure 45: Engagement with government procurement processes



Thirty-three percent of businesses interviewed reported that they purchase supplies primarily from local sources. Another 27% indicated that the majority of their supplies come from businesses located elsewhere in BC.

Figure 46: Geographic source of majority of supplies

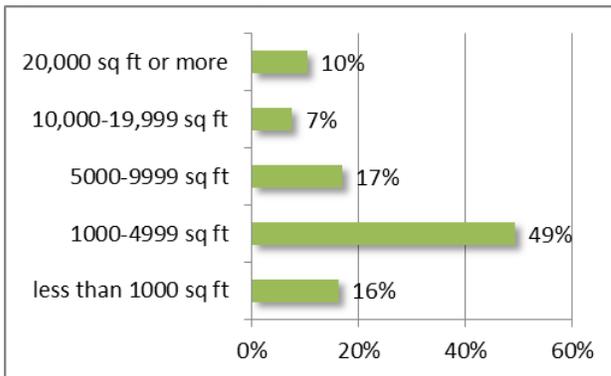


FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Size and Condition

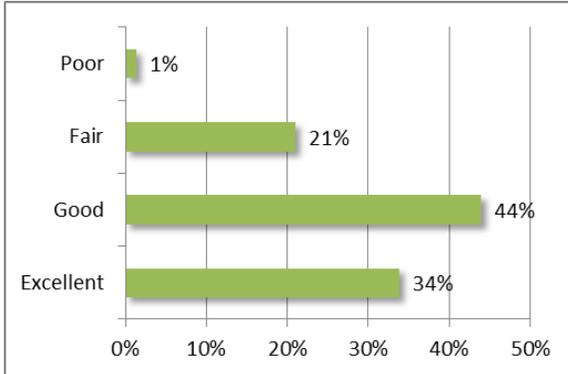
Almost half of respondents (49%) reported that their facility is between 1,000 and 4,000 square feet in size. Most other respondents indicated that their facility is 5,000 square feet or larger.

Figure 47: Size of facility



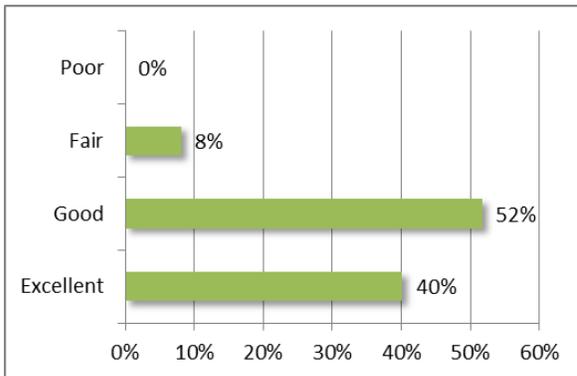
Forty-four percent of surveyed businesses reported that their facility is in good condition. Another 34% reported that their facility is in excellent condition. Notably, only 1% of respondents indicated that their facility is in poor condition.

Figure 48: Condition of facility



The majority of respondents (52%) indicated that their equipment is in good condition. Another 40% indicated that is in excellent condition.

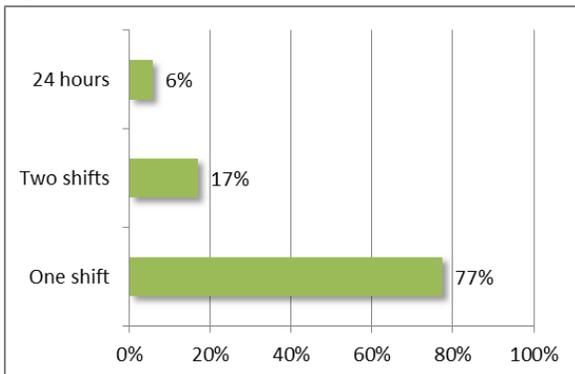
Figure 49: Condition of equipment



Shifts

Most surveyed businesses (77%) operate one shift per day, 17% operate two shifts and 6% run 24-hours per day.

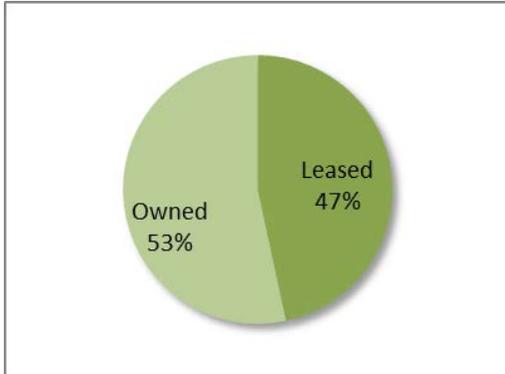
Figure 50: Number of shifts



Ownership

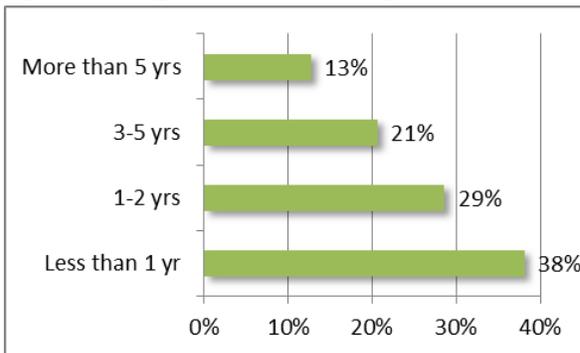
Fifty-three percent of respondents own the facility in which they operate and 47% lease it.

Figure 51: Ownership status of facility



Of the businesses that lease their facility, 38% have less than a year remaining on their lease and 13% have more than 5 years remaining. The vast majority of respondents that lease their facility (89%) intend to renew their current lease agreement.

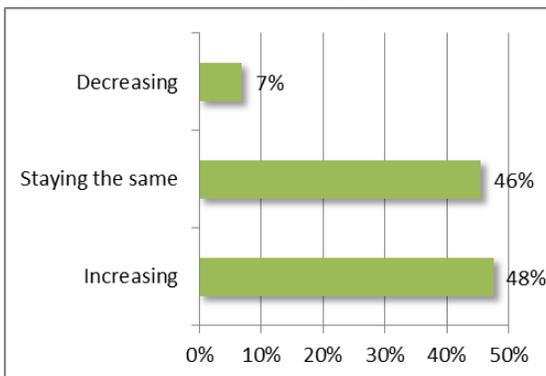
Figure 52: Length of time remaining on lease



Investment and Expansion

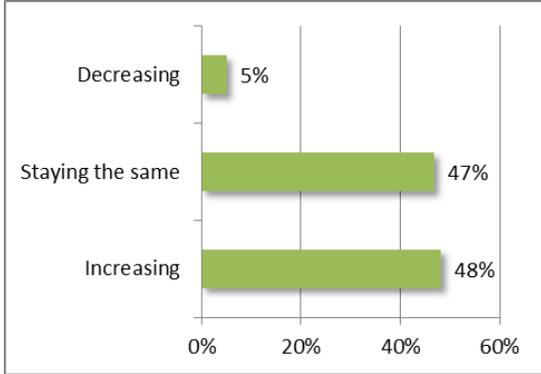
About half of respondents indicated that their company's investment in their facility has increased (48%) or stayed the same (46%) over the past 18 months. A small number of businesses (7%) indicated that investment in their facility has decreased over the same time period.

Figure 53: Investment in facility (past 18 months)



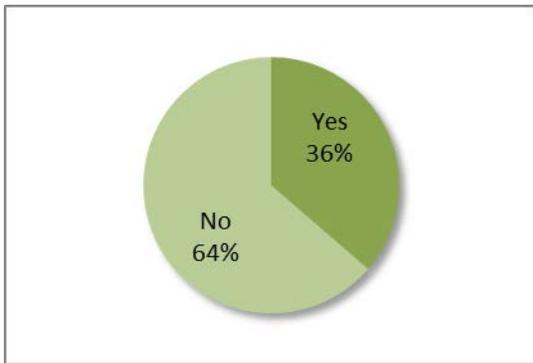
A similar trend was reported for recent investments in equipment.

Figure 54: Investment in equipment (past 18 months)



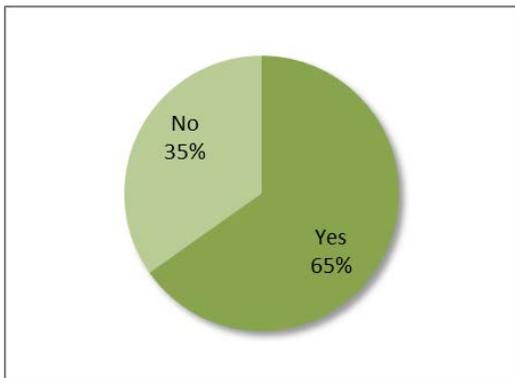
Thirty-six percent of interviewed businesses plan to expand within three years. Sixty-four percent do not.

Figure 55: Plans to expand within three years



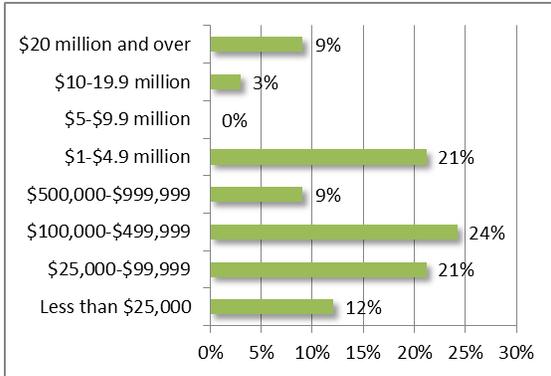
Of the businesses planning a near-term expansion, 65% reported that their current site will be adequate. Notably, however, 16 businesses (35%) reported that they will have to look for a new site to meet their planned expansion needs.

Figure 56: Adequacy of current site to support expansion



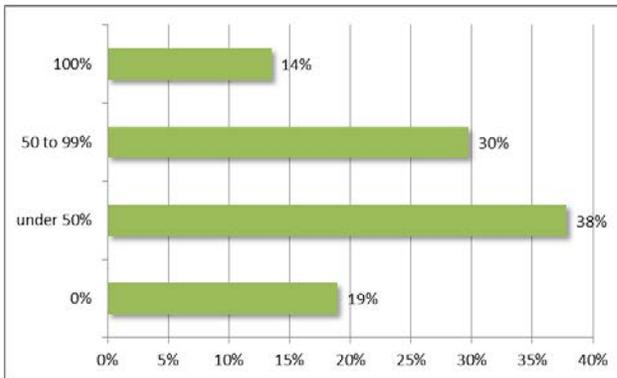
In total, the Lower Columbia Region businesses interviewed plan to spend over \$560 million on expansion over the next three years. The highest number of businesses (24%) plan to spend between \$100,000 and \$499,999

Figure 57: Estimated expansion investment



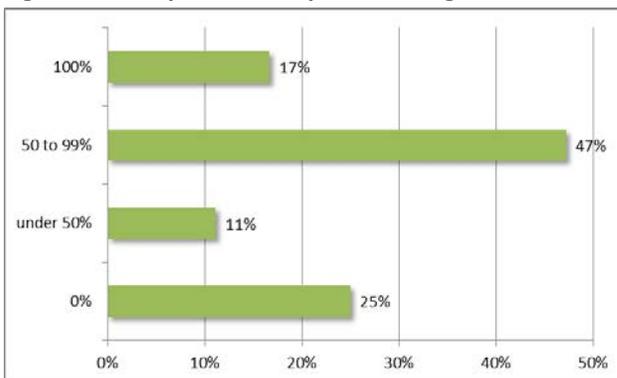
Forty-four percent of respondents expect to spend half or more of their expansion budget on equipment and technology.

Figure 58: Component of expansion budget for equipment and technology



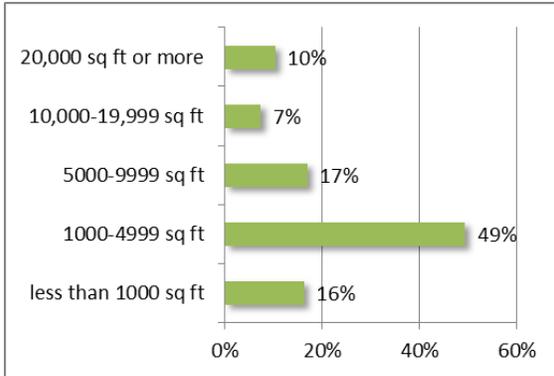
Sixty-four percent of respondents expect to spend half or more of their expansion budget on real estate.

Figure 59: Component of expansion budget for real estate



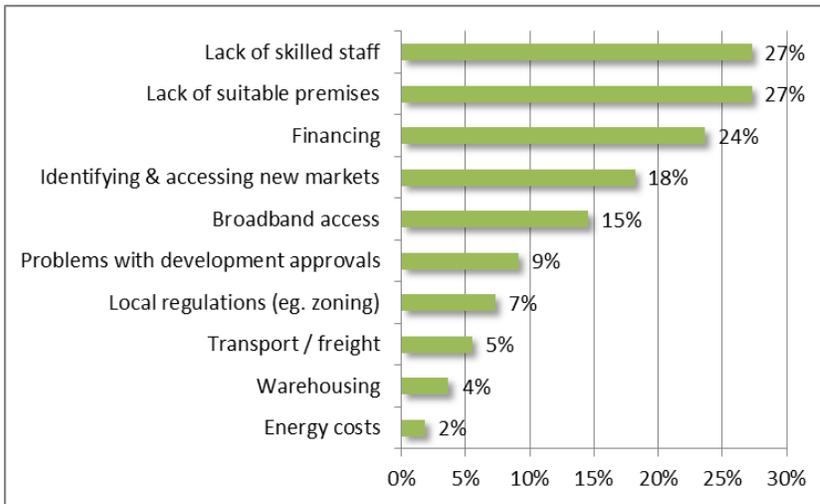
Almost half of respondents (49%) expect that the size of their facility expansion will be between 1,000 and 4,999 square feet. The remainder of the respondents reporting varying estimates for expansion size.

Figure 60: Size of facility expansion



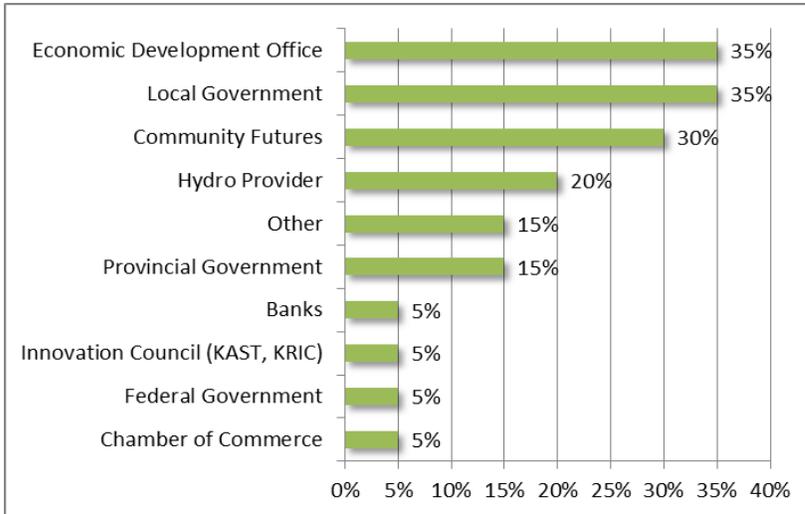
Respondents cited a variety of factors that act as barriers to their expansion. Most common of those were a lack of skilled staff (27%), a lack of suitable premises (27%), and financing (24%).

Figure 61: Barriers to expansion



Twenty-nine percent of respondents indicated that they have sought assistance with their expansion efforts from an external organization. Of these businesses, the highest number (35%) had approached their Economic Development Office, 35% had consulted with their local government and 30% had approached Community Futures.

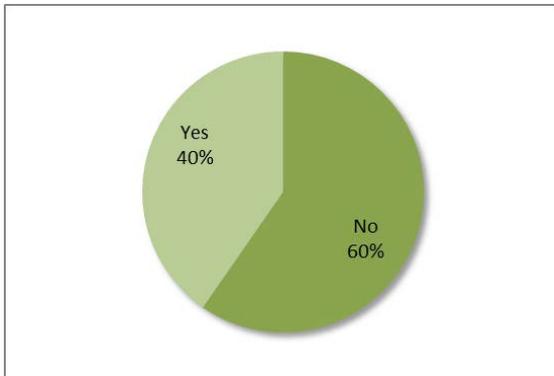
Figure 62: Organizations approached for expansion assistance



Energy Efficiency

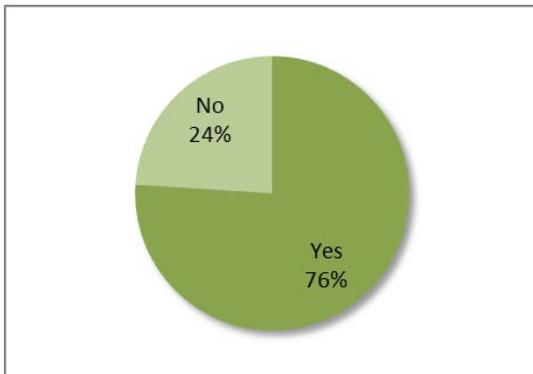
Over half of respondents are not considering energy efficiency in their expansion plans.

Figure 63: Considering energy efficiency in expansion plans



Seventy-six percent of respondents are familiar with the energy efficiency support available through the BC Hydro Power Smart program.

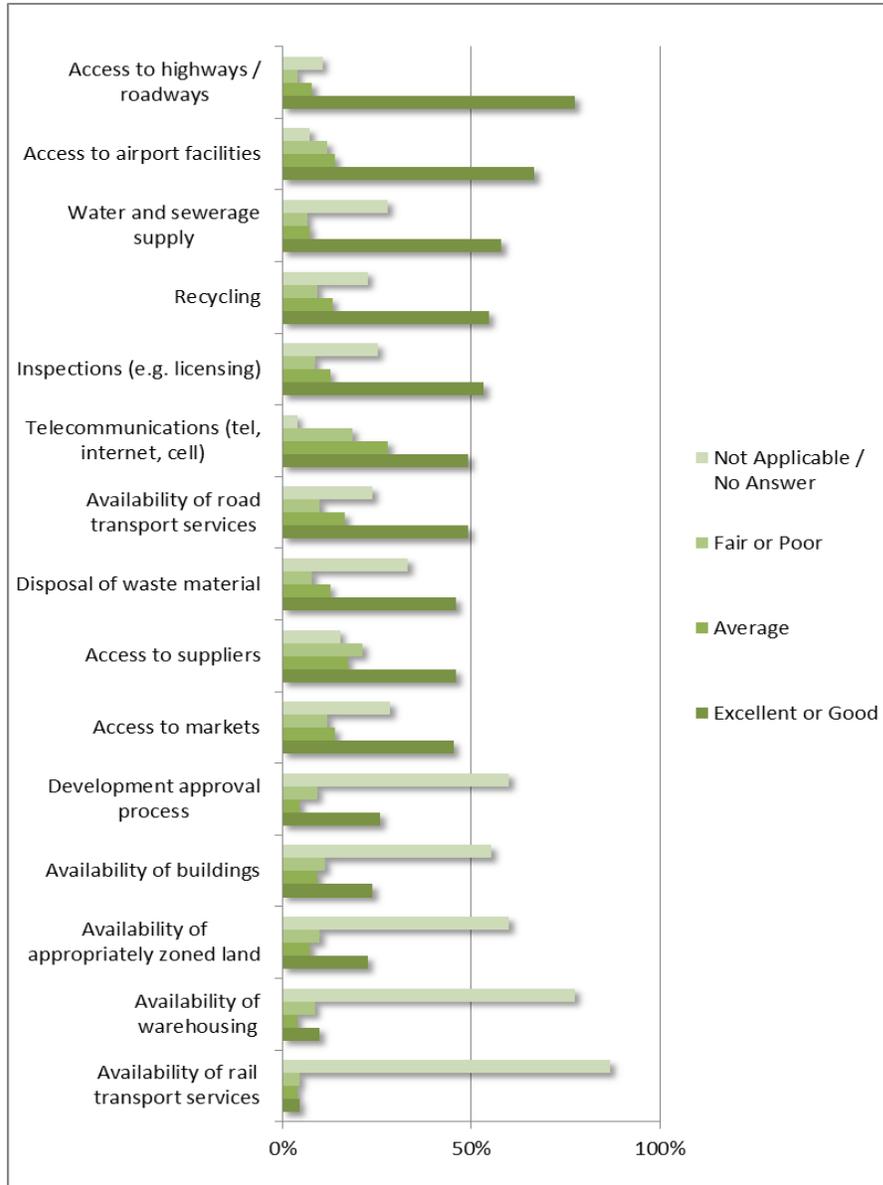
Figure 64: Awareness of BC Hydro Power Smart



GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Respondents were asked to rate a list of government services as fair, poor, average, good or excellent. Respondents also had the option to rate a service as not applicable to their business. The services that received the highest number of fair or poor ratings were access to suppliers (21%) and telecommunications (19%). The services that received the highest number of good or excellent ratings were access to highways/roadways (77%) and access to airport facilities (67%). The services that the highest number of respondents felt are not applicable to their business were availability of rail transport services (87%) and availability of warehousing (77%).

Figure 65: Rating of government services



When asked to provide suggestions on how to improve government services, the highest number of responses (25) related to providing better, faster or cheaper telecommunications services. More reliable, expanded or less expensive airport services (14 respondents) and more efficient

government/development approval processes (11 respondents) also factored heavily in these discussions. The following excerpt from one respondent's survey data illustrates the importance of internet availability to Greater Trail businesses:

"If fibre could be brought in and the lines opened up it would be a world of difference for how the region could grow. If we don't do it soon, the opportunity to get ahead will be lost and it will make it even harder just to catch up to the baseline normal."

Figure 66: Key words in respondents' suggestions for improvements to government services

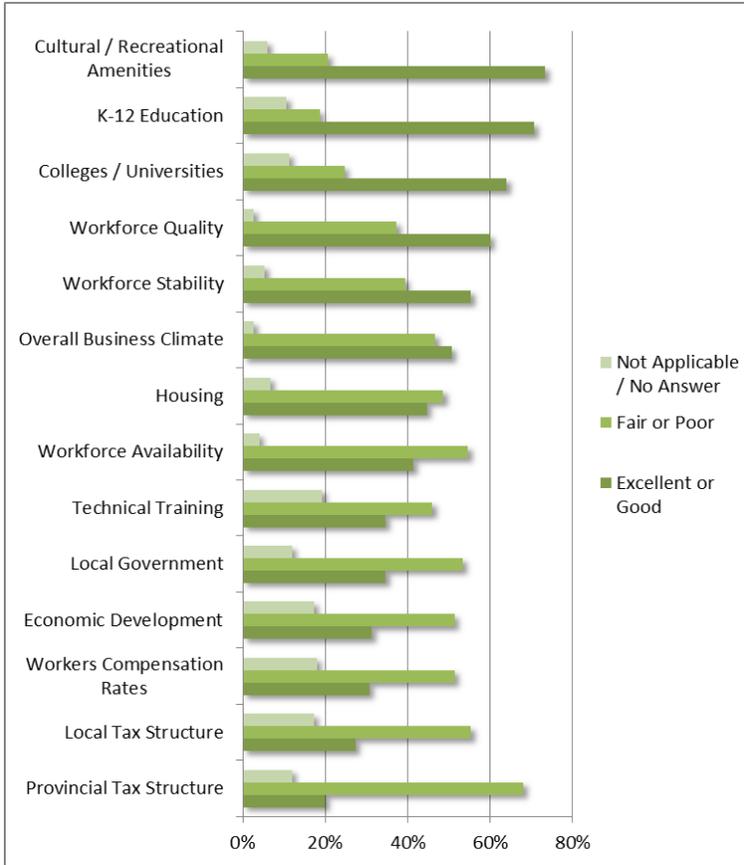


BUSINESS CLIMATE

Quality of Business Climate

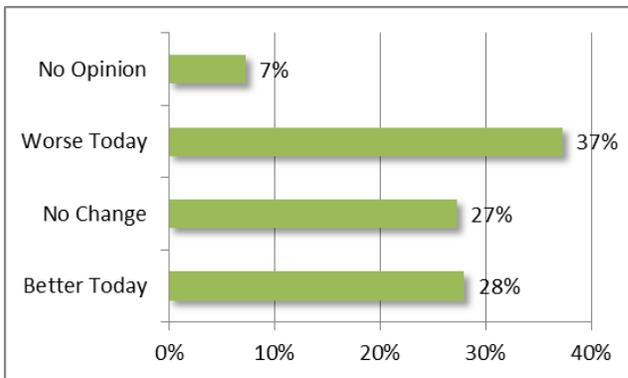
Respondents rated the quality of a list of business climate factors as either poor, fair, good, excellent or not applicable to their business. The factors that received the highest number of fair or poor ratings included the provincial tax structure (68%) and the local tax structure (55%). The factors that received the highest number of good or excellent ratings included cultural/recreational amenities (73%) and K-12 education (71%).

Figure 67: Rating of business climate factors



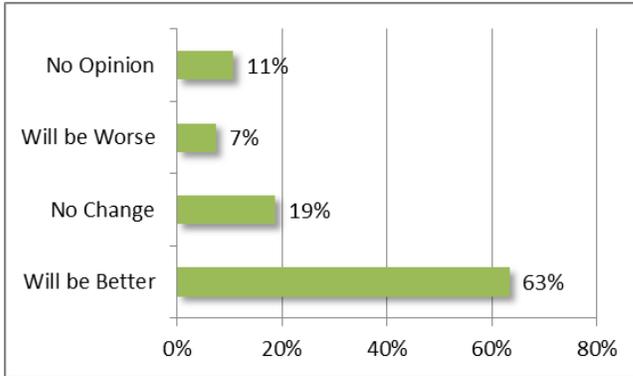
Thirty-seven percent of respondents felt that the business climate is worse today than it was 5 years ago. Twenty-eight percent thought that it is better.

Figure 68: Business climate today vs. 5 years ago



Sixty-three percent of respondents expect that the business climate will be better 5 years from today. Seven percent expect that it will be worse.

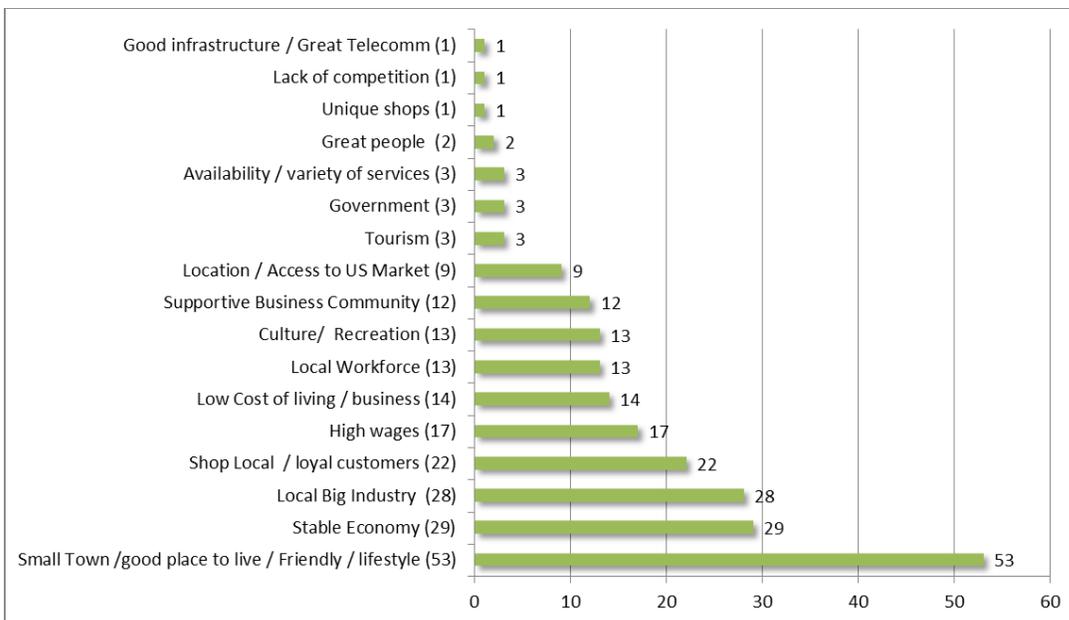
Figure 69: Business climate 5 years from today



Strengths and Weaknesses of Business Climate

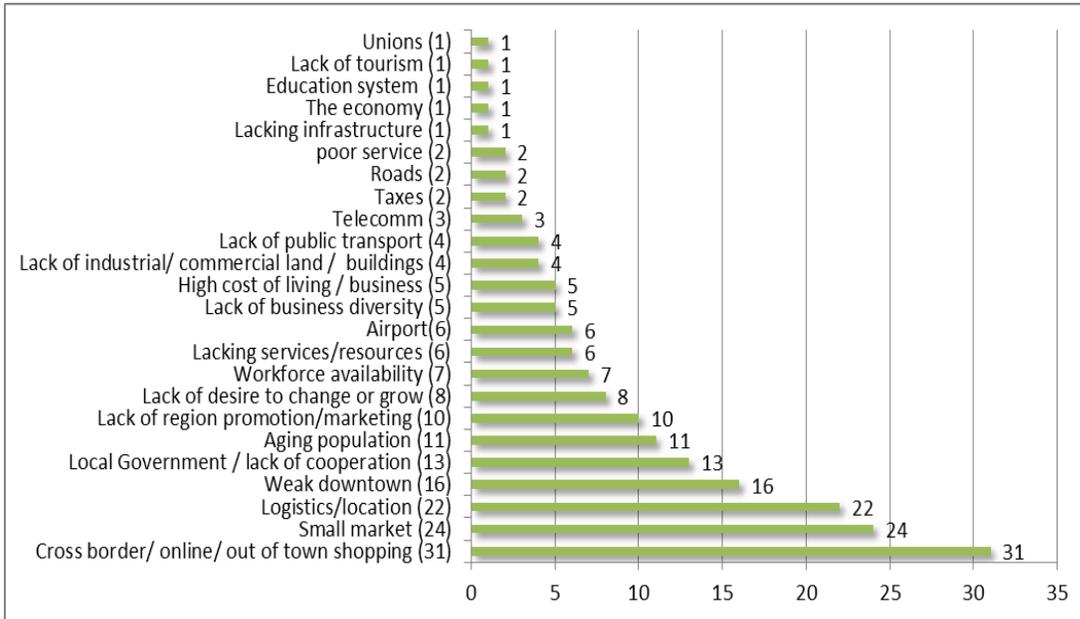
When asked to list the community’s strengths as a place to do business, the highest number of respondents (53) cited the area’s small town nature and lifestyle. Twenty-nine respondents cited the region’s stable economy and 28 discussed the positive economic impact of big industry players in the area.

Figure 70: Community's strengths as a place to do business



When asked to list the community’s weaknesses as a place to do business, the highest number of respondents (31) cited cross-border or online shopping. Twenty-four respondents stated that the area’s small market is an issue.

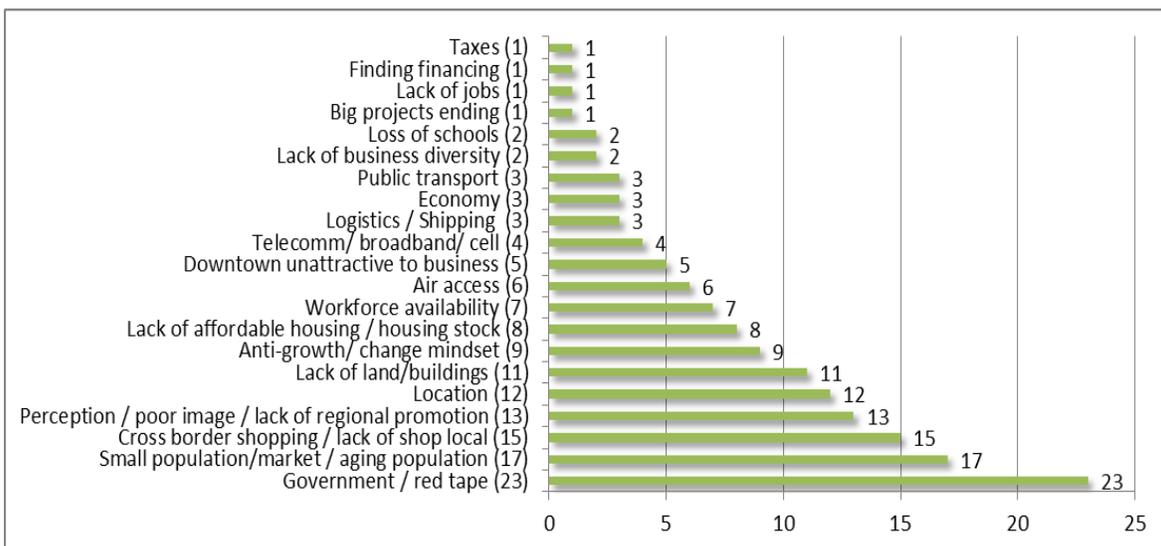
Figure 71: Community's weaknesses as a place to do business



The highest number of respondents (23) stated that ‘red tape’ and government (particularly local governments) are an important barrier to growing the community’s economy. This sentiment is illustrated in the following excerpt from one respondent’s survey data:

“Local government’s inability to work together productively. Making decisions that benefit their town at the expense of others in the region. It seems that most local governments have no real interest in growing the economy or helping existing businesses and that political decisions are slow and ultimately can’t move at the speed of businesses so businesses either go bankrupt or move as they can’t wait for government decisions.”

Figure 72: Barriers to growth in the community



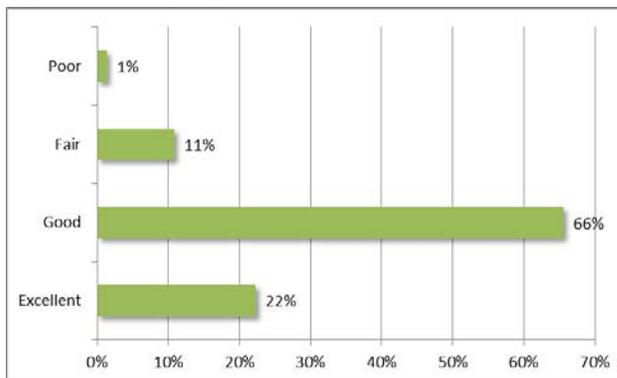
Thirty percent of respondents indicated that there are key suppliers and 65% of respondents indicated that there are key customers to attract to the region. Suppliers cited by multiple businesses included internet/phone service providers, clothing/shoe stores, food stores, restaurants and various types of manufacturing businesses. Customers cited by multiple businesses included tourists, amenity migrants, families, seniors, entrepreneurs and manufacturers.

ASSESSMENT AND PLANS

Overall Health

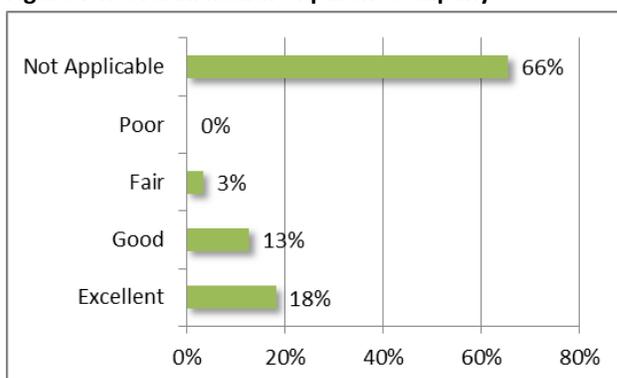
The majority of businesses surveyed reported that their company is in overall good health, 22% reported that their company's health is excellent and 11% reported that it is fair. Only 1% of respondents indicated that their company is in poor health.

Figure 73: Company's overall health



The highest number of respondents with a parent company (18%) indicated that the health of their parent company is excellent. Thirteen percent reported that it is good.

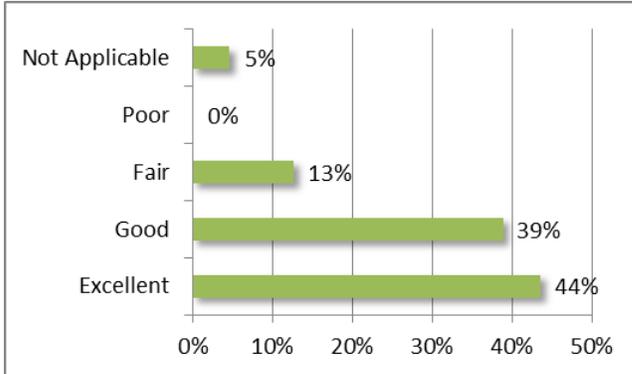
Figure 74: Overall health of parent company



Attitude toward Community

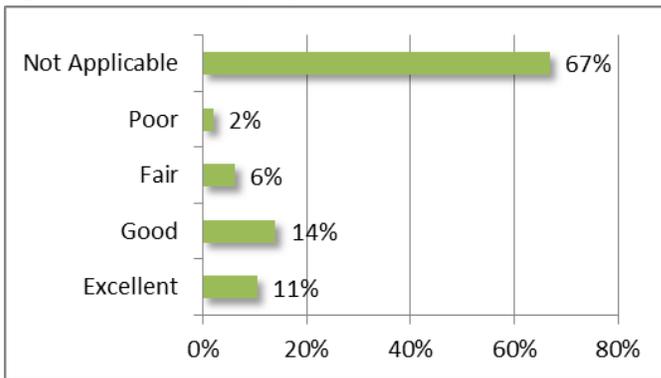
Forty-four percent of respondents indicated that their local management's attitude toward the community is excellent and 39% indicated that it is good.

Figure 75: Local management's attitude toward community



Data suggest that parent companies' attitudes towards the community is slightly less positive than local management's. The highest number of respondents (14%) indicated that their parent company's attitude toward the local community is good.

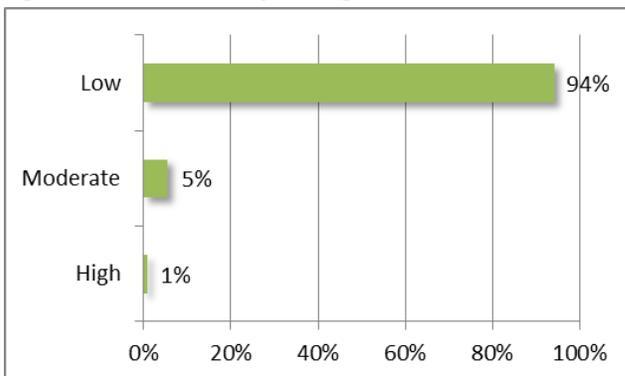
Figure 76: Parent company's attitude toward local community



Risk of Closing or Downsizing

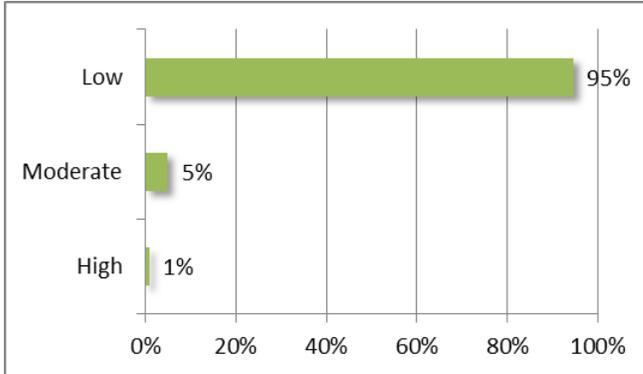
Data indicate that the risk of Lower Columbia Region businesses closing or downsizing is very low. Only 6% of respondents reported that they are at moderate or high risk of closing.

Figure 77: Risk of facility closing



Again, only 6% of respondents indicated that they are at moderate or high risk of downsizing.

Figure 78: Risk of facility downsizing

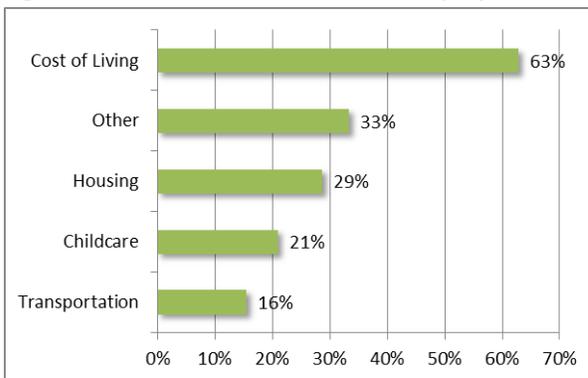


ISSUES OF REGIONAL INTEREST

Employees

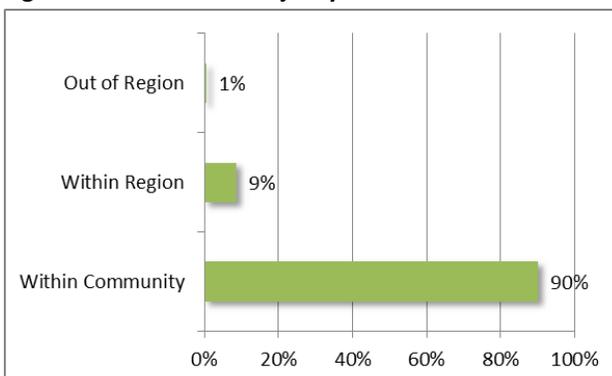
The majority of respondents (63%) listed cost of living as an issue that is critical to their employees. For a list of factors included in the other category charted below, see Appendix B.

Figure 79: Critical considerations for employees



Ninety percent of businesses interviewed reported that the majority of their employees live within the community, 9% indicated that they live elsewhere in the Columbia Basin Boundary region and 1% indicated that they live outside of the region.

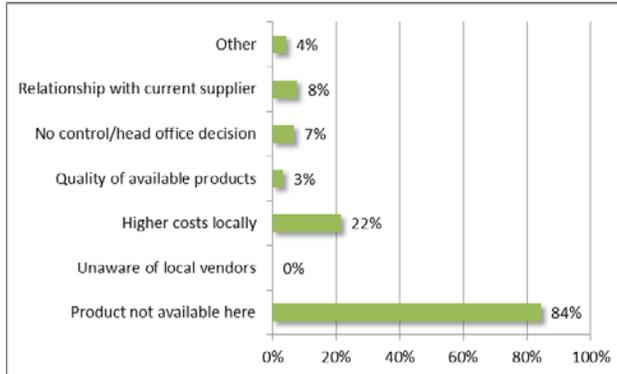
Figure 80: Location of majority of workforce



Purchasing

When reflecting on their reasons for purchasing products or services from out-of-area suppliers, the vast majority (84%) indicated that the products they need are not available locally. Twenty-two percent also indicated that products tend to cost more from local suppliers.

Figure 81: Reason for out-of-area purchasing

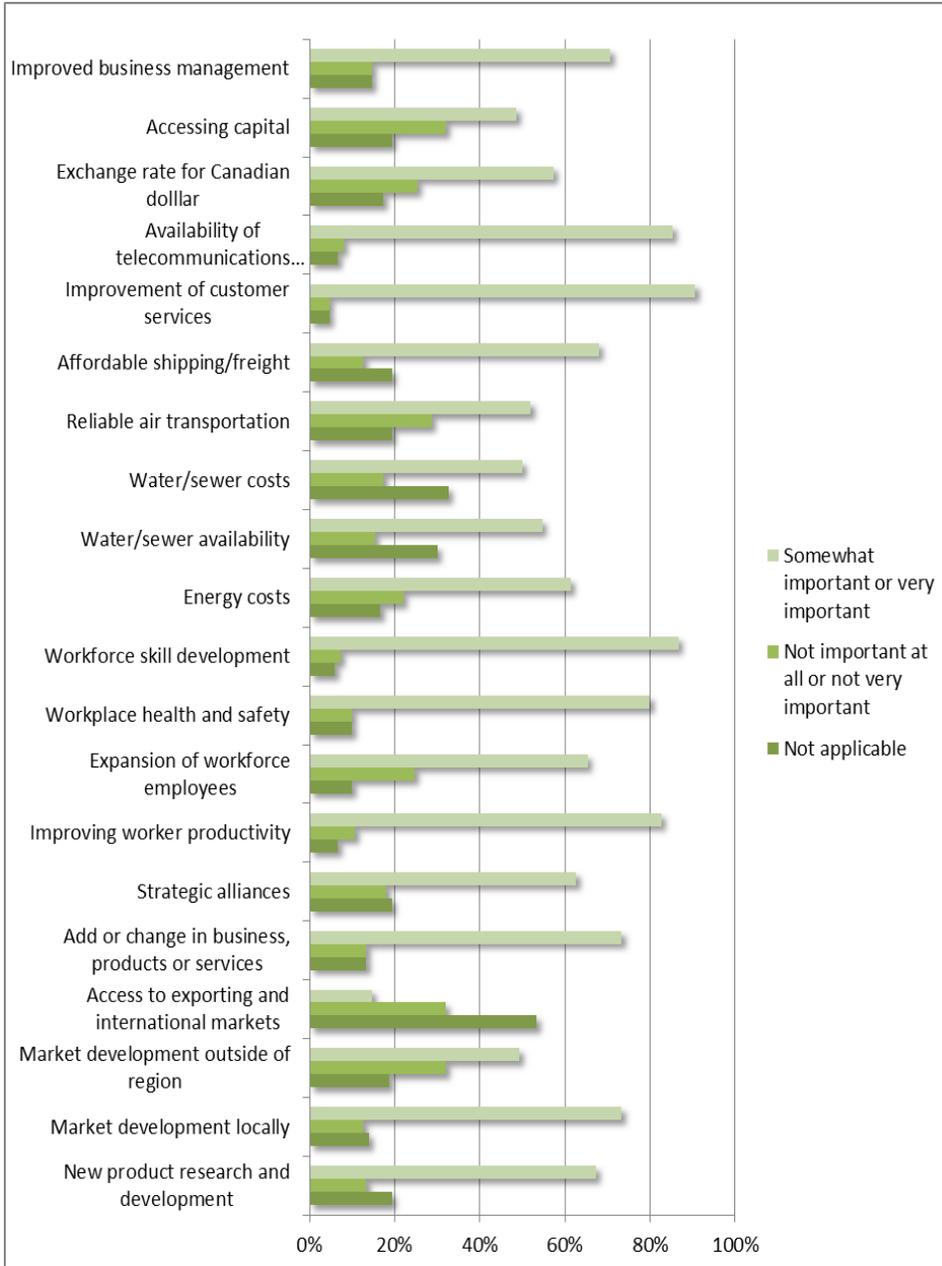


Products that multiple businesses stated they would like a local supplier for included office equipment, stationary and paper, computer equipment and web hosting.

Business Competitiveness and Productivity

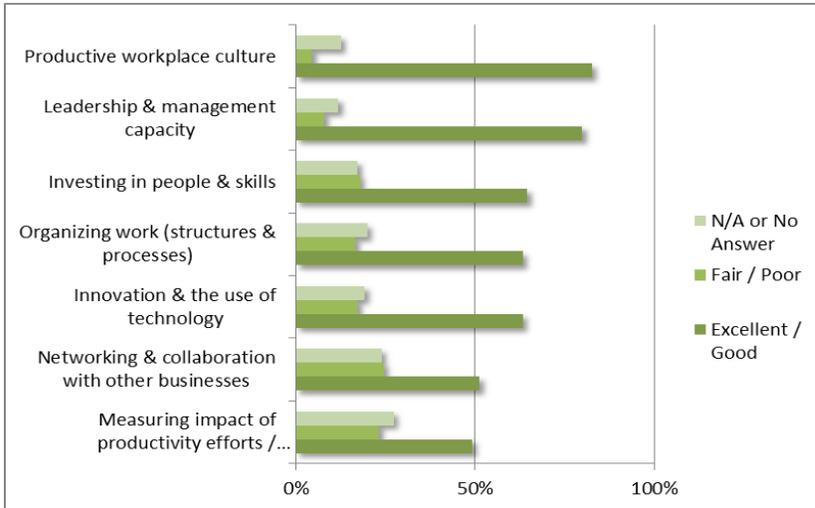
From a list of business competitiveness factors, those that received the highest number of somewhat important or very important ratings include improvement of customer services (91%) and workforce skill development (87%). The factors that received the highest number of not important at all or not very important ratings include access to exporting and international markets (32%), accessing capital (32%) and market development outside of the region (32%). The factors that most respondents indicated are not applicable to their business include access to exporting and international markets (53%) and water/sewer costs (33%).

Figure 82: Importance of business competitiveness factors



When asked to rate their business' performance on a list of productivity drivers, the drivers that received the highest number of excellent or good ratings include a productive workplace culture (83%) and leadership and management capacity (80%). The factors that received the highest number of fair or poor ratings include networking and collaboration (25%) and measuring impacts of productivity efforts/investments (23%).

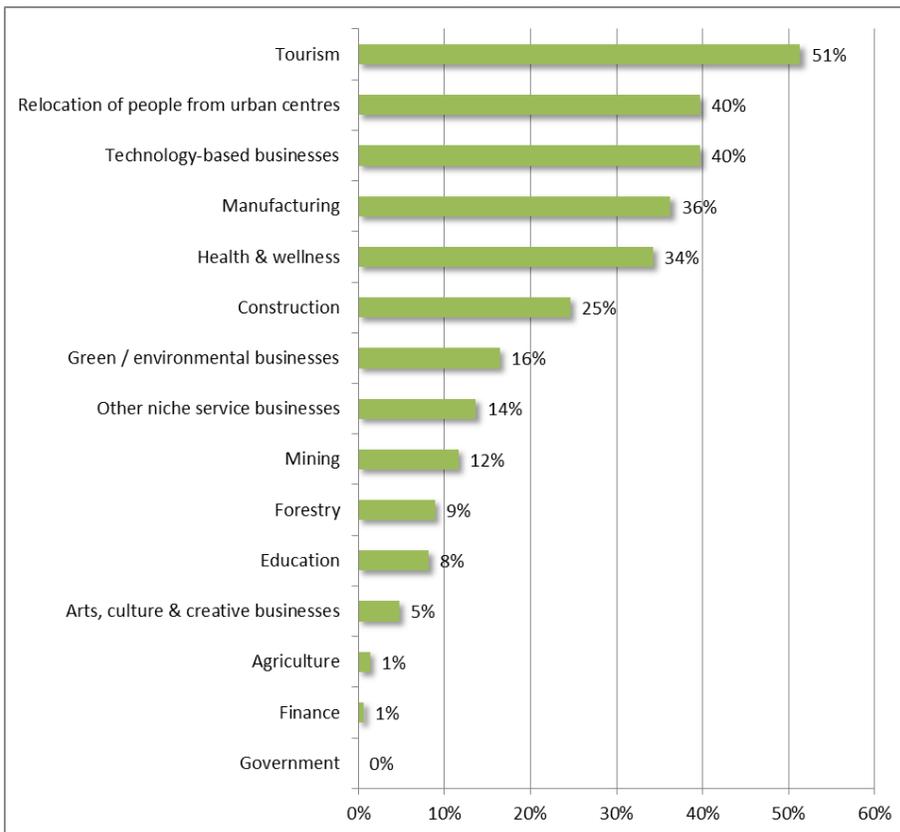
Figure 83: Performance on key productivity drivers



Economic Drivers

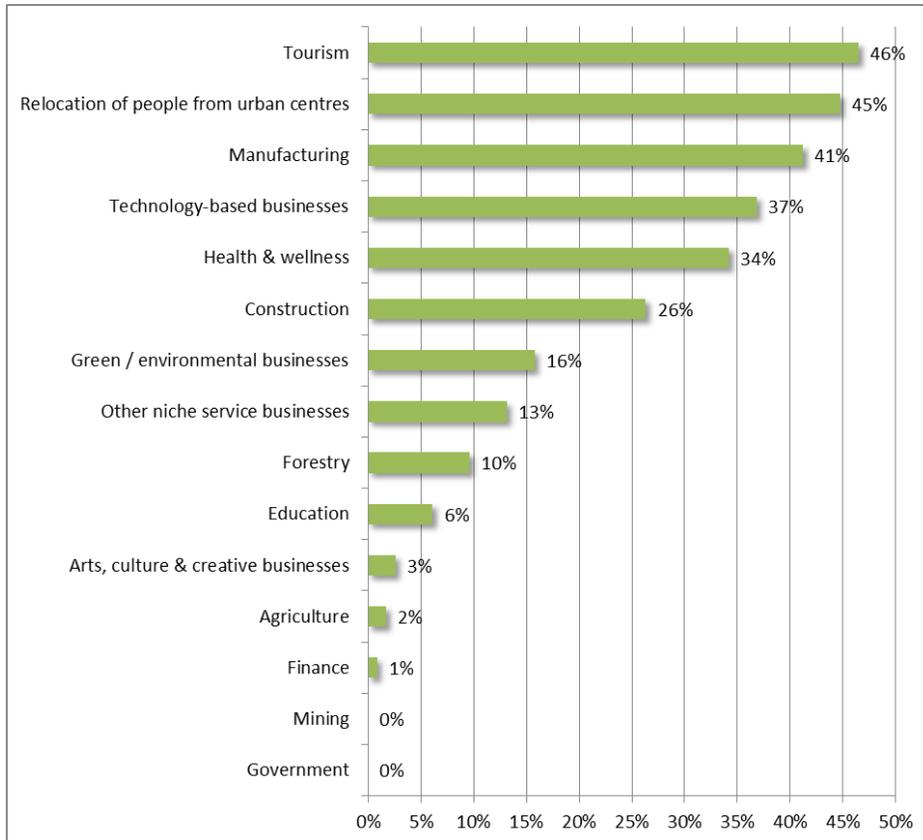
The economic drivers that the highest number of respondents see potential for growth in over the next 5 to 10 years include tourism (51%) relocation of people from urban centres (40%) and technology-based businesses (40%). Notably, no respondents chose government as an economic driver with growth potential.

Figure 84: Economic drivers with greatest growth potential



The economic drivers that respondents would prefer to see growth in closely match those that they think have the greatest growth potential. The drivers with the highest ratings include tourism (46%), relocation of people from urban centres (45%) and manufacturing (41%).

Figure 85: Preferred future economic development drivers



RECOMMENDATIONS

NEXT STEPS

The results of this survey can be used by economic development organizations in the Lower Columbia Region to inform short- and long-term business retention and expansion action planning. Many BRE programs ensure that follow-up actions occur as soon as possible following completion of the survey stage. This approach builds credibility, a sense of success and momentum to carry out long-term actions.

Successful BRE programs pick an initial set of short-term actions that:

- can be completed in 6 months or less;
- are highly visible to businesses and the community as a whole; and
- have the potential for considerable impact with minimal input (i.e., the “low hanging fruit”).

Many BRE actions also lead to long-term programs (e.g., a ‘Buy Local’ program), or ongoing plans and policies. Patience and a commitment over the long-term are critical in determining the success of these initiatives. For this reason, BRE should be thought of, and implemented as, a process as opposed to a one-time project.

BRE results can form the backbone of a community’s economic development strategy and, in some cases, they are integrated into Official Community Plans (OCPs). Some communities form committees or action groups around the themes or action areas identified in the BRE report to ensure success in implementation.

The following steps could further support links to planning and action:

1. Prepare a follow-up report compiling current research findings alongside other relevant regional economic development research to identify common themes and further develop recommended actions.
2. Host a business stakeholder forum to present findings and prioritize actions. Ensure participation by businesses outside of the City of Trail by hosting forums in Rossland, Fruitvale and Montrose, if needed.
3. Host a facilitated action planning session with economic development stakeholders and industry representatives.
4. Based on results from the forums and planning session, finalize priority actions, develop related action plans, update existing economic development plans and develop relationships with a broader network of support providers (at regional, provincial and national scales) to support implementation.
5. Establish a monitoring program to assess the impact of implementation efforts.

POTENTIAL ACTION AREAS

Site selection support for expanding businesses

Businesses in the region are planning significant investment in expansion over the near term and over half of that investment will likely be spent on real estate. Many businesses stated that they will need a new site to support their expansion needs or that a lack of a suitable premises is preventing their expansion. Actions on this theme may involve assisting in the location of potential expansion sites, or they may relate more to the development approval process. Local government 'red tape' and inefficient approval processes were often cited by respondents as a barrier to economic development in the community.

Promotion of local supply sourcing

Only about a third of respondents purchase the majority of their supplies from local suppliers and, while the vast majority of businesses stated that the supplies they need are not available locally, many of the products businesses indicated they would like a local supplier for are in fact available in the region. Additional research could help determine the barriers to businesses buying locally. A potential action on this theme may involve connecting businesses with relevant suppliers, both to improve businesses' knowledge of the types of supplies that are available locally, and to ensure suppliers' product lines meet the needs of local businesses.

Accessible, relevant and affordable training opportunities

A lack of skilled staff was commonly cited as a barrier to expansion of businesses and the vast majority of respondents said that workforce skill development is important to the competitiveness of their business. Professional development areas most often listed by businesses include retail/hospitality/customer service, business management and marketing/sales. Uptake on training opportunities can be low in the region due to the limited time and financial resources available to small businesses. Therefore, any actions on this theme should consider business schedules and training budgets. Educational and training institutions in the region could be approached as potential collaborators in meeting businesses' training needs.

Recruitment initiatives

About half of businesses indicated that they have experienced challenges recruiting new employees, especially mechanics and sales/service personnel. A strong majority of respondents acknowledged that expansion of the workforce is important to their business' competitiveness. Currently, respondents primarily recruit locally; therefore, actions on this theme could involve assisting businesses with recruiting further afield, either individually or as a business community. Recruitment initiatives could promote the business climate factors that respondents identified as strengths of the region (e.g., cultural/recreational amenities, schools).

Succession and business planning support

Business and succession planning are critical to the health and longevity of businesses, yet less than a quarter of respondents indicated that they have a formal succession plan and more than half do not have an up-to-date business plan. Open, instructive training sessions have the potential to provide a base level of support to a large number of businesses in the area; however,

given the importance of individual circumstances in business planning, a more targeted, one-on-one assistance program could result in greater overall benefit by providing a higher level of support to 'at-risk' businesses.

APPENDIX A: THE BRE SURVEY

BASE LONG-FORM SURVEY



COMPANY INFORMATION

Key: = Select Multiple, = Select One

1. Description of products/services:

2. Who are your competitors (local, regional, national, international)?

3. What are the factors that make your company successful here?

4. Life cycle stage of firm's primary product/service:
 Emerging Growing Maturing Declining
5. What is this company's ownership status?
 Privately owned Publicly owned
6. What is this company's legal status?
 Sole proprietorship Partnership Corporation Limited liability partnership (LLP) Non-profit Other

If *Other*, please specify:

7. Location of company's headquarters:
 In Province _____
 Elsewhere in nation _____
 Outside Canada _____
8. How long has this facility operated
 <1 Year 1-4 Years 5-9 Years 10-19 Years >20 Years
9. Name of parent company, if different:

10. Functions located at this facility:
 Distribution Engineering/RD Headquarters Manufacturing Services Warehousing
11. Does this company have another Canadian location that provides a similar product/service as the local operation:
 Yes No

Similar Canadian notes:

12. Does this company have another location elsewhere in the world that provides a similar product/service as the local operation:
 Yes No

Similar world notes:



- 13. Has the local facility changed owners in the past 5 years?
 Yes No
- 14. If Yes, describe the local impact of the change in ownership:
 Positive Neutral Negative
- 15. Has the local facility changed management in the past 5 years?
 Yes No
- 16. If Yes, describe the local impact of the change in management:
 Positive Neutral Negative
- 17. Is an ownership change pending for this facility?
 Yes No
- 18. If Yes what is the anticipated time frame:
 1 year or less 2 years 3 years or more
- 19. If Yes, how do you intend to exit the business?
 Sell/transfer to a family member Sell/transfer to a non-family member Sell to another company Close the business down Other

- 20. What is your age group (estimate by interviewer - do not ask)
 Over 65 60-65 55-59 50-54 45-49 44 and under
- 21. Have you identified a successor to your business?
 Yes No
- 22. Is there a formal succession plan?
 Yes No Not applicable
- 23. If Yes, have you been assisted in preparation of a succession plan?
 Yes No
- 24. If Yes, by whom:
 Accountant Banker Business partner Lawyer Online Internet Resources Personal financial planner Spouse Other

- 25. Does this firm have a current business plan?
 Yes No
- 26. Company information notes:

LOCAL WORKFORCE Key: = Select Multiple, = Select One

- 27. Total number of employees at this facility:
_____ Full-time employees
_____ Part-time employees
_____ Temporary employees
_____ Total employees
- 28. Estimated total payroll for this location.
\$ _____

29. Historical employment trend:
 Increasing Staying the same Declining

30. Projected number of employees at this facility in one year:

31. Projected number of employees at this facility in three years:

32. How did the number of staff change, if at all, in the last 3 years?

- 1 = Increased
- 2 = Stayed the same
- 3 = Decreased

Staff	1	2	3
Full time:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Part time:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Casual:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

33. How do you expect the number of staff to change, if at all over the next 3 years?

- 1 = Increased
- 2 = Stayed the same
- 3 = Decreased

Staff	1	2	3
Full time:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Part time:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Casual:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34. Is the number of unfilled positions:
 Increasing Stable Decreasing

35. Does the company provide a training budget in order to upgrade employee's skills?
 Yes No

36. Where does the company attract the majority of its workers from?
 Locally Provincially Nationally Internationally

37. Percent of workforce:
 _____ % Skilled/Professional
 _____ % Semi-skilled
 _____ % Entry-level

38. Average hourly wage:
 \$ _____ Skilled/Professional
 \$ _____ Semi-skilled
 \$ _____ Entry-level

39. Describe the wage scale here compared to all other firms locally:
 Greater than Same as Lower than

40. Describe the majority of essential personnel at this location:
 Less than 25 26 - 34 35 - 49 50 or older

41. Do you have problems retaining employees?
 Yes No

Employee retention notes:

42. Is the company experiencing recruitment problems with any employee positions or skills?
 Yes No

If Yes, in which category(s)?

- Administrative/Clerical Advanced Mfg Workers Agriculture/Farming Assembler/Line Workers CDL Drivers Construction/Contractors Electrical/Electronics Food/Beverage Service General Laborer Graphics Arts/Printing Healthcare Professionals Hospitality Service Machine Operators Machinists Maintenance Manufacturing/Other Marketing Material/Fabricators Mechanics Plant Managers / Operators Prof/Info Tech/Programming Professional/Other Professional/Technical Sales/Retail Sales/Service Other None

Other (specify job roles/titles):

43. Do you anticipate future recruiting difficulties i.e. 3-5 year?
 Yes No

If Yes, in what area(s)?

- Administrative/Clerical Advanced Mfg Workers Agriculture/Farming Assembler/Line Workers CDL Drivers Construction/Contractors Electrical/Electronics Food/Beverage Service General Laborer Graphics Arts/Printing Healthcare Professionals Hospitality Service Machine Operators Machinists Maintenance Manufacturing/Other Marketing Material/Fabricators Mechanics Plant Managers/Operators Prof/Info Tech/Programming Professional/Other Professional/Technical Sales/Retail Sales/Service Other None

Other (specify job roles/titles):

44. Union status:
 Yes No Not applicable

45. If Yes, what is the status of labor-management relations?
 Excellent Good Fair Poor

46. Are there any areas of training or professional development that would be of benefit to you or your employees?
 Yes No

If Yes, what are they?

47. When you do attend training/certification, where do you usually access the training?
 Local Regional British Columbia Rest of Canada United States

48. What modes of education/training work best for you?
 Classroom Individual coaching Online/ Webinar training Other _____



49. Are you aware of any anticipated trends, technologies, significant changes that will be occurring in your industry that will require new skills?
 Yes No

50. Workforce notes:

SALES Key: = Select Multiple, = Select One

51. Annual sales at this facility:
 \$ _____ Annual sales private

52. Is the market for your product:
 Increasing Stable Decreasing

53. Is the market share (compared to your competitors) of your company's products:
 Increasing Stable Decreasing

54. What is the projected sales growth in the next year at this facility?
 Greater than or equal to 100% 50 - 99% 25 - 49% 10 - 24% 1 - 9% 0% Declining

55. Historical sales trend:

Please use the following rating scale:
 1 = Increasing; 2 = Staying the same; 3 = Declining; 4 = Not applicable

Historical sales trend	1	2	3	4
At this facility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At the parent company	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Within the industry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

56. Sales trend notes:

57. Percent of total sales generated by top 3 customers:
 76 - 100% 51 - 75% 26 - 50% 10 - 25% 1 - 9%

58. Do you engage in government procurement:
 Yes No

59. Please identify the source of your sales by percentage:
 _____ % Local / Regional
 _____ % Provincial
 _____ % National
 _____ % United States
 _____ % International



60. Please identify the source of your supplies by percentage:

- _____ % Local / Regional
- _____ % Provincial
- _____ % National
- _____ % United States
- _____ % International

61. International trade status:

- Import Export None Not applicable

62. Historical export sales trend:

- Increasing Staying the same Declining Not applicable

63. Sales notes:

FACILITY/EQUIPMENT

Key: = Select Multiple, = Select One

64. What is the square footage of your current facility?
_____ sq/ft

65. Status of facility:

- Owned Leased

If *Leased*, what is the length of term remaining

- <1 Year 1 - 2 Years 3 - 5 Years > 5 Years

66. Are you planning on renewing current lease?

- Yes No

If *No*, why not

67. Facility condition:

Please use the following rating scale:

1 = Excellent; 2 = Good; 3 = Fair; 4 = Poor

Facility condition	1	2	3	4
Condition of facility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Condition of equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

68. Describe the operations at this site:

- One shift Two shifts 24 hours Other

If *Other*, please specify:

69. Historical investment trends:

Please use the following rating scale:
1 = Increasing; 2 = Staying the same; 3 = Declining

Historical investment trends	1	2	3
Over past 18 months in the <i>facility</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Over past 18 months in the <i>equipment</i> at this facility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

70. Is there room for expansion at this site?

Yes No Maybe

71. Are you aware of BC Hydro Power Smart resources that are available to you?

Yes No

72. Does the company plan to expand in the next three years?

Yes No

Will it be in this community?

Yes No

Is your current site adequate for the proposed expansion?

Yes No

\$ _____ Estimated total investment

_____ Approximate percentage equipment/technology

_____ Approximate percentage real estate

_____ Estimated facility size increase (sq/ft)

Estimated timeframe for expansion

< 1 Year 1-3 Years > 3 Years

73. What, if any, are the major constraints on your expansion? (Please check all that are applicable)

Broadband access Energy costs Energy reliability Finance Identifying and accessing new markets
Lack of skilled staff Lack of suitable premises Local regulations e.g. zoning Problems with DAs
Roads Transport/freight Warehousing Other (please specify): _____

74. Have you approached anybody in local/provincial/federal government or business development organizations to discuss your expansion plans?

Yes No

75. If Yes, which have you approached?

BC Hydro BC Ministry responsible for Economic Development Chamber of Commerce Community Futures Local Council Local Economic Development Office Other (please specify): _____

76. Have you factored improvements in energy efficiency in your expansion plans?

Yes No

77. Facility/Equipment notes:

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Key: = Select One

78. Please rate the following:

Please use the following rating scale:
 1 = Excellent 2 = Good 3 = Average 4 = Fair 5 = Poor 6 = N/A

Services	1	2	3	4	5	6
Access to airport facilities:	<input type="radio"/>					
Access to highway/roadway:	<input type="radio"/>					
Access to markets:	<input type="radio"/>					
Access to suppliers:	<input type="radio"/>					
Availability of road transport services:	<input type="radio"/>					
Availability of rail transport:	<input type="radio"/>					
Availability of warehousing:	<input type="radio"/>					
Disposal of waste material:	<input type="radio"/>					
Recycling:	<input type="radio"/>					
Inspections (eg: licensing):	<input type="radio"/>					
Development approval process:	<input type="radio"/>					
Telecommunications (tel, Internet, Cell)	<input type="radio"/>					
Availability of buildings for lease or purchase	<input type="radio"/>					
Availability of appropriately zoned land:	<input type="radio"/>					
Water and sewerage supply:	<input type="radio"/>					
Other (please specify):	<input type="radio"/>					

79. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve any of the services and infrastructure listed above?
 Yes No

If Yes, how?

80. Municipal services notes:

BUSINESS CLIMATE Key: = Select One

81. Please rate the following:

Use the following rating system:
 1 = Excellent
 2 = Good
 3 = Fair
 4 = Poor
 5 = No opinion

	1	2	3	4	5
Workforce quality:	<input type="radio"/>				
Workforce availability:	<input type="radio"/>				
Workforce stability:	<input type="radio"/>				
Local government:	<input type="radio"/>				
Local tax structure:	<input type="radio"/>				
Province tax structure:	<input type="radio"/>				
Workers compensation rates:	<input type="radio"/>				
Economic development:	<input type="radio"/>				
Cultural/Recreational amenities:	<input type="radio"/>				
Housing:	<input type="radio"/>				
K - 12 education:	<input type="radio"/>				
Colleges/Universities:	<input type="radio"/>				
Technical training:	<input type="radio"/>				

82. Notes on business climate rankings:

83. Please rate the local business climate:

Excellent Good Fair Poor

84. What are the community's strengths as a place to do business?

85. What are the community's weaknesses as a place to do business?

86. Are there any barriers to growth in this community?

Yes No

If Yes, what are they?

87. Are there suppliers you think could locate in this region?

Yes No

If Yes, please list:

88. Are there customers that we should attract to this region?

Yes No

If Yes, please list:

89. Please compare the local business climate today versus 5 years ago:

Better today No change Worse today No opinion

If worse today, why?

90. Please forecast the condition of the local business climate 5 years from today:

Will be better No change Will be worse No opinion

91. Business climate notes:

ASSESSMENT

Key: = Select One

92. Rate the following:

Please use the following rating scale:
1 = Excellent; 2 = Good; 3 = Fair; 4 = Poor; 5 = Not applicable

Rate the following	1	2	3	4	5
Facility's overall health	<input type="radio"/>				
Overall health of the parent company	<input type="radio"/>				
Local management's attitude toward the community	<input type="radio"/>				
Parent company's attitude towards the community	<input type="radio"/>				

93. Rate the risk:

Please use the following rating scale:
1 = Low; 2 = Moderate; 3 = High

Rate the risk	1	2	3
Facility closing in the next 1 - 3 years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facility downsizing in the next 1 - 3 years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

94. Are there any local expansion plans in the next 12 - 18 months?

Yes No

95. Assessment notes:

APPENDIX B: DATA TABLES

COMPANY INFORMATION

Industry Classification		
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining	2	1%
Construction	6	4%
Manufacturing	5	3%
Retail and wholesale trade	46	31%
Transportation and Warehousing	1	1%
Finance/insurance	7	5%
Professional, scientific and technical services	19	13%
Information	16	11%
Real estate rental and leasing	6	4%
Health care and social assistance	2	1%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	8	5%
Accommodation and food service	17	11%
Other services	13	9%
Public administration	2	1%
Total	150	100%

Location of Competitors		
Local / regional	119	79%
Elsewhere in BC	10	7%
National	3	2%
International	20	13%
No competition	8	5%
Unique respondents	150	

Business Success Factors		
Lifestyle / family friendly	0	0%
Location / proximity to markets	24	16%
Affordability	14	10%
Workforce	15	10%
Technology / research & development	4	3%
Quality / innovative products	29	20%
Diversity / flexibility / customization	15	10%
Customer service / reputation / referrals	87	59%
Experience / length of time in business	44	30%
Lack of competition / high market demand / customer base	11	7%
Infrastructure / facilities / equipment	1	1%
Proximity to quality supply	3	2%
Other	12	8%
Unique respondents	147	

Life Cycle Stage		
Emerging	4	3%
Growing	82	55%
Maturing (Status Quo)	56	37%
Declining	8	5%
Total	150	100%

Ownership Status		
Public	17	12%
Private	130	88%
Total	147	100%

Type of Business		
Sole Proprietorship	27	18%

Partnership	11	7%
Corporation	95	64%
Limited Liability Partnership	7	5%
Non-Profit	5	3%
Other	4	3%
Total	149	100%

Location of Headquarters		
BC	114	86%
Elsewhere in Canada	15	11%
Elsewhere in world	4	3%
Total	133	100%

Length of Time in Business		
less than 1 year	3	2%
1-4 years	16	11%
5-9 years	14	9%
10-19 years	35	23%
more than 20 years	81	54%
Total	149	100%

Facility Functions		
Distribution	15	10%
Engineering / research & development	7	5%
Headquarters	14	9%
Manufacturing	10	7%
Services	112	75%
Warehousing	13	9%
Other	0	0%
Unique respondents	150	

Another Canadian Location		
Yes	45	34%
No	88	66%
Total	133	100%

Another Global Location		
Yes	20	15%
No	111	85%
Total	131	100%

Ownership & Management Changes		
Ownership change in last 5 years	34	23%
Management change in last 5 years	42	28%
Pending ownership change	32	22%

Impact of Ownership Change		
Negative	4	12%
Positive	26	76%
Neutral	4	12%
Total	34	100%

Impact of Management Change		
Negative	2	5%
Positive	35	83%
Neutral	5	12%
Total	42	100%

Anticipated Exit Strategy		
Family sale / transfer	7	26%
Non-family sale / transfer	11	41%
Another company sale / transfer	5	19%
Close business	0	0%
Other	4	15%
Total	27	100%

Ownership Change Timeline		
1 year or less	7	23%
2 years	9	30%
3 years or more	14	47%
Total	30	100%

Participant Age		
44 years & under	15	10%
45-49 years	13	9%
50-54 years	19	13%
55-59 years	9	6%
60-65 years	7	5%
Over 65 years	0	0%
Total	150	100%

Successor Identified		
Yes	32	23%
No	109	77%
Total	141	100%

Formal Succession Plan		
Yes	32	21%
No	106	71%

N/A	12	8%
Total	150	100%

Current Business Plan		
Yes	72	49%
No	75	51%
Total	147	100%

LOCAL WORKFORCE

Number of Full-Time Employees		
Less than 5	86	57%
5-9	35	23%
10-19	10	7%
20-49	11	7%
50-99	4	3%
Over 100	4	3%
Total	150	100%

Number of Part-Time Employees		
None	43	29%
10 or less	92	61%
More than 10	15	10%
Total	150	100%

Number of Temporary Employees		
None	127	85%
10 or less	17	11%
More than 10	6	4%
Total	150	1

Total Number of Employees		
Less than 5	53	35%
5-9	52	35%
10-19	19	13%
20-49	13	9%
50-99	7	5%
Over 100	6	4%
Total	150	100%

Estimated Payroll		
Under \$100,000	3	50%
\$100,000 to \$249,999	0	0%
\$250,000 to \$499,999	0	0%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	0	0%
\$1,000,000 to \$4,999,999	3	50%
Over \$5,000,000	0	0%
Total	6	100%

Employment Trend Over Last 10 Years		
Decreasing	22	15%
Staying the Same	62	42%
Increasing	63	43%
Total	147	100%

Projected Employees in One Year		
0 or No Answer	5	3%
Less than 5	44	29%
5-9	51	34%
10-19	24	16%
20-49	13	9%

50-99	6	4%
100 and over	7	5%
Total	150	100%

Projected Employees in Three Years		
0 or No Answer	5	3%
Less than 5	36	24%
5-9	49	33%
10-19	33	22%
20-49	12	8%
50-99	7	5%
100 and over	8	5%
Total	150	100%

Full-Time Employment Trend Over Last 3 Years		
Decreasing	18	12%
Staying the Same	80	54%
Increasing	49	33%
Total	147	100%

Part-Time Employment Trend Over Last 3 Years		
Decreasing	17	13%
Staying the Same	71	55%
Increasing	40	31%
Total	128	100%

Temporary Employment Trend Over Last 3 Years		
Decreasing	8	13%
Staying the Same	47	75%
Increasing	8	13%
Total	63	100%

Full-Time Employment Trend Over Next 3 Years		
Decreasing	5	3%
Staying the Same	72	49%
Increasing	69	47%
Total	146	100%

Part-Time Employment Trend Over Next 3 Years		
Decreasing	9	7%
Staying the Same	75	58%
Increasing	45	35%
Total	129	100%

Temporary Employment Trend Over Next 3 Years		
Decreasing	2	3%
Staying the Same	48	80%
Increasing	10	17%
Total	60	100%

Trend in Unfilled Positions		
Decreasing	6	4%
Staying the Same	117	80%
Increasing	24	16%
Total	147	100%

Training Budget		
Yes	90	63%
No	53	37%
Total	143	100%

Location of Workforce Recruitment		
Local	134	91%
Provincial	10	7%
National	3	2%
International	1	1%
Total	148	100%

Skilled / Professional Employees as % of Workforce		
0%	33	22%
less than 25%	14	9%
25 to 49%	21	14%
50 to 74%	25	17%
75 to 100%	57	38%
Total	150	100%

Semi-Skilled Employees as % of Workforce		
0%	54	36%
less than 25%	28	19%
25 to 49%	19	13%
50 to 74%	30	20%
75 to 100%	19	13%
Total	150	100%

Entry-Level Employees as % of Workforce		
0%	91	61%

less than 25%	23	15%
25 to 49%	14	9%
50 to 74%	9	6%
75 to 100%	13	9%
Total	150	100%

Skilled / Professionals Average Wage		
0 or No Answer	52	55%
under \$20	10	11%
\$20 to \$29	21	22%
\$30 to \$49	10	11%
\$50 or more	2	2%
Total	95	100%

Semi-Skilled Average Wage		
0 or No Answer	66	58%
under \$20	34	30%
\$20 to \$29	12	11%
\$30 to \$49	2	2%
\$50 or more	0	0%
Total	114	100%

Entry-Level Average Wage		
0 or No Answer	91	75%
\$10 to \$12	22	18%
\$13 to \$15	2	2%
\$16 to \$20	4	3%
\$21 to \$25	3	2%
Total	122	100%

Wage in Relation to Other Businesses in Region		
Less than	6	4%
Same	84	63%
Greater than	44	33%
Total	134	100%

Age of Essential Employees		
Less than 25 years	17	12%
26 to 34 years	27	19%
35 to 49 years	74	51%
50 years or older	27	19%
Total	145	100%

Recruitment Challenges		
Yes	75	50%
No	74	50%
Total	149	100%

Retention Challenges		
Yes	44	30%
No	101	70%
Total	145	100%

Current Recruitment Areas	
Administration / clerical	8
Advanced manufacturing workers	1
Agriculture / farming	0
Assembler / line workers	0
CDL drivers	1
Construction / contractors	1

Electrical / electronics	2
Food / beverage service	6
General labourer	3
Graphic arts / printing	2
Healthcare professionals	2
Hospitality service	7
Machine operators	1
Machinists	1
Maintenance	3
Manufacturing other	2
Marketing	0
Material / fabricators	4
Mechanics	13
Plant managers / operators	3
Professionals / information techs / programming	6
Professional other	16
Professional / technical	3
Sales / retail	12
Sales / service	14
Engineers	3
Other	12
Hairdressers / Stylists	6
Total	132

Responses to Other and Professional / Other for Current Recruitment Areas
Chemist
Social Worker
Insurance Broker
Manager/Project Manager
Drafter

Journalist
 Chief Financial Officer
 Housekeeper
 Autobody Repair Person
 Realtor
 Skilled Trades Worker
 Welder
 Interior Designer

Future Recruitment Areas	
Administration / clerical	8
Advanced manufacturing workers	2
Agriculture / farming	0
Assembler / line workers	0
CDL drivers	1
Construction / contractors	1
Electrical / electronics	5
Food / beverage service	6
General labourer	3
Graphic arts / printing	2
Healthcare professionals	1
Hospitality service	4
Machine operators	1
Machinists	4
Maintenance	3
Manufacturing other	0
Marketing	1
Material / fabricators	3
Mechanics	16
Plant managers / operators	4

Professionals / information techs / programming	5
Professional other	14
Sales / retail	5
Sales / service	15
Engineers	4
Other	17
Hairdressers / Stylists	3
Total	81

Responses to Other and Professional Other for Future Recruitment Areas
Autobody repair worker
Funeral services worker
Commercial realtor
Skilled trades workers
Commercial lender
Insurance broker
Interior designer
Certified accountant
Manager/Project Manager
Journalist
Pharmacist
Housekeeper

Union Status		
Yes	13	9%
No	133	91%
Total	146	100%

Status of Labour Relations		
Excellent	3	21%

Good	11	79%
Fair	0	0%
Poor	0	0%
Total	14	100%

Professional Development Needs		
Administrative / Computer Skills	3	4%
Technology Skills	9	12%
Trades	3	4%
Equipment Operators	2	3%
Retail / Hospitality / Customer Service	16	22%
First Aid / WHMIS / Food Safe	5	7%
Workplace Safety	0	0%
Business / Management	15	21%
Operations / Processes	5	7%
Marketing / Sales	14	19%
Other	10	14%
Unique Respondents	73	

Usual Training Locations		
Local	60	44%
Regional	20	15%
Provincial	66	49%
National	19	14%
United States	12	9%
Unique Respondents	135	

Preferred Training Mechanisms		
Classroom / Seminars	57	41%
Individual Coaching	31	22%

Online / Webinar Training	52	38%
Trade Shows / Conferences	2	1%
Other	3	2%
Unique Respondents	138	

SALES

Annual Sales		
Under \$100,000	5	3%
\$100,000 to \$499,999	27	18%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	17	11%
\$1million to \$4.99 million	15	10%
over \$5 million	12	8%
Confidential	74	49%
Total	150	100%

Status of Market		
Decreasing	10	7%
Stable	58	39%
Increasing	81	54%
Total	149	100%

Market Share in Comparison to Competitors		
Decreasing	6	4%
Stable	69	49%
Increasing	67	47%
Total	142	100%

Projected Sales Growth in Upcoming Year		
declining	3	2%
0%	13	9%

1-9%	59	41%
10-24%	47	33%
25-49%	10	7%
50-99%	7	5%
100% or more	5	3%
Total	144	100%

Historical Sales Trend (at this Location)		
Decreasing	23	16%
Stable	15	10%
Increasing	110	74%
Total	148	100%

Historical Sales Trend (at the Parent Company)		
Decreasing	4	3%
Stable	5	4%
Increasing	35	29%
Not Applicable	78	64%
Total	122	100%

Historical Sales Trend (within the Industry)		
Decreasing	26	20%
Stable	29	23%
Increasing	59	46%
Not Applicable	13	10%
Total	127	100%

Sales Generated by Top 3 Customers		
1-9%	82	58%
10-25%	22	16%
26-50%	16	11%

51-75%	8	6%
76-100%	13	9%
Total	141	100%

Participation in Government Procurement		
Yes	36	25%
No	110	75%
Total	146	100%

Source of Sales (Local/Regional)		
0% or no answer	18	12%
under 50%	6	4%
50-99%	51	34%
100%	75	50%
Total	150	100%

Source of Sales (Provincial)		
0% or no answer	92	61%
under 50%	49	33%
50-99%	7	5%
100%	2	1%
Total	150	100%

Source of Sales (National)		
0% or no answer	124	83%
under 50%	25	17%
50-99%	0	0%
100%	1	1%
Total	150	100%

Source of Sales (United States)		
0% or no answer	126	84%
under 50%	21	14%
50-99%	3	2%
100%	0	0%
Total	150	100%

Source of Sales (International)		
0% or no answer	132	88%
under 50%	14	9%
50-99%	4	3%
100%	0	0%
Total	150	100%

Source of Supplies (Local/Regional)		
0% or no answer	68	45%
under 50%	33	22%
50-99%	30	20%
100%	19	13%
Total	150	100%

Source of Supplies (Provincial)		
0% or no answer	68	45%
under 50%	41	27%
50-99%	30	20%
100%	11	7%
Total	150	100%

Source of Supplies (National)		
0% or no answer	88	59%
under 50%	33	22%

50-99%	22	15%
100%	7	5%
Total	150	100%

Source of Supplies (United States)		
0% or no answer	109	73%
under 50%	27	18%
50-99%	10	7%
100%	4	3%
Total	150	100%

Source of Supplies (International)		
0% or no answer	134	89%
under 50%	5	3%
50-99%	8	5%
100%	3	2%
Total	150	100%

International Trade Status		
Import	15	10%
Export	11	7%
None of Not Applicable	127	85%
Unique Respondents	150	

Historical Export Sales Trend		
Declining	4	3%
Staying the Same	2	1%
Increasing	9	6%
Not Applicable	135	90%
Total	150	100%

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Facility Size		
less than 1000 sq ft	22	16%
1000-4999 sq ft	67	49%
5000-9999 sq ft	23	17%
10,000-19,999 sq ft	10	7%
20,000 sq ft or more	14	10%
Total	136	100%

Ownership Status		
Leased	69	47%
Owned	79	53%
Total	148	100%

Length of Time Remaining on Lease		
Less than 1 yr	24	38%
1-2 yrs	18	29%
3-5 yrs	13	21%
More than 5 yrs	8	13%
Total	63	100%

Lease Renewal Planned		
No	8	11%
Yes	65	89%
Total	73	100%

Condition of Facility		
Excellent	50	34%
Good	65	44%
Fair	31	21%
Poor	2	1%
Total	148	100%

Condition of Equipment		
Excellent	59	40%
Good	76	52%
Fair	12	8%
Poor	0	0%
Total	147	100%

Number of Shifts		
One shift	110	77%
Two shifts	24	17%
24 hours	8	6%
Total	142	100%

Investment in Facility (Past 18 months)		
Increasing	69	48%
Staying the same	66	46%
Decreasing	10	7%
Total	145	100%

Investment in Equipment (Past 18 months)		
Increasing	67	48%
Staying the same	65	47%
Decreasing	7	5%
Total	139	100%

Room for Expansion		
Yes	38	55%
No	23	33%
Maybe	8	12%
Total	69	100%

Awareness of BC Hydro Power Smart		
Yes	111	76%
No	35	24%
Total	146	100%

Expansion Plans		
Yes	52	36%
No	91	64%
Total	143	100%

Expansion Within Community		
Yes	41	84%
No	8	16%
Total	49	100%

Adequacy of Current Site for Expansion		
Yes	30	65%
No	16	35%
Total	46	100%

Total Investment in Expansion		
Less than \$25,000	4	12%
\$25,000-\$99,999	7	21%
\$100,000-\$499,999	8	24%
\$500,000-\$999,999	3	9%
\$1-\$4.9 million	7	21%
\$5-\$9.9 million	0	0%
\$10-19.9 million	1	3%
\$20 million and over	3	9%
Total	33	100%

Expansion Budget for Equipment & Technology		
0%	7	19%
under 50%	14	38%
50 to 99%	11	30%
100%	5	14%
Total	37	100%

Expansion Budget for Real Estate		
0%	9	25%
under 50%	4	11%
50 to 99%	17	47%
100%	6	17%
Total	36	100%

Size of Facility Expansion		
less than 1000 sq ft	6	24%
1000-4999 sq ft	11	44%
5000-9999 sq ft	5	20%
10,000-19,999 sq ft	1	4%

20,000 sq ft or more	2	8%
Total	25	100%

Time frame for Expansion		
Less than 1 yr	6	14%
1-3 yrs	26	59%
More than 3 yrs	12	27%
Total	44	100%

Barriers to Expansion		
Broadband access	8	15%
Energy reliability	0	0%
Identifying & accessing new markets	10	18%
Lack of suitable premises	15	27%
Problems with development approvals	5	9%
Transport / freight	3	5%
Energy costs	1	2%
Financing	13	24%
Lack of skilled staff	15	27%
Local regulations (eg. zoning)	4	7%
Roads	0	0%
Warehousing	2	4%
Other	0	0%
Unique Respondents	55	

Expansion Assistance from Support Organization		
Hydro Provider	4	20%
Chamber of Commerce	1	5%
Local Government	7	35%
Provincial Government	3	15%

Federal Government	1	5%
Community Futures	6	30%
Economic Development Office	7	35%
Basin Business Advisors / Columbia Basin Trust	0	0%
Innovation Council (KAST, KRIC)	1	5%
Business Development Bank of Canada	0	0%
Banks	1	5%
Investors	0	0%
Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust	0	0%
College	0	0%
Other	3	15%
Unique Respondents	20	

Energy Efficiency Considerations in Expansion Plans		
No	34	60%
Yes	23	40%
Total	57	100%

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Government Services						
	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable
Access to airport facilities	36	64	21	11	7	11
Access to highways / roadways	40	76	12	3	3	16
Access to markets	20	48	21	12	6	43
Access to suppliers	14	55	26	23	9	23
Availability of road transport services	11	63	25	9	6	36
Availability of rail transport services	3	4	6	3	4	130
Availability of warehousing	4	11	6	6	7	116
Disposal of waste material	14	55	19	4	8	50

Recycling	23	59	20	8	6	34
Inspections (e.g. licensing)	13	67	19	5	8	38
Development approval process	4	35	7	3	11	90
Telecommunications (tel, internet, cell)	16	58	42	18	10	6
Availability of buildings for lease or purchase	7	29	14	5	12	83
Availability of appropriately zoned land	4	30	11	7	8	90
Water and sewerage supply	16	71	11	4	6	42

BUSINESS CLIMATE

Business Climate Factors					
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable / No Answer
Workforce Quality	20	70	42	14	4
Workforce Availability	13	49	45	37	6
Workforce Stability	19	64	40	19	8
Local Government	7	45	65	15	18
Local Tax Structure	4	37	56	27	26
Provincial Tax Structure	2	28	75	27	18
Workers Compensation Rates	4	42	66	11	27
Economic Development	5	42	66	11	26
Cultural / Recreational Amenities	49	61	25	6	9
Housing	8	59	61	12	10
K-12 Education	16	90	21	7	16
Colleges / Universities	2	94	28	9	17
Technical Training	5	47	37	32	29
Overall Business Climate	5	71	55	15	4

Business Climate Today vs 5 Years Ago		
Better Today	42	28%
No Change	41	27%

Worse Today	56	37%
No Opinion	11	7%
Total	150	100%

Business Climate 5 Years from Today		
Will be Better	95	63%
No Change	28	19%
Will be Worse	11	7%
No Opinion	16	11%
Total	150	100%

Barriers to Growth in Community		
Yes	121	82%
No	27	18%
Total	148	100%

Important to Attract Suppliers		
Yes	44	30%
No	101	70%
Total	145	100%

Important to Attract Customers		
Yes	94	65%
No	51	35%
Total	145	100%

ASSESSMENT AND PLANS

Company's Overall Health		
Excellent	33	22%

Good	97	66%
Fair	16	11%
Poor	2	1%
Total	148	100%

Parent Company's Overall Health		
Excellent	27	18%
Good	19	13%
Fair	5	3%
Poor	0	0%
Not Applicable	97	66%
Total	148	100%

Local Management's Attitude Toward Community		
Excellent	65	44%
Good	58	39%
Fair	19	13%
Poor	0	0%
Not Applicable	7	5%
Total	149	100%

Parent Company's Attitude Toward Community		
Excellent	15	11%
Good	20	14%
Fair	9	6%
Poor	3	2%
Not Applicable	95	67%
Total	142	100%

Risk of Facility Closing		
High	1	1%
Moderate	8	5%
Low	139	94%
Total	148	100%

Risk of Facility Downsizing		
High	1	1%
Moderate	7	5%
Low	139	95%
Total	147	100%

Plans for Expansion in Next 18 Months		
Yes	33	23%
No	113	77%
Total	146	100%

ISSUES OF REGIONAL INTEREST

Critical Considerations for Employees		
Housing	37	29%
Transportation	20	16%
Childcare	27	21%
Cost of Living	81	63%
Other	43	33%
Unique respondents	129	

Responses to Other for Critical Considerations for Employees	
Lifestyle	11
Time off/flexibility	8

Wages/benefits	8
Workplace culture	4
Job security/stability	3
Healthcare	2
Internet/cell connectivity	2

Location of 50% of More of Workforce		
Within Community	135	90%
Within Region	13	9%
Out of Region	1	1%
Total	149	100%

Reason for Out of Area Purchasing		
Product not available here	98	84%
Unaware of local vendors	0	0%
Higher costs locally	25	22%
Quality of available products	4	3%
No control/head office decision	8	7%
Relationship with current supplier	9	8%
Other	5	4%
Unique Respondents	116	

Business Competitiveness Factors					
	Not applicable	Not important at all	Not very important	Somewhat important	Very important
New product research and development	29	4	16	43	58
Market development locally	21	6	13	45	65
Market development outside of region	28	12	36	46	28
Access to exporting and international markets	80	21	27	11	11
Add or change in business, products or services	20	6	14	56	54

Strategic alliances	29	6	21	48	46
Improving worker productivity	10	5	11	52	72
Expansion of workforce employees	15	8	29	55	43
Workplace health and safety	15	4	11	39	81
Workforce skill development	9	2	9	37	93
Energy costs	25	6	27	42	50
Water/sewer availability	45	6	17	23	59
Water/sewer costs	49	5	21	31	44
Reliable air transportation	29	11	32	33	45
Affordable shipping/freight	29	5	14	25	77
Improvement of customer services	7	0	7	29	107
Availability of telecommunications infrastructure and services	10	3	9	29	99
Exchange rate for Canadian dollar	26	6	32	30	56
Accessing capital	29	15	33	35	38
Improved business management	22	7	15	45	61

Economic Drivers with Potential for Future Development		
Forestry	13	9%
Manufacturing	53	36%
Education	12	8%
Tourism	75	51%
Technology-based businesses	58	40%
Arts, culture & creative businesses	7	5%
Health & wellness	50	34%
Relocation of people from urban centres	58	40%
Government	0	0%
Green / environmental businesses	24	16%
Finance	1	1%
Construction	36	25%

Other niche service businesses	20	14%
Agriculture	2	1%
Mining	17	12%
Unique respondents	146	

Preferred Future Economic Development Drivers		
Forestry	11	10%
Manufacturing	47	41%
Education	7	6%
Tourism	53	46%
Technology-based businesses	42	37%
Arts, culture & creative businesses	3	3%
Health & wellness	39	34%
Relocation of people from urban centres	51	45%
Government	0	0%
Green / environmental businesses	18	16%
Finance	1	1%
Construction	30	26%
Other niche service businesses	15	13%
Agriculture	2	2%
Mining	0	0%
Unique respondents	114	

Productivity Drivers					
	N/A	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Leadership & management capacity	18	0	12	85	35
Productive workplace culture	19	0	7	94	30
Innovation & the use of technology	29	0	26	63	32
Investing in people & skills	26	1	26	62	35
Organizing work (structures & processes)	30	1	24	70	25

Networking & collaboration with other businesses	36	9	28	60	17
Measuring impact of productivity efforts / investments	41	3	32	54	20