

COVID-19 & THE LOCAL ECONOMY:

RESULTS FROM THE LOCAL BUSINESS RESILIENCE SURVEY

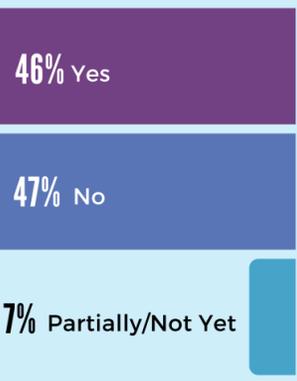
600+ Calls made **300+** Businesses reached

This survey was conducted by phone prior to April 1 and the results have been used by local business leaders to determine gaps in services and to understand how to advocate and support our business community.



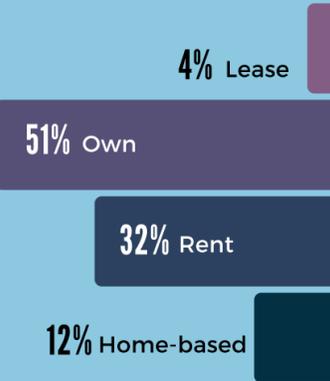
1 Have you closed due to the pandemic?

COVID-19 impacts were swift and strong. Almost half of respondents had closed their businesses, however, almost half the businesses remained open.



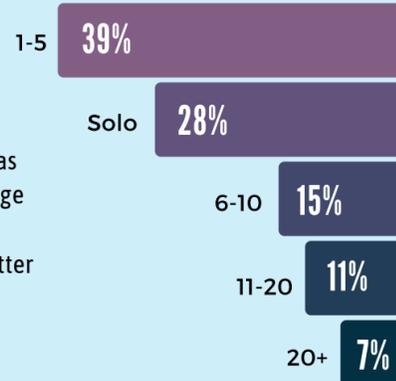
2 Do you own or rent your building?

Most businesses are unlikely to be at immediate risk from rental pressures. New, flexible programs from banks and credit unions such as payment deferrals and restructuring may assist mortgage holders. 1% responded "N/A".



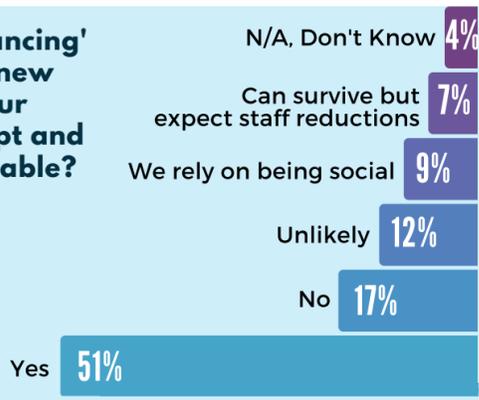
3 How many employees do you have?

Two thirds had <5 employees and as such are likely eligible for new wage subsidy programs. Compared to larger businesses, they may be better positioned to adapt sooner to changing conditions, and retain more employees.



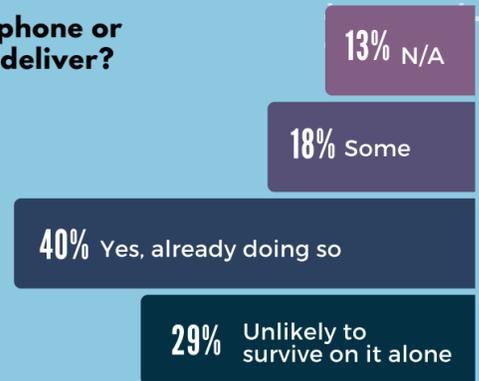
4 If 'social distancing' becomes the new norm, can your business adapt and remain profitable?

Adaptability is key to resiliency. 58% are confident they can adjust, but many businesses are concerned.



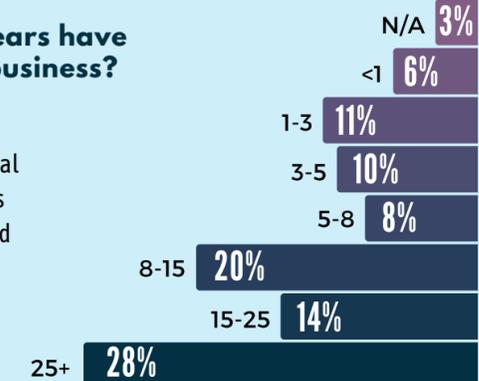
5 Can you take phone or web orders & deliver?

Physical distancing measures require businesses to adapt to meet the needs of home-based clients. 40% already offer remote sales and delivery. 29% said they cannot adjust.



6 How many years have you been in business?

70% have operated for 5+ years, 61% for 8+ years. Local business owners/operators are strong, determined, and capable of adjusting to various economic challenges over time.



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How many employees were or are expected to be released?

39% have laid off all or most of their employees. The 20% "N/A" may represent sole proprietorships.



8

Can you restart once the pandemic ends?

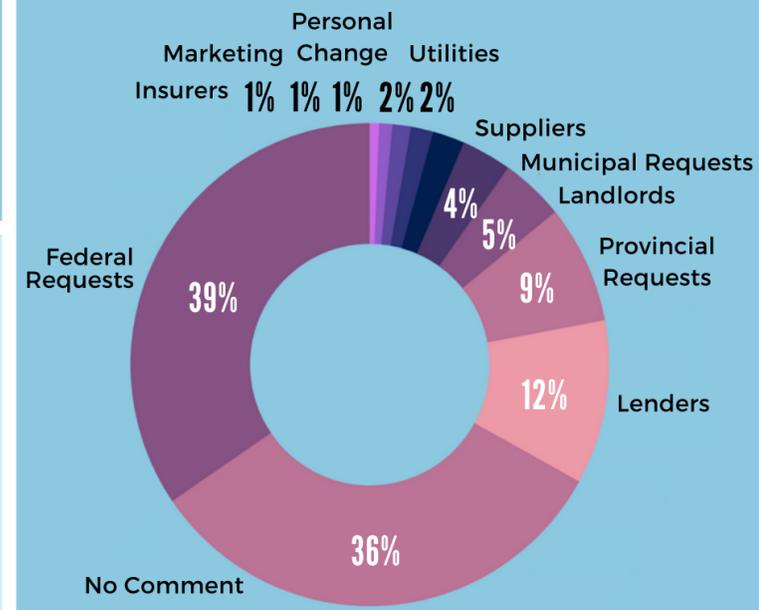
79% of businesses are confident they can restart post-pandemic. This figure may speak to the determination, resilience, and attitudes of local business owners.



9

What government tax/policy initiative would help your business the most?

Businesses were seeking concessions in areas other than government.



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Our world changed in a matter of days and while most of the focus has been on physical distancing, staying home and flattening the curve, the resulting economic fallout has hit hard, coming as it did on the heels of a fishing curtailment last summer, a prolonged forest industry strike just resolved and an interruption in Catalyst's business. Many of us have now settled into "the new normal" but our small business owners are stuck in a place of limbo wondering if their life's dream can survive this latest crisis.

Since COVID-19 hit the mainstream, we've heard stories of businesses being shuttered and employees being laid off. To better assess the landscape, the Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures Alberni-Clayoquot, the Port Alberni Port Authority and the City of Port Alberni, joined together to contact the business community, ensure they knew of the supports in place for them, ask a number of questions to determine gaps in business assistance programs and to lay the foundation for a recovery, resilience and pivot strategy.

As a local business owner, I know personally how difficult it is to have to close your doors, lay off staff, and try to set a path forward when the world is standing still. These are unprecedented times, and there are no guaranteed outcomes. We are all learning as we go. One thing I do know, the one thing that has stood the test of time in our community is our resolve to rise above adversity. We are a strong community and we are made stronger through our kindness and ability to adapt as a collective.

I also know that your Council and many other organizations are working hard to protect the well-being of this community. We may not know the future but we do know that in this City of over 17,000 people, we have support all around us. By working together, we will forge a better path forward and see Port Alberni thrive as a beautiful Vancouver Island waterfront community for centuries to come.

Sharie Minions, Mayor

LOCAL SUPPORT

- City of Port Alberni**
COVID-19 Response webpage
letsconnectpa.ca/COVID-19
- Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce**
E-newsletter and ongoing advocacy.
albernichamber.ca
- Community Futures**
Emergency Loan Fund: Max \$20,000.
Simple online application: cfac.ca/loans
- Community Futures**
No-charge business consulting with an experienced emergency recovery specialist:
[250-724-1241 or info@cfac.ca](mailto:info@cfac.ca)

ADDITIONAL WEBLINKS

- Small Business BC**
smallbusinessbc.ca
- Canadian Business Resilience Network**
canadianbusinessresiliencenetwork.ca