

# Business owners' workload

Research report  
Research and Market Intelligence at BDC



November 2024

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## Survey highlights

# Workload

Although having flexibility in setting work hours, many struggle to maintain a healthy life balance. Delegating responsibilities, hiring more staff and automating tasks would alleviate the load for many business owners.



On average, business owners work about...

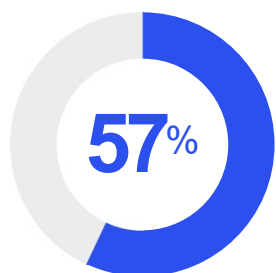


per week

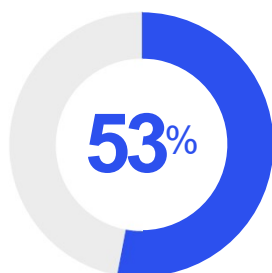
**40%**  
combine  
multiple sources  
of revenue

Among these, almost **4 out of 10 would not manage** financially without the combined sources of revenue

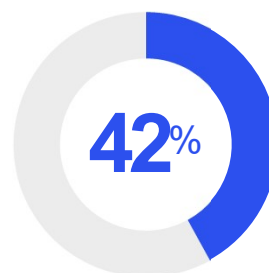
Despite having flexibility in setting work hours, many struggle to maintain a **healthy balance**:



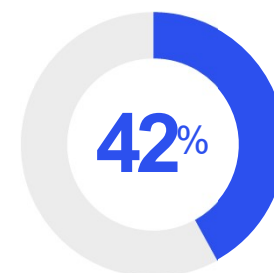
Suffer from work-related stress



Report poor work-life balance



Feel overwhelmed by their workload



Say work interferes with personal life

## What would help



Delegate responsibilities



Hire more personnel



Automate routine tasks



2

# Methodology

# Methodology



## Survey methodology

Online survey.

## Respondent profile

Business owners and business decision-makers members of BDC's ViewPoints online panel.

## Survey dates

November 5<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## Margin of error

For a probabilistic sample of 609 respondents, the maximum margin of error is  $\pm 3.97$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20. However, as this survey is based on a non-probabilistic sample, this information is provided for reference only.

## Data processing and analysis

Were performed by the BDC Research and Market Intelligence team.

## Weighting factors

Results were weighted by region and number of employees to be representative of the Canadian SME population.



# 3

## Detailed results

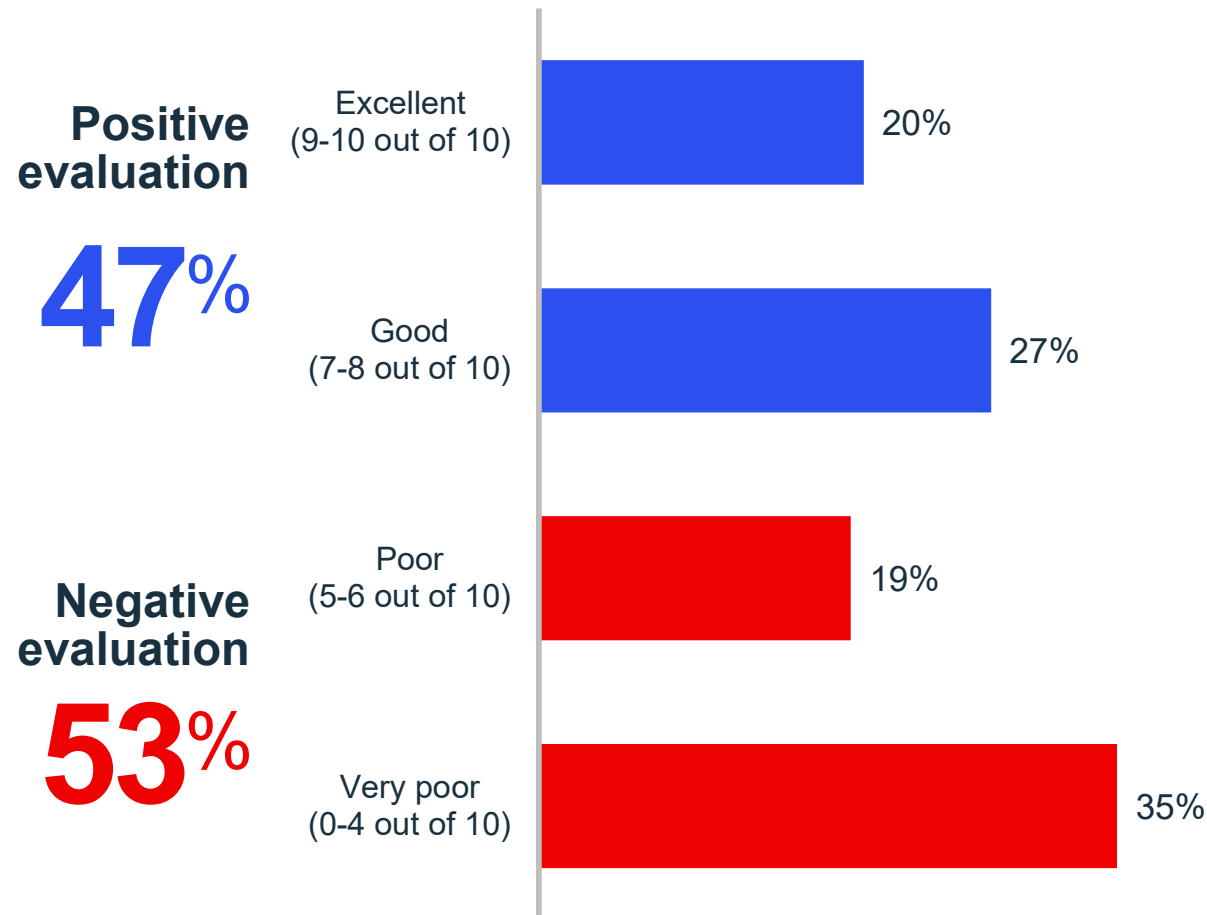
Business owners' workload

# Evaluation of their current work-life balance

Over half of business owners rate their current work-life balance poorly and over one third believe it is “very poor”.



S3bQ1. How would you rate your **current work-life balance**?



Base: All respondents (n=607). Those who did not know were excluded from the calculation base. \*Sample size is very small (12 respondents), please interpret with caution.

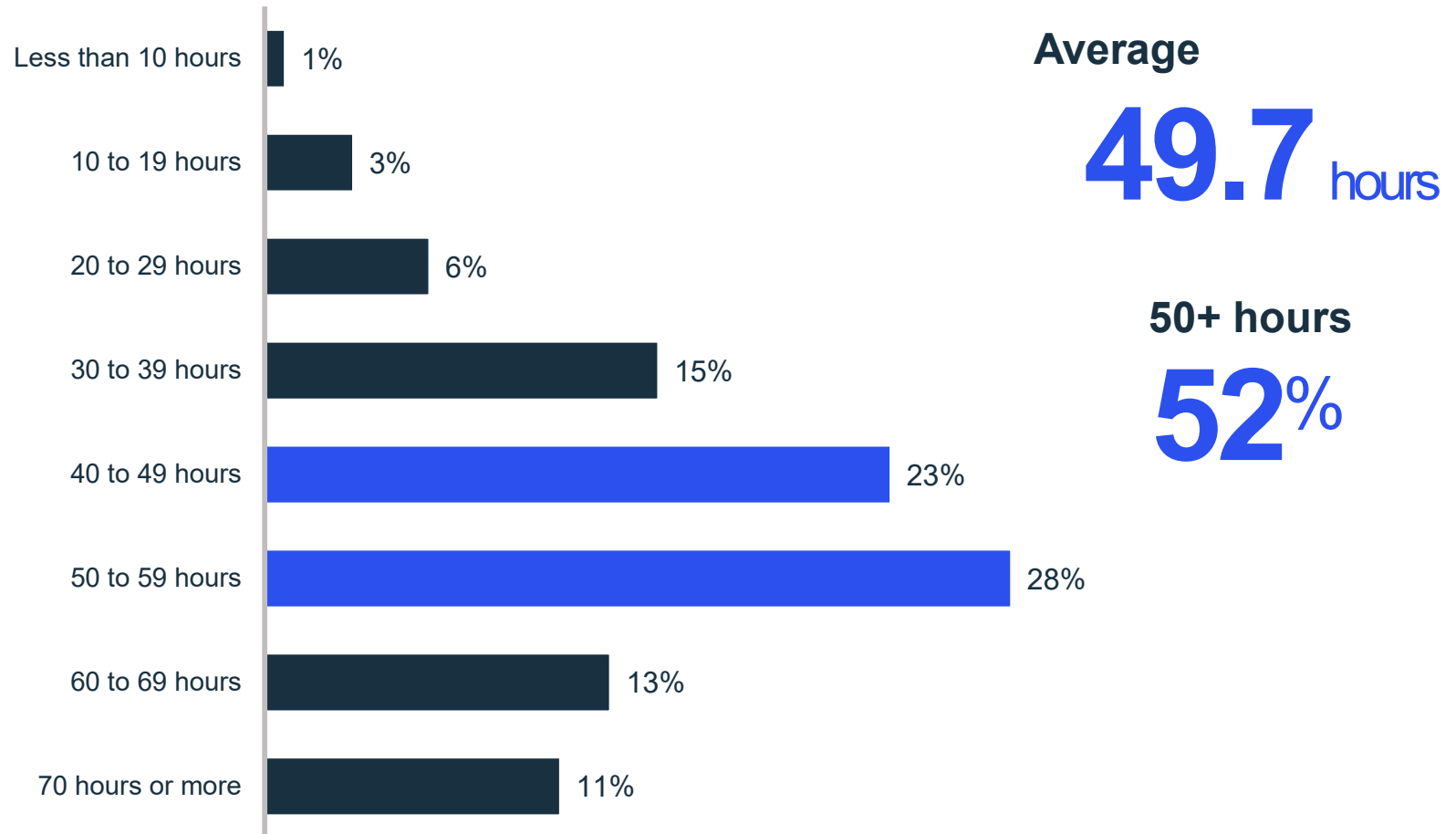


# Typical number of hours

On average, the business owners who responded to this survey work almost 50 hours a week.



S3bQ2. How many **hours per week** do you typically work?



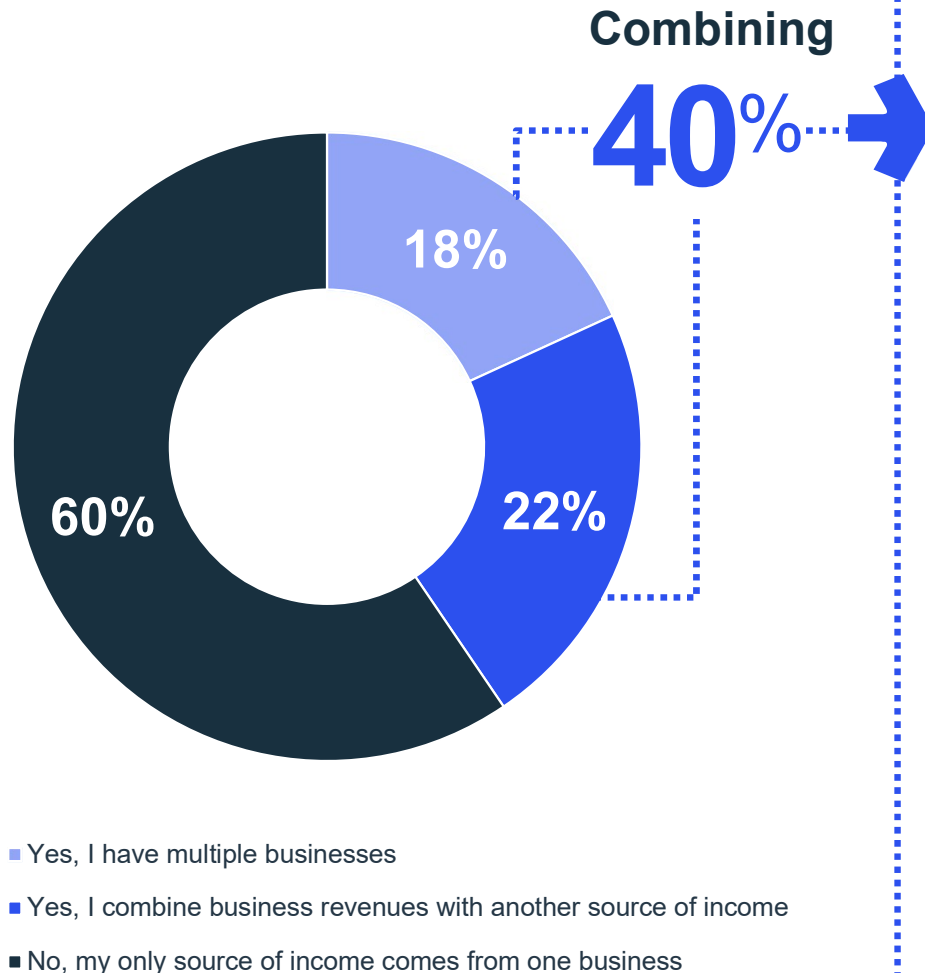
Base: All respondents (n=609). \*Results significantly higher than average. We used the mid-point of each of the response intervals to calculate the average. For the extremes, we used 5 and 75 hours.

# Combining revenue sources

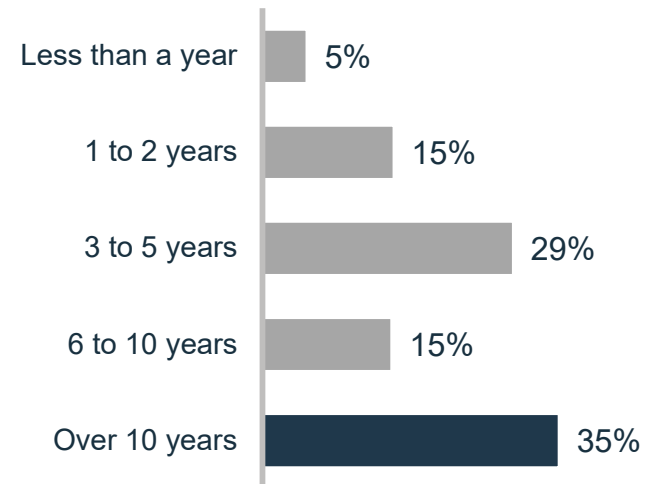
2 in 5 entrepreneurs combine multiple sources of revenue. A third of these have been doing it for over 10 years; many say they wouldn't manage financially if they didn't to this.



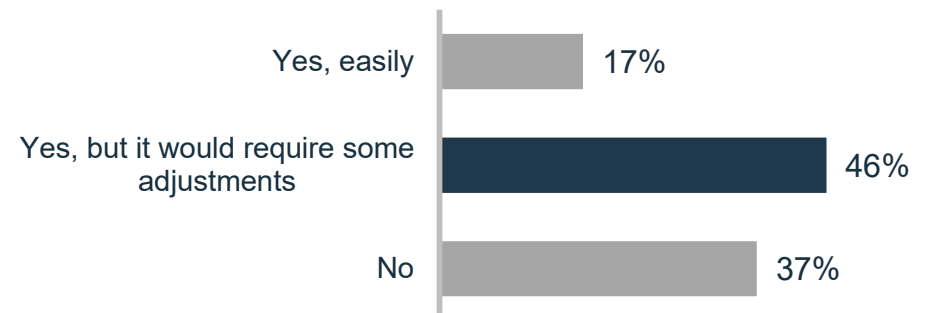
S3bQ3. Do you need to combine **multiple sources of revenue** to achieve an income that meets your expectations and needs?



S3bQ4. **How long** have you been combining multiple sources of revenue?



S3bQ5. Could you **manage financially without** combining multiple sources of revenue?

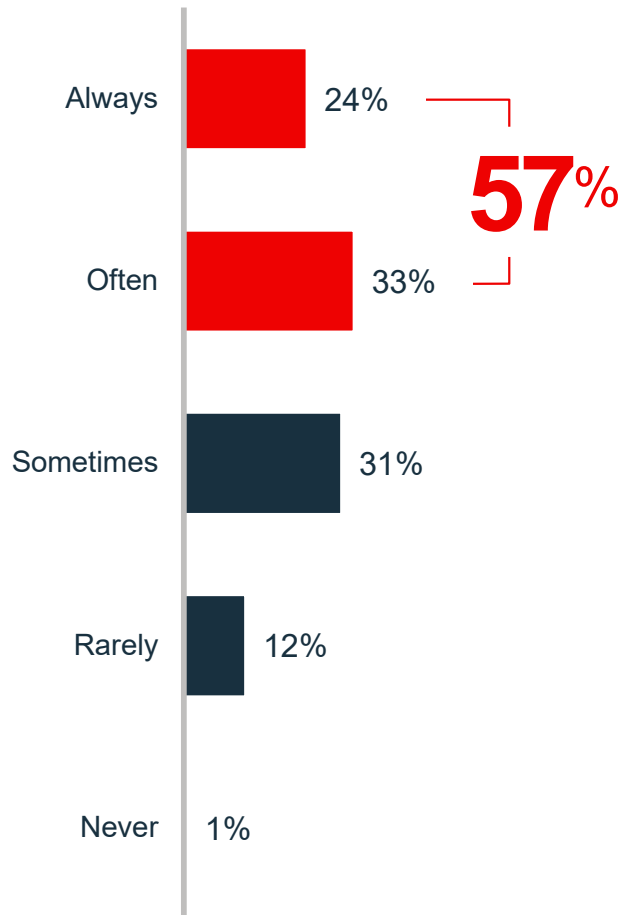


# Work stressors

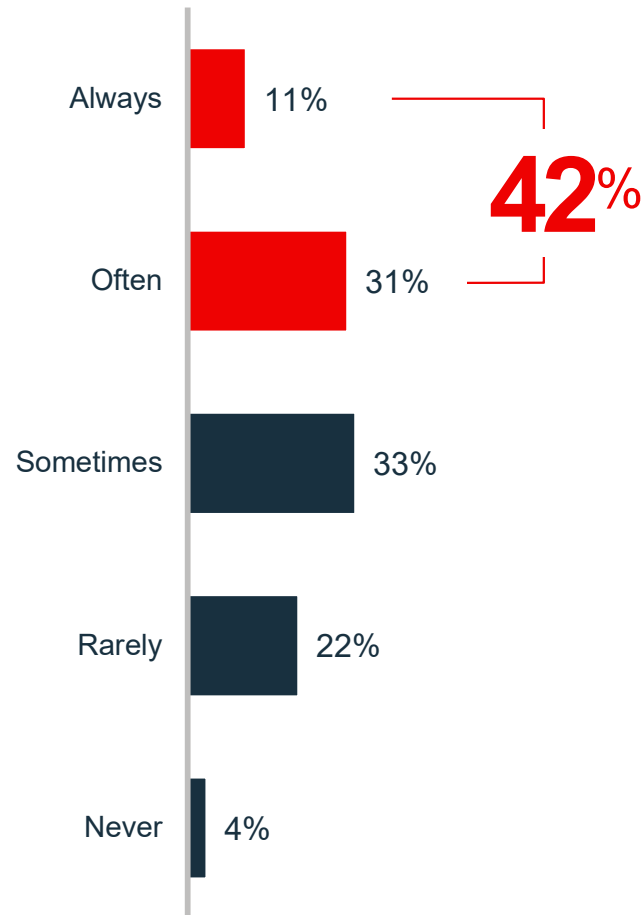
Many business owners are struggling: over half suffer from work-related stress, and more than 2 in 5 feel overwhelmed or report that work interferes with their personal life.



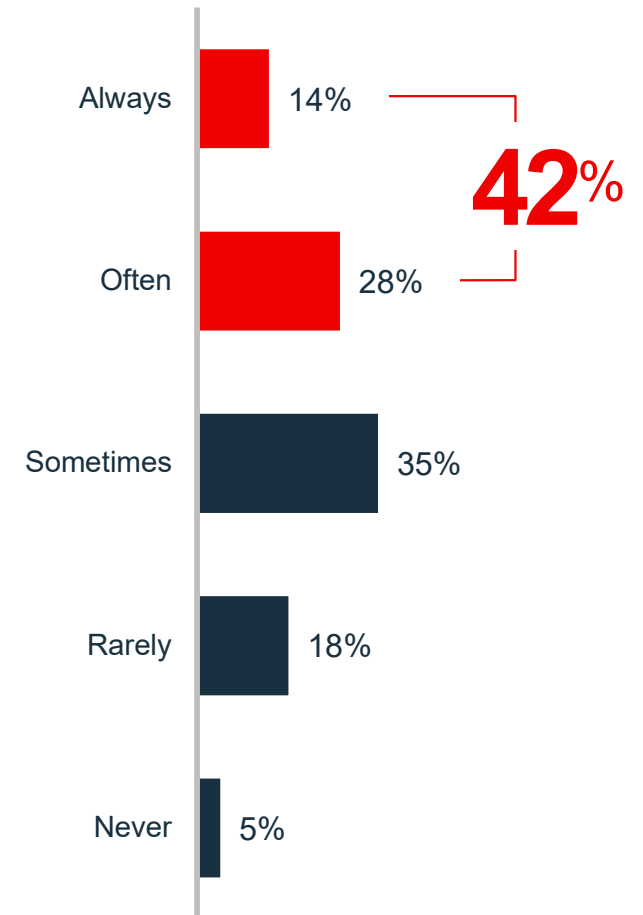
S3bQ6. How frequently do you experience **work-related stress**?



S3bQ7. How often do you feel **overwhelmed** by your workload?



S3bQ8. How often do you feel that **work interferes** with your personal/family life?

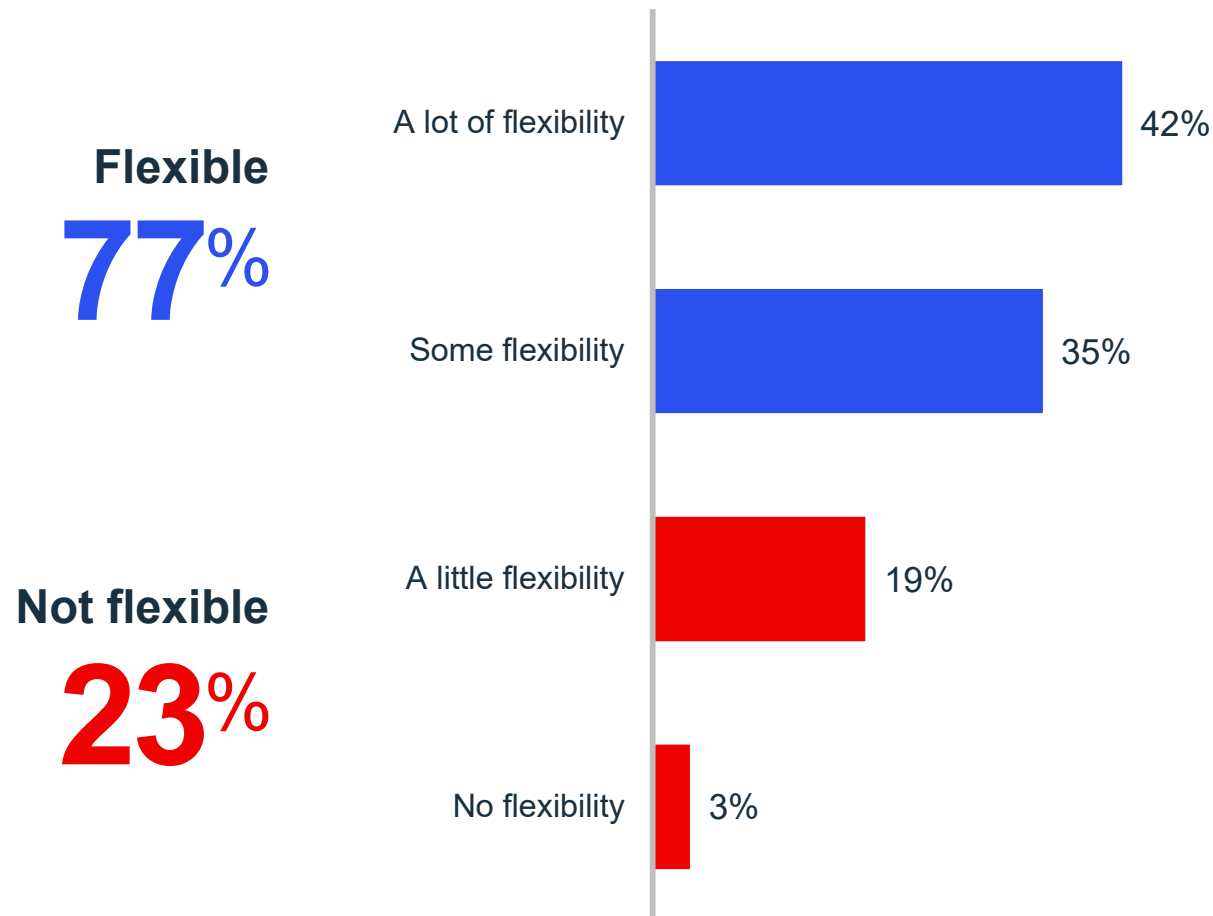


# Flexibility in setting one's working hours

More than three quarters state that they have flexibility in setting their work hours. However, this advantage does not appear to be sufficient to offset the challenges outlined previously.



S3bQ9. How much **flexibility** do you have in setting your work hours?



# Ways to help have more flexibility

The main ways to have more flexibility would be to delegate responsibilities to trusted employees, hire more staff to share the workload and automate routine tasks.



S3aQ10. What could **help you** have more flexibility in setting your work hours?



Base: All respondents (n=546). Multiple mentions were allowed; therefore, total exceeds 100%. Those who did not know were excluded from the calculation base.



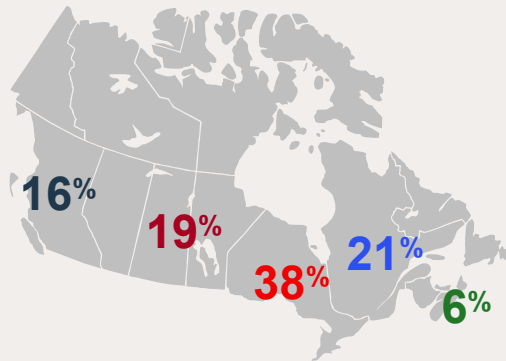
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Respondent  
profile

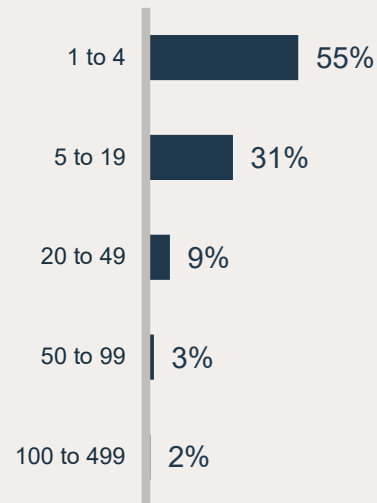
# Respondent profile



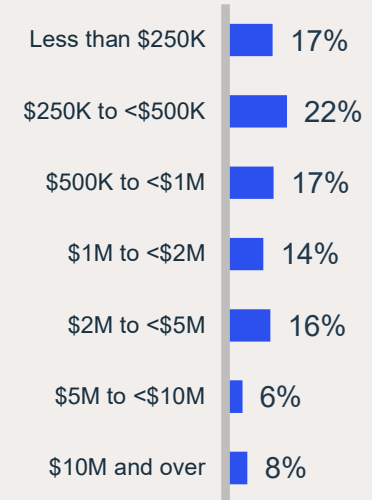
## Region



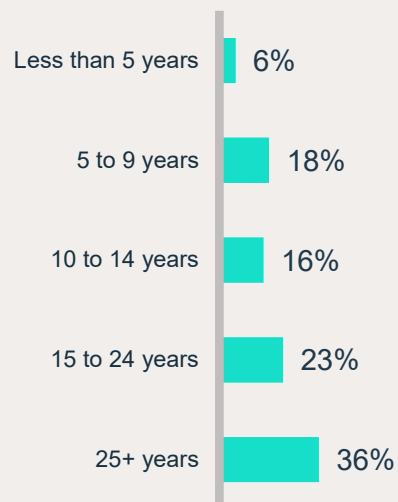
## Number of employees



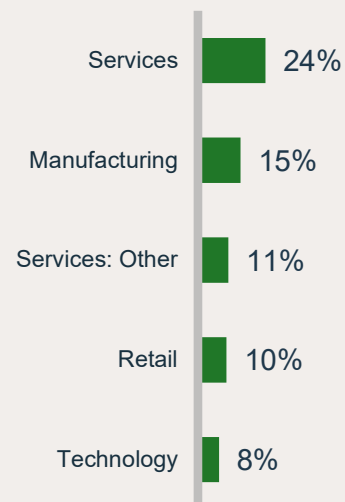
## Annual sales



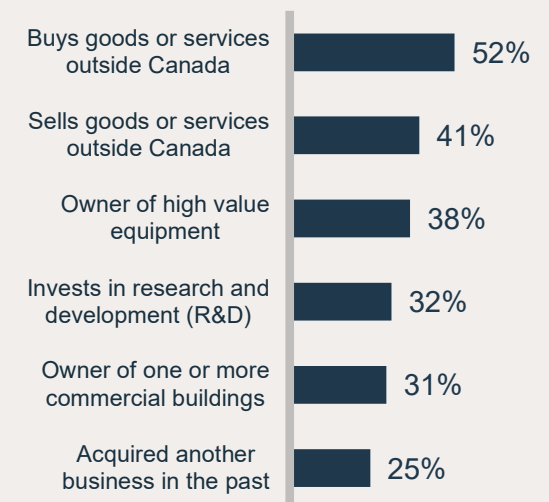
## Years in business



## Main sector of activity



## Specific activities\*

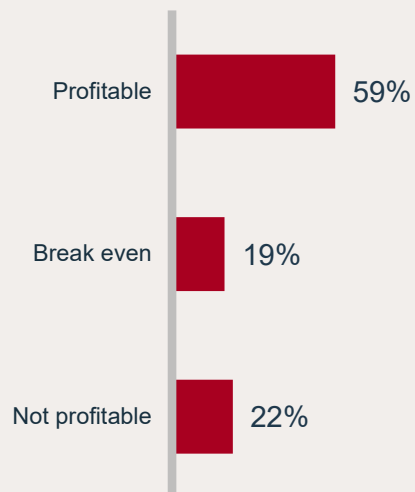


Base: All respondents (n=609). Those who did not know or preferred not to answer were excluded from the calculation base. For the sectors, only those with 8%+ respondents are presented. \*Multiple mentions were allowed; therefore, total exceeds 100%.

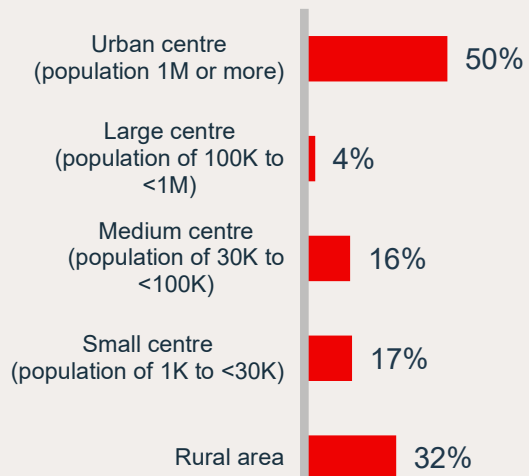
# Respondent profile



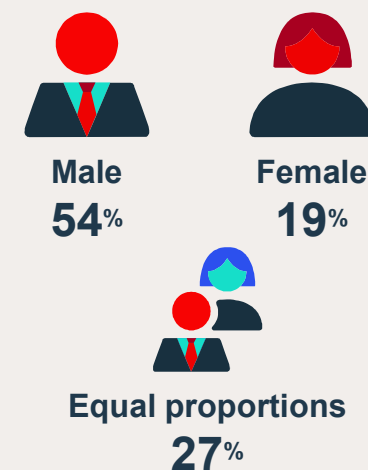
## Business profitability



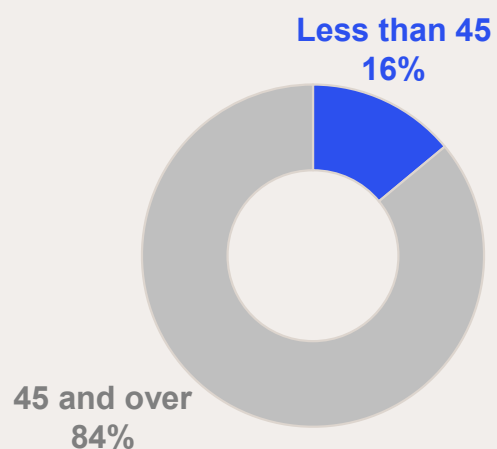
## Business location



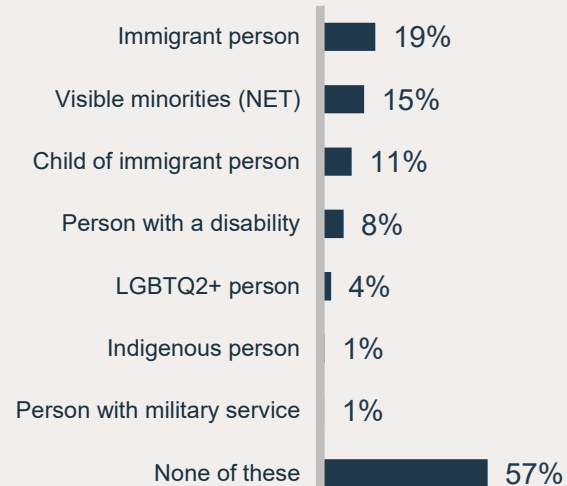
## Gender ownership



## Owners' age



## Diversity\*



Base: All respondents (n=573-609). Those who did not know or preferred not to answer were excluded from the calculation base. \*Multiple mentions were allowed; therefore, total exceeds 100%.



# Thank you.

Research and Market Intelligence team

