



COWICHAN COVID-19 BUSINESS SURVEY #1

Survey Dates: May 19 to 27, 2020

Results Published: June 16, 2020

This Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) was undertaken to assess the impact of the COVID-19 event on Cowichan business operations. The research was collectively undertaken by the CVRD and community partners. The results have generated a Cowichan-specific snapshot that can be used to:

- Identify local business needs at a point in time
- Feed into regional economic recovery planning processes
- Allow the CVRD to lobby the Provincial Government on behalf of Cowichan businesses
- Provide data to support the work of local economic development organizations

This is the first in a series of surveys that will be launched over the coming three months to assess the progress of economic recovery within the regional district.

Key Findings:

Impacts on Cowichan Businesses

Cowichan Businesses have been sharply impacted by COVID-19.

- **56%** have **temporarily/indefinitely shut down**
- 3% (2) of the 70 businesses surveyed have closed their doors permanently
- **62%** seeing **revenue reductions of at least 75%**, compared with April of 2019
- **54%** have **reduced staff** from pre COVID-19 levels
- **37%** experienced disruptions to the **supply chain** they depend on to operate their business

Business Response

Every business surveyed has changed their business model in some way as a result of COVID-19.

- **30%** have incorporated **online ordering** options
- **24%** now offering **delivery** options
- 19% of businesses were allowing their workers to work remotely

Long-term Changes to Business Model

*Following COVID-19 changes to the business model that businesses intend to keep:

- **33%** plan for **increased participation in the digital economy**/other remote ordering options
- **36%** will keep **increased sanitation** procedures and other health precautions
- 11% expect ongoing challenges related to reduced occupancy

* The themes identified here have been drawn from responses to open ended questions. Every effort has been made to accurately reflect the spirit of the business owners' responses.



Greatest Challenges for Businesses/Resiliency

The **greatest challenges** for businesses in returning to regular business operations are:

- **Consumer Confidence (32%), Financial (35%), Operational/Health & Safety (57%) ***
- **41 %** identified that they do **not have the tools be resilient** to future economic shocks

Mental and Physical Wellbeing of Business Owners and Staff

*Business owners identified the ways the event has **affected the wellbeing, both mentally and physically**, of business owners (and staff). The responses have been summarized.

- **26%** either feel exhausted/have no energy/overwhelmed, **experience anxiety, or depression**
- **31%** are either **stressed or very stressed**, with 3% experiencing stress related illness
- **13 %** have been **severely negatively impacted** by the event
- 11% expressed that they or their staff were fearful/worried to resume work
- **29 %** identify **no impact**/minimal impact, that they are feeling resilient, or that they “now see the light at the end of the tunnel”

Vision for the Future

* *“What is your vision for the community we build together as we emerge from this event?”*

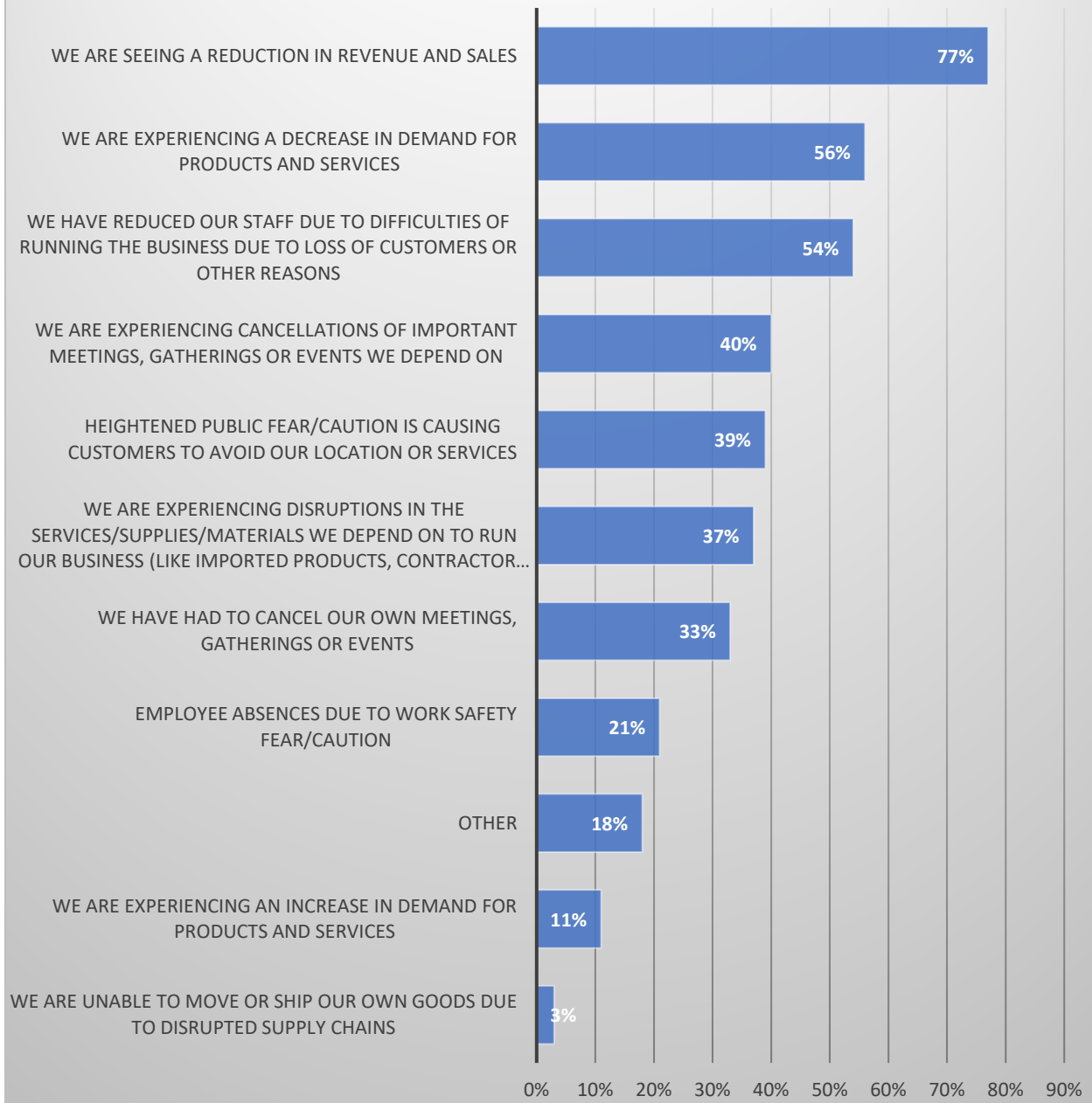
- **30%** identified the desire to **build community** coming out of this crisis
- **24%** want support for **buying locally**
- **16%** is hoping that public at large will be **understanding, compassionate and show kindness** to the business community in light of all the struggles all are facing

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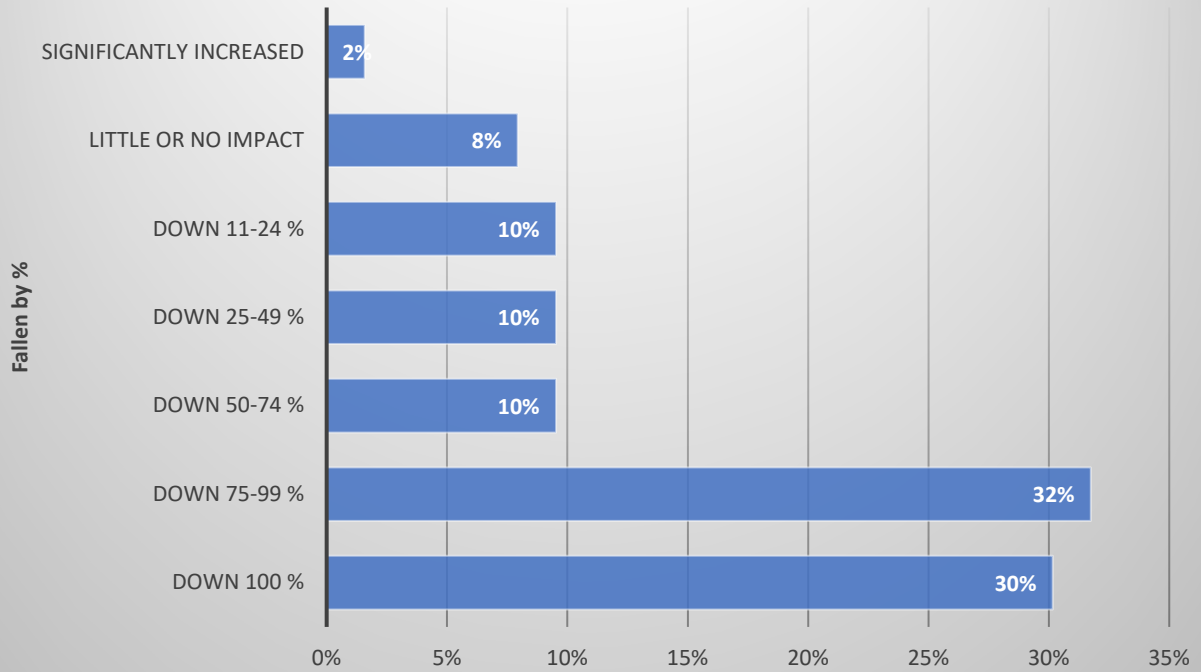
How Has COVID-19 Impacted Your Business?

(n=70)



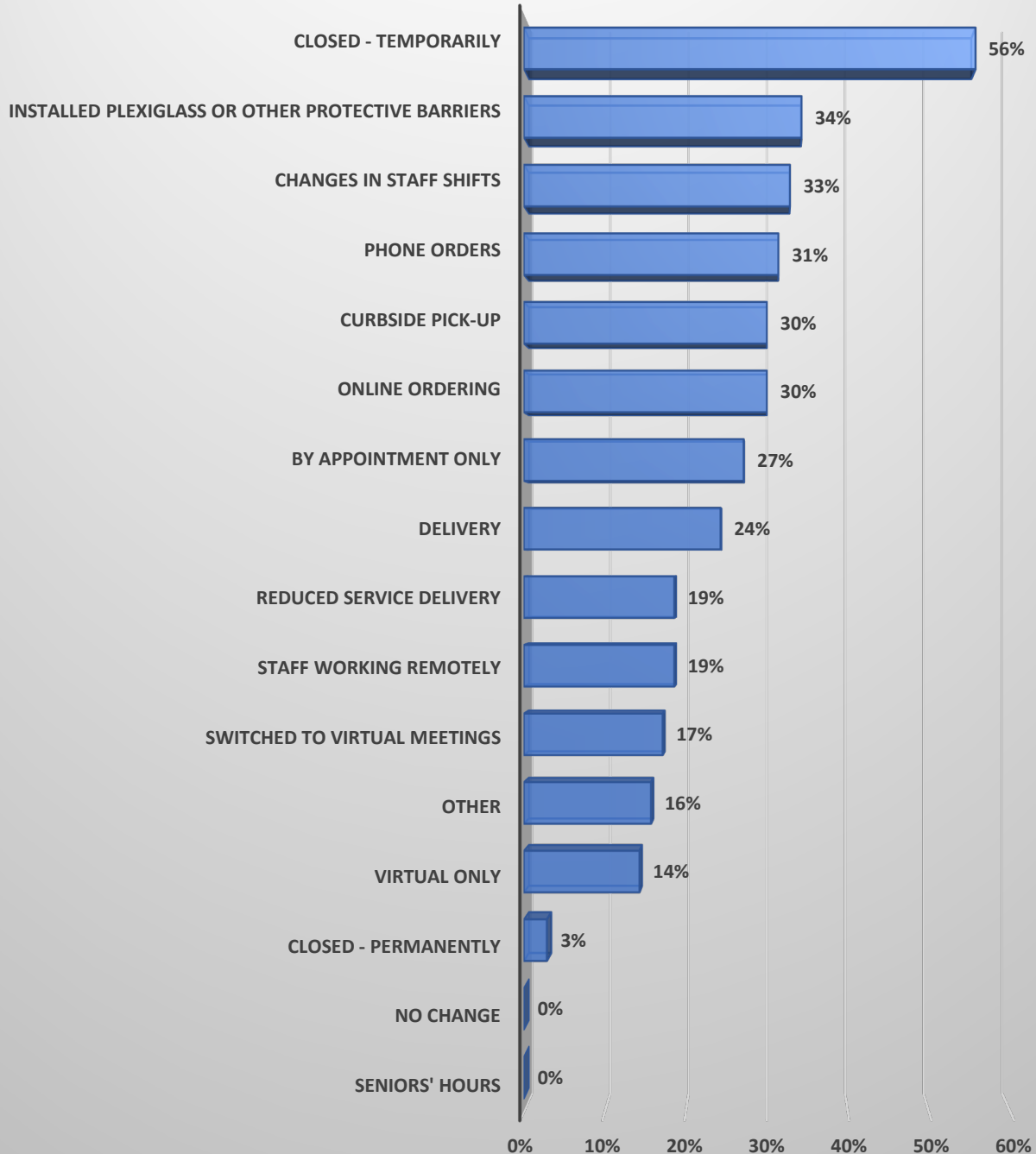


How does your revenue stream compare with April 2019? (n=63)

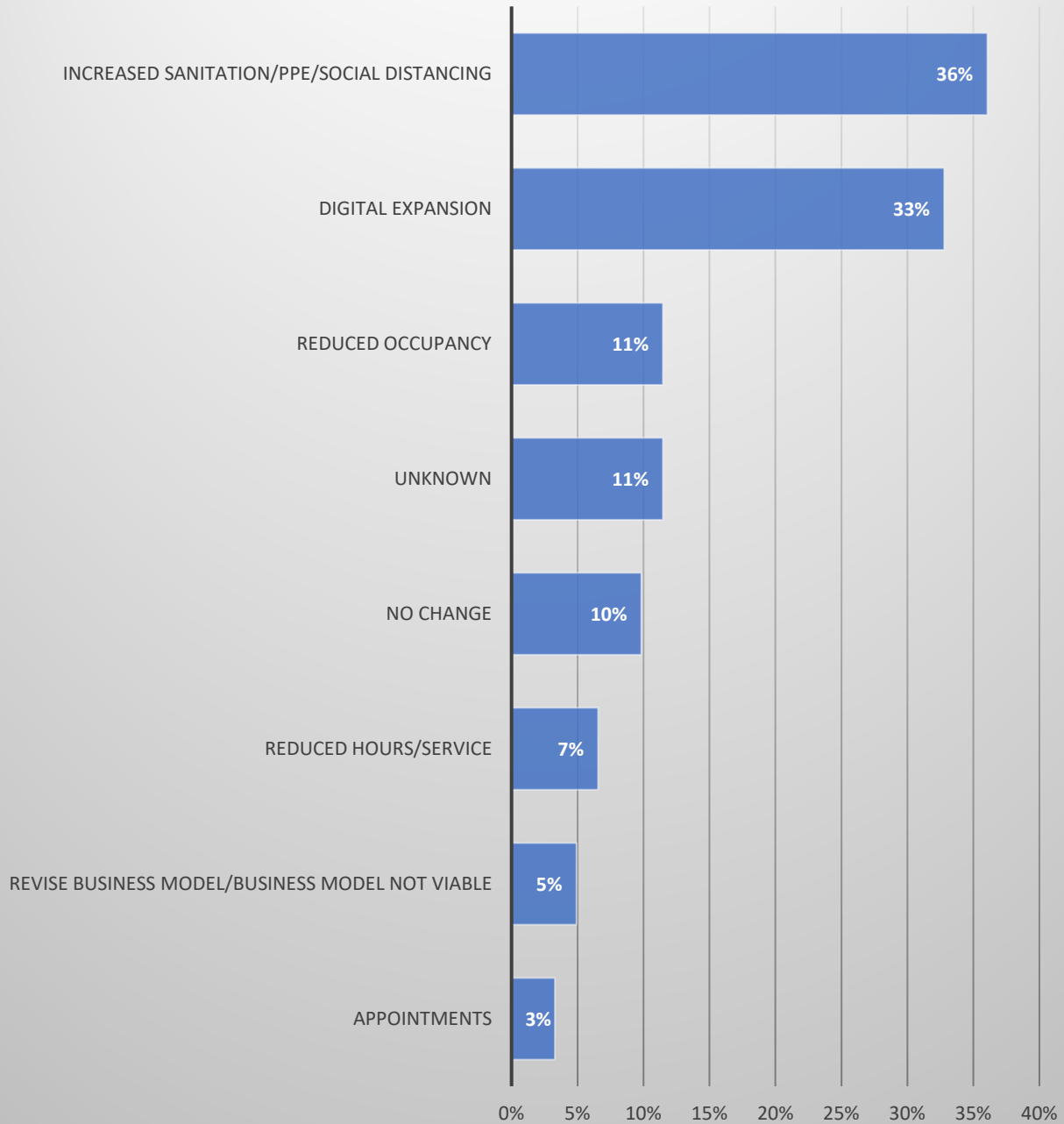




How have you changed your business model to adapt to this crisis? (n=70)

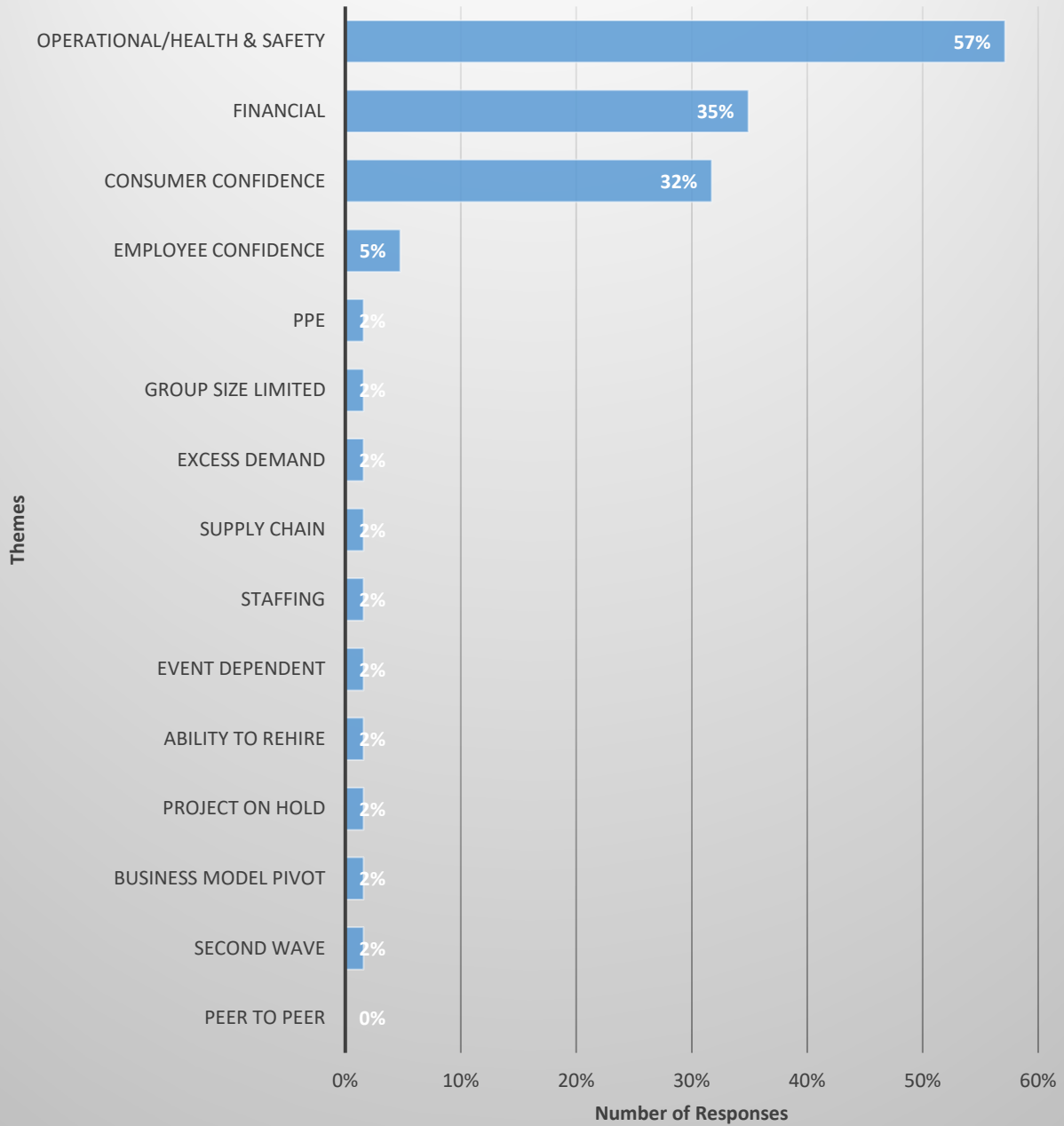


What changes to your business model do you intend to keep following COVID-19? (n=61)

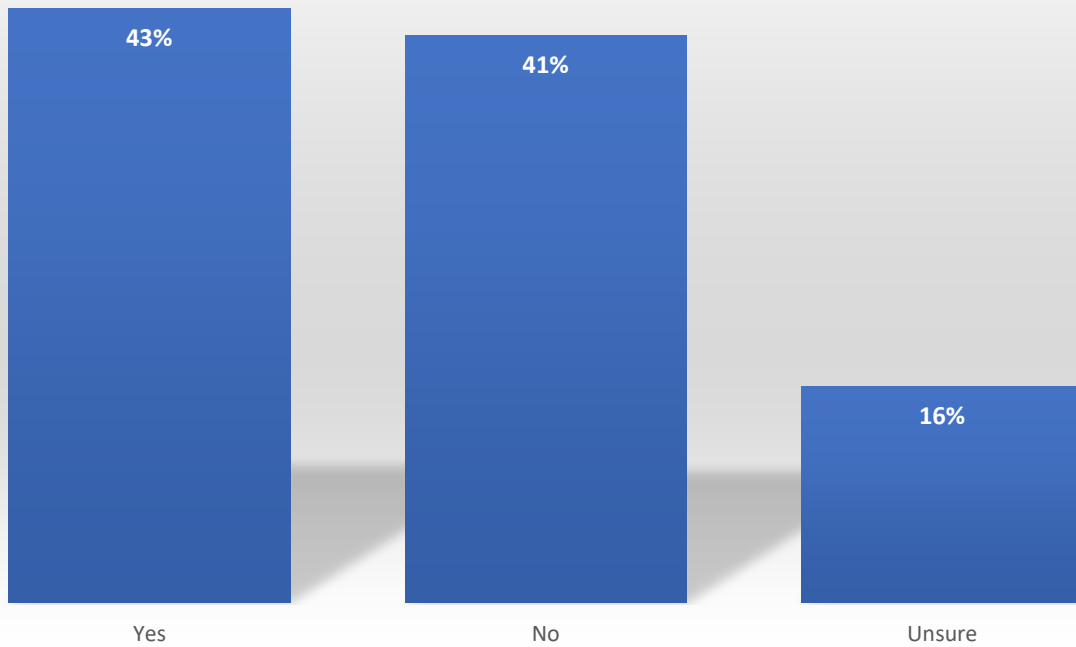




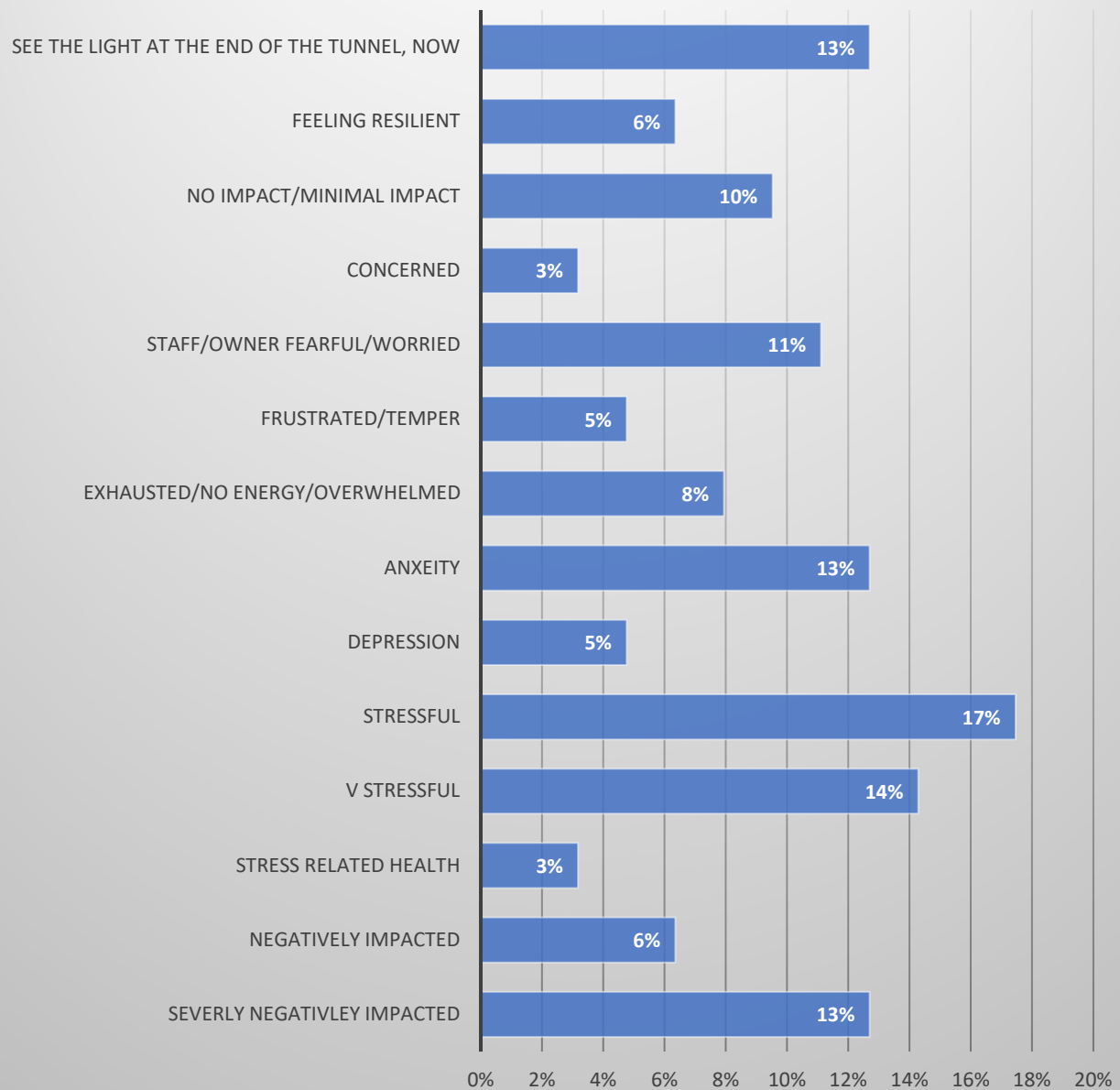
What are the greatest challenges you have in returning to regular business operations? (n=63)

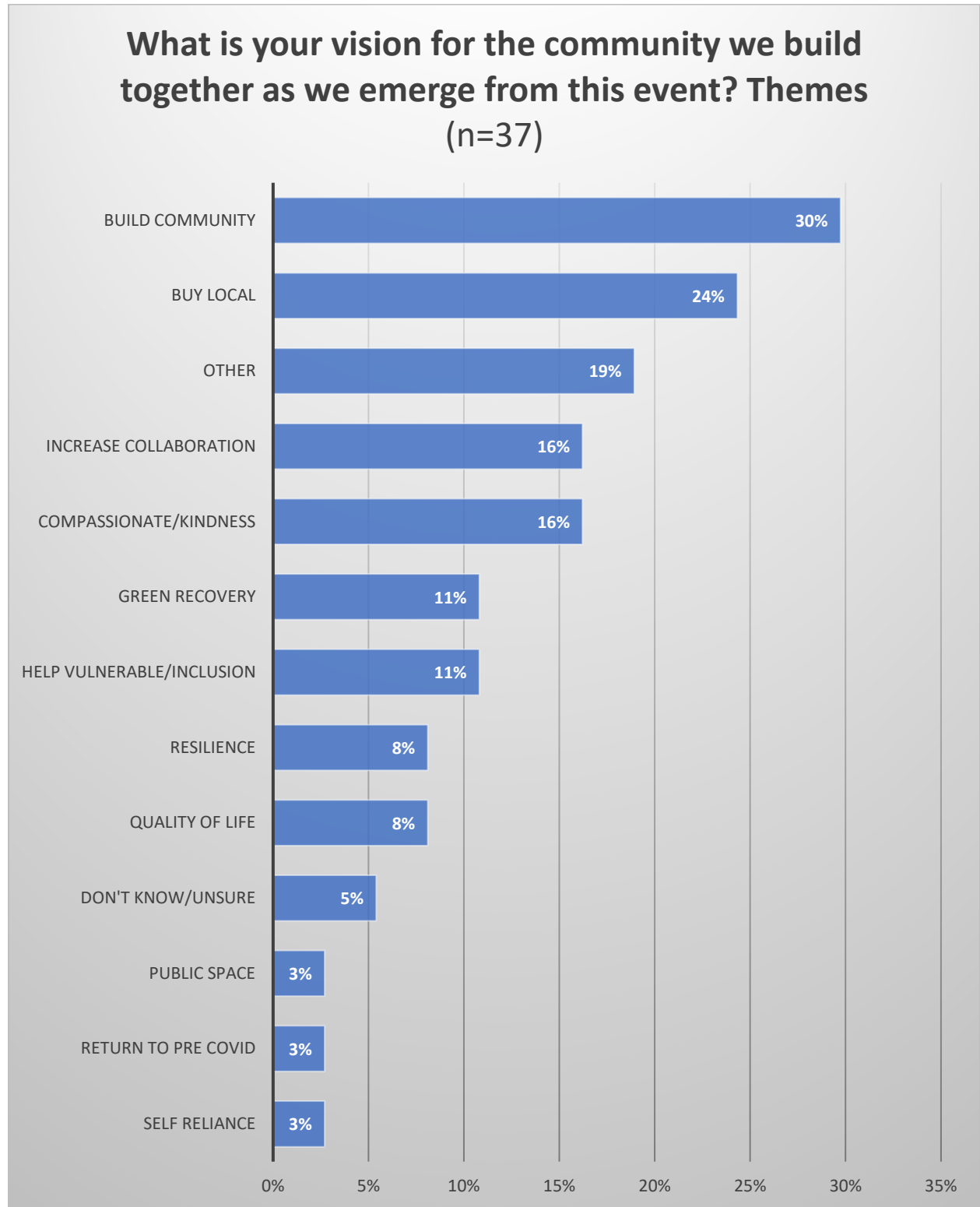


Do you have the tools with which to plan to make your business resilient to future economic shocks? (n=51)



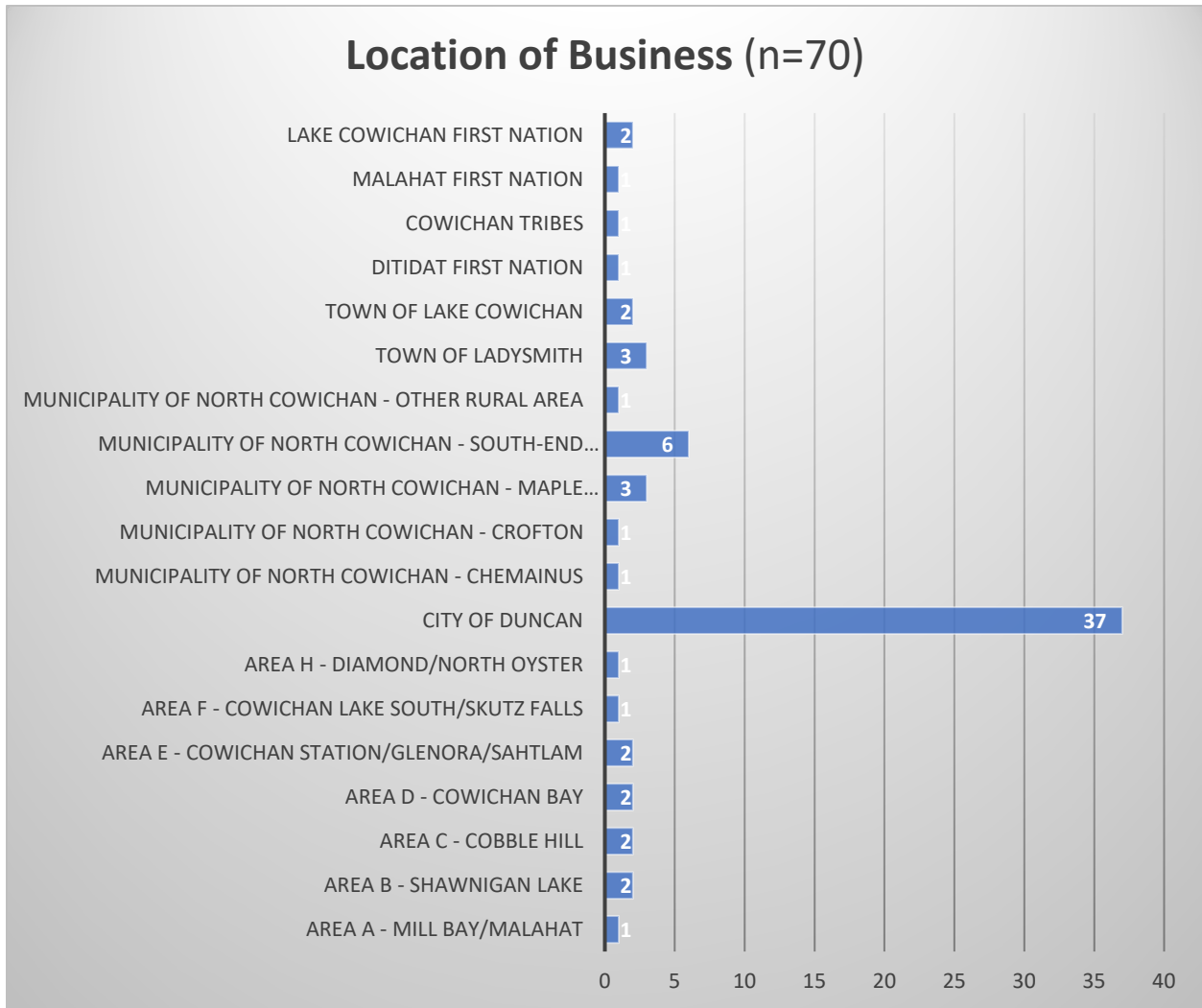
How has this event affected the wellbeing, both mentally and physically, of yourself or your staff? Themes (n=63)







Appendix A: Firms Surveyed





Which of the Following Best Describes Your Business Sector?

