



**LEDUC  
COUNTY**

What We Heard Report  
**Business Retention and  
Expansion Survey**

Date: Feb. 8, 2023

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## Background

### *Business Retention and Expansion Survey*

Leduc County's economic development function works to grow the County through business attraction, retention and expansion. We aim to foster an environment that promotes innovation, job creation, new investment, and growing the local economy.

To date, we don't have a strategic *business retention and expansion (BRE) program* to help foster connectivity with more than 1,000 businesses in the region. This program is now being developed to support the needs of existing businesses, help businesses grow and expand their networks, improve operations and attract investment.

The BRE program will help the County to connect with existing businesses to understand and respond to their needs.

Through the Coal Community Transition Fund (CCTI), PrairiesCan has been assisting Leduc County in managing the transition away from coal-fired electricity through funding for investment readiness and BRE program resources. This includes two foundational projects, which will inform BRE program development.

The first is the repurposing of the former Nisku Recreation Centre into a Business Resource Centre, which will turn the building into a centralized, multi-functional space with program offerings for businesses and entrepreneurs. The project will build initial operational capacity, market engagement, and implement programming to obtain real time data to allow for better decision making on the longer-term implications of redeveloping the NRC.

The second project is a **BRE survey**, which will identify and analyze the issues and challenges related to business growth and expansion in Leduc County, with emphasis on the Nisku Business Park.

Leduc County hired Deloitte LLP, one of Canada's leading professional services firms, to execute the BRE survey project.

### *Public participation*

Leduc County chose to **consult** with businesses through the BRE Survey. While there isn't a specific decision being made as a result of the outcome of the survey, the County has committed to using the information to inform future decisions on economic development activities and programming.

The BRE survey was intended to solicit feedback from businesses in Leduc County as well as the towns of Calmar and Thorsby and the Village of Warburg. The survey was administered by phone to a random sample of businesses. Business owners/operators could also participate online using a unique URL programmed with a PIN to access the online survey.

The survey was active from **Aug. 12 to Oct. 15, 2022**. If a business was unable or unwilling to complete the survey online but had not been contacted via phone, they could request a call by filling out a form on the project web page.

## What we asked of you

Our Business Retention and Expansion Survey aimed to gather input on the future plans and needs of local businesses, as well as how business owners and operators view the community as a place to do business.

Through the results, we hope to identify opportunities and challenges that our local business community may be facing. Challenges could include concerns over relocation, closure, and/or downsizing, while opportunities may include plans for future expansion and recruitment.

## How we communicated

# HOW WE COMMUNICATED

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 **33** web page visits |  **10** print advertisements

 **12** social media posts |  **9** web notice visits

 **582** email newsletter recipients

We promoted the opportunity to participate in the following ways:

- ▶ **County Chronicle:** we shared information about the project and how to get involved in Leduc County's quarterly publication, the County Chronicle, which we mailed to all property owners in mid-September.
- ▶ **Direct-mailed letter:** we mailed a letter via direct-mail to all businesses in the project area with details about the BRE Survey, including purpose, instructions, timelines, contact and where they can go to find more information. The letters also contained a unique survey URL for each business, embedded with a PIN.
- ▶ **Media release:** we sent a media release to local media on Aug. 15.

- ▶ **Print advertisements:** we ran 10 print advertisements in the Leduc Representative, County Market, Thorsby Target and Warburg Bugle promoting the opportunity to participate and directing readers to the project web page.
- ▶ **Public participation opportunities newsletter:** we sent five public participation opportunities email newsletters out to 577 subscribers between Aug. 17 and Sept. 14.
- ▶ **Social media advertisement:** we ran an advertisement on Facebook and Instagram throughout the campaign promoting the opportunity to participate and directing readers to the project web page.
- ▶ **Social media posts:** we posted 12 social media posts on Leduc County’s Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter pages, promoting the opportunity to participate and directing readers to the project web page.
- ▶ **Web page:** we published a web page under the “business and development” section of the website ([leduc-county.com/BRE-survey](http://leduc-county.com/BRE-survey)) which included details about the survey’s purpose, timelines, and instructions, the reporting back process and contact information. This web page also linked to a URL request form for those who want to participate online and a phone call request form for those who want to participate via phone.
- ▶ **Website notices:** we posted one notice to the homepage of Leduc County’s website to introduce the project and link to the project web page.

## How you participated

We heard from respondents in the following ways:

- ▶ **Telephone and online survey:** A random sample telephone and online survey was conducted with 325 businesses responding.

## What you told us

A total of **325** businesses responded to the survey with Deloitte. The following pages contain the consultant’s report of their findings.



**Leduc County**

**Triage BR&E Report**

October 2022



# Overview



## Background

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- Leduc County completed a business satisfaction survey to understand how to best support local businesses. Business retention and expansion (BR+E) activities can be employed to ensure business needs are monitored and addressed; however, engagement can be time consuming and complex.
- A Triage BR&E Survey was commissioned to engage the broader business community, while also allowing for the identification of potential expansion or retention opportunities for follow-up on a business-by-business basis.

# Overview



## Methodology

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- A random sample telephone/online survey was conducted with 325 businesses. The total response rate for the online and phone surveys was 21.0%, which is very high in the market research industry. The average phone interview length was 12.3 minutes.
- This scientific approach ensures that the results have a high level of accuracy (with a 5.4% margin of error at a 95% confidence level) and statistically represents the business community in the region.



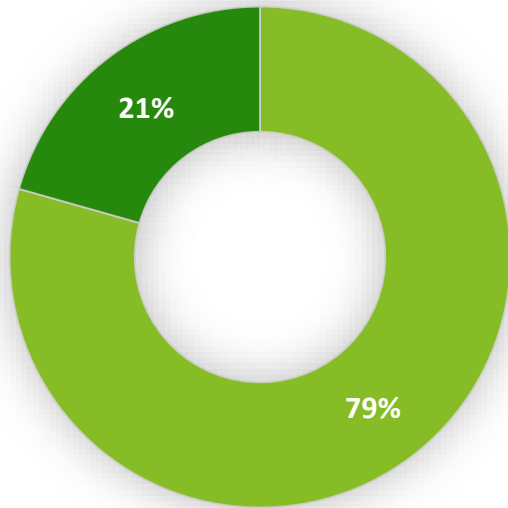


# Business Community Firmographics

# Firmographics



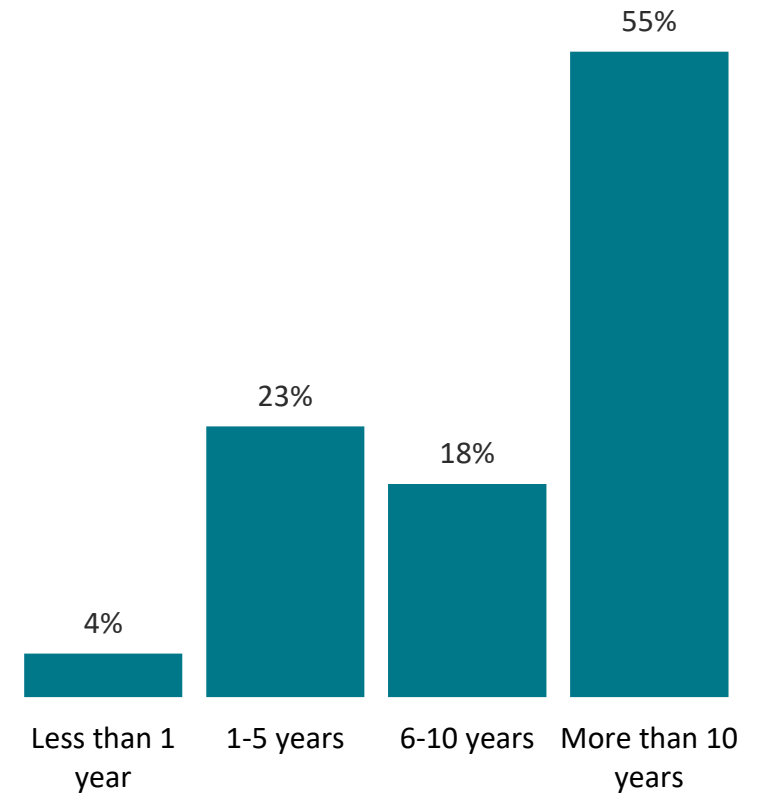
## Ownership (n=325)



■ Locally Owned and Operated ■ Externally Owned and Operated



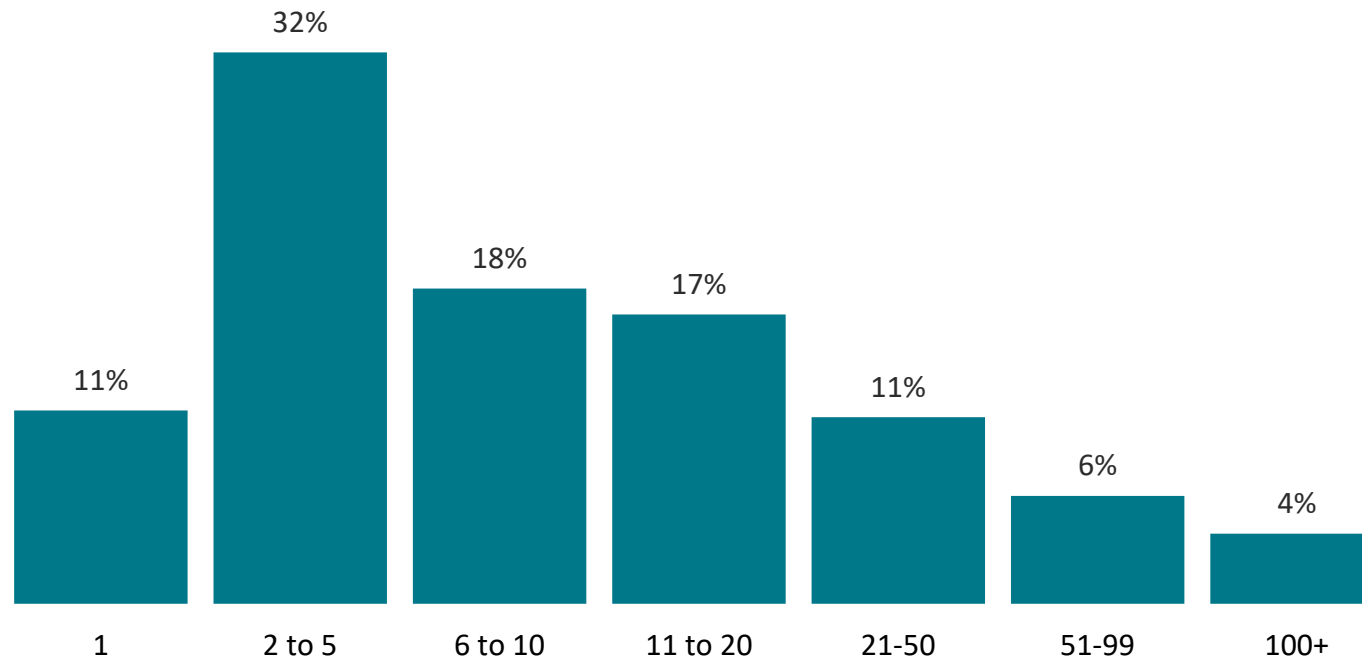
## Years Operating in the Community (n=325)



# Firmographics



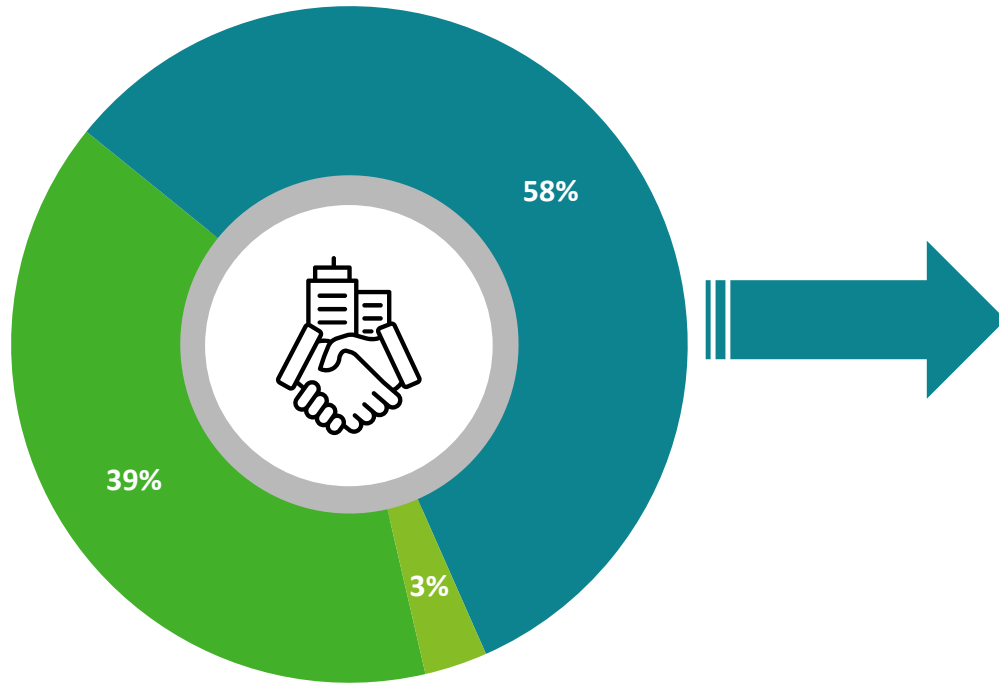
Number of Employees (n=325)



# Firmographics

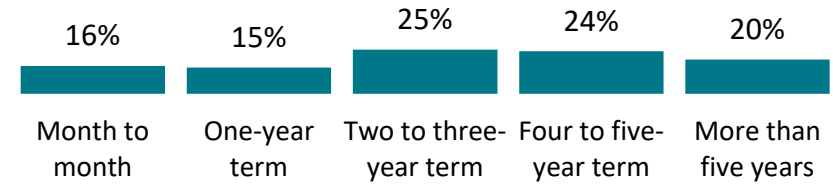


## Own or Rent Business Property?

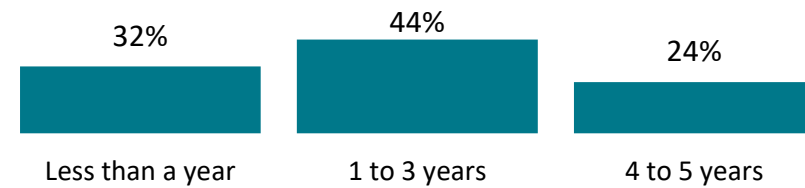


■ Rent   ■ Own   ■ Don't Know/Not Applicable

### Term of Lease (n=107):



### Lease expires (n=95):





# Business Performance

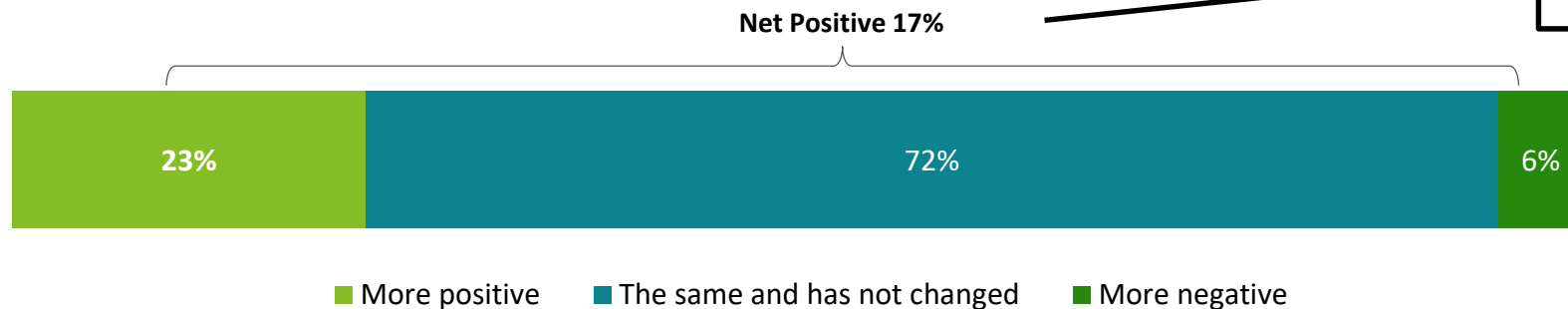
# Business Performance



Over the past 12 months have your revenues at your business...

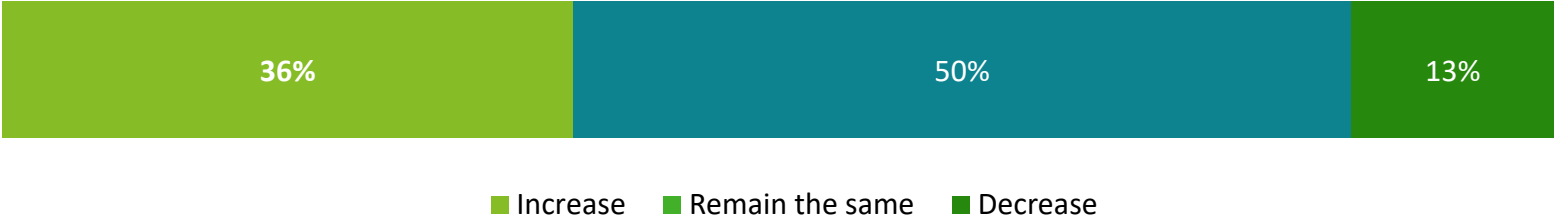


And what are your expectations for the next 12 months in total revenues compared to last 12 months?



Over the past 12 months would you say your attitude about doing business in the County is...

# Business Performance



Over the past 12 months did the total number of employees in your company...



Thinking about the next 12 months, do you expect the total number of employees in your company to...





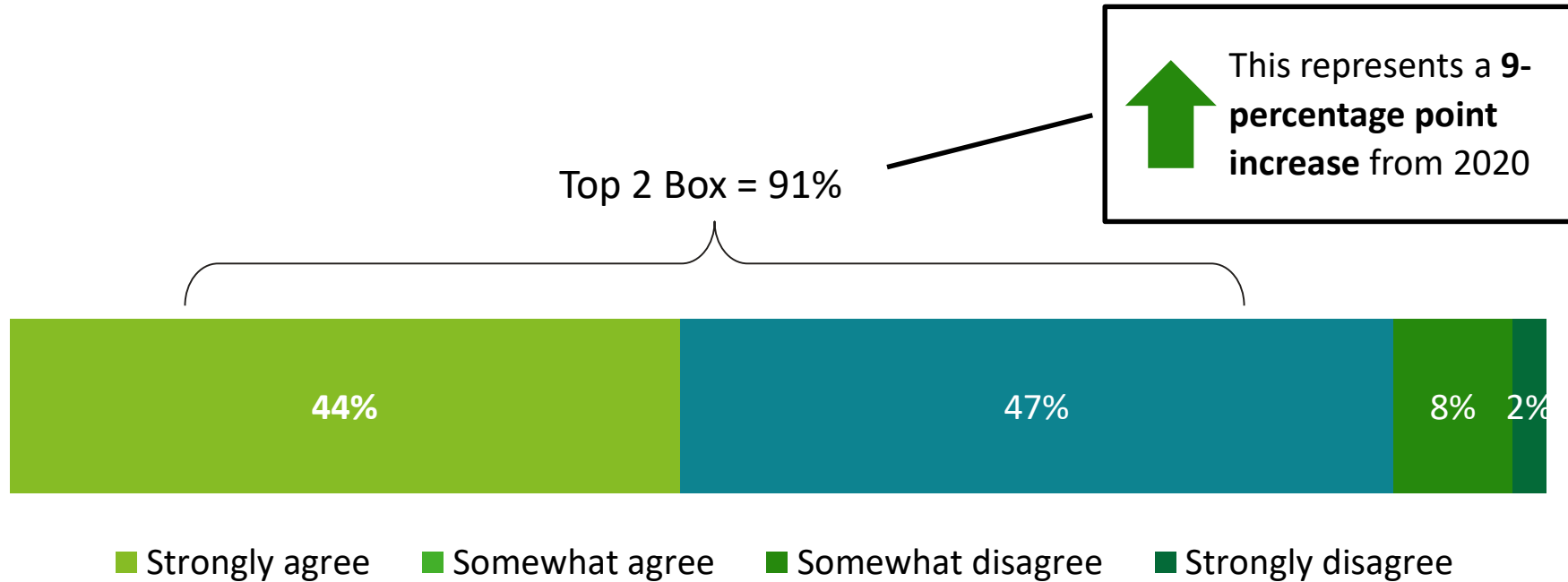
# Net Promoter Score



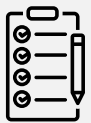
# Community Recommendation



Please rate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: I would recommend this County to another business looking to expand or relocate.

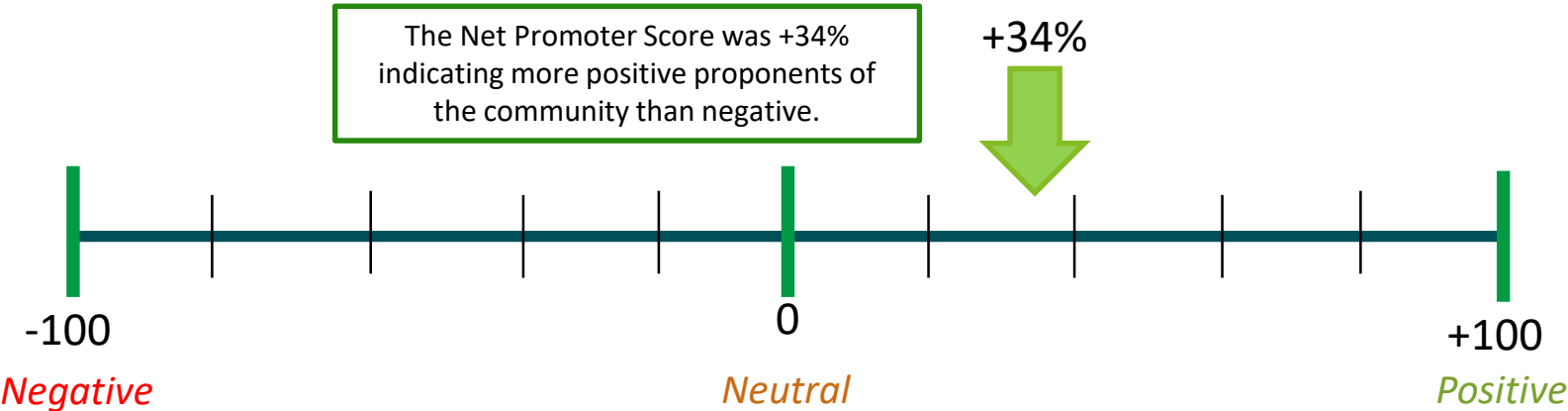


# Net Promoter Score



Net Promoter Score: Based on response to the following statement – “I would recommend this region to another business looking to expand or relocate.”

Group	Definition	Response to question	Percentage
Promoters	Active proponents of the community	Strongly Agree	44%
Passives	Neutral businesses	Somewhat Agree	55%
Detractors	Businesses with a negative opinion that may harm branding efforts	Somewhat Disagree or Strongly Disagree	10%





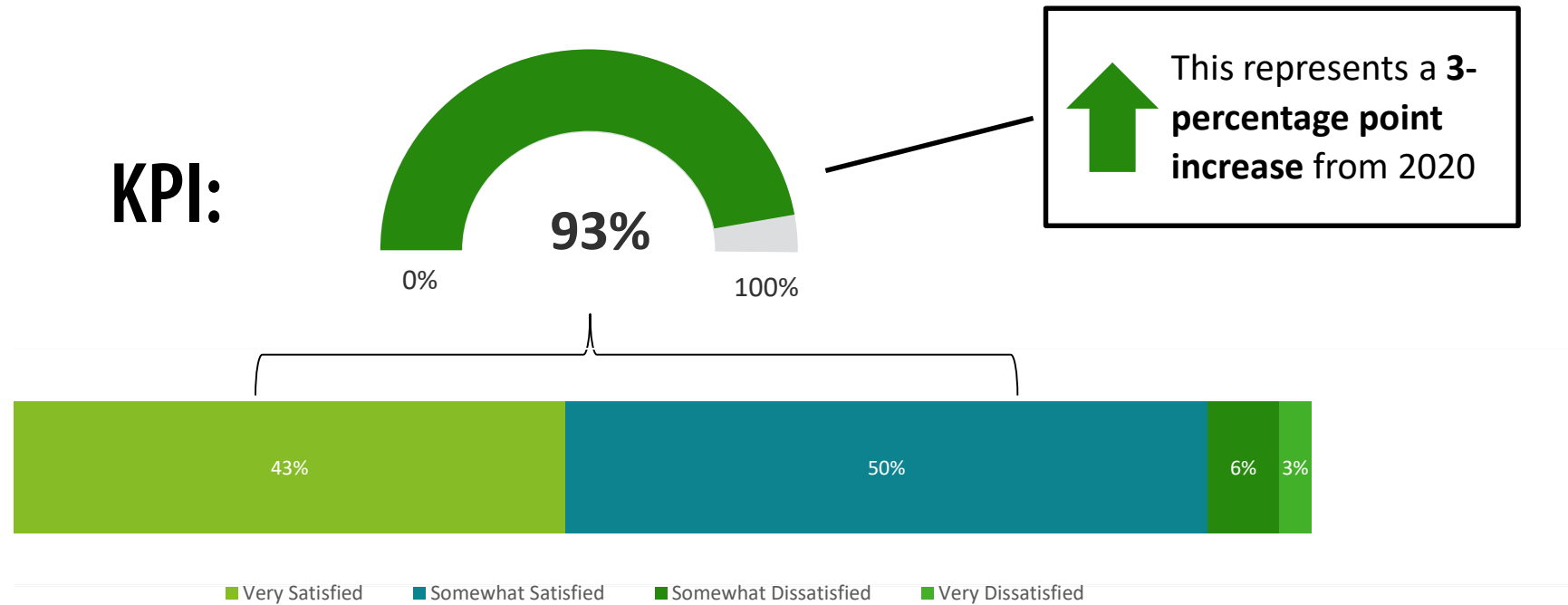
# Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

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Overall, how satisfied are you with Leduc County as a place to own and operate a business?

KPI:



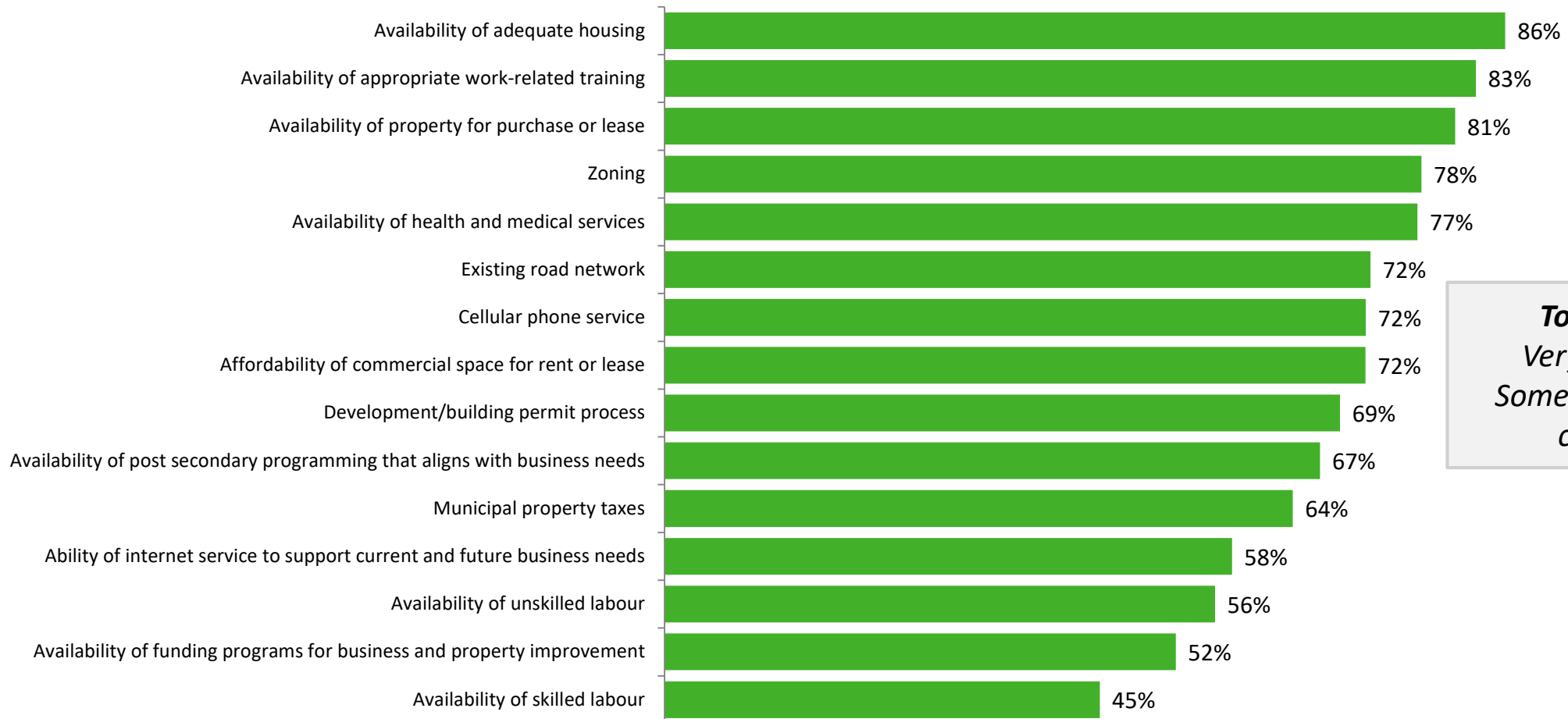


# Satisfaction Levels

# Satisfaction Levels



How satisfied you are with each of the following factors of doing business in the Community?



**Top two box:**  
*Very Satisfied & Somewhat Satisfied combined.*





# Derived Importance & Priority Matrix

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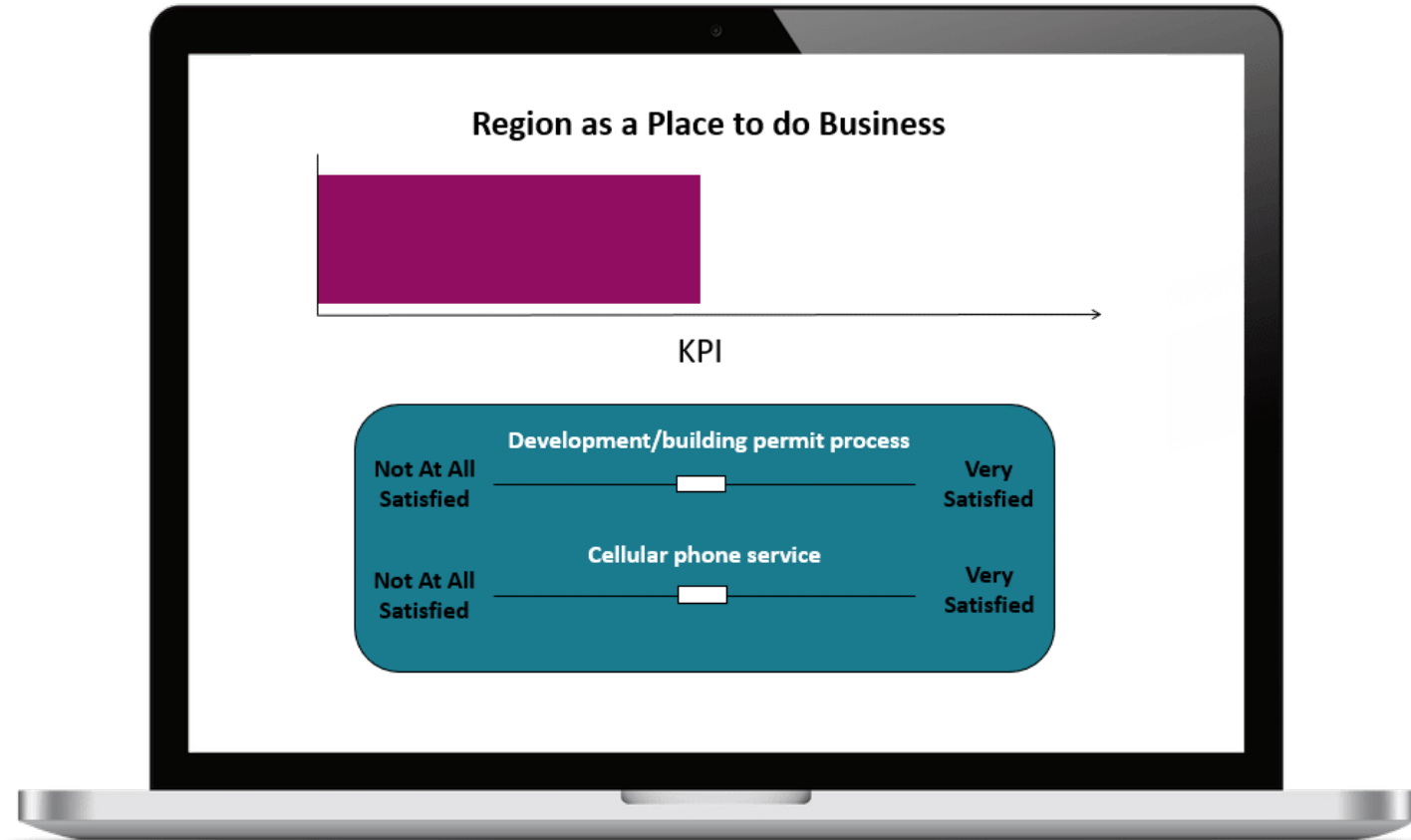
## Derived Importance

- A statistical calculation of importance
- Far more accurate relative to asking importance
- Calculates the correlation coefficient of business factors with the KPI
- Factors with a high derived importance will have the greatest impact on the KPI

## Priority Matrix

- A list of business factors to focus efforts
- Each priority is calculated using the level of satisfaction and the importance of each item (Derived Importance)
- Factors with lower satisfaction scores and higher importance become the top priorities
- Making improvements to the top priorities will have the greatest impact on improving the overall KPI

Example:





## Priority Matrix

Factors	Performance	Importance	Priority Rank
Availability of funding programs for business and property improvement	52%	8.7	1
Availability of skilled labour	45%	7.1	2
Municipal property taxes	64%	8.6	3
Availability of unskilled labour	56%	6.4	4
Development/building permit process	69%	8.9	5
Ability of internet service to support current and future business needs	58%	5.9	6
Affordability of commercial space for rent or lease	72%	8.1	7
Availability of post secondary programming that aligns with business needs	67%	6.6	8
Existing road network	72%	7.4	9
Zoning	78%	8.7	10
Cellular phone service	72%	6.6	11
Availability of health and medical services	77%	6.7	12
Availability of property for purchase or lease	81%	7.6	13
Availability of appropriate work-related training	83%	7.2	14
Availability of adequate housing	86%	6.4	15



Higher Priority

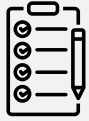


Lower Priority



# Business Community Health Index

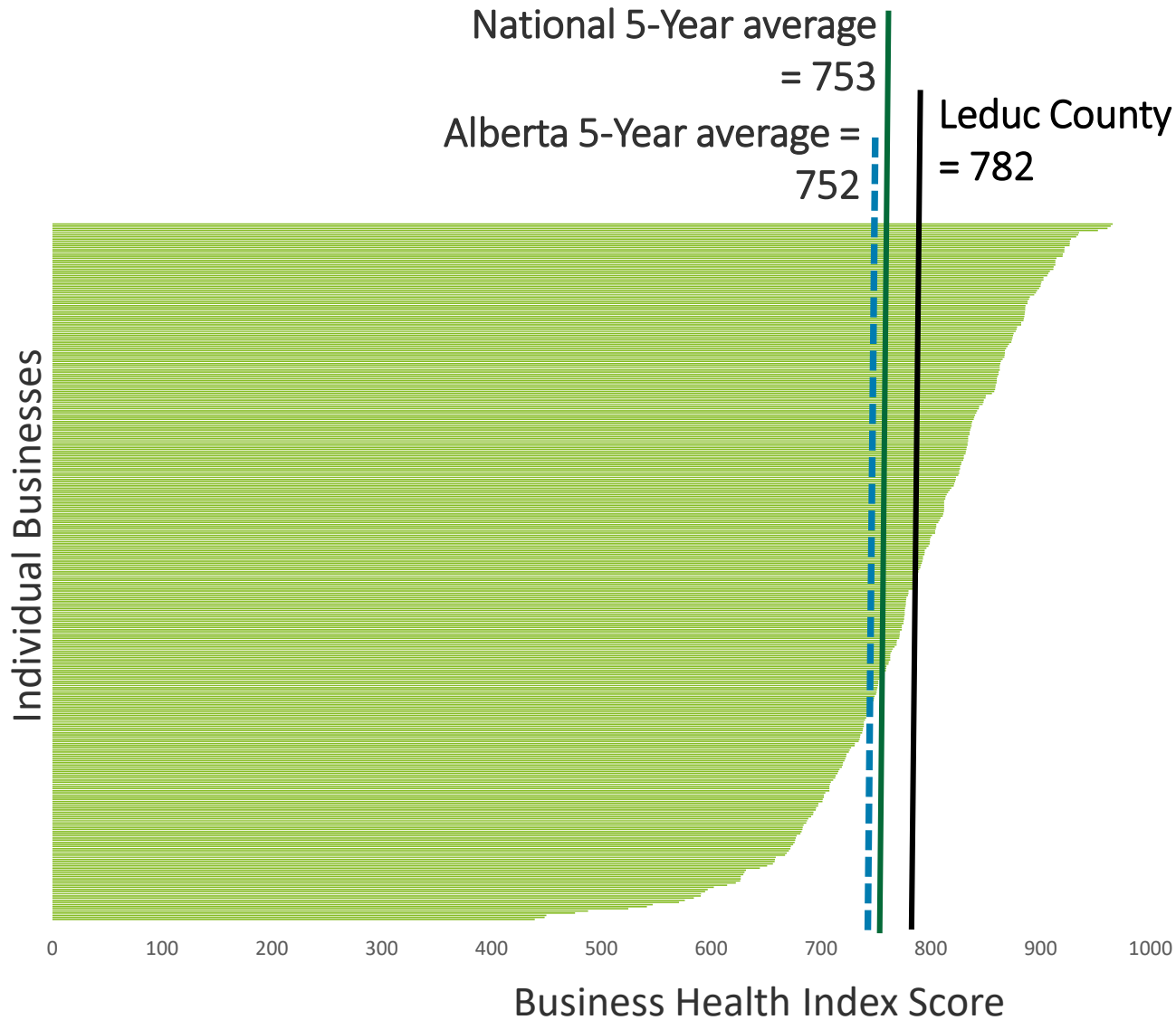
# Community Business Health Index



*Using the results of this business survey, Deloitte combines the questions into a proprietary Community Business Health Index which is the combination of the following nine sub-scores:*



# Community Business Health Index



Leduc County scored very well compared to other communities on the Community Business Health Index. This index is based on several factors:

- The County outperformed the national average on businesses' ratings of almost all the Business Health Index sub-scores. The County scored particularly high on historical revenues, community recommendation, and revenue outlooks over the next 12 months.
- The only indicator that was rated relatively lower in Leduc County compared to the national average were ratings of Business Policies, Supports and Incentives.

## Future Plans – Next 24 months



### Businesses with plans to expand:

- **90** businesses total
- **29** in less than 6 months
- **61** in more than 6 months

### Plans to downsize:

- **10** businesses total
- **1** in less than 6 months
- **9** in more than 6 months

### Plans to relocate:

- **8** businesses total
- **6** in less than 6 months
- **2** in more than 6 months

### Plans to close:

- **8** businesses total
- **3** in less than 6 months
- **5** in more than 6 months

### Plans to sell:

- **6** businesses total
- **1** in less than 6 months
- **5** in more than 6 months

## Triage Flag Results

Throughout the survey process Triage cases that represented green or red flags were tracked. Out of the 325 businesses surveyed, 152 businesses presented an opportunity for intervention.



= Businesses considering expanding in the next 2 years.

= 90 businesses.



= Businesses considering relocating, downsizing, selling, or closing. Also, businesses whose lease expires in less than a year.

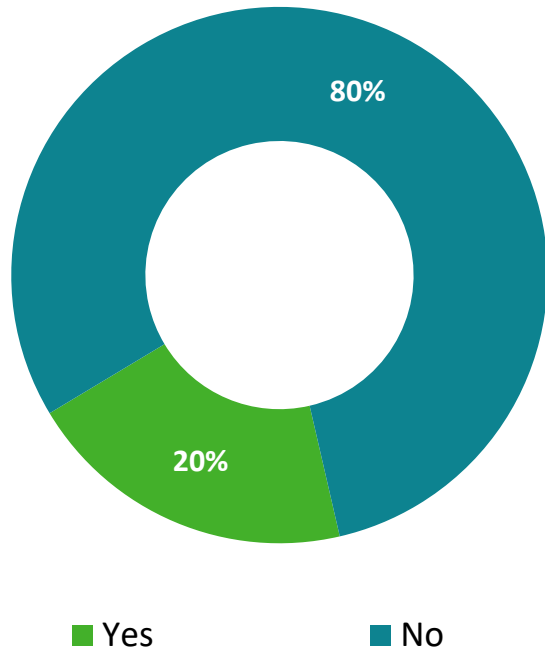
= 62 businesses



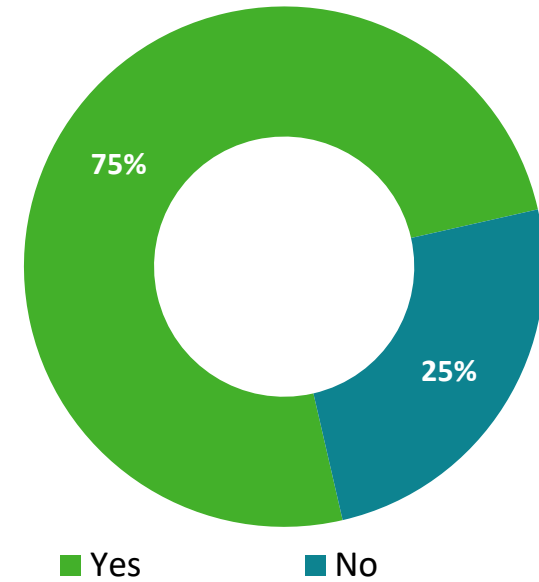
# Mentoring



Leduc County has created a business resource centre to support businesses as they start up and grow in the County. Would you be interested in mentoring other local businesses?(n=325)



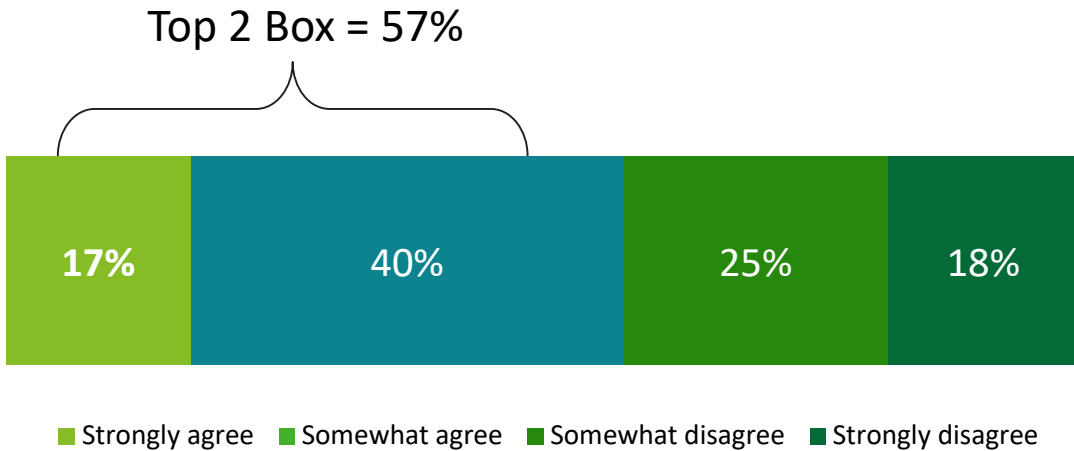
Is it okay to share your individual responses with your local economic development representatives so that they can develop initiatives to improve the County's business climate?



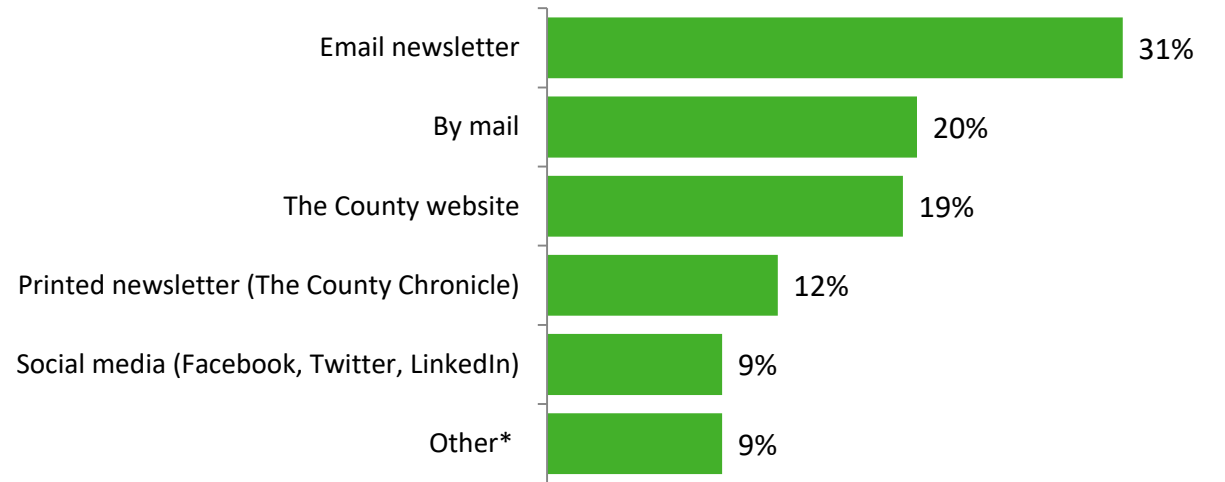
# County - Businesses Communications



Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: I know who I need to talk to at the County if I have a problem with my business or a business concern I'd like to share.



How do you prefer that the County communicate with you about business-related programming, resources, initiatives, and opportunities for input? (n=325)



\* Other responses included Phone call, open houses, county counselor and in person meetings.



## Who engaged

Of the 325 respondents who participated in our survey...

- **79 per cent** represented businesses that are **locally owned and operated**.
- **55 per cent** represented businesses that have been **operating in the community for more than 10 years**.
- **78 per cent** represented businesses with **one to 20 employees**.
- **58 per cent** represent businesses which **own** their properties.

## What we're doing now

Since the conclusion of the survey, we have begun following up with businesses who identified challenges or opportunities with a one-on-one visit from one of our Economic Development team members. These visits can help us to:

- get additional information on work force and labour challenges,
- understand what resources and support the business community needs,
- share information on the programs and supports Economic Development will be rolling out, and
- track any statistics on new and growth-stage companies for future planning.

To learn more about how we can help or to inquire about our business visitation program, contact us at [ecdev@leduc-county.com](mailto:ecdev@leduc-county.com) or call Maureen Easton, economic development officer, at **587-879-9804**.