

Economic Facts

2019 Timmins Business Confidence
Survey size 27 Questions

Number of business
Respondents 135

Timmins Chamber

Top Industry Respondents

Professional Services	16%
Retail	12%

Need for Available Workforce 88%

Expected New Hires 42%

Business Projection

Positive	56%
Neutral	20%
Negative	11%

Quality of Life 74%

1-5 Employees	27%
6-30 Employees	50%
31-100 Employees	11%
101+ Employees	12%

The Timmins Chamber conducted a local business confidence survey to understand the health of our business community, their plans for growth, and their most pressing concerns with respect to the future.



Report sponsor:



Proud Reseller of HP Multifunctional Printers and Supplies

Business Confidence Report

Understanding the health of our business community
October 2019

Methodology



Report photos of the Hollinger Headframe
courtesy of Hollinger Golf Club

The Chamber is proactive in voicing the concerns of our members. As such, the Municipal Affairs Committee conducted a local business confidence survey to better understand what impacts our members, their degree of optimism surrounding the state of our local economy, and the ways in which they conduct business in Timmins.

The survey asked owners what contributes to their success, satisfaction with the services and infrastructure managed by the city, plans for the future, what tools they would need to implement these plans, and most importantly, what barriers they face that impacts their continued success.

The survey was conducted online and of the 625 Chamber members, 135 locally operated businesses submitted their response.

To ensure the pulse of our business community beats steadily, the enclosed findings act as a barometer of the health of our local economy. The report is based on our members' perceptions of current business satisfaction and employment conditions, as well as their expectations for two years hence regarding business conditions, employment, and income.

Some questions are multiple data and therefore may not add up to 100 per cent.

From the President

On behalf of the Chamber, I am pleased to present our regional business confidence report. As the voice of business in Timmins, I am proud to see that our business community continues to remain optimistic. With business confidence and growth projections exceeding our expectations, Timmins businesses are continuing to move forward.

Survey respondents have indicated that individual business optimism remains positive, with an outlook to grow over the coming years. This optimism derives from the confidence they have in their own ability to execute and get the job done.

While the majority specify that they have seen an increase in their consumer base and opportunity for job creation, perhaps the most important statistic we see is that many within our membership attribute overall prosperity and cite high levels of satisfaction with respect to quality of life and conducting business in Northern Ontario.

What we have found is that even though employer satisfaction is high and plans for future expansion exist, the vast majority show concern with access to a qualified, motivated, and reliable workforce. We should all be concerned that employment growth has largely been concentrated in Southern Ontario, while our region has experienced slow or even negative growth. We must continue to work together to develop strategies for attraction and retention, to ensure a healthy and skilled workforce.



This report presents a candid look at private sector sentiment and opportunities for economic growth. The Timmins Chamber looks forward to our continued work at all levels of government throughout the coming year to ensure we are capitalizing on opportunities to drive economic growth for the North.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Val Venneri'.

Val Venneri
2019-20 Chamber President

About the Chamber

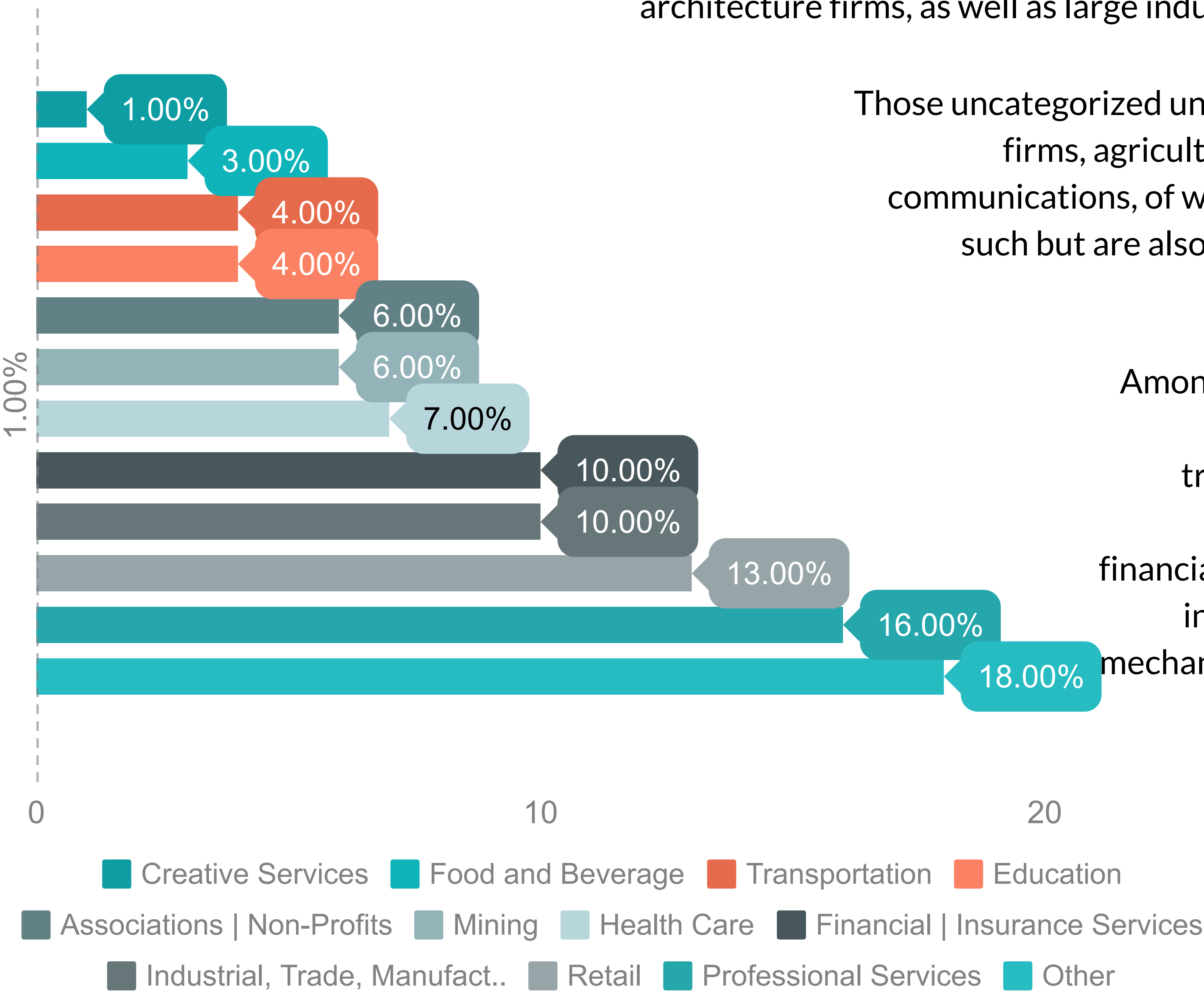
With over 625 members, the Chamber is one of the largest accredited chambers of commerce with distinction in northeastern Ontario. As the “Voice of Business in Timmins” since 1949, our advocacy and policy initiatives focus on ensuring a positive business climate in the City of Timmins.

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Sector Participation

Top sector participants include businesses who offer professional services and retail industries, often the largest contributors to our community. They are comprised of legal services, consultants, employment services, engineering and architecture firms, as well as large industrial retailers, and automotive sales.



Those uncategorized under 'Other' identified as construction firms, agricultural producers, and broadcasting and communications, of whom felt it necessary to categorize as such but are also among the largest community-based contributors.

Among the lowest sectors represented are education-based organizations, transportation, and food and beverage businesses who may not be top financial contributors but provide high-level in-kind contributions or social support mechanisms to those within our community.

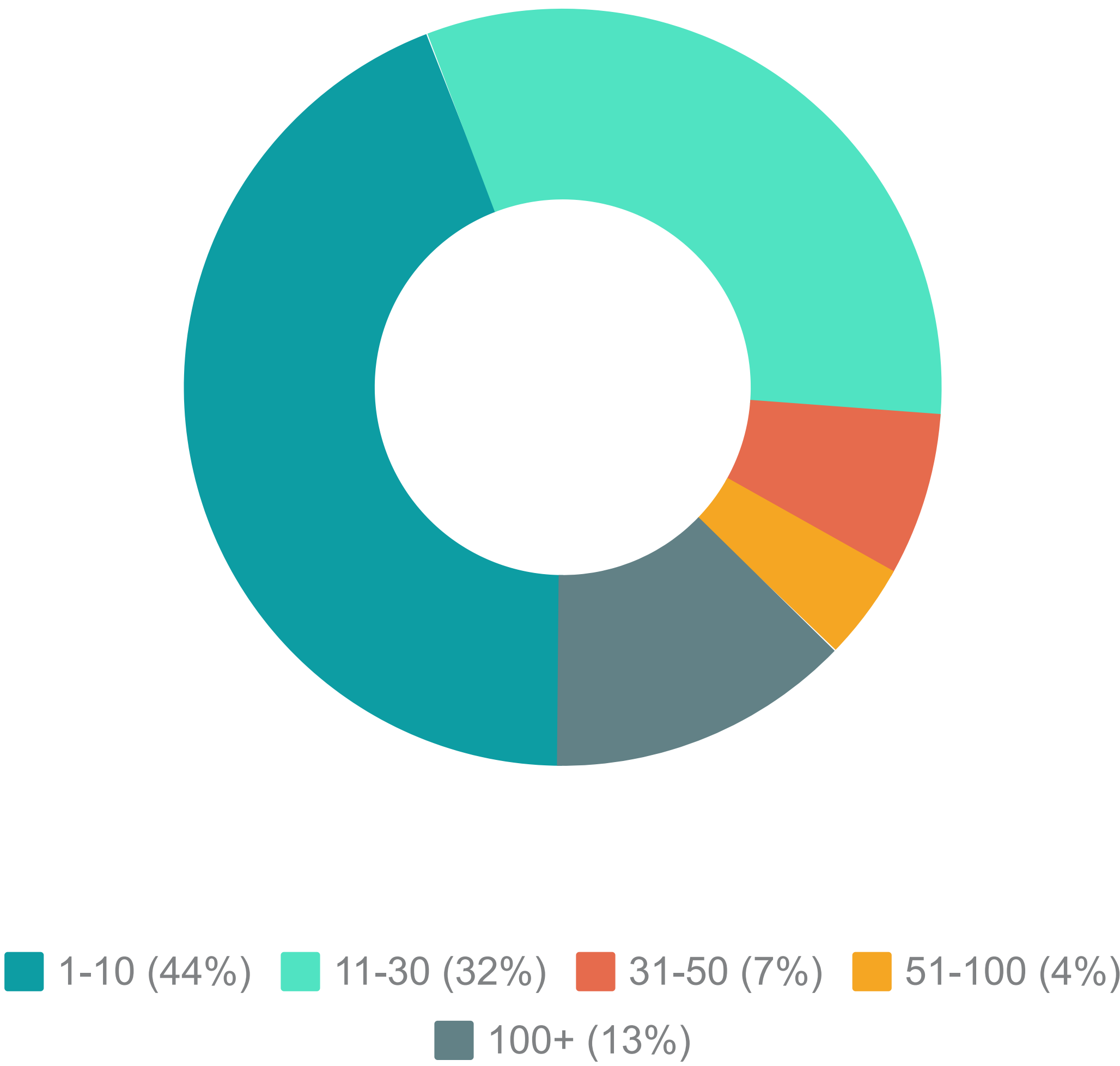
Number of Employees

Of the 135 respondents, 103 are classified as small-business entrepreneurs, the backbone of our local economy, who employ between 1 and 30 employees respectively.

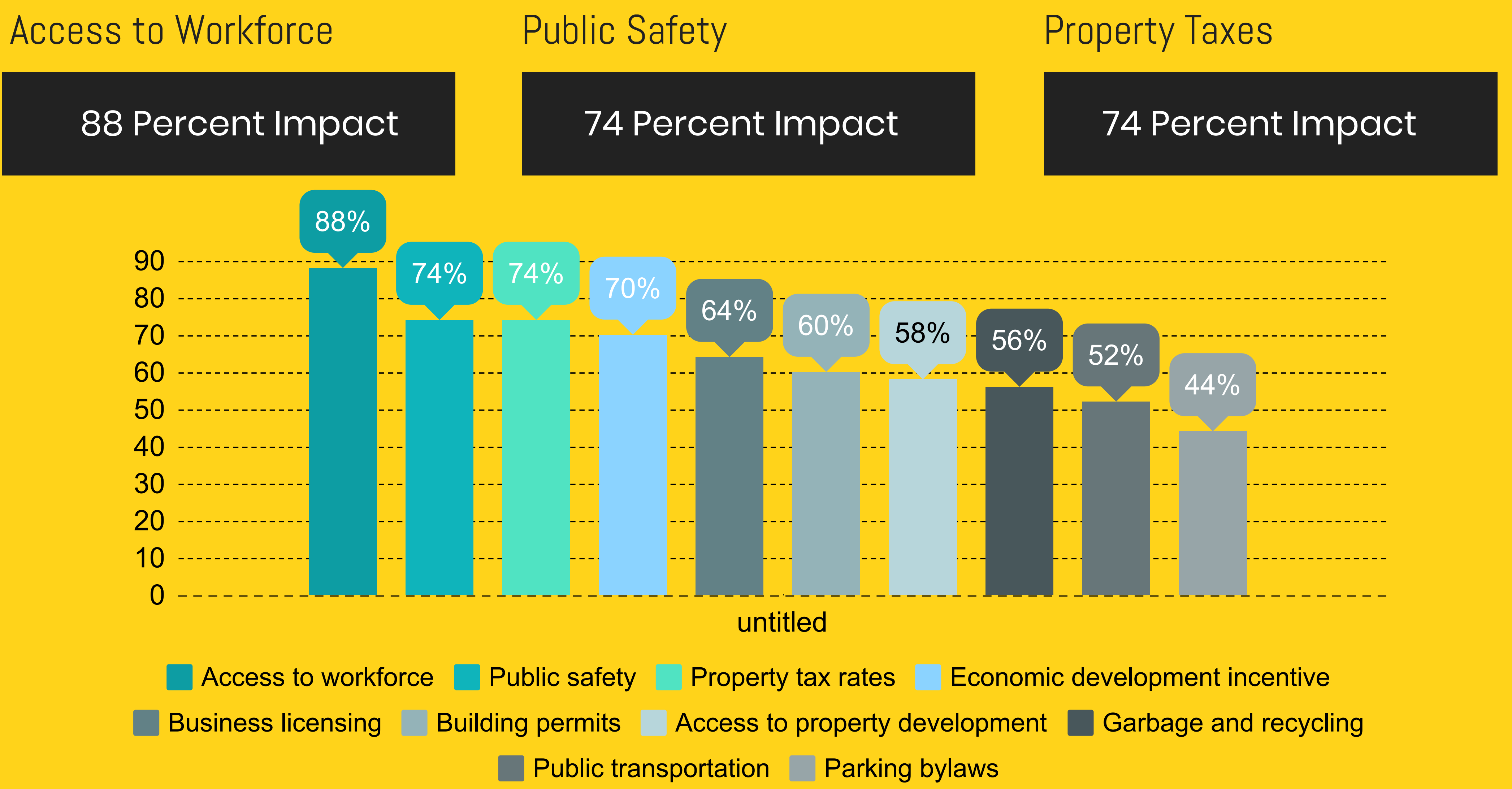
Nationally and most notably, small businesses are responsible for 78 per cent of all jobs created in the private sector.

How does this translate to our region? Local small-sized enterprises employ just over 60 per cent of our local workforce. It is for this reason that their feedback is of high value so as to fully understand the health of our business community.

Medium-to larger-sized enterprise comprised the remaining 24 per cent of respondents. While most fell under the industrial manufacturing sectors, many still are large contributors, not only to our municipal tax base but also to many non-profit and support organizations within our community.



What Impacts Their Business?



Access to a skilled workforce has been a prevalent theme among survey respondents. The data shows this to be the greatest impact on the operation of the business, future potential growth and may impede opportunities for partnership or expansion.

The Chamber has long advocated that widespread concerns have been expressed over the potential supply of workers in Northern Ontario. As the skills gap widens and outmigration continues to rise, local entrepreneurs are struggling to find a motivated and reliable available workforce. Additionally, long-standing stigmas surrounding trades work and fewer secondary schools offering skilled workshop programs have left our business community in need of a strategy to promote career pathways in the skilled trades and grow the pool of qualified workers.

Public safety came second, citing it as having both a direct and indirect impact, deterring customers and hindering the continued success of their business. While the level of satisfaction with the city's safety services sits at 70 per cent, it is important to understand that the wellbeing of their clientele remains top of mind.

As the third highest-rated impact on their business, sentiments surrounding the current tax rate and the cost of doing business in Northern Ontario is relatively high. Many business owners feel that current property tax rates are impacting their business with 74 per cent of respondents citing taxes and fees on business are too high.

It is also important to note that respondents indicated a relatively moderate level of satisfaction with the current services with respect to waste removal, parking bylaws, and public transportation.

Top Comments:

Improve Broadband Infrastructure

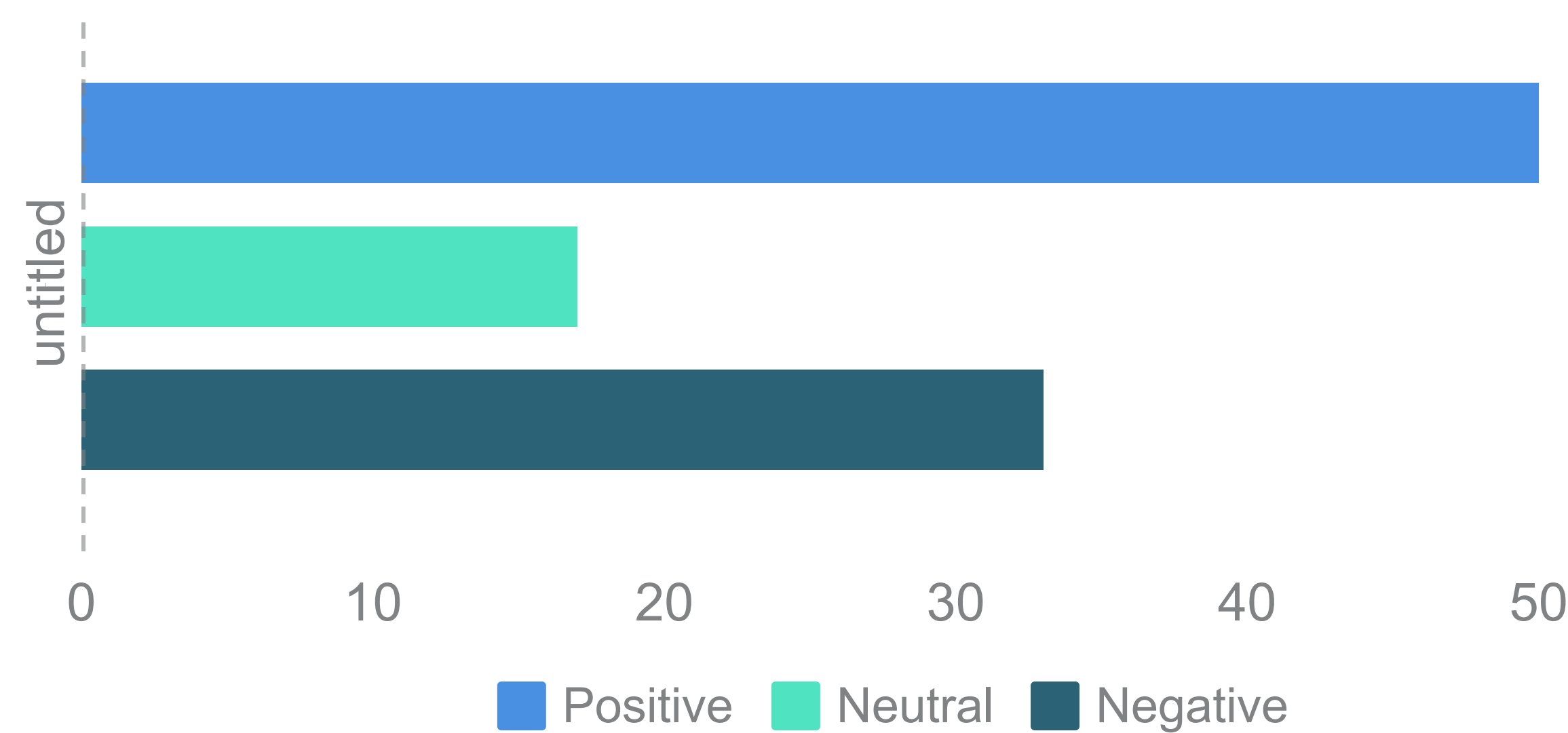
Focus on Beautification and Greenspace

Creative Parking Solutions

Economic Development Incentives



Current Business Satisfaction



The small business economy remains steady, despite the doom and gloom narrative that is hampering expectations. Asked to weigh their satisfaction on a scale from positive to negative, the majority cited a favourable outlook in the years ahead. The results show how business views both its own success and the success of the local economy more broadly. Expectations are higher and respondents have found reason to be optimistic. Member confidence in their own organizations, as well as the broader economy both, appear to be in good health.

With optimism on growth, and despite continual concerns with respect to government red tape and hindering regulations, many within our business community see competitive neutrality realised in the short term. Further to this, we understand that Northern Ontario is an integral part of the provincial economy and as such, small business owners continue to invest, grow, and hire at historically high levels.

Survey respondents note that owning and operating a small business requires their full attention. Often, they are faced with unnecessary barriers and red tape which is why government must do all that they can to provide greater access and ease when navigating policies and procedures. Advocating for better regulation will witness our small-business entrepreneurs at full steam ahead.





Snapshot on Business

Our survey reveals growing confidence among local business owners. The goal now is to keep optimism high by continuing to push for and achieve growth-oriented policies and reforms that help small businesses succeed. Small businesses are the lifeblood of our economy. They represent the majority of all employers, account for nearly half of all private-sector workers, and produce more than 60 per cent of new jobs.

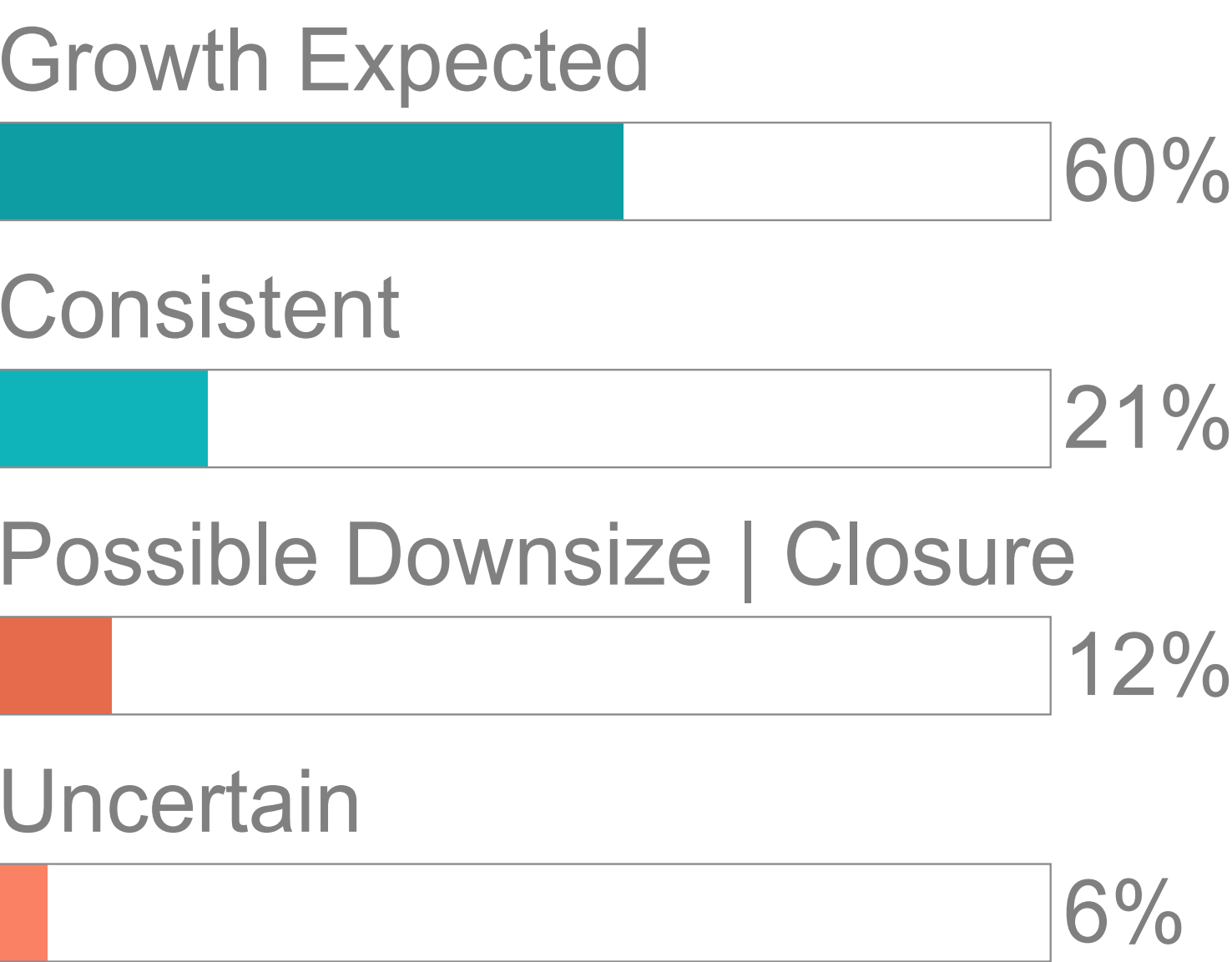
Timmins' economic success hinges on the ability of small business owners to build capital, hire workers, and grow their companies at scale. That's why the Chamber spotlights local entrepreneurs and the challenges and opportunities they face in having to do business in Northern Ontario. The index is part of our mission to elevate the voice of small businesses and highlight the important continued roles they play in our society.

Improved (50%) Remained current (41.30%) Dropped (8.70%)



Future Prospects

Small business owners may be pessimistic about the prospects for tax and regulatory policies, still, improved expectations for hiring and revenue along with better overall sentiment regarding current business conditions offset these changes, keeping the overall index score at an exceedingly healthy level.



In the Face of Economic Challenges



Cuts to Charitable Donations

Cuts to Advertising

Employee Layoffs

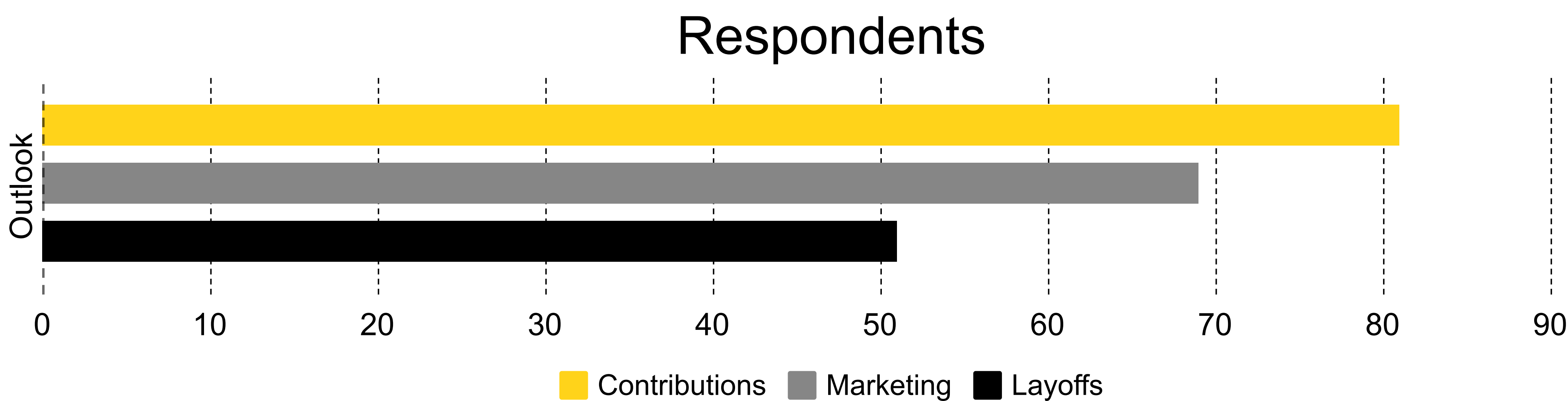
Perhaps the most disconcerting data presented in the report is understanding exactly what business owners will cut in the face of an economic downturn. A staggering 81 per cent of respondents indicate that among the top three items to be reduced or eliminated is the charitable and community contributions and donations.

Our local businesses are the largest employers and without support from the community, Timmins businesses cannot continue to contribute to the multitude of charitable causes, community programs and events.

The Timmins Chamber continues to push our *#finditIntimmins* initiative which not only encourages consumers to find goods and services within the community but also serves to emphasize the importance of voting with your dollar.



If we reflect on the earlier data that relates over half of our local population's source of income to small- to medium-sized businesses, we need to begin to understand the ripple effect that comes from a decline in local support. Whether you are a business, a consumer or an organization that has received support from the business community, it is imperative that we celebrate and support our business community.



Recommendations

The Chamber's Business Confidence Report indicates a sharp uptick in economic optimism among small business owners. For the most part, our local economy is in good health. This report follows the trend of growing confidence in our Northern economy and more specifically, the small business environment, that we have observed over the past year.

What has led to this optimism among local small business owners? Smart pro-growth policies. The Chamber has fought long and hard to secure meaningful policy victories for our small businesses and the results show. To keep the economic momentum going, we need to improve workforce training and adopt a common-sense immigration system that attracts and welcomes talent at all skill levels.

In short, what is good for small business is good for the economy. That is why the Chamber will continue advocating for forward-thinking reforms that empower entrepreneurs to succeed.

Workforce Strategy



Challenges relating to the cost of doing business in Northern Ontario and the ability for businesses to successfully recruit and retain talent loom large, undermining our local economic potential. Promoting and encouraging entrepreneurs to join in roundtable discussions will prove helpful in formulating the framework to attract and retain a more viable labour force.

Business Consultation



Our business community is calling for greater interaction with the City of Timmins. Regular consultation and information sharing will reduce vulnerabilities and better develop policies with the aim of fostering competitiveness. Placing emphasis on the issues identified by our members will benefit both sides, allowing for broader consultation that will bring a renewed sense of confidence with local entrepreneurs.

Boost Business Services



Increase accessibility and awareness for the Community Improvement Plan and assist entrepreneurs in navigating the application to revitalize areas within their business. Continue to lobby government to fund public infrastructure projects in order to remove the unproductive burden of interest payments. Taxation can be used to control inflation, mitigating debts and deficits that will hinder future public infrastructure projects.

This report was made possible with the financial support of:

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