

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION SCALABLE SURVEY

Introduction

Ensuring the survival and growth of existing businesses in your community is key to stimulating a strong economic climate, one that will sustain existing businesses and attract future investment. The goal of this questionnaire is to equip community leaders with a better understanding of the issues faced by business in your community. Is there a need to revitalize the downtown area, develop skills and training programs in partnership with the local educational institution, or an opportunity to create new jobs for the next generation? Knowing the major issues, coupled with the resolve to implement a community action plan will help current and future businesses prosper within your community.

This short survey is designed to be used in communities with limited capacity to carry out and analyze a fuller version. There are three key elements: what is working for businesses in your community, what is not working, and what are the potential solutions. High level, open-ended questions are thought to be more useful than a checklist, as business owners can more readily target the issues that relate directly to their experience and situation. Note that the format of the survey allows for easy customization. Please feel free to adapt the survey to the unique needs of your community.

Developing this type of qualitative data may take more time and effort, but, in the long run, should provide both a clear picture of common issues, and some ideas about resolving those issues. Potential solutions can cover a broad spectrum, from ongoing relationship building, to drawing awareness to potential funding sources, as well as local, provincial and national government supports and services, improved use of limited local resources and creating a united front to build strong local businesses.

Conducting the Survey

The BRE process recommends that the survey be conducted in person by two volunteers – one to ask the questions and the other to record the answers. This may not be possible in communities with less capacity, so depending on circumstances, the survey can be conducted either by phone, email or mail.

Collating and Analyzing the Data

If you are using a BRE service offered by a company such as the Economic Development Association of BC, the data will be submitted to that company for collation and analysis. If you are not using such a service, you can collate the data to develop a summary page, and use the results as the basis for your analysis.

BRE Scalable Survey

| A. BUSINESS INFORMATION | |
|---|--|
| <p>This section allows the business owner to provide a snapshot of the current status of the business. Remember all individual business data is confidential.</p> | |
| Business Name | |
| Business Address | |
| Business Owner | |
| Phone Number(s) | |
| Email Address | |
| Date Business Established | |
| Description of Products and or Services | |
| Customer Base | |
| Current Business Status (sales increasing, declining, prefer not to say) | |
| Number of Employees | |
| Employee Level of Skills/Training | |
| Describe Markets: local, domestic, foreign | |
| Describe Short Term Goals | |
| Describe Long Term Goals | |
| Describe Plans for Business Retention or Expansion | |
| Describe Plans for Business Succession | |
| Other Considerations | |

B. WHAT IS WORKING OR NOT WORKING FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

This section gives the business owner the opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of conducting business in the area. The Yes/No options provide quantitative data, while the comments can provide more elaboration on the situation. Use the numbers to collate the responses across survey respondents.

| # | SITUATION | YES | NO | COMMENTS |
|-----|---|-----|----|----------|
| 1. | Good business location? | | | |
| 2. | Good signage? | | | |
| 3. | Business friendly environment (taxes, permit process, etc) | | | |
| 4. | Well trained and skilled employees? | | | |
| 5. | Opportunities to obtain capital and attract investment? | | | |
| 6. | Good local/regional/provincial transportation? | | | |
| 7. | Good local/regional/provincial infrastructure? | | | |
| 8. | Does the business have a good level of productivity? | | | |
| 9. | Does the business have a good facility and up-to-date equipment | | | |
| 10. | Good access to technology and innovation? | | | |
| 11. | Good access to suppliers? | | | |
| 12. | Good access to local markets? | | | |
| 13. | Good access to regional markets? | | | |
| 14. | Good access to national and foreign markets? | | | |
| 15. | Describe the competition for your business. | | | |
| 16. | Good relationship and networking opportunities with local businesses? | | | |
| 17. | Other considerations | | | |

C. IDENTIFYING THE SOLUTIONS?

This section allows the business owner an opportunity to discuss the solutions that would help address the issues identified above.

| # | Issue | Recommended Solution |
|-----|--|----------------------|
| 1. | Business Location | |
| 2. | Signage | |
| 3. | Business friendly environment | |
| 4. | Access to train and skills development for employees | |
| 5. | Sources for capital and investment | |
| 6. | Improved transportation | |
| 7. | Improved infrastructure | |
| 8. | Increasing business productivity | |
| 9. | Improved facilities and equipment | |
| 10. | Accessing technology and innovation | |
| 11. | Improving access to suppliers | |
| 12. | Improving access to local markets | |
| 13. | Improving access to regional markets | |
| 14. | Improving access to national and foreign markets | |
| 15. | Increasing the ability to compete in the market | |
| 16. | Improving relationships and networking with local businesses | |
| 17. | Other recommendations | |