

LANARK COUNTY

Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) Project



LANARK COUNTY



Ontario



With the support of the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

Avec l'appui du gouvernement du Canada à travers l'Agence fédérale de développement économique pour le Sud de l'Ontario.

Canada



Beckwith Township, Carleton Place, Drummond North Elmsley, Lanark County, Lanark Highlands Township, Mississippi Mills, Montague Township, Perth, Smiths Falls, Tay Valley Township, Valley Heartland Community Futures

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Lanark County and Valley Heartland are committed to Economic Development and supporting our local business owners. This collaboration continues to be an effective partnership that leverages the strengths of each partner and is driving economic development activities county-wide.

Our partnership has set the foundation for implementation of the Lanark County BR+E Project identified as a priority action during the development of the Lanark County Economic Development Strategic Plan 2018 – 2020

For their contributions and insight into this report, we would like to thank:

- The 30+ project team members and the 75 volunteers who committed their time and support to the Lanark County Business Community.
- And, most importantly, the 134 businesses from across Lanark County who welcomed volunteers gave generously of their time.
- **see page 29 for a full list of project partners**

This project was made possible with funding from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

Executive Summary:

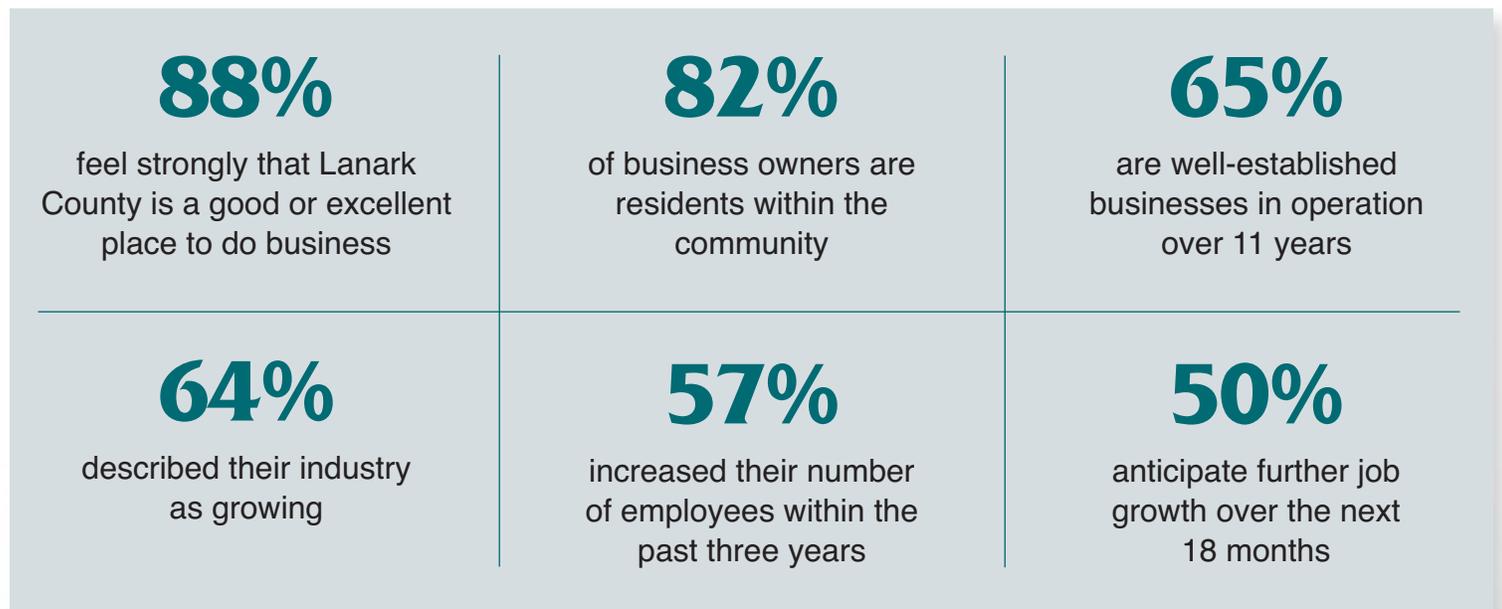


In June of 2018 Lanark County, in partnership with Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporation, launched a year-long Business Retention + Expansion (BR+E) project; a key priority identified in the county's most recent Economic Development Strategic Plan.

At a high level, BR+E is a community based, action-oriented and volunteer-driven way of reaching out to the business community, by surveying entrepreneurs and business owners to get a sense of their issues, priorities, and needs, to address immediate concerns, and to develop evidence-based action plans and future economic development activities. In practice, it further strengthens the connections with local businesses and collaboration among community stakeholders and all tiers of municipal government. All municipalities across the county were actively involved in the project and took on responsibilities in their respective communities by recruiting volunteers and businesses.

In total, 134 businesses were interviewed using the primary survey. A smaller sampling of 79 sector-specific surveys in Agriculture (11), Manufacturing (17), Retail (21), Healthcare (13), and Tourism (17) has resulted in a unique-to-Lanark County dataset as determined by a statistically significant number of businesses inclusive of all sectors and municipalities in Lanark County.

The compiled results provided many positive insights to build on. Of the respondents:



Other insights of note included:

- Interest in countywide networking opportunities
- Continued mindfulness of business owners' time
- More promotion and awareness of services and resources available
- Less duplication of business services and resources within the county



The Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) Project Team

With the completion of an in-depth analysis of all the data, three common themes emerged:

Workforce Development

Many businesses reported challenges attracting qualified workers and limited availability of skilled workers. However, the stability and retention of employees were felt to be more positive. Ongoing training was a critical factor in maintaining a strong quality of the workforce. Over half of businesses surveyed do not currently take part in co-op, internship, or apprenticeship programs. Businesses noted emerging skills over the next 1 – 5 years as problem-solving, leadership, continuous learning, responsibility, and people skills.

Business Engagement

Businesses indicated that networking and relationship-building, business to business (B2B) activities, and connecting with business service providers were essential factors to their success. A variety of services and activities were identified as being necessary to supporting businesses through business engagement, including the following; workforce planning, workshops, and seminars, County Wide training, and marketing, access to capital, referrals, and contacts.

Business Friendly

Survey respondents were impressed with Lanark County as a place to do business. The highest ratings came from the quality of life provided in Lanark County and the availability of health and medical services. There were several areas identified for improving and developing action plans, including educating the community on the value and benefit of buying local, better communication between business service providers, and to creating an environment that makes it easy for a business to find and use resources.

Top 5 Actions to address Business Engagement – As voted on by Businesses

1

Make Information easily available & meaningful

2

Create county wide opportunities for business to business networking

3

Improve collaboration and reduce duplication of services among business support providers

4

Centralized information and resources for business

5

Chambers & BIA's investigate joint buying & marketing campaigns

101 of 134 businesses interviewed are members of business organizations, 84 of the 101 are members of their local Chamber of Commerce.

107 businesses voted that business networking & relationship building was the most valued service provided.

Top 5 Actions to address Business Workforce – As voted on by Businesses

1

Collaboration with Ottawa universities & colleges to attract grads to rural jobs

2

Create more awareness of financial incentives for employee development

3

Employers to collaborate with local high schools to raise awareness of local career opportunities

4

Find opportunities for paid internships or co-op students

5

Access to local training

1/2 Over half of the businesses surveyed do not currently take part in co-op, internship or apprenticeship programs.

86 of 134 businesses indicated that their business would be expanding in the next 18 months, of those 86 businesses, 75 noted an increase in the workforce with a combined total of 619 new jobs.

Top 5 Actions to address Business Engagement – As voted on by Businesses

1

"buy local" continue to promote the concept of how spending dollars in a local community enhance the economic climate

2

Conduct information session about what people get for their taxes and what can be eliminated if new items are added

3

Increase awareness of businesses in municipal employees so that they better understand their needs

4

Central county location for available space or land./promote property owners. Promote underutilized land

5

Joint marketing opportunities for attracting customers to commercial areas

Survey respondents were impressed with Lanark County as a place to do business. The highest ratings came from the quality of life provided to them in Lanark County and the availability of health and medical services

Businesses are most interested in working co-operatively with other businesses in the community to pursue:
1. Joint marketing. 2. Joint training. 3. Joint Product purchasing. 4. Networking & Information sharing

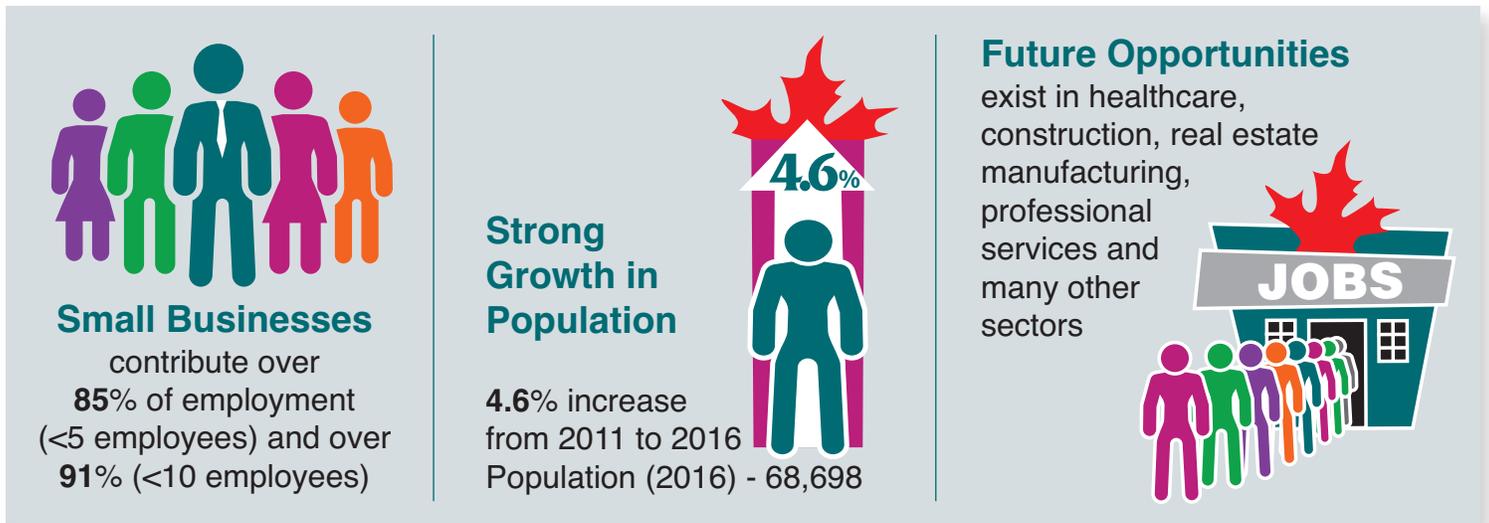
Introduction and Background



Small and medium-sized businesses are fundamental in Lanark County, and growth opportunities exist in critical sectors, including healthcare, construction, real estate, manufacturing, professional services, retail, agriculture, accommodation, and food services.

Our high quality of life and our social and economic values, along with our natural environments, are strong. These factors, combined with our community approach, provides a solid foundation for residential, entrepreneurial, business, and job growth throughout the county.

Lanark County Economy - highlights (2016 Census)



Lanark County has over 6,000 businesses from a variety of sectors (2016 EMSI Data).



Lanark County businesses also provide over 25,000 jobs (2016 EMSI Data) in the region





Why undertake a BR+E project?

Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) is built on the idea that the majority of new jobs in a community come from existing businesses and that those businesses need to be nurtured and supported.

**Small Businesses
in Lanark County
contributes to:**



85%
of employment
(<5 employees)

&

91%
of employment
(<10 employees)

A BR+E Project builds partnerships and relationships (network)

With over 30 project partners involved, including the many business and service providers, municipalities, educators, Chambers, BIA's, community groups and partners, and over 75 volunteers, the BR+E project is truly a community based, volunteer-driven project.

These current and newly forged partnerships and relationships will continue to be integral to the success of the project as it moves into the implementation of the BR+E Action Plan.

How does it work

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) developed the BR+E model back in the late 1990s, which includes a manual, survey templates, database management system, and support & facilitation by OMAFRA and our Rural Economic Development Advisor. This model has resulted in 170 projects over the last ten years across Ontario.

BR+E Activities include;



Short Term goals of BR+E

Help Lanark County Economic Development better understand business needs and priorities, and strengthen relationships with business

Connect business to resources and support programs available

Identify and address immediate business concerns and issues

Collect business and market data through the survey to create an Action Plan

Long Term Goals of BR+E

Create an environment that allows a business to thrive and grow

Build capacity between County, Municipalities, and organizations

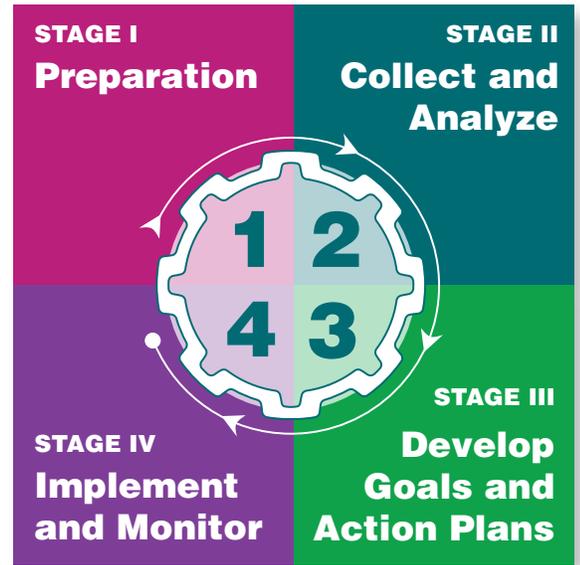
Utilize evidence-based data and planning strategies that respond directly to what business needs for longer-term planning

Stages and Timelines

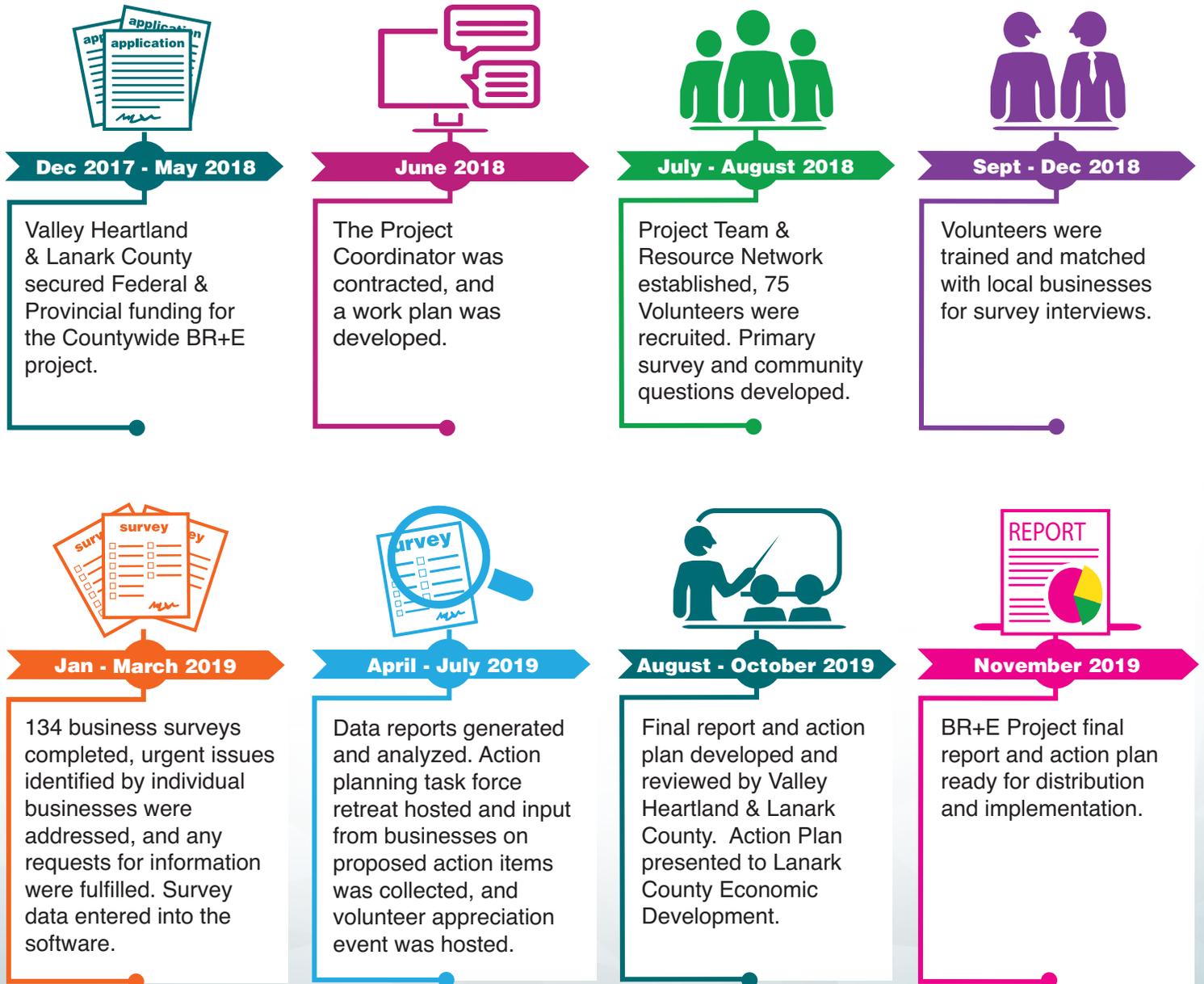
The 2019 BR+E Project provided a unique-to-Lanark County dataset from surveys conducted with a statistically significant number of businesses across Lanark County.

The Lanark County Business Retention + Expansion (BR+E) is a structured, action-oriented, community based, and volunteer-driven approach to business and community economic development. It is a multi-stakeholder process that builds the commitment needed from a variety of partners and organizations to develop and implement a variety of action plans.

The following are the timelines and activities that occurred over the last year to deliver the BR+E project;



There are four (4) stages to the BR+E Project





1. BUILDING OUR TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS:

Volunteers included municipal representatives, business support organizations, educators, entrepreneurs, professionals, and community residents from all nine municipalities. Politicians were not part of the volunteer team; instead, their role was to act as ambassadors for the BR+E project in their communities.

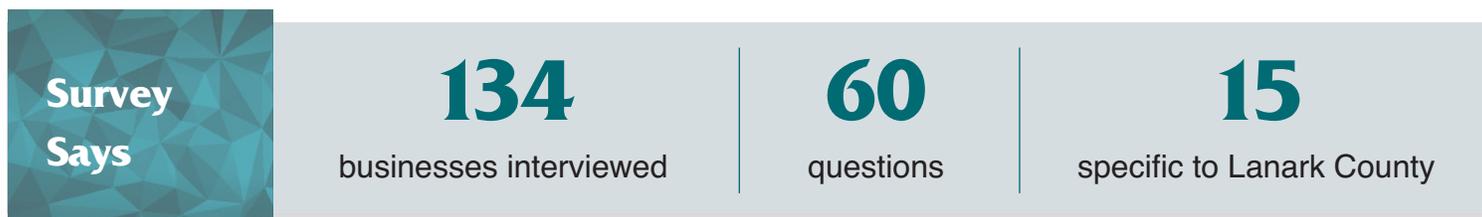
2. BUILDING THE PROJECT TEAM AND RESOURCE NETWORK:

The Lanark County BR+ Project Team and Resource Network were responsible for a variety of roles including, communication, recruitment, business visitation, and data analysis. Made up of members from all lower-tier Municipalities, business support providers, industry leaders, and economic development professionals, they all volunteered in support of the business community. A full list of the Project Team and resource network members can be found on page 29.

3. SAMPLE SIZE OF BUSINESSES – STRATIFIED SURVEY:

Based on the number of businesses located in Lanark County, a minimum of 115 businesses were required to participate in the survey to ensure a statistically significant sampling that would reflect the overall opinions of the business community. The number of surveys per lower-tier municipality was calculated based on a ratio of businesses in that municipality versus businesses in Lanark County. OMAFRA provided a Pre-populated survey containing 60 questions was provided by OMAFRA, an additional 15 questions specific to Lanark County was developed by the project and added to the survey.

There were 134 businesses interviewed in total.



OMAFRA provides a pre-populated primary survey with over 60 questions. There were also another 15 specific to Lanark County questions added to the survey to make it a true made in Lanark County product. These questions were developed through consultation with the many project partners to identify the most relevant and timely questions that would have the most value based on their knowledge of the local business climate.

4. BUSINESS SELECTION

The Executive Pulse software was used to provide a random selection of businesses from a cross of industries in all Municipalities.

Each Municipality provided a list of businesses based on their local intelligence. These lists included businesses that were the largest employers, businesses that were experiencing growth and were businesses that were experiencing challenges.



Sector survey sampling size requirement

Sector	Total Businesses per Sector	Sampling Size
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	404	8
Construction	794	16
Manufacturing	156	8
Wholesale trade	113	3
Retail trade	520	13
Transportation and warehousing	130	2
Information and cultural industries	64	1
Finance and insurance	281	5
Real estate and rental and leasing	994	11
Professional, scientific and technical services	725	14
Admin, waste, remediation services	194	4
Educational services	56	1
Health care and social assistance	383	9
Arts, entertainment and recreation	120	3
Accommodation and food services	259	7
Other services (except public administration)	459	10
TOTAL	6,362	115

A full survey sample of 115 businesses across all nine municipalities in Lanark County was decided upon based on a confidence interval of 95% and confidence level of 10%, ensuring a statistically significant sampling reflecting the opinions of the overall business community.

Municipal survey sampling size requirement

Municipality	Total Businesses per Municipality	Sampling size
Mississippi Mills	1520	27
Beckwith	415	8
Montague	247	4
Carleton Place	959	17
Drummond North Elmsley	532	10
Tay Valley	518	9
Perth	816	15
Lanark Highlands	597	11
Smiths Falls	758	14
TOTAL	6,362	115

A full survey sample of 115 businesses across all nine municipalities in Lanark County was decided upon based on a confidence interval of 95% and confidence level of 10%, ensuring a statistically significant sampling reflecting the opinions of the overall business community.

A General call out for businesses through media releases, social media, radio, direct email, and project team networks was also done.

In the end, 134 businesses were interviewed across all sectors and all nine municipalities.

In addition to the main broad sector survey, we used a sector-specific survey for those businesses in the following sectors; Some businesses also completed an additional survey based on their economic sector.



Agriculture



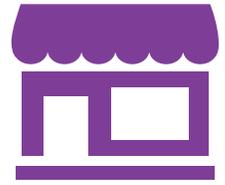
Tourism



Healthcare



Manufacturing



Retail

Sector-specific survey results were reviewed and incorporated into the BR+E action planning process.

5. INTERVIEW/SURVEY FORMAT AND PROCESS

- Businesses were provided an electronic copy of the survey in advance.
- All volunteers signed confidentiality agreements, and once businesses were on board, volunteers were provided with contact information for their assigned businesses, and the volunteers arranged interviews.
- Generally, each team of two volunteers interviewed 2 – 4 businesses, where one volunteer asked the survey questions and the other recorded answers.
- Business owners or senior management were interviewed; all interviews were conducted in person and lasted approximately 1 – 1.5 hrs.
- Completed surveys were returned to the project lead, and any immediate action items were recorded and flagged for short term follow-up or referred to one of the partners in the Resource Network.

6. ACTION PLANNING:

Data from the Surveys is entered into software to complete an analysis & identify trends, commonalities, and broader areas of concern.

3 COMMON THEMES EMERGED:



Workforce Development



Business Engagement



Business Friendly

Establish a task force to include Municipal Representatives, Business Owners, Business support Organizations, Community Employment Services, and OMAFRA Advisors to facilitate the session.

Survey Results & 3 Themes were presented to the Task Force, who collectively generated 57 suggested actions to address what businesses told us in the surveys.

The lead organizations had further consultation with the businesses that completed the surveys for input and prioritization of the 57 suggested actions based on their business needs. These results informed the final seven action items.

“

“ It's great to see the enthusiasm and participation and how many people care about the growth and success of our Lanark County businesses.”

Volunteer Testimonial

“I really enjoyed the experience and I must add that I learned a lot through my participation.”

Business Testimonial

”

Performance Measures/Outcomes

The positive outcomes are the direct result of the collaboration between the partners, the volunteers, and the business community.

Project Goals	15 project team members	60 volunteers	115 business visits
Project Outcomes	30+ project team members	75+ volunteers	134 business visits & surveys
Other Project Outcomes Include	580+ volunteer hours	53 meetings & presentations	7+ press releases
	200+ requests for information	72 immediate follow-up requests	44 referrals and counting



Top Sectors Surveyed



Every effort was made to engage businesses from the many sectors and geographic areas to meet the sampling goals. Businesses could also volunteer to participate if they were not among those selected for interviews.

Business Participants Overview:

88%

of businesses surveyed rate Lanark County as a good or excellent place to do business

94%

of businesses surveyed are locally owned and operated

96%

of businesses had at least one owner involved in the daily operations



of business owners are a resident within the community



60%

of businesses have a business plan, and of those, almost 60% report their plan is less than three years old

Businesses describe their industry as

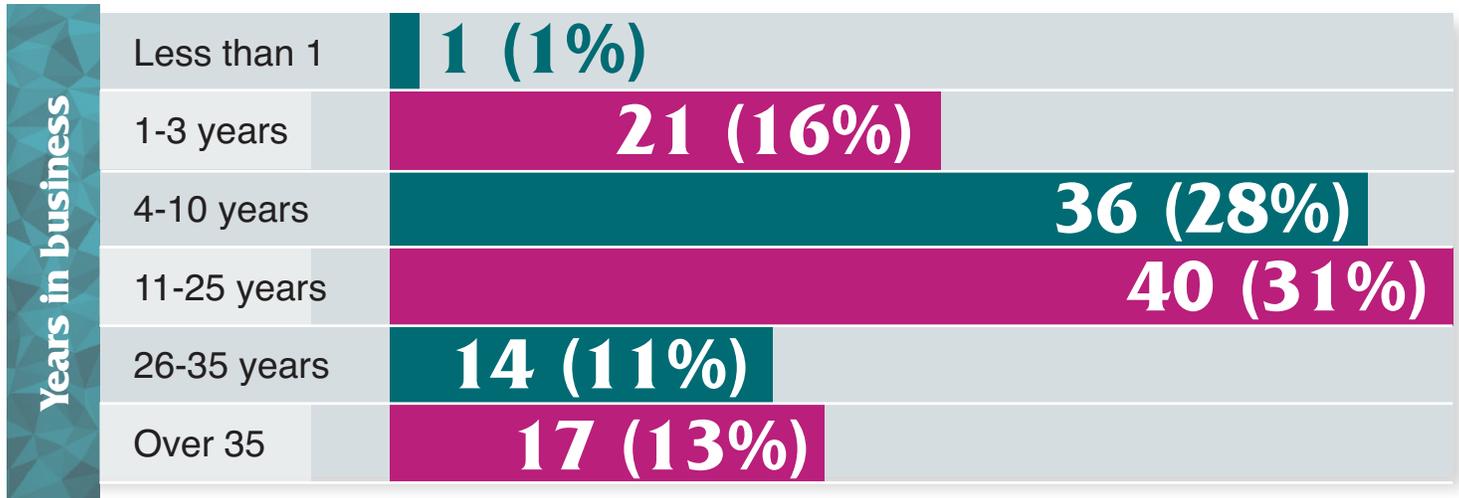
64%
growing

5%
declining

3%
not sure

28%
stable

How many years has your business been in operation in this community?

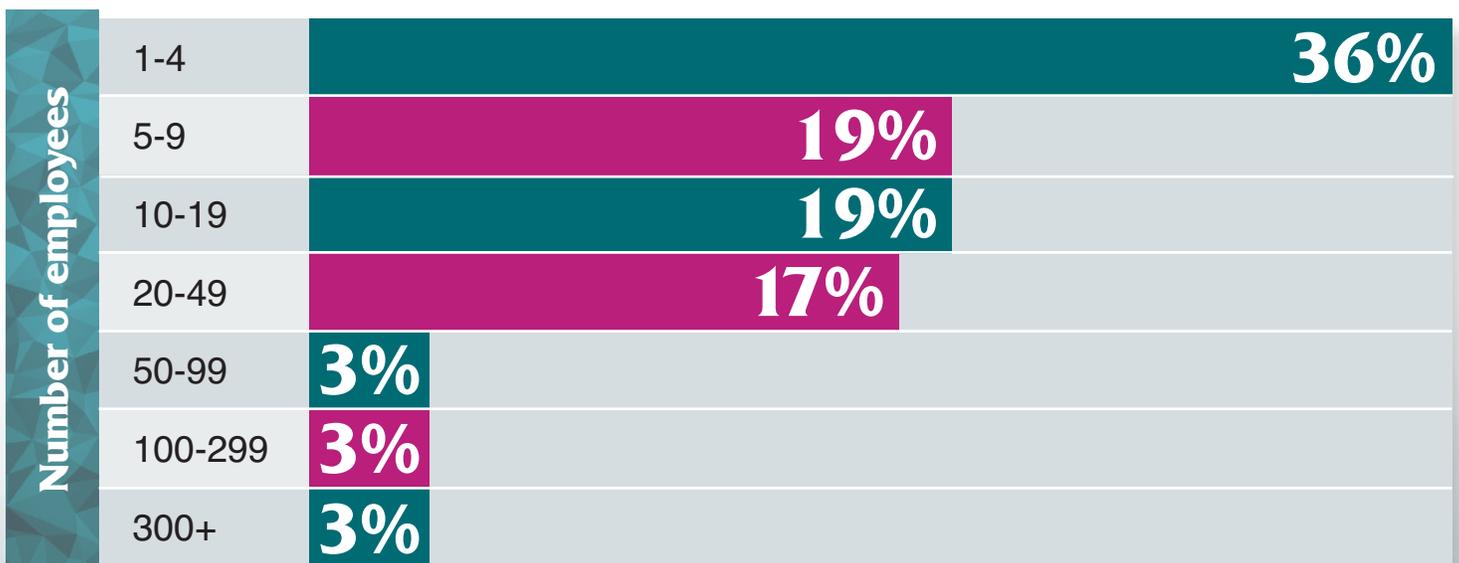


Did you know

76 - 90% of new jobs come from existing businesses

Small Business contributes to over 85% of employment (<5 employees) in Lanark County

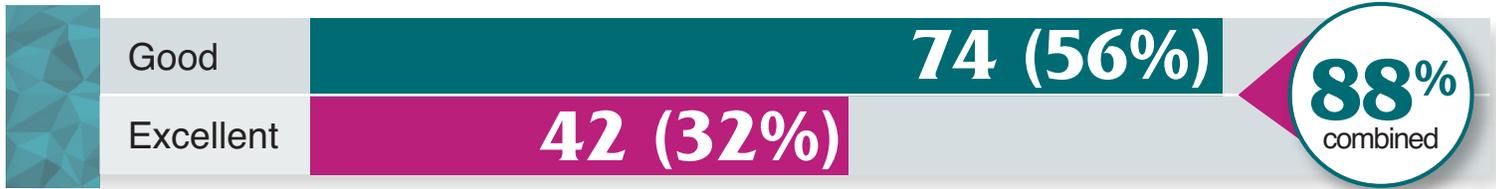
How many people does your business employ?



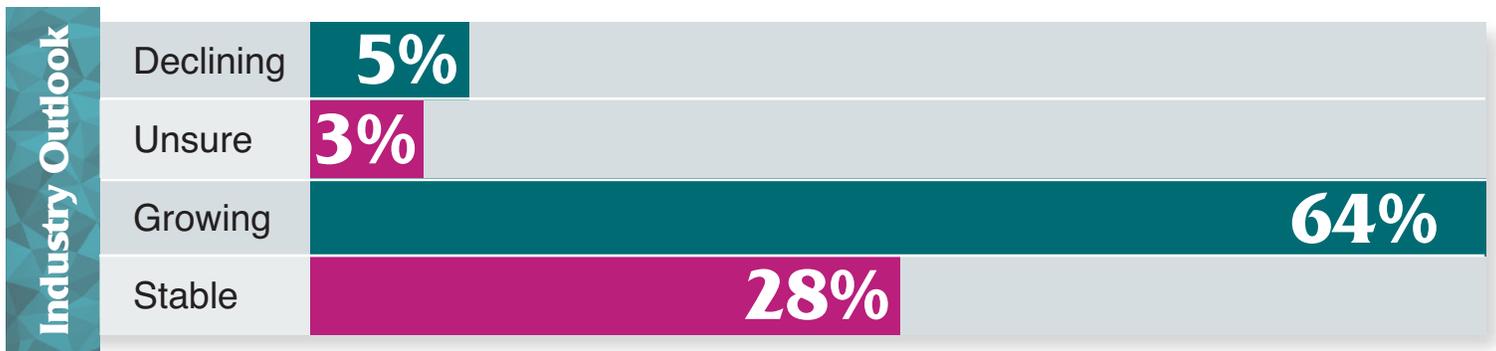
Summary of Survey Results



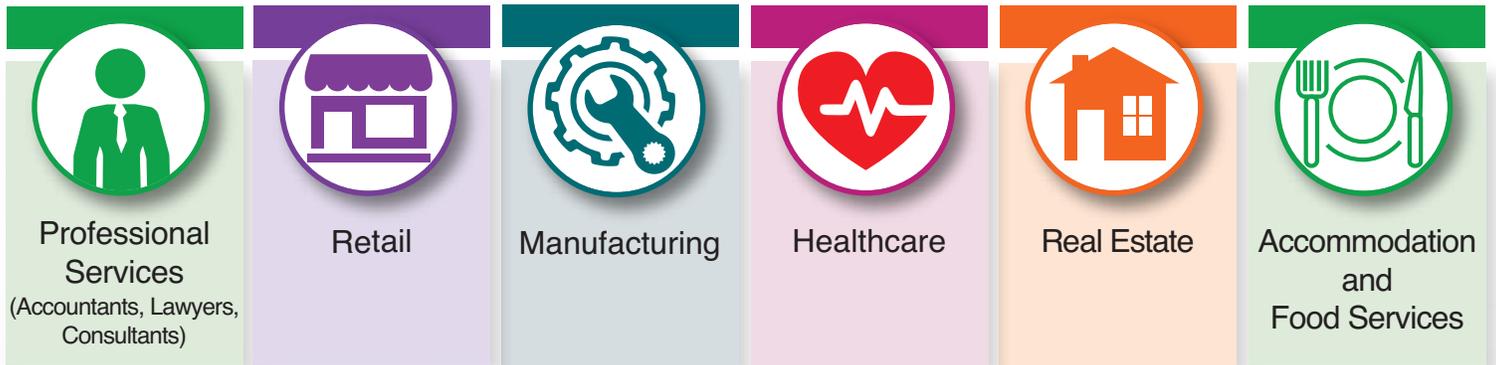
What is your general impression of this community as a place to do business?



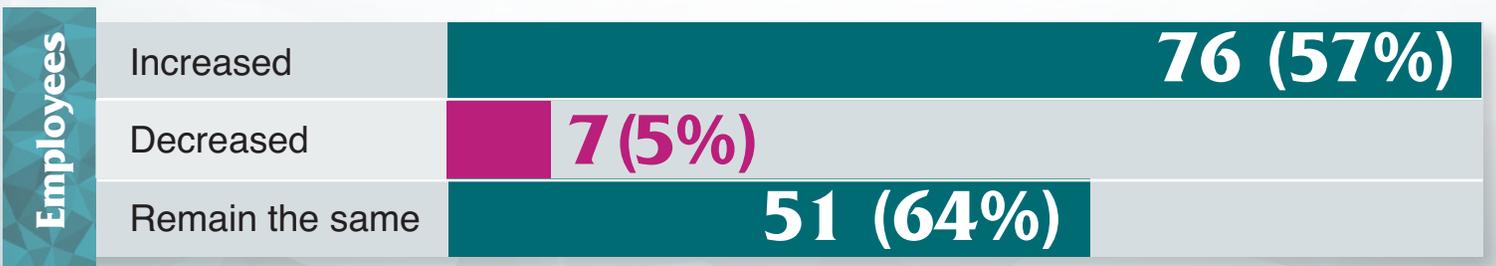
There is a positive industry outlook in Lanark County, with 64% of those surveyed showing growth and 28% remaining stable within their respective industries.



The top industries showing growth are ranked as follows;



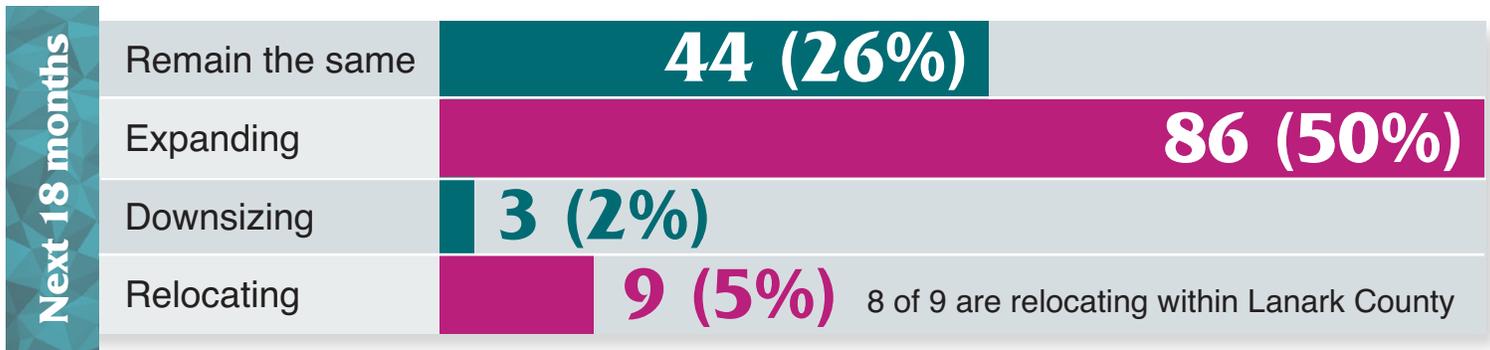
During the past 3 years, has the number of people you employ in this business increased, decreased or stayed the same?



The top 5 industries ranked



Within the next 18 months, which do you plan on?



Top 5 job growth sectors ranked



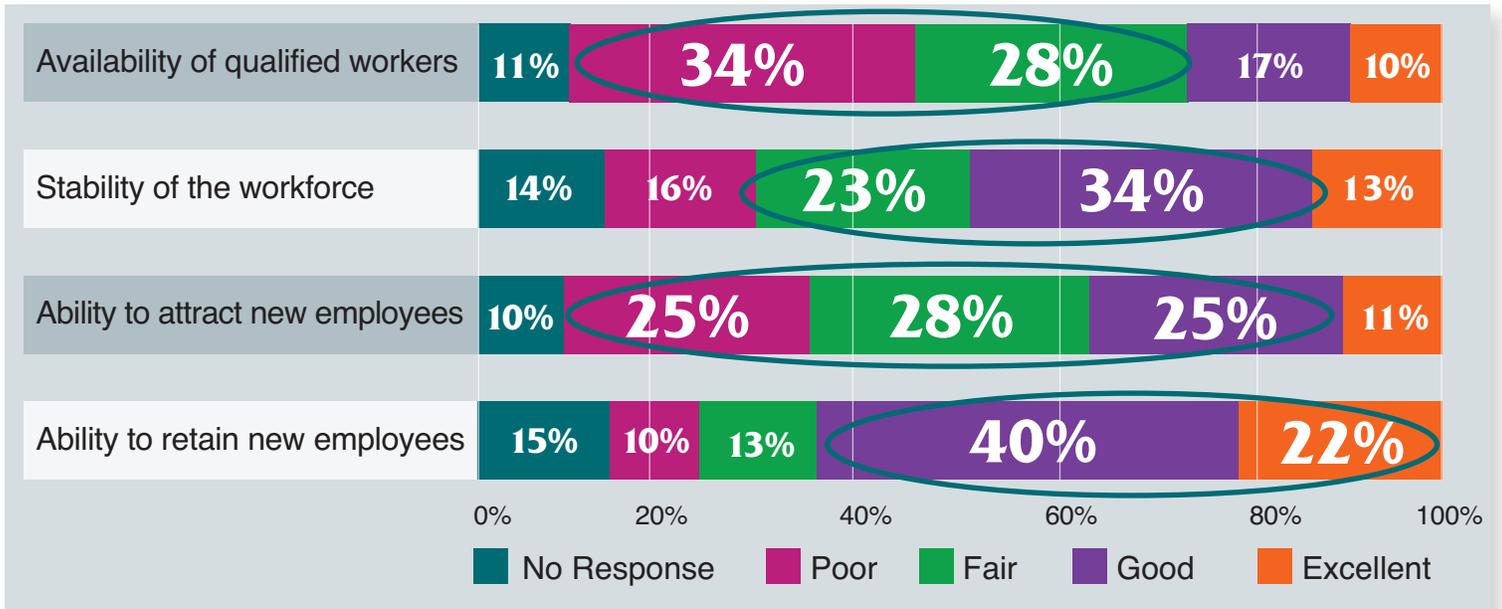
An estimate of 350+ jobs in the next 18 months

Did you know	86 of 134	businesses indicated that their business would be expanding in the next 18 months, of those 86 businesses, 75 noted that their expansions would lead to an increase in the workforce with a combined total of 619 new jobs.
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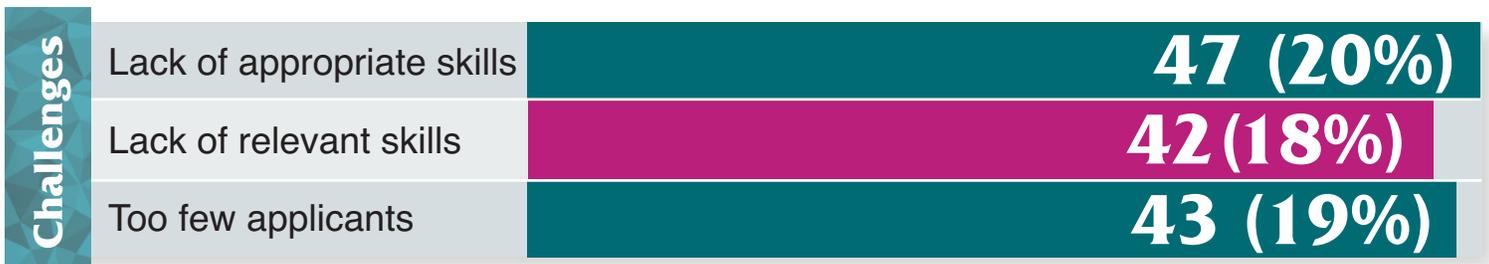
Theme 1. Workforce Development



How would you rate the following factors for your business needs?



How would you describe your hiring challenges?



“ Increased competition for limited applications | Can only offer part-time and/or seasonal work | More prep in High School is needed ”

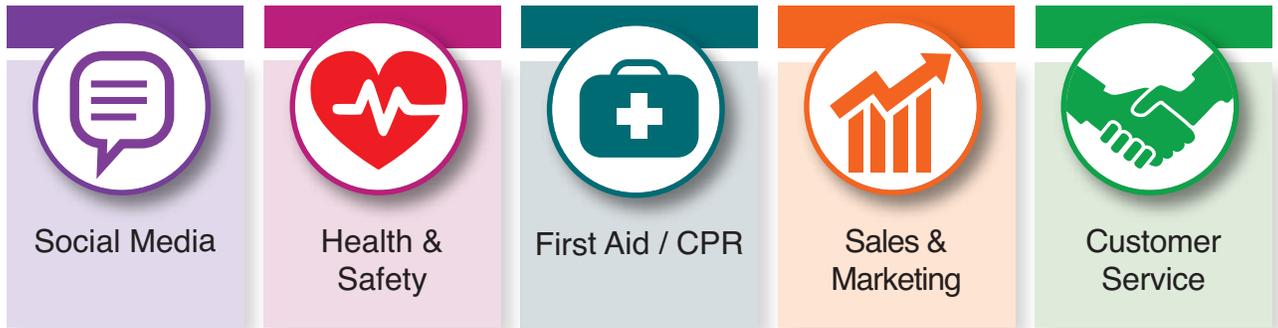
Top industries having hiring challenges



Important to recognize that industry hiring challenges may sometimes be more regional in scope and may require other levels of government and agencies to be involved (i.e., PSW shortage in Healthcare, changes in Agriculture) 60% of businesses indicated a need for training for their employees and that some barriers to that training include cost, availability of training locally and impact of downtime of employees.

When asked what one thing would substantially increase business success, training was in the top five. Businesses need ongoing training to support their workforce needs and ensure that the quality of their workers remains strong. The top five training topics were;

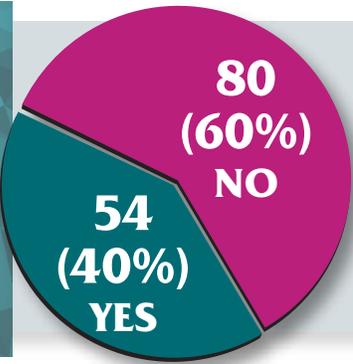
Top training ranked



Did you know

50%+ Over half of the businesses surveyed do not currently take part in co-op, internship or apprenticeship programs.

Coop, internship apprenticeship programs



60% of the respondents don't participate in any coop, internship or apprenticeship programs and are interested in learning more, so there is an opportunity to educate and link existing programs available to business, i.e., High Schools, TR Leger, Colleges and Universities

Emerging skills

When asked about emerging skills that employers will be looking for over the next 1-5 years, soft skills such as problem-solving, leadership, continuous learning, responsibility, and people skills came up to the top.

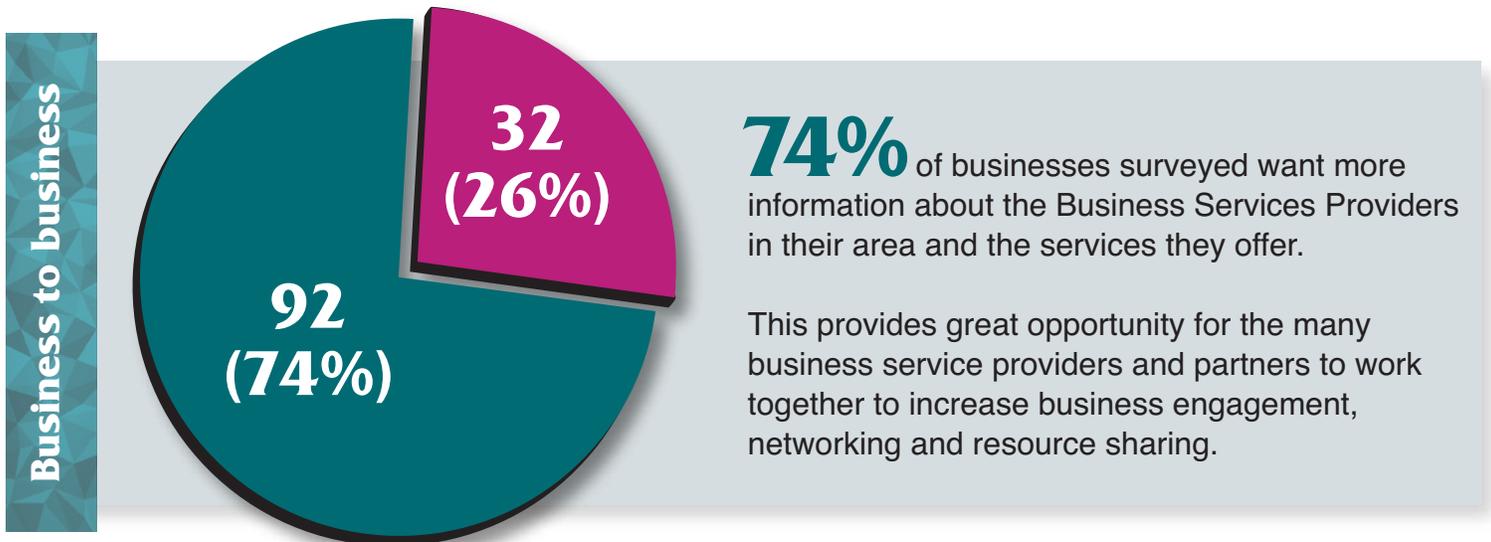
- Problem-solving
- Responsibility
- Leadership
- People skills/ Relationship building
- Continuous learning



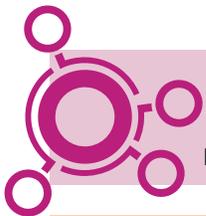
Theme 2. Business Engagement



Businesses indicated that networking and relationship building, business to business (B2B) activities, and connecting with business service providers were important factors to their success.



Businesses identified a variety of services and activities that are important in supporting their business



Business networking and relationship building

Workforce Planning including attraction, retention and training

Workshops and seminars on key topics including social media



Joint advertising and marketing initiatives



Access to capital

Referrals and contacts

Did you know

107

businesses voted that Business Networking & relationship building was the most valued service provided.

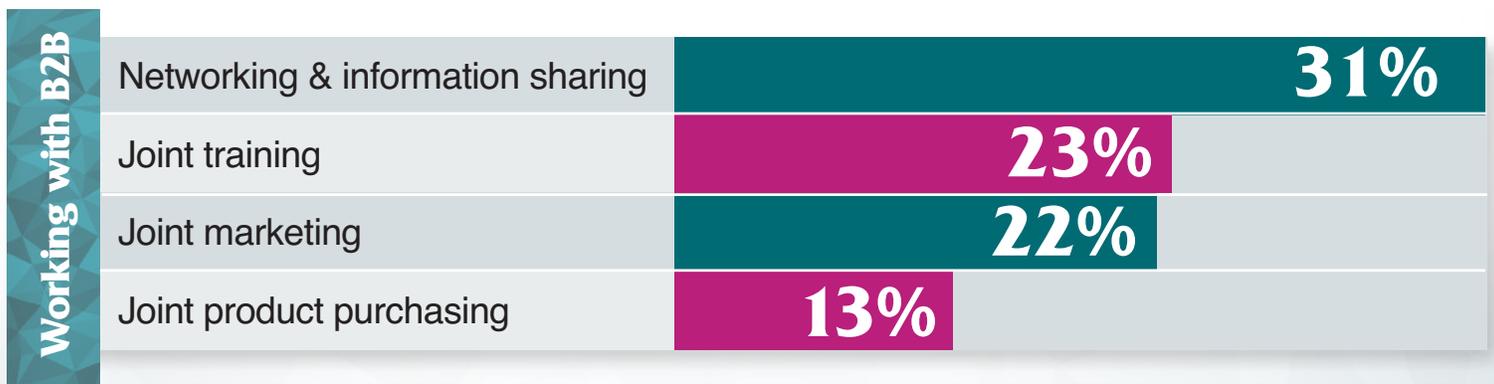
Did you know

101 of 134

businesses interviewed are members of business organizations, 84 of the 101 are members of their local Chamber of Commerce.



There was high interest in working cooperatively with other businesses and participating in joint ventures such as joint training, marketing, and product purchasing



With three Chambers of Commerce and two BIA organizations across Lanark County, there is ample opportunity to work together to increase joint opportunities and collaboration for the benefit of businesses.

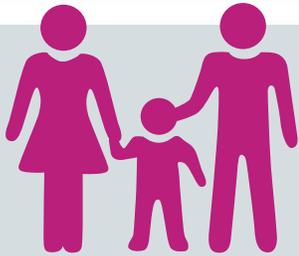
Theme 3. Business Friendly Climate



Overall
Impressed

88% rated

Lanark County as a good to excellent place to do business



97%

rated quality of life as good / excellent



85%

rated availability of health and medical services as good / excellent



75%

rated support from other businesses and residents as good / excellent

75%

rated regional/provincial roads and highways across Lanark County as good / excellent

63%

rated local roads and streets as good / excellent



58%

rated cost of electricity as poor / fair



65%

rated cell phone internet service as good / excellent

75%

rated snow and waste removal as being good / excellent



Top 5 Actions to address Business Friendly – As voted on by Businesses

1

Central county location for available space or land & promote property owners & underutilized land

2

Increase awareness of businesses in municipal employees so that they better understand their needs

3

Conduct an information session about what people get for their taxes and ask about what can be eliminated if new items are added.

4

Joint marketing opportunities for attracting customers to commercial areas

5

"Buy local" continue to promote the concept of how spending dollars in a local community enhance the economic climate

“

“A central online identify all locally available training”

“Ensure that downtown areas are beautified and kept up.”

“Fine tune messaging and ensure that all partners have access to and are sharing the same message.”

“Increase visibility of local business champions”

“Amalgamating some business services into a County-wide service.”

“Workforce attraction video/marketing campaign”

“Collaboration with UCDSB on high schools’ major courses and internships with the local business.”

“Recognize that business owners are busy, don’t ask too much of our time”

“Communities would benefit from a Business readiness document”

“Coordinated recruitment campaigns at the municipal level to encourage skilled worker movement into Lanark County”

“Account for aging population.”

“More partnering on events and less duplication of the three regional chambers”

“Lanark County 'open for business' page - central site for business needs (service providers, info on starting business, access to capital, bylaws)”

“Business owners are flooded with so many events and opportunities to gather and network, it would be nice to see more collaboration among chambers, bias, municipalities, business support organizations, etc.”

”

Lanark County BR+E Suggested Action Plan

The Lanark County BR+E Action Plan was developed through numerous and extensive reviews of the summarized data with the many project partners and participating businesses, who then prioritized actions that can best respond to the survey results. More details about this process are outlined in the methodology section of this report.

1. Regional Service Providers Alliance

Lead: Valley Heartland

Establish an alliance with Business + Employment Service Providers to foster collaboration between organizations to improve business access, relevancy, and outcomes of support programs/events and coordinate grassroots workforce development activities.

- 1.1. Draft terms of reference
- 1.2. Host/chair initial meeting

2. Develop a County Economic and Business Development Site

Lead: Valley Heartland

Develop a proposal to Lanark County for a stand-alone centralized website and brand for Lanark County EcDev that would act as a single pathway to access resources and information required to start and grow a business in Lanark County. Proposal to include framework, scope, budget, roles, information/content ideas, tools, maintenance, marketing/social media.

3. Export Catalyst Loan Fund

Lead: Valley Heartland CFDC

VH to apply to Eastern Ontario CFDC Network for \$1M for a loan fund to support SMEs developing export strategies or expanding into new international markets, at a reduced interest rate.

This will support economic diversification by developing multiple sources of income/markets to encourage positive economic growth and development.

1. Regional Service Providers Alliance

Lead: Regional Service Providers Alliance

Alliance to identify opportunities for collaborative projects and action identified business and taskforce recommendations, these include:

Leadership + Collaboration

- 1.1. Coordinate County-wide Annual Business Networking Event
- 1.2. Develop an annual county-wide shop local marketing campaign
- 1.3. Coordinate an annual schedule of business events, workshops and training to reduce duplication amongst alliance members and improve countywide promotion and attendance for the benefit of the business community

Workforce Development

- 1.4. Develop a database of high school and post-secondary opportunities and communicate to businesses
- 1.5. Pilot Project: Develop a tour/experiential workforce event involving local employers, key sectors, new/future grads, and job seekers to complement existing programs offered by educators and employment services

2. Develop a County Economic and Business Development Site

Lead: Valley Heartland

- 2.1. Development and launch of the site
- 2.2. Host website orientation/training session for EcDev stakeholders, County Council, and staff
- 2.3. Implementation of L.C EcDev Marketing Campaign
- 2.4. Ongoing updates and content development
- 2.5. Development and reporting of KPIs

3. Export Catalyst Loan Fund

Lead: Valley Heartland CFDC

Implementation, pending approval

BR+E Insights, Actions, Suggestions, and Ideas

1. 83 of 134 surveyed were Chamber members
2. 86 of 134 business are expanding in the next 18 months, 43 will require employee training in Customer service, first aid/CPR, health and safety, marketing, sales, and social media
3. Make information easily available and meaningful, be mindful of businesses time
4. Joint marketing opportunities for attracting customers to commercial areas
5. More partnering on events and less duplication of the three regional chambers
6. Better collaboration with Ottawa universities and colleges to attract grads to rural jobs
7. Communications between business and High Schools to promote job placement programs and raise awareness of career opportunities (what it's like to work in a sector)
8. Local recruitment programs (at the municipal level)
9. One-stop employer social media page/group for services in Lanark County - for information sharing
10. Increase awareness of employment services, financial incentives, and coop programs
11. Amalgamating some business services into a County-wide service
12. County wide networking opportunity for businesses (business to business)
13. 107 of 134 identified business networking and relationship building as highly valuable
14. Centralize information regarding opportunities for networking and relationship building for business to business and business to services
15. Lanark County central site for business needs (service providers, info on starting a business, access to capital, bylaws) available space or land, promote property owners and underutilized land

EcDev Strat Plan

16. Create an Inventory for Business. Following needs assessment through BR+E, coordinate to compile an inventory of talent and business resources, housed on a central site with links to municipalities and EcDev stakeholders. And Develop Investment Readiness for local business expansion & new business investment.

BR+E Insights, Actions, Suggestions, and Ideas

17. Only 5% of those surveyed are exporting, 3% are reaching national markets, and 92% are dependent on local and regional consumption and markets.

1. Regional Service Providers Alliance

Budget: \$10,000

Valley Heartland will provide seed funds in the 2020-2021 fiscal year for the Implementation of sub-actions to build capacity for revenue generation for sustained implementation.

2. Develop a County Economic and Business Development Site

Budget: TBD

The proposal will include scope, capital expenses, and ongoing maintenance fees

Business Friendly

4. Business Barrier Reduction

Lead: Regional Economic Development Alliance
Coordinator annual county-wide information session night with building and planning staff at each lower-tier municipality on what's required to apply for site plan, building permits, etc.

5. Organize workshops for municipalities and business support partners

Lead: Valley Heartland
Build capacity within our local Economic Development + Business Support stakeholders. Topics will focus on new models/practices for economic development, trends shaping business attraction/retention, workforce development, and topics for achieving sustained economic growth.

4. Business Barrier Reduction

Lead: Regional Economic Development Alliance
Yearly coordination, ongoing

5. Organize workshops for municipalities and business support partners

Lead: Valley Heartland
Yearly schedule and coordination of workshops and training.

Workforce Development

6. Labour Market Information Committee for Lanark and Renfrew.

This Committee focuses on high-level workforce development issues. The purpose is to establish an open line of communication among community partners working on common solutions for workforce development.

Lead: Labour Market Group of Renfrew & Lanark Labour Market Group

5.1. Increase Lanark County representation on the committee

Lanark County representatives:

5.2. Attend semi-annual in-person meetings

5.3. Participate in regular phone meetings, every 6-8 weeks

7. Workforce Development Roundtables

Lead: Regional Economic Development Alliance
Valley Heartland to present the concept to host eight key sector roundtables. Four roundtables will be organized a year and repeat bi-annually. Sectors to be inclusive of the top growing and key sectors in Lanark County:

1. Manufacturing 2. Healthcare 3. Retail
4. Agriculture 5. Food Service 6. Professional Services 7. Tourism Operators and 8. Construction

* Other action addressing Workforce Development: 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2, 4

6. Labour Market Information Committee for Lanark and Renfrew

Lead: Lanark Renfrew Labour Market Group (LRLMG)
Yearly coordination, ongoing

7. Workforce Development Roundtables

Lead: Regional Economic Development Alliance

7.1. Alliance to identify EcDev Stakeholders to facilitate/scribe each roundtable and provide 4-5 standardized facilitation questions

7.2. Identified facilitators to organize a location and invite attendees to the roundtable

7.3. REDA to review and analyze roundtable findings and identify key issues emerging

7.4. Valley Heartland to summarize results in a report to be shared with key stakeholders

BR+E Insights, Actions, Suggestions, and Ideas

1. Increased awareness of regulations and processes between businesses and municipal employees
2. Educate councilors on the building/planning processes

EcDev Strat Plan

1. Coordinate and streamline regulatory processes for business start-ups and expansion (Business Burden Reduction Program)

BR+E Insights, Actions, Suggestions, and Ideas

3. Increase awareness of the new rural economy, workforce development, continue to build capacity and modern approach to rural economic development
4. Provide increased customer service training to municipal staff to further reduce duplication, VH will focus on providing in-person workshops for EcDev stakeholders in place of businesses

5. Organize workshops for municipalities and business support partners

Budget: \$2,500

EcDev Strat Plan

1. Develop a Strategy for Workforce Development, mapping talent assets and needs of future local workforce with needs of local employers. Develop Key Sectors (Healthcare, Agri-Food, Tourism, etc.)

BR+E Insights, Actions, Suggestions, and Ideas

1. Continued BR+E
2. Sector Development
3. Industry networking opportunities
4. 86 of 134 business are expanding in the next 18 months, 75 will lead to an increase in workforce
5. 107 of 134 identified business networking and relationship building as highly valuable
6. Face to face meeting with EcDev Staff was identified as a top method of communication
7. Healthcare, Agriculture, Manufacturing and Food Services were the top industries identified facing hiring challenges

7. Workforce Development Roundtables

Budget: \$500



Over the past three years, Valley Heartland and Lanark County led extensive business and stakeholder consultations that have supported a foundational regional strategy and countless collaborations.

Our lower-tier municipalities, local educational institutions, businesses, chambers of commerce, employment centers, provincial and federal partners, have brought forward valuable insights, ideas, and visions on the economic future of the county.

For over a decade, Valley Heartland's role has been to support the growth of our economy and ensure competitiveness. This action plan will drive our priorities going forward and will be very much focused on action, developing, and ensuring that we have the tools, resources, and pivotal partnerships to ensure sustained growth and prosperity.

As old models of economic development give way to transformational thinking and opportunities, innovative and real-time strategic planning will ensure our future efforts respond to a fast-changing economy and today's speed of business.

Partner Organizations

OMAFRA

**Small Business Advisory Centre
Community Employment Services (CES) –
Algonquin College Perth
Pakenham Business & Tourism Association
CDN Career Academy (CCA)
Ontrac Employment Resource Services
Carleton Place Chamber of Commerce
Perth & District Chamber of Commerce
Downtown Carleton Place BIA
Downtown Perth BIA**

KEYS

**Algonquin College
Launch Lab
Renfrew Lanark Labour Market Group
Renfrew Lanark Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)
Perth & District Community Foundation
YAK Youth Centre Perth
TR Leger
Lanark County Community Justice (VIVA Program)
Upper Canada District School Board (UCDSB)
Specialist High Skills Major Program
Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario (CDSBEO)
United Way Lanark County**



