

Business Retention & Expansion Survey Report

September 2018

SUMMARY

Established economic development studies consistently demonstrate that the majority of all job growth comes from existing businesses (SBA Office of Advocacy). Investing in the health of local business and industry is the primary key to regional economic sustainability. Thus, the Clear Creek Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) initiated a Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program, which began with a BR&E survey that took place during August - September 2018.

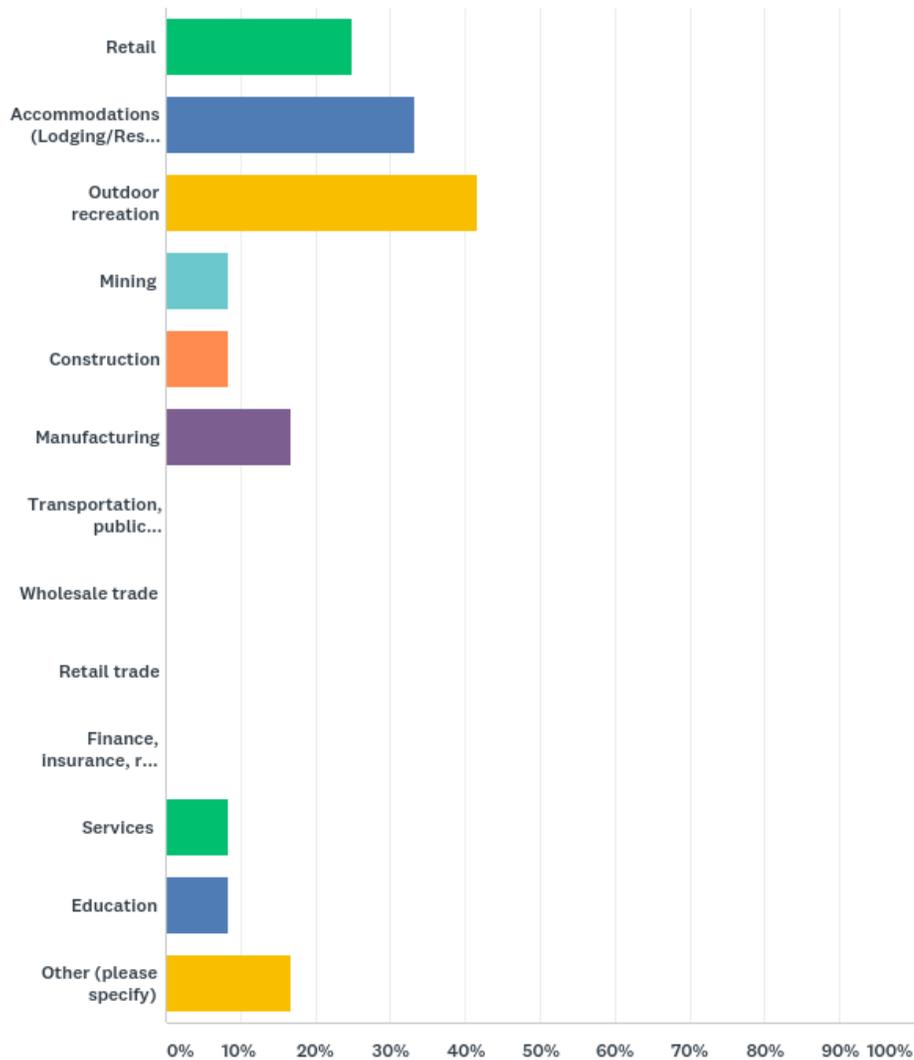
As part of our growing BR&E program, we will continue to interview a select number of businesses each year moving forward. The CCEDC Board of Directors will use the information and feedback gathered to drive the current and future goals of the organization.

PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES

Twelve businesses were asked to complete the survey—over half were surveyed in person (each survey took approximately 1.5 hours to complete) and the remaining surveys were completed online through SurveyMonkey. All survey participants are confidential and have been documented in a way to protect anonymity. To maintain trust within the business community, and to ensure the most honest feedback as possible, the CCEDC will not be releasing the names of participating businesses.

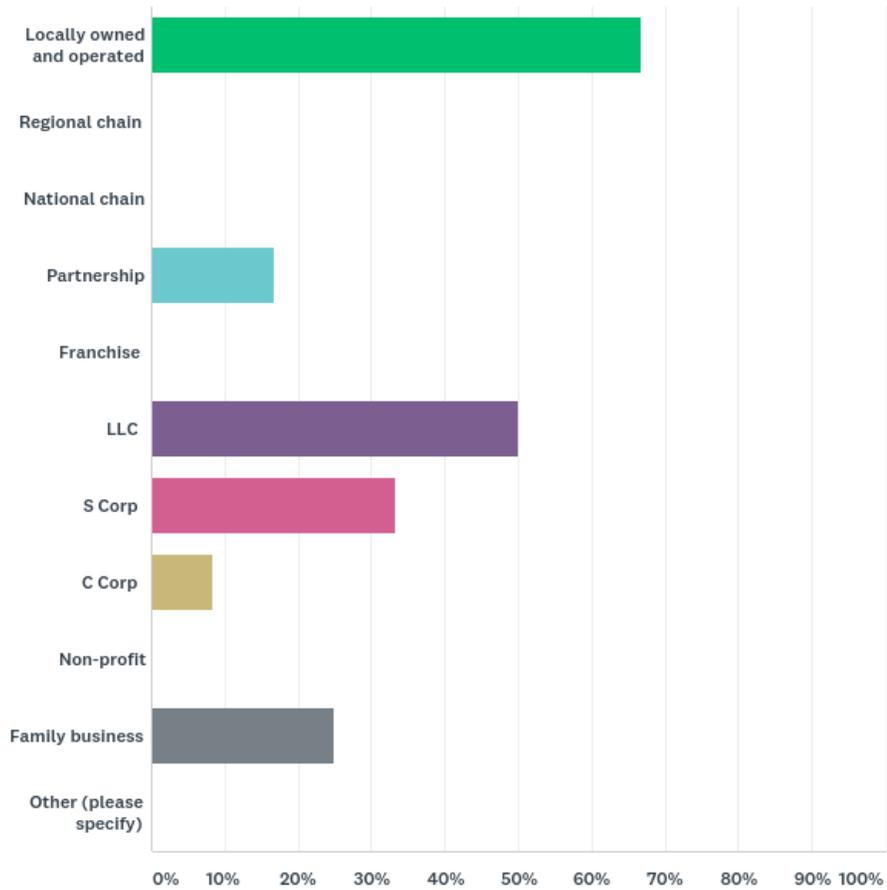
SHORT ANSWER RESULTS

Q4 Which of the following industries best describes your business? (Check all that apply.)



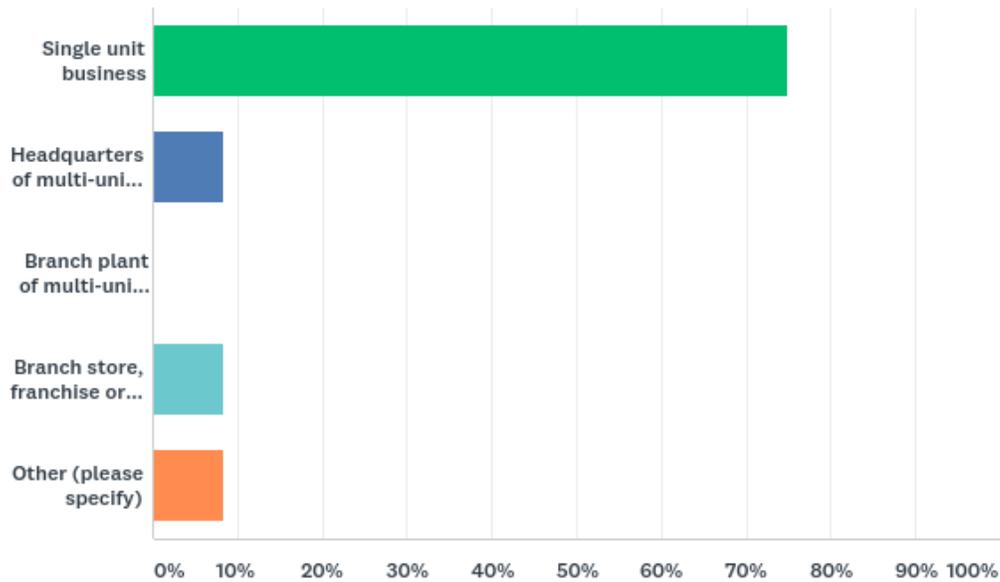
* Answered 12 / Skipped 0 * Other (please specify): Tours, Day Spa

Q5 Which of the following classifications best describes your business? (Check all that apply.)



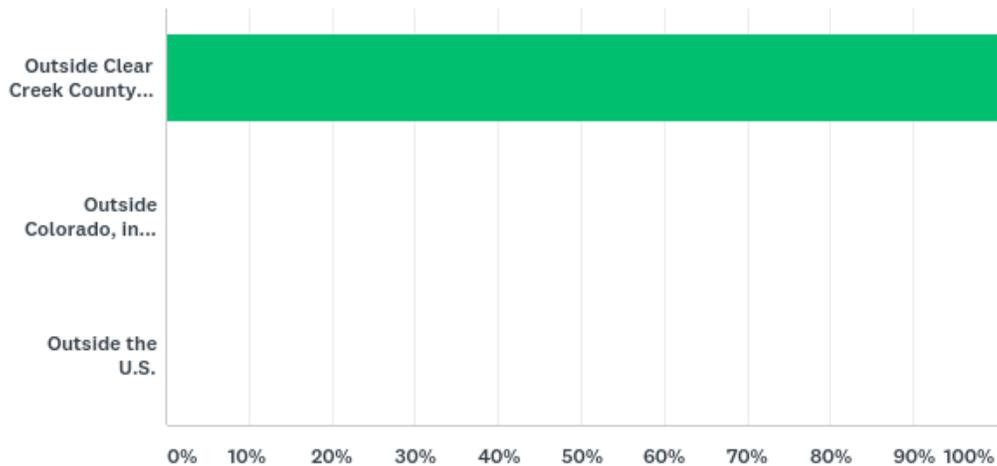
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Q6 How is your business structured?



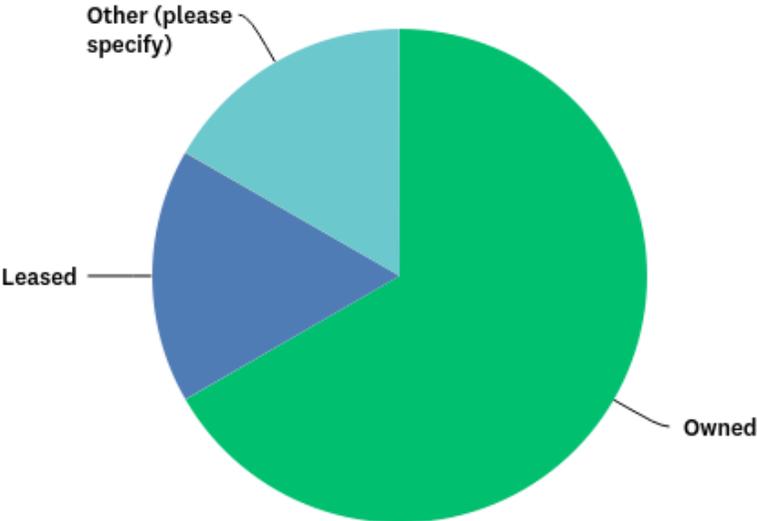
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Q7 If a multi-unit firm, where is company headquarters located?



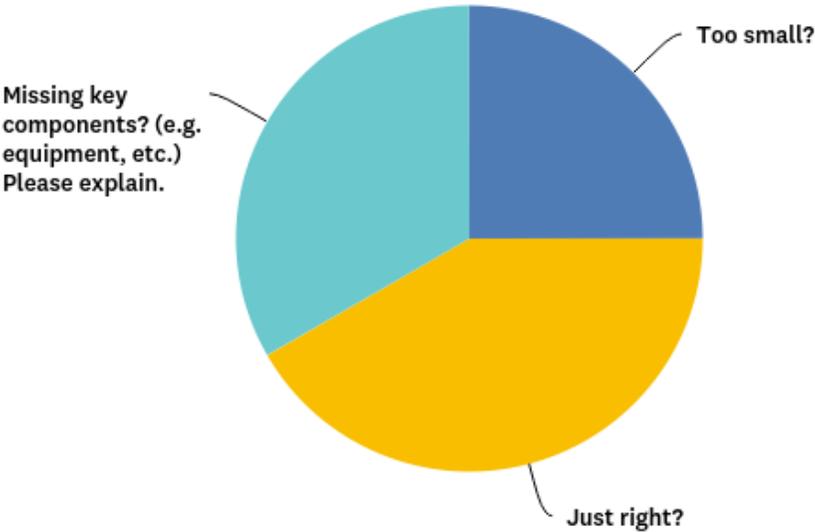
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Q9 Your business location in Clear Creek County is...



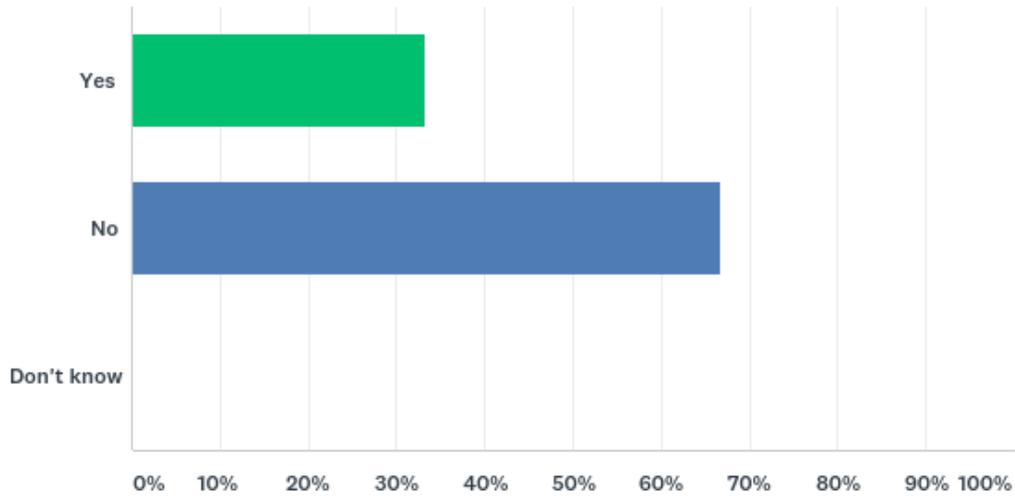
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Q11 Is your present location...



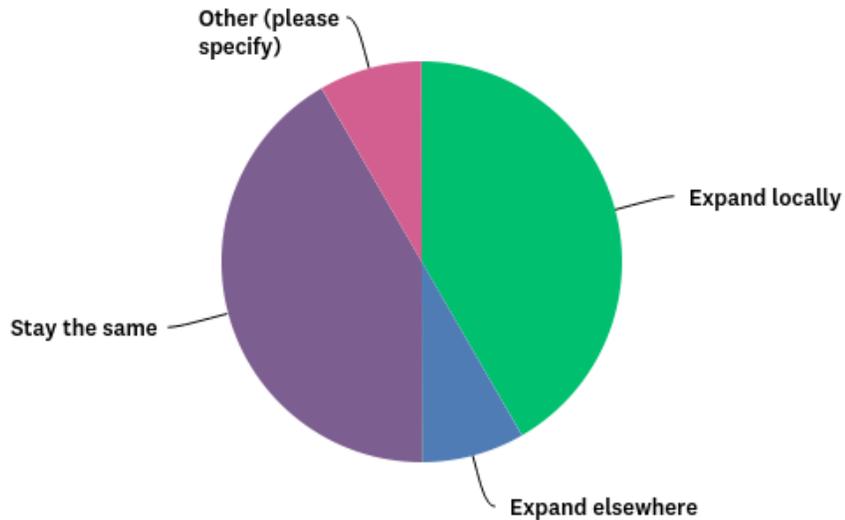
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Q15 In the past five years, has your business changed ownership?



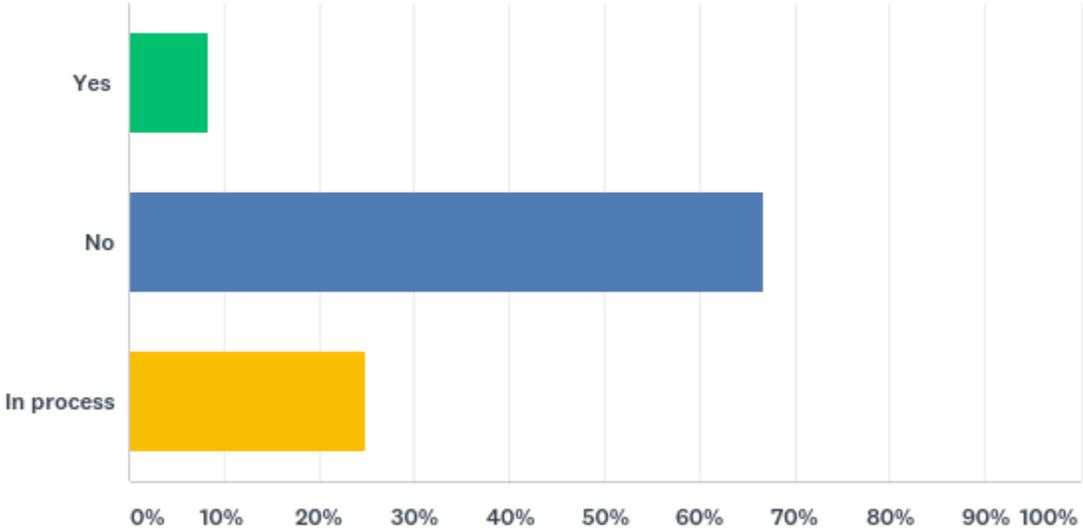
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Q16 In the next 2-3 years, do you plan to...



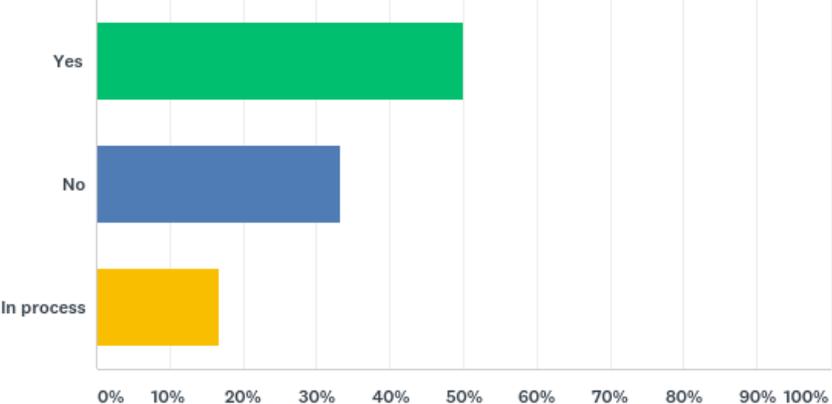
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Q17 Does your business have a written succession plan?



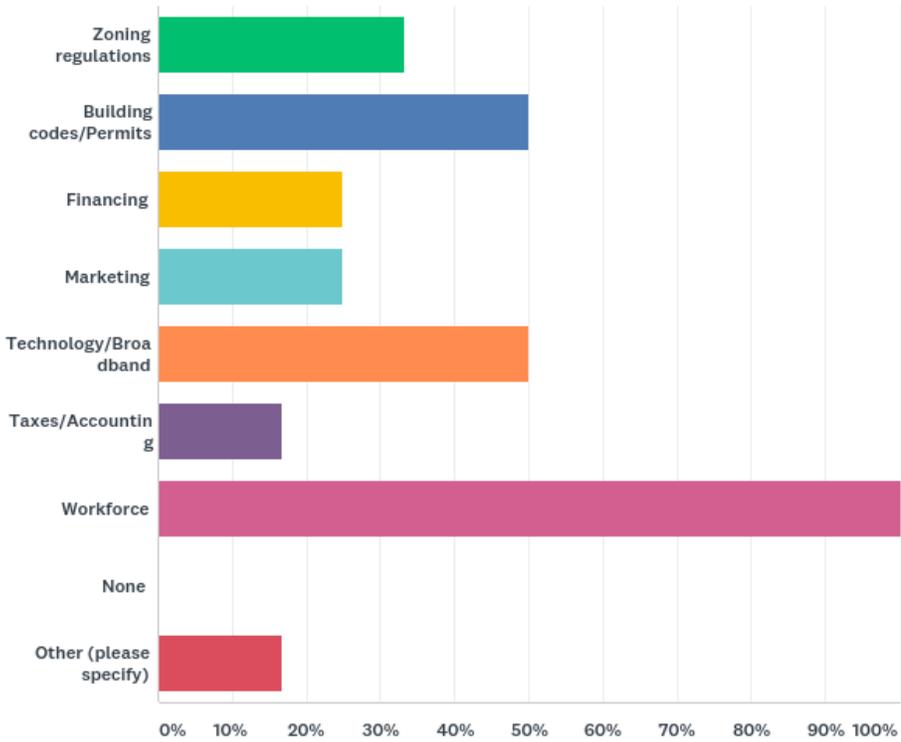
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Q18 Does your business have a short term operating plan or COOP (Continuity of Operations Plan)?



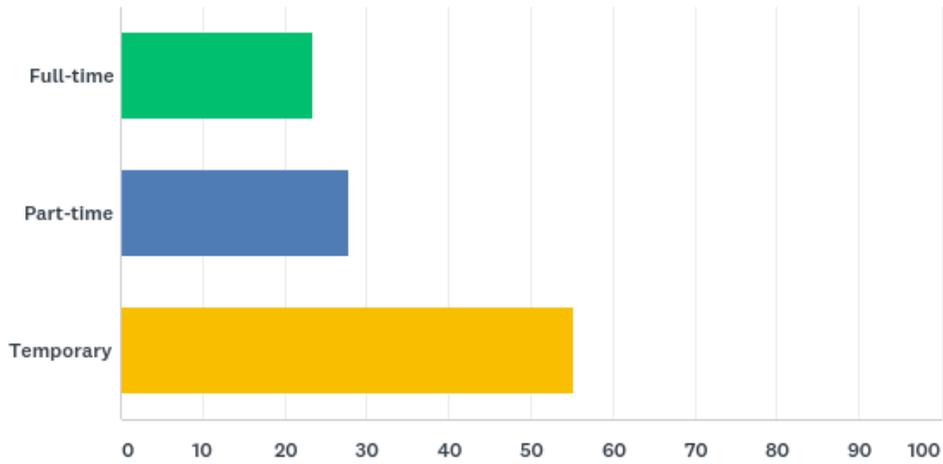
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Q19 Do any of the following currently present your business with difficulties? (Check all that apply.)



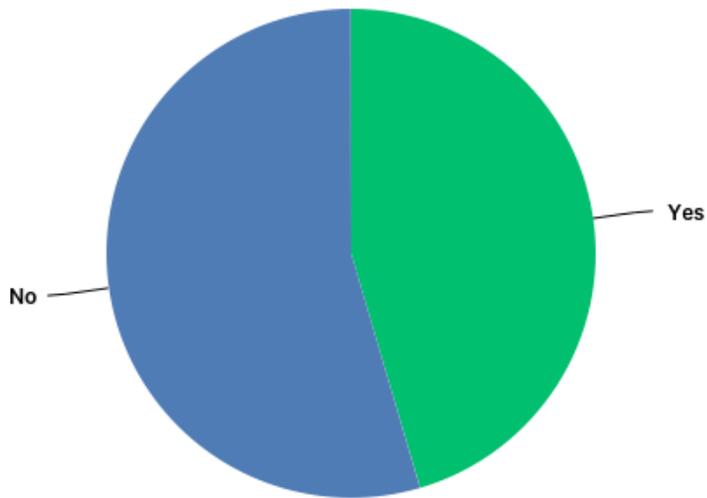
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Q21 How many employees does your business have currently?



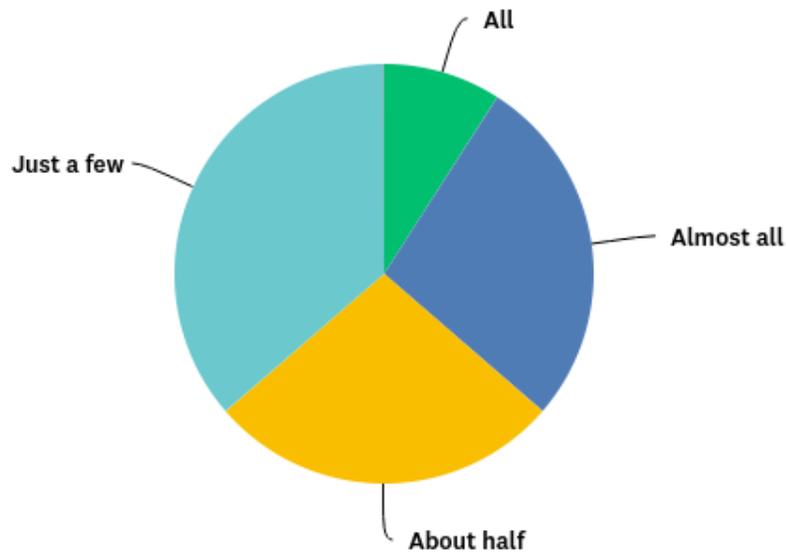
* Answered 12 / Skipped 0 * Total Employees = 780 (FTE 280, PTE 279, Temp 221)

Q23 Does the business owner live in Clear Creek County?



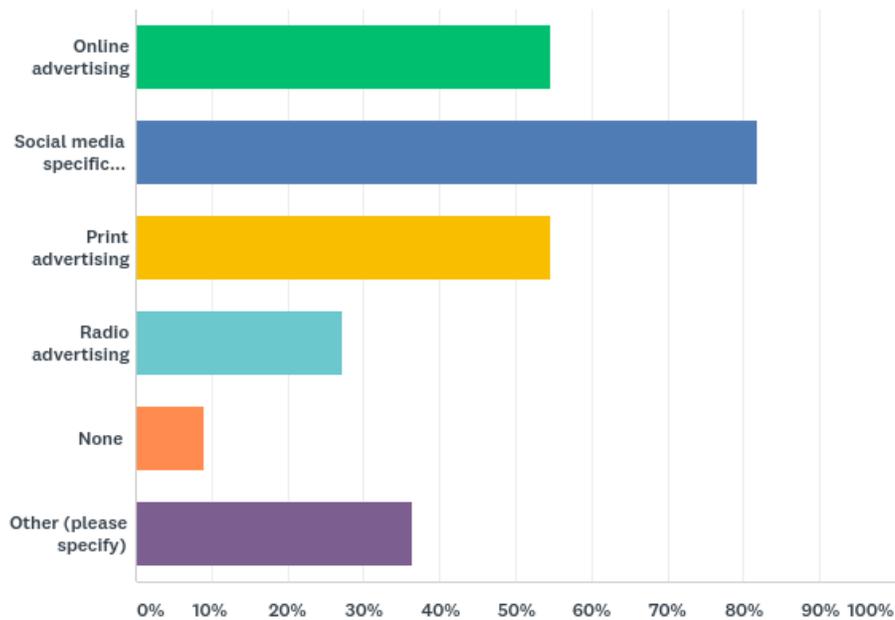
* Answered 11 / Skipped 1

Q24 Do the business's employees live in Clear Creek County?



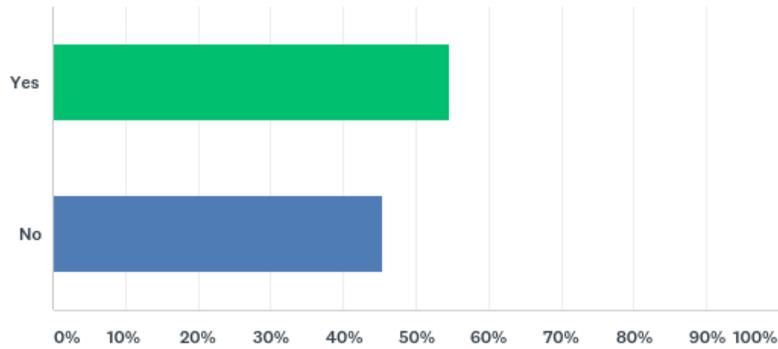
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Q29 What best describes your current marketing efforts? (Check all that apply.)



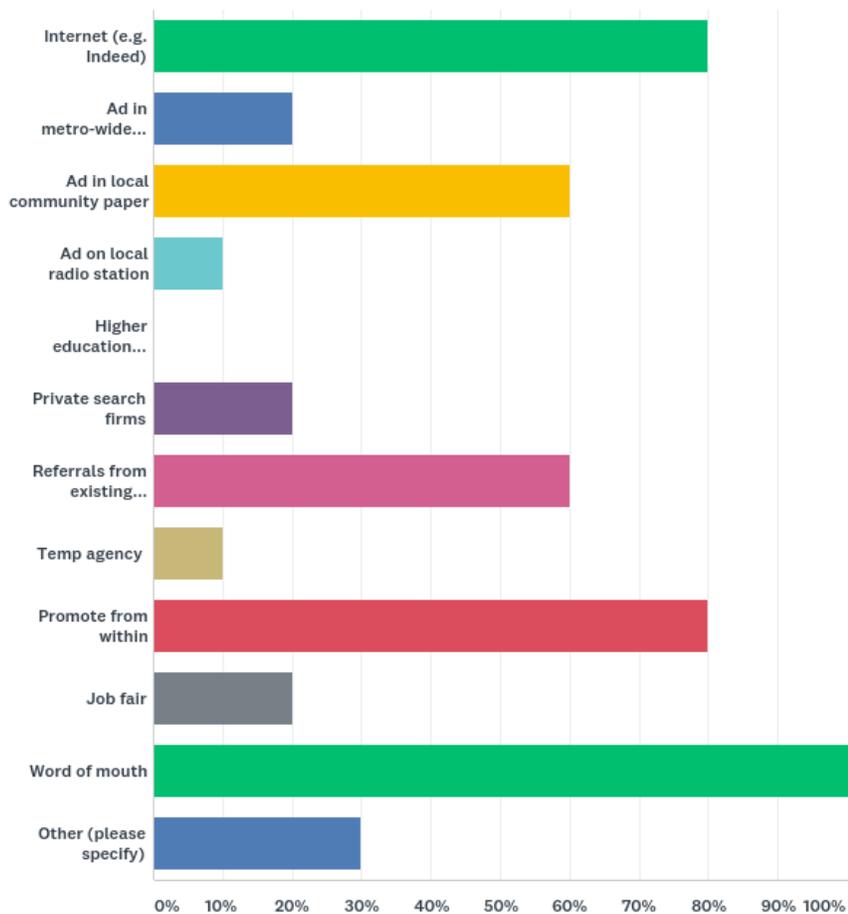
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Q31 Does your business distribute products and/or services online?



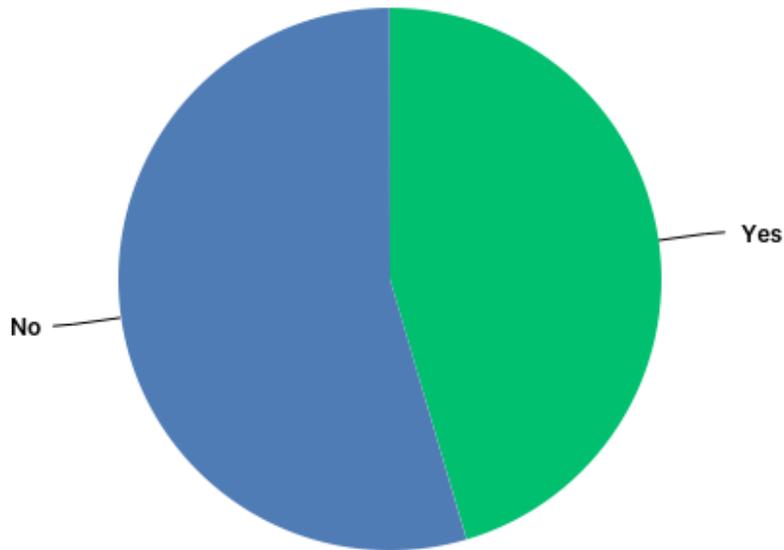
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Q32 What resources are currently being used to recruit new employees? (Check all that apply.)



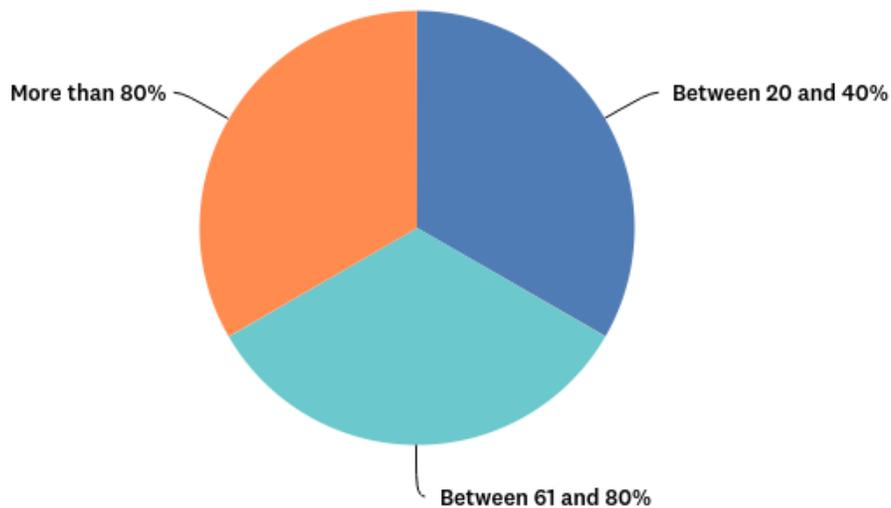
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Q33 Are your employees offered healthcare benefits?



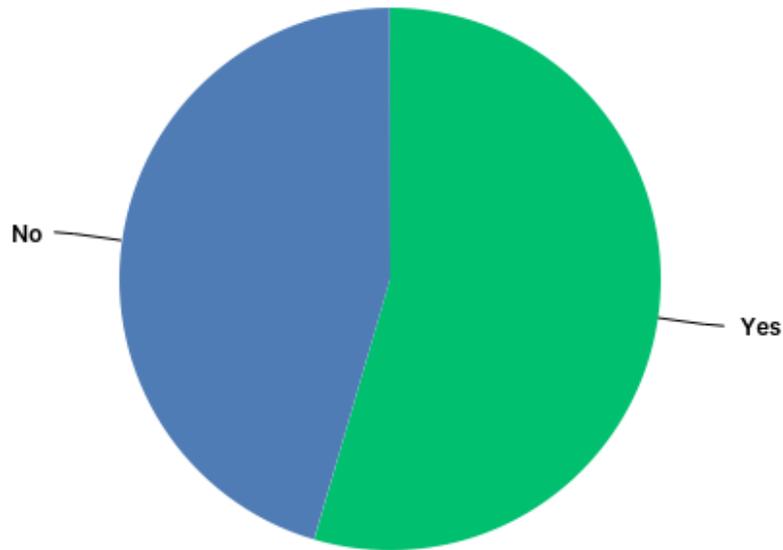
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Q34 If yes, what percentage of healthcare premiums are paid by the business?



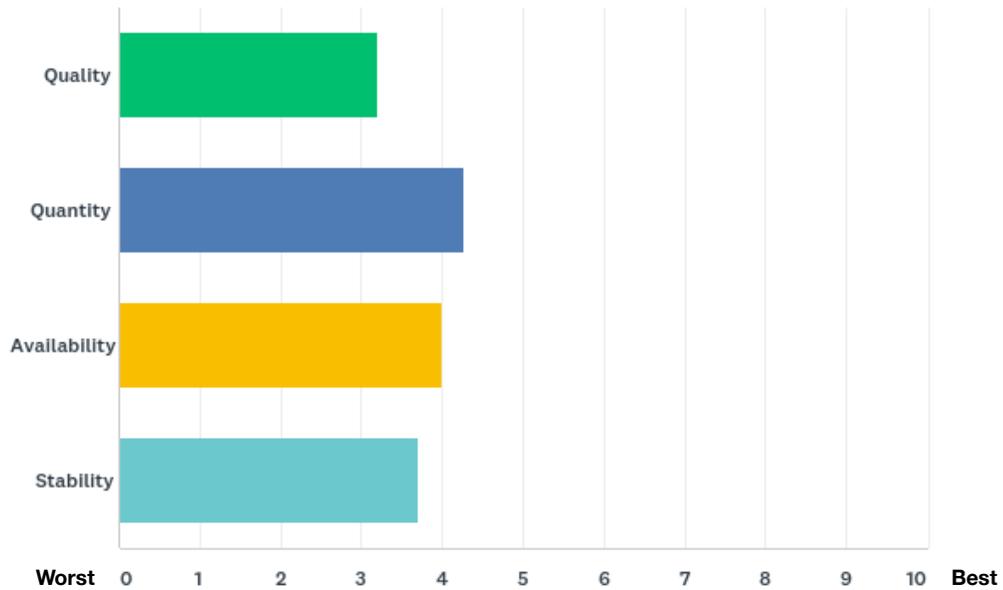
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Q35 Does your business offer retirement benefits?



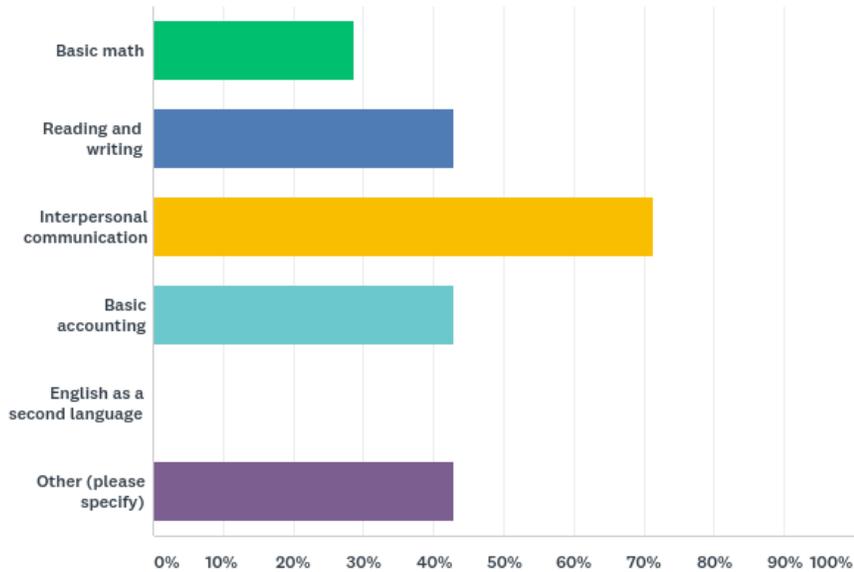
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Q36 How would you rank Clear Creek County's labor force?



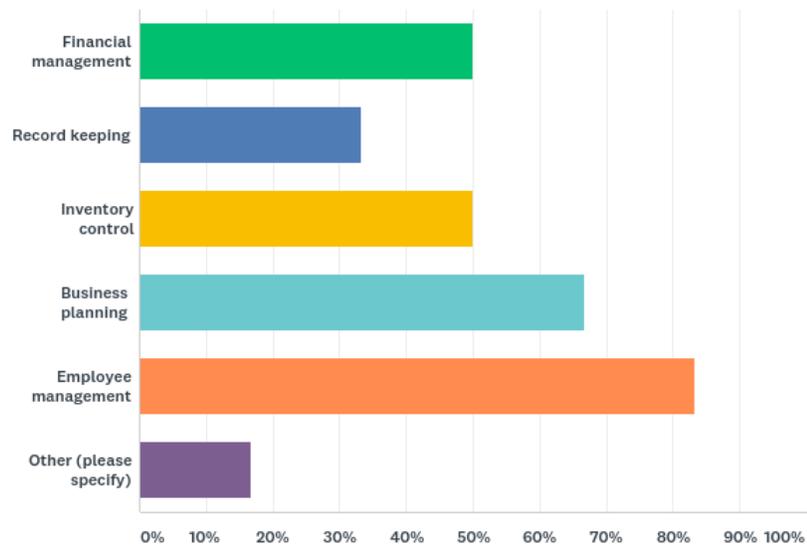
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Q37 What, if any, necessary general skills are lacking among your current employees?
(Check all that apply.)



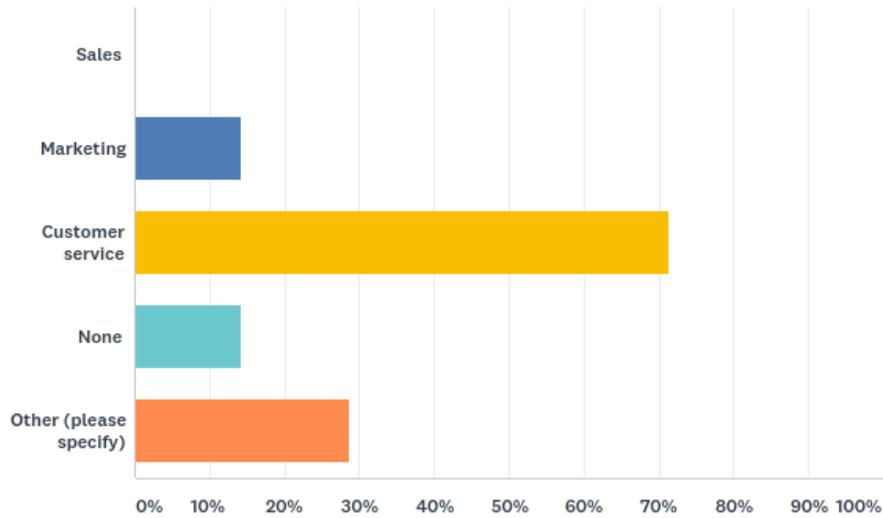
* Answered 7 / Skipped 5

Q38 What, if any, necessary managerial skills are lacking among your current employees?
(Check all that apply.)



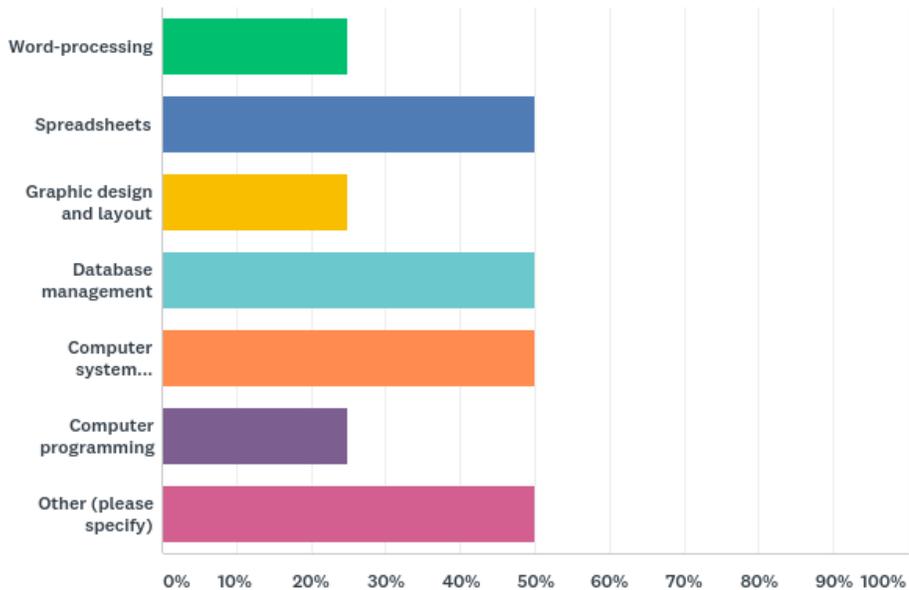
* Answered 6 / Skipped 6

Q39 What, if any, necessary professional skills are lacking among your current employees?



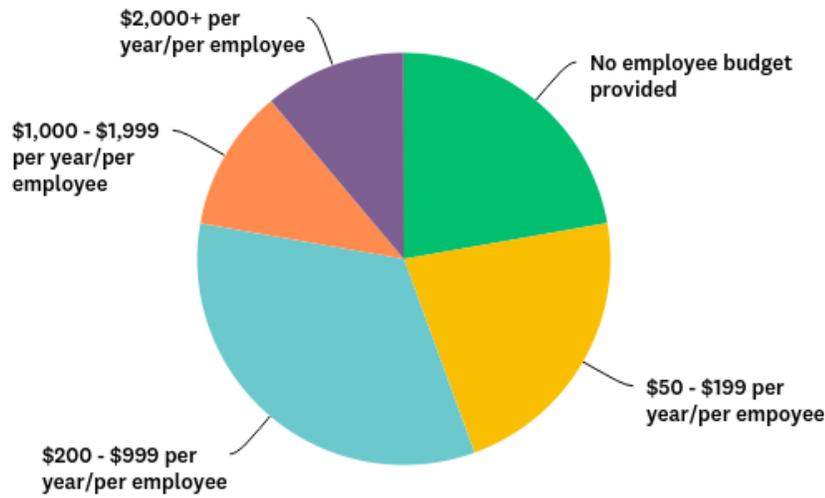
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Q40 What, if any, necessary specialized computer skills are lacking among your current employees?



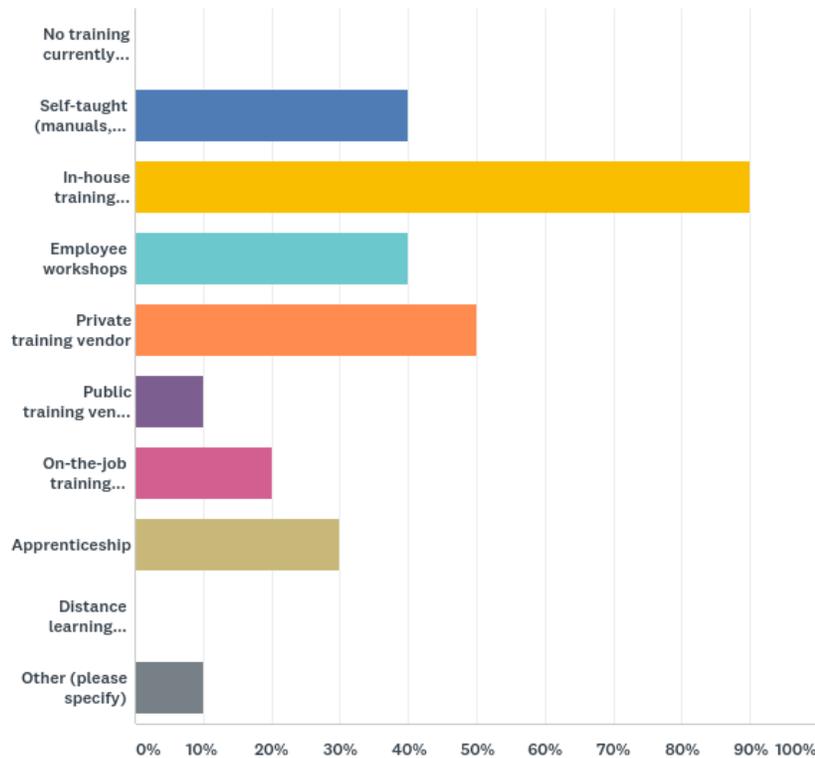
* Answered 4 / Skipped 8

Q45 With respect to employee training, what best describes your business's budget?



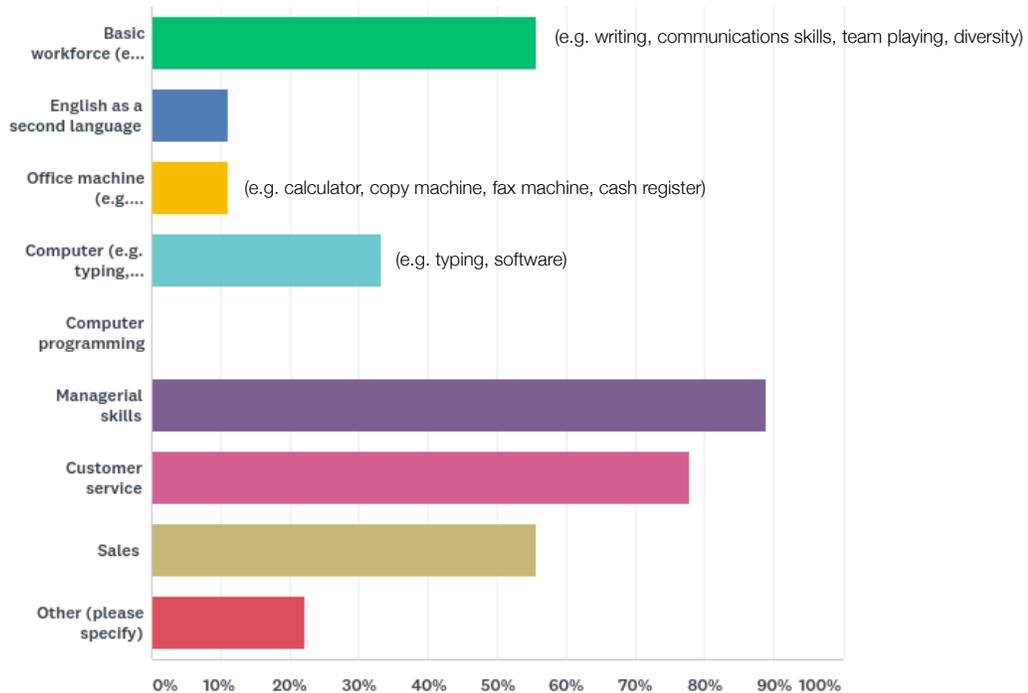
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Q46 How are your employees currently trained? (Check all that apply.)



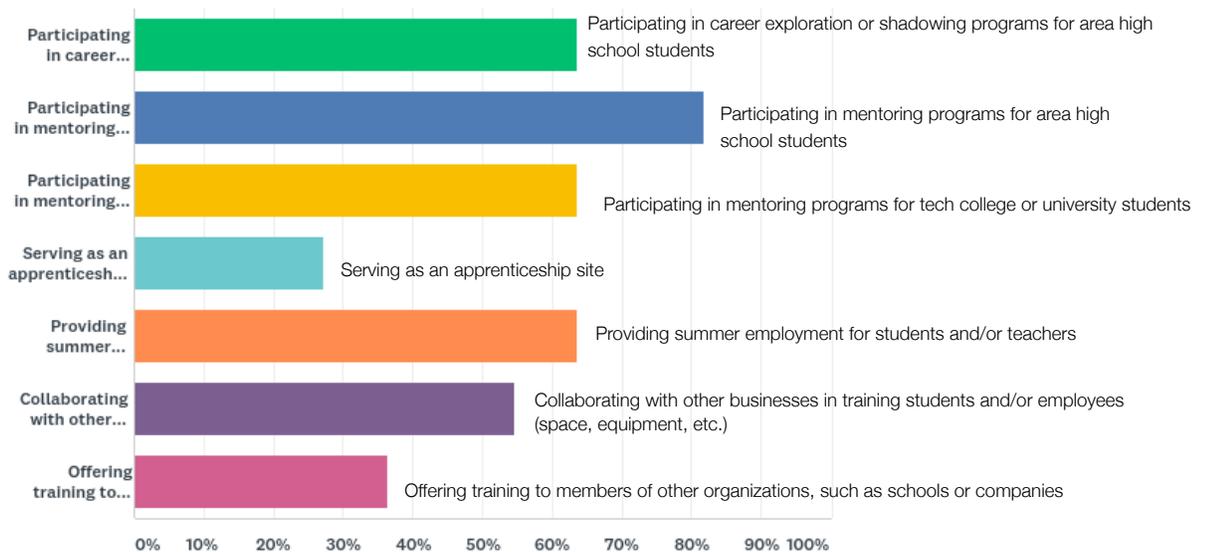
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Q49 Would training opportunities in any of the following areas be helpful to your business?
(Check all that apply.)



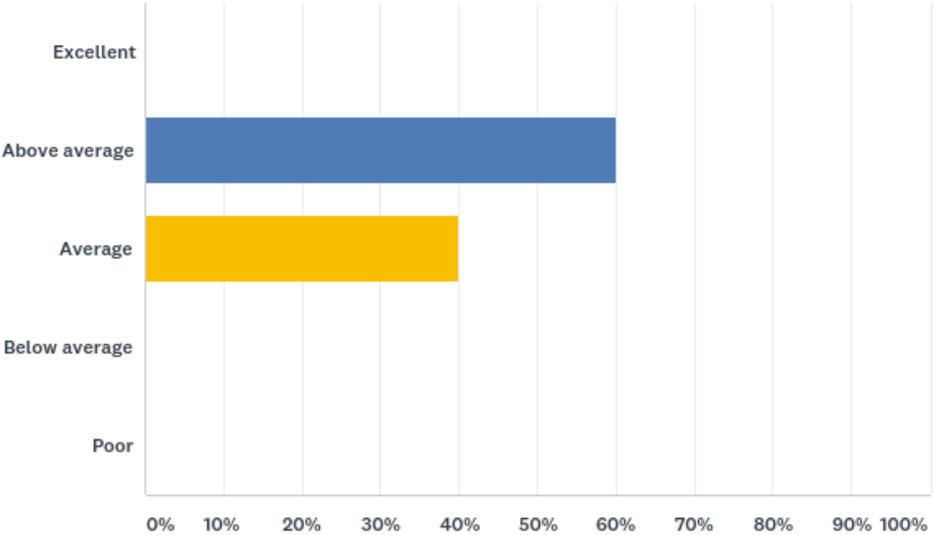
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Q50 Would you be interested in any of the following outreach programs? (Check all that apply.)



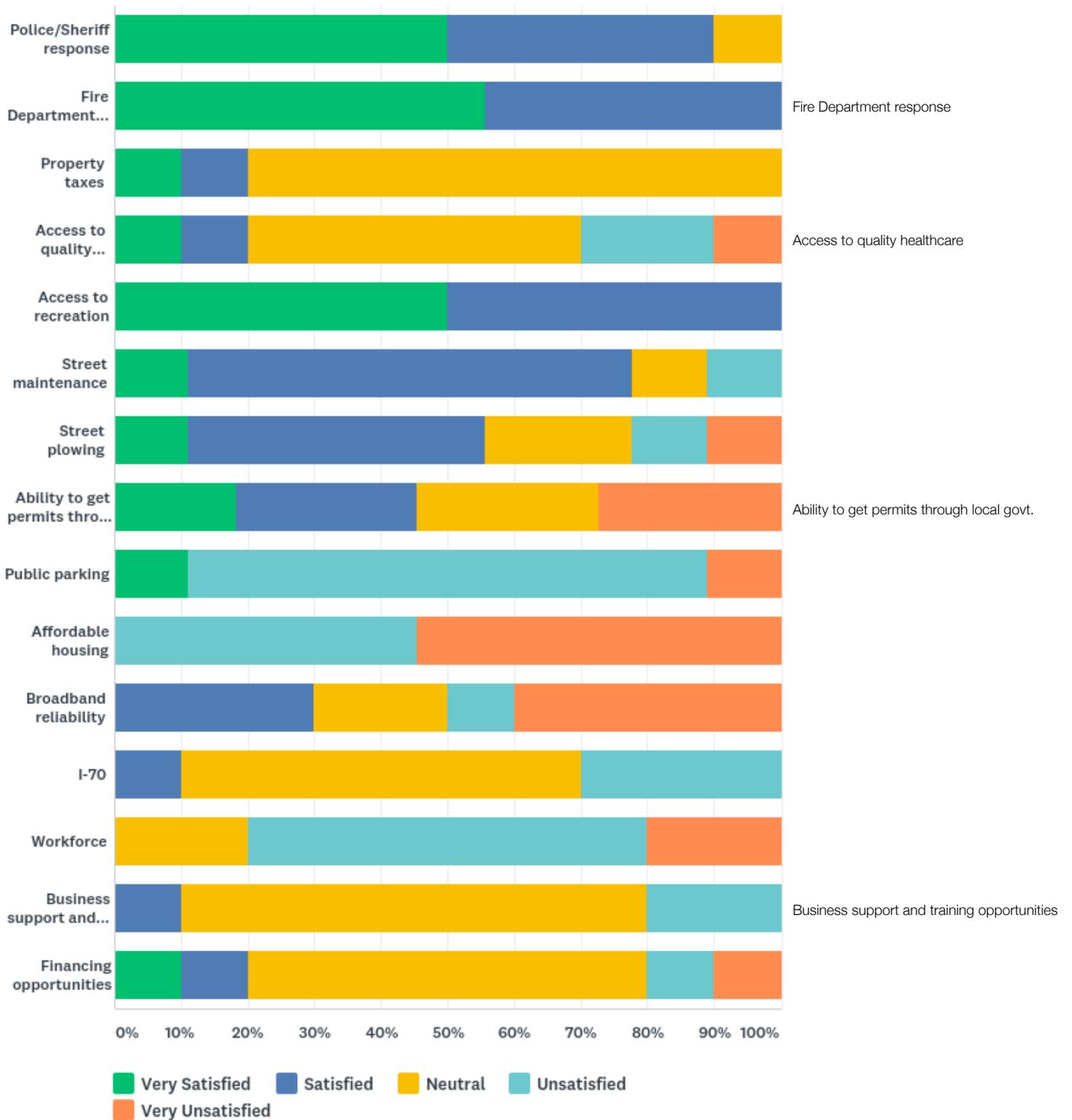
* Answered 11 / Skipped 1

Q51 Overall, how do you feel about the business climate in Clear Creek County?



* Answered 10 / Skipped 2

Q57 Please describe your satisfaction on the following.



* Answered 11 / Skipped 1

LONG ANSWER RESULTS

Why did you decide to locate your business in Clear Creek County?

“The growth opportunities. There are no other mountain town opportunities with this proximity to Denver that have not already been saturated (discovered and commercialized).”

“Well-suited and available commercial building.”

“We knew the location was a great opportunity when we first saw it. We had always wanted to start a full service restaurant, but never had the resources to achieve it.”

“We’ve lived and worked here for years. We took advantage of the chance to own our own small business here. It gives us flexibility and stability.”

“The beauty and proximity to Denver.”

If more than half of your business’s employees live outside Clear Creek County, why do you think that is?

“Partially due to being closer to another county.”

“The cost of housing and lack of available short term leases.”

“Affordability and available housing.”

“No housing. My employees would love to live in Clear Creek County; however, I only have one employee that actually lives up here. It is challenging just to get applicants. I even had a potential manager turn down the job, as he could not find real estate in the area.”

“We are about to lose one, possibly two, employees within the next year. They are moving because of the cost of living here.”

“Lack of affordable and appropriate housing.”

“No affordable housing for employees to rent or buy.”

“My staff would definitely be interested in living in Clear Creek County if there was availability and affordability.”

What, if any, other specialized skills and/or specialized equipment skills are lacking among your current employees?

“It can be difficult to find employees with trade skills, such as mechanics, plumbers, electricians, etc.”

“Heavy equipment operators.”

“Technical skills, such as mechanics and electricians.”

Are there specific workplace skills that have not been identified that your business is in need of?”

“Would like to be able to find employees that have a basic understanding of how a business works.”

“Would like employees who can comprehend basic food safety and why it is so important.”

“Looking for employees with intuition and awareness - an ability to see what needs to be done.”

“Customer service training is HUGE. I would also like to see employee training on the history of the area. I’m pretty sure my staff just make things up.”

“Would like to see leadership training for employees, DOLA has been a great resource in the past. Also consider creating a young business leaders group.”

How could the business climate in Clear Creek County be improved?

“Need to find ways to streamline County and City processes to ensure businesses can develop at the rate they require. Unnecessary processes will continue to hinder (the already extraordinary amount of) development in the area, and businesses will then look to expand in areas where they don’t have to deal with this.”

“Need housing.”

“Need more collaboration between regulatory and government bodies.”

“Need workforce, housing and parking.”

“Need better permitting processes and a larger workforce.”

“I would like to see businesses work together as opposed to thwarting each other for petty reasons.”

“The workforce is so important. I would love to support any outreach training that would put quality employees in front of tourists.”

“Need more employee housing and lodging accommodations.”

“There needs to be a better understanding of the benefits and implementation processes of public/private partnerships to move projects forward.”

“Need a liaison between the business community and the city when it comes to policy issues.”

In your opinion, what is the biggest concern for businesses in Clear Creek County? Do you have suggestions on how to address this concern?

“Need to find ways to sustainably grow and become self-sufficient without the mine, while not alienating County residents. Also, educating County residents on the challenges the County faces if sustainable revenue is not achieved.”

“Biggest concern is environmental regulation.”

“Biggest concerns are the usual - workforce, housing, parking. There is no quick fix.”

“Biggest concern is parking. Taxes are also a concern - sales tax is nearly a percentage point higher compared to areas of Denver.”

“ We need a balance of workforce housing. Our staff cannot stimulate the economy when their entire check goes into just keeping a roof over their head. The seasonality is also a huge problem, and for some businesses, we’re not able to invest our summer revenues into positive growth or expansion, because we need it all to keep our quality people employed through the shoulder season.”

“Biggest concern is staffing. Also concerned with local health services - the majority of our employees live along the corridor. Not having full service medical services is a concern for them.”

“Biggest concerns are workforce, cost of living, housing and parking.”

“Housing and parking!”

“Broadband is a huge concern, as well as affordable housing.”

“Biggest concerns are housing, workforce availability and financing barriers.”

“Offering healthcare is a challenge. Even if the business is paying half of the premiums, it is still prohibitive.”

“We would be interested in being able to offer health care coverage if it was reasonable. Administrative hurdles are definitely a challenge.”

“The biggest drain on business is the regulatory environment.”

Does I-70 impact your business? In what ways?

“Yes, it mostly helps bring more people to us.”

“Yes, 85% of our business comes off of I-70.”

“Yes, it is the main transportation route for delivery of our product.”

“Yes, it is our life blood.”

“Yes, it is most of our traffic.”

“Yes! When I-70 is congested, we’re busy. In the winter when it closes, it means so much revenue for us. We follow the traffic patterns very closely so we can staff accordingly.”

“Yes, both positively and negatively. I-70 brings guests, but is congested.”

“Absolutely! We notice a big difference when it closes due to a wreck or bad weather.”

“Yes, we have a hard time recruiting staff due to bad road conditions in the winter.”

“Yes, both positively and negatively. I-70 brings customers, but is also congested, which can deter visitors and developers.”

What is your view on property taxes, both commercial and residential?

“Property taxes should be carefully considered so as to not make the County too expensive for those that already live and do business here; however, they are necessary to drive revenue to county resources.”

“Very favorable, with the exception of undeveloped plotted land.”

“Kills small business. Large corporations get property tax incentives while small businesses pick up the bill.”

“I am very much in support of property taxes. On the flip side, our lease is triple net and we did not anticipate \$17k in taxes for our first two years of operation. That is money that would have gone into adding restrooms, newer equipment or infrastructure, but we accept that we have to manage it.”

“The Gallagher Amendment needs to be repealed. Commercial businesses pay too much.”

What is your understanding of the roles of the Clear Creek Economic Development Corporation? Have you utilized any of the CCEDC's programs and/or services?

"My understanding is they are working to build, support and drive new economic development within Clear Creek County. Yes, I've loved participating in some of the CCEDC's activities."

"I have only used the CCEDC as a referral agency, which has been positive."

"The CCEDC's role is to plan, support and stimulate the business climate."

"The CCEDC's role is to improve the commercial landscape in the County."

"I know the CCEDC is the life blood of many businesses in Clear Creek County."

"The CCEDC creates/supports economic development in the county. I have utilized the CCEDC loan program."

"The CCEDC's role is to help me have a successful business."

"The CCEDC is getting better and has the potential to be very inspirational!"

"Without the CCEDC's loan program, I would NOT have been able to open my business."

"The CCEDC should support the removal of obstacles for the business community."

"The CCEDC should be an avenue to market the good stories—there are so many businesses giving back to their community."

Is there anything else you would like the CCEDC to know or consider?

Permitting

"There is no building department, which is frustrating. SAFEbuilt has been very hard to work with. The problem with privatization is SAFEbuilt has no intrinsic motivation to do what is best for the community. The motivation is to make as much money as possible by making the process as difficult as possible. I am forced to take my best guess when putting plans together and, without a doubt, get my permit denied and have to keep going back and forth, writing more and more \$150 checks for every visit by the inspector. SAFEbuilt continued to reject my permit and then came in for a final inspection, yet didn't even inspect—just collected the \$150. I am guessing there are businesses that never got to start because of the difficult permitting process."

"There needs to be someone with SAFEbuilt or city/county, etc. readily available to answer permit questions. There is very little support."

“Red tape should be easier. When I proposed a change to my building, you would have thought I was bringing in an oil refinery and plutonium. Just getting plans through was a nightmare. The regulations are out of control. My costs were tripled due to several regulations.”

“SAFEbuilt does not understand historic buildings and districts.”

“Regulations stopped plans for a building addition. There was a small issue that could have been solved by a minor amendment.”

“SAFEbuilt is costing the County in property tax. Projects are being held up or are not being completed.”

Henderson Mine

“I am tired of hearing about Henderson Mine. It is time to move on and focus on helping our small business community.”

“Sometimes it feels like Henderson Mine is strong-arming the community into doing what they think is best for us. They use funding as a means of control. Henderson starts discussions, wants to lead them, but doesn’t follow through.”

“Henderson Mine dangles funding in front of organizations like a carrot. It seems like funding is being used for more and more studies instead of meaningful economic development projects.”

“Henderson’s CPP meetings are not worth the time; they are way too long and are used as an image booster for Henderson.”

XCEL Energy

“We have consistent power outages (about 12 times per year), which also means we lose our water.”

“We plan every year for power outages. We understand that wind, etc. creates challenges, but the outages seem excessive.”

Internet Providers

“Broadband reliability is definitely an issue.”

“Cost for broadband service is high—there is little competition”

Other

“Thank you for all the CCEDC does for our community!”