



October 1, 2014 Business Walk



Post Event Report

Business Walk Program Finds 95% of Central Okanagan Businesses Steady or Increasing

Central Okanagan Economic
Development Commission

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Executive Summary

The Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC) facilitated the first Business Walk in Canada in October, 2012. To date, through 3 non-sector specific Walks and one manufacturer's Walk, approximately 1,150 businesses have been visited through the Business Walk program. The Business Walk is one method used by the COEDC to gather information from the business community and identify programs to facilitate business growth.

The information obtained captures the pulse of businesses throughout the region, connects business support agencies to the business community, communicates industry intelligence to multiple civic and business stakeholders and identifies opportunities for COEDC's Business Enhancement programming.

Outcomes from Business Walks to date include:

- One-on-one post-walk assistance provided to over 150 companies across all sectors;
- The Ministry of Jobs Tourism and Skills Training is using the [Business Walks program as a best practice](#);
- Following the May, 2013 Walk to manufacturers, the COEDC facilitated a Business Beyond Borders session to 25 Okanagan manufacturers to address employee recruitment and retention strategies;
- Information from the Manufacturers Walk provided industry intelligence to District of West Kelowna staff in the facilitation of a Manufacturers Round Table session;
- The COEDC created a [Central Okanagan Manufacturers Resources Guide](#);
- Internal reports communicate barriers to conducting business and program opportunities identified through the Business Walk to municipalities, Chambers of Commerce/Board of Trade and business improvement areas throughout the region. These have included issues/the need for information related to truck routing, signage, networking and buy local campaigns.

October 1, 2014 Business Walk

Within a three hour blitz on October 1st, more than 60 business and civic leaders walked door-to-door and connected with 400 businesses throughout Lake Country, Kelowna, Westbank First Nation, West Kelowna and Peachland business districts. This third annual Central Okanagan Business walk reached the largest number of businesses to date, kicking off Small Business Month with positive feedback on the local business environment.



Lori Mason (right) of TREETZ in Rutland with Laurel D’Andrea of the Uptown Rutland Business Association.

Businesses were asked:

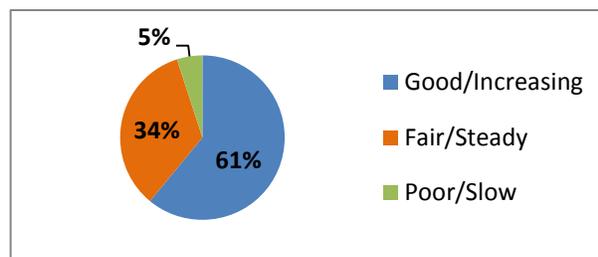
- How is Business?
- What do you like most about doing business in your area of the Central Okanagan?
- What can be done to help your business thrive?
- What specific information would you like to have access to?

Summary/Results

Of the 400 businesses visited, 72 were conducted in Lake Country, 214 in Kelowna (54 Downtown, 30 Pandosy/Mission, 90 in Rutland, 40 in Capri), 41 in Westbank First Nation, 32 in West Kelowna and 41 in Peachland.

Question 1: How is Business?

Results indicate a generally positive outlook from 95% of businesses surveyed in 2014 who said business was either Fair/Steady (34%) or Good/Increasing (61%) – up from a combined total of 90% in 2013.

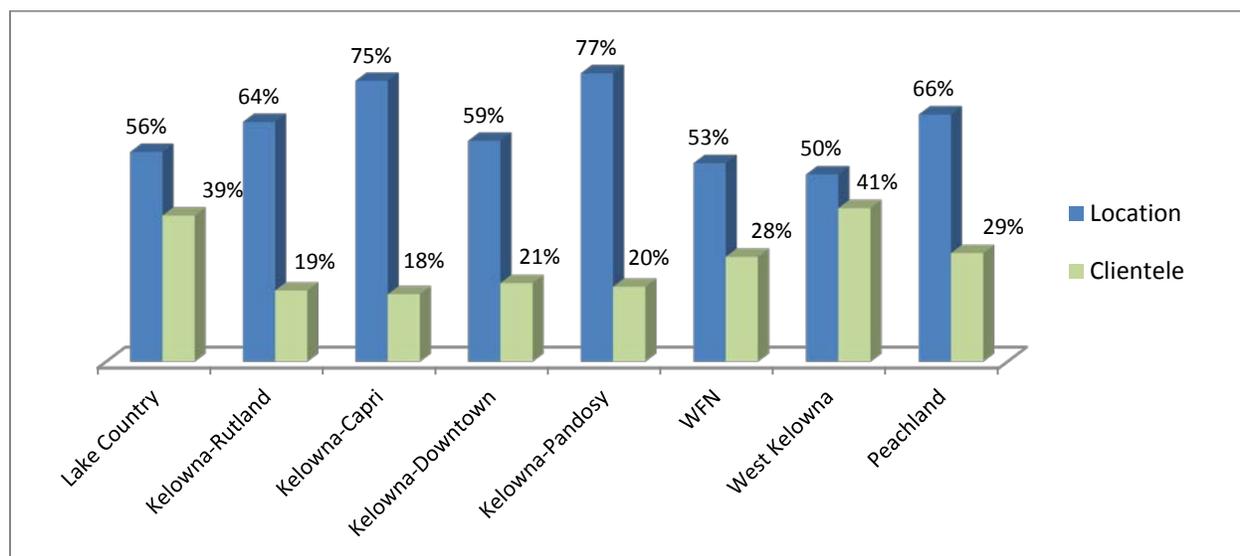


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Question 2: What do you like most about doing business in the region?

When asked what they like most about doing business in their region, well over half the respondents – 62% - stated their **Location** was what they liked most, followed by **Clientele** at 26%.

Various “**Other**” factors were cited by 7% of businesses – these were mainly lifestyle-related. 3% of businesses cited the **Cost of Doing Business** as what they liked most. **Availability of Talented Labour** was one of the least mentioned factors at 1%, a reflection of the challenges of attracting and retaining workers that is increasingly experienced by businesses throughout the region – and well beyond the Central Okanagan.



Question #3: What can be done to help your business thrive?

Responses ranged from tangible needs such as resources for finding employees and improved parking, signage and “streetscaping,” to greater marketing/promotion of the area where their business is located.

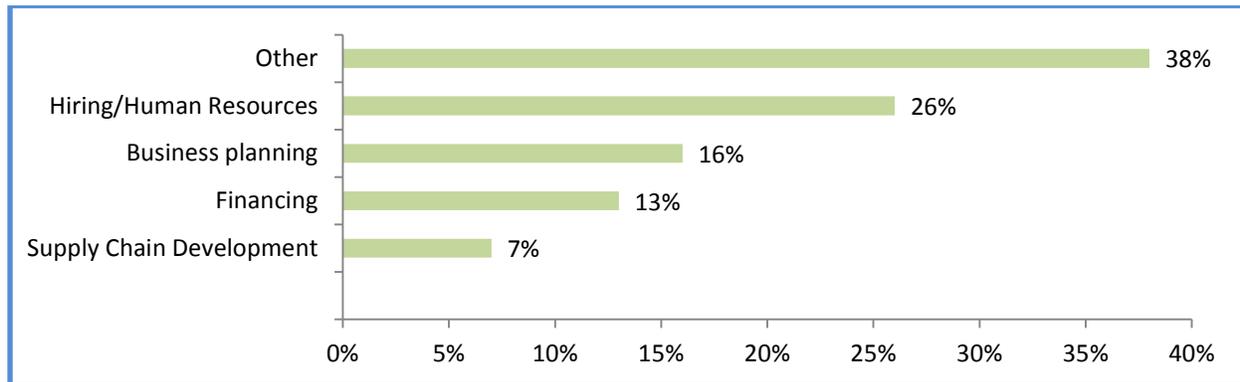
Common themes from communities throughout the Region suggest businesses want:

- Programs, funding and information that will help them find the number of employees they need, with the skills they need;
- Increased development/density of retail centres to attract more customers to specific shopping/service areas;
- Less government restriction and faster processing of business permits, licenses, etc.;
- Promotion, beautification and improved parking in major business districts.

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Question #4: What specific information would you like to have access to?

Information related to **Hiring/Human Resources** was an area of need expressed by 26% of the businesses visited. Another 38% cited their category of need as **“Other”** – frequently stated within this category was the need for information on “community events”, “marketing” and “grants/loans”.



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The Business Walks program is facilitated and made possible by regional partnerships.

The Economic Development Commission would like to recognize and thank the following:



For more information or inquires please contact:

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