

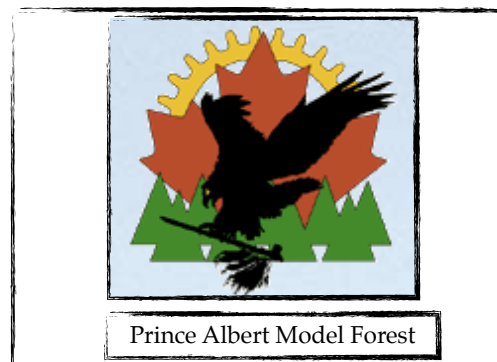
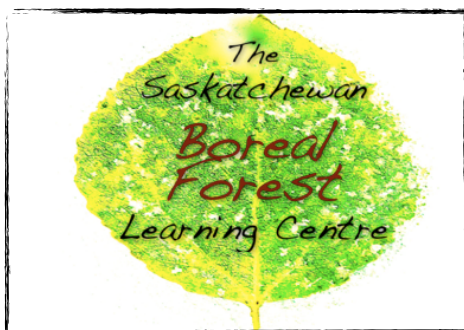
B O R E A L F O R E S T  
L E A R N I N G C E N T R E

*Big River & Area Tourism Business Survey*



**Tourism Business Survey**

August, 2011



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 About the Boreal Forest Learning Centre
- 1.2 Context/Scope
- 1.3 Project Partners
- 1.4 Methodology
- 1.5 Notes
- 1.6 Key Points

## **2.0 ABOUT LOCAL BUSINESSES**

- 2.1 Business Type
- 2.2 Trends
- 2.3 Wishlist

## **3.0 PRODUCT AND SERVICES**

- 3.1 Product/Service Type
- 3.2 Trends

## **4.0 EMPLOYEE PROFILE**

- 4.1 Workforce Size
- 4.2 Trends
- 4.3 Training & Recruitment

## **5.0 CUSTOMER PROFILE**

- 5.1 Marketing Strategies
- 5.2 Wishlist

## **6.0 COMMUNITY PROFILE**

- 6.1 Strengths & Weaknesses
- 6.2 Outlook

**APPENDIX I:** Skills Section

**APPENDIX II:** Final Comments

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 About the Boreal Forest Learning Centre

The **Saskatchewan Boreal Forest Learning Centre (BFLC)** is a non-profit organization that operates in the field of environmental education. Our shared site is also the home of the well-known Ness Creek Music Festival, the Northern Lights Bluegrass Festival and Music Camp, the Emma Lake International Artist Collaborative and a wide spectrum of other groups. It is situated 20km north east of Big River, Saskatchewan and on the west side of Prince Albert National Park.

We offer various learning and outdoor activities to students of all ages. They include: silviculture training, First-Nation's history and traditional land use, trail-riding, boreal forest ecology, plant identification, astronomy, winter camping, permaculture design education and more. Workshops are led by a diverse array of individuals, each with his or her own forest-related expertise. These varied perspectives give students a sense of the many different connections between humans and nature in the Boreal Forest ecoregion.

We hope to see the development of a sustainable, ecologically-sensitive forest-based economy in the Big River Area.

Visit us online at: [www.borealforest.net](http://www.borealforest.net)

## 1.2 Context/Scope

The downturn in the provincial forest industry has created a need to foster new & more sustainable economic alternatives. We are providing businesses & individuals with the tools they need to move forward. We see the potential for a diversified, healthy forest industry. This project looks at both the 'effects' and 'responses' to the industry slump and mill closure in Big River over the past 5 years.

This survey is focused on businesses operating in the tourism sector in and

around Big River. Tourism has emerged in the last 5 years a major ‘response’ to the mill closure. The goal of this survey is to collect and organize the opinions and thoughts of these local businesses. The range of tourism businesses that participated includes: outfitters, campground operators, festival organizers, restaurants, recreational providers and many others. Our intention is to see the local workforce gain meaningful, sustainable employment in their own community.

**The Big River and Area Tourism Survey is meant to provide some insight into:**

- how business has changed in the community in the last 5 years
- what types of resources would help local people & local businesses
- what gaps exist between employee’s skills & employer’s needs
- what expectations & preferences people have for the future of their community
- what reservations and expectations the community has about the type of development that will unfold

### **1.3 Project Partners**

#### **Funding Partners**

Prince Albert Model Forest  
Les Cooke and Associates  
Community Development Trust Fund

#### **Supporting Partners**

Town of Big River  
Sturgeon River Ranch Bison Stewards  
Enterprise 55 West  
Big River Forest Advisory Board  
Ness Core Ventures

### **1.4 Methodology**

Our survey collected a mix of *qualitative* data (comments, opinions, expecta-

tions) and *quantitate* data (demographics, training). In this way, it can be used by a wider range of decision-makers.

A total of **35 tourism-related businesses** were surveyed; participants were given the option of three methods to complete it:

METHOD	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
<b>Online</b>	13 / 35	(37.1%)
<b>Interview</b>	12 / 35	(34.3%)
<b>Take Home</b>	10 / 35	(28.6%)

### **Timeline**

#### **March - April**

- preliminary survey questions and formats were developed
- survey questions were disseminated for peer review to our partners
- a work plan & project timeline were completed and agreed upon; survey questions were finalized and published
- survey targets were established; online survey reporting was created and distributed

#### **May - August**

- weekly visits to local businesses; home visits and scheduled meetings
- maintained full-time phone and email contact with respondents
- report creation, editing and publishing

### **Privacy & Editing**

- all comments collected during the survey were edited only for grammar and spelling
- personal and business names were also removed

### **1.5 Notes**

- living and working in the Big River area was a major asset for our surveyors; community integration and participation in public events helped to break down barriers such as 'skepticism' and 'pessimism' while promoting openness, honesty and discussion; 'word of mouth' was often the most effective

means of finding willing respondents

- it is important to remember that not all respondents completed the survey in full; individuals answered the following questions to the best of their ability in an open and honest environment

We would like to thank all participants for their time, hospitality and effort.

## **1.6 Key Points**

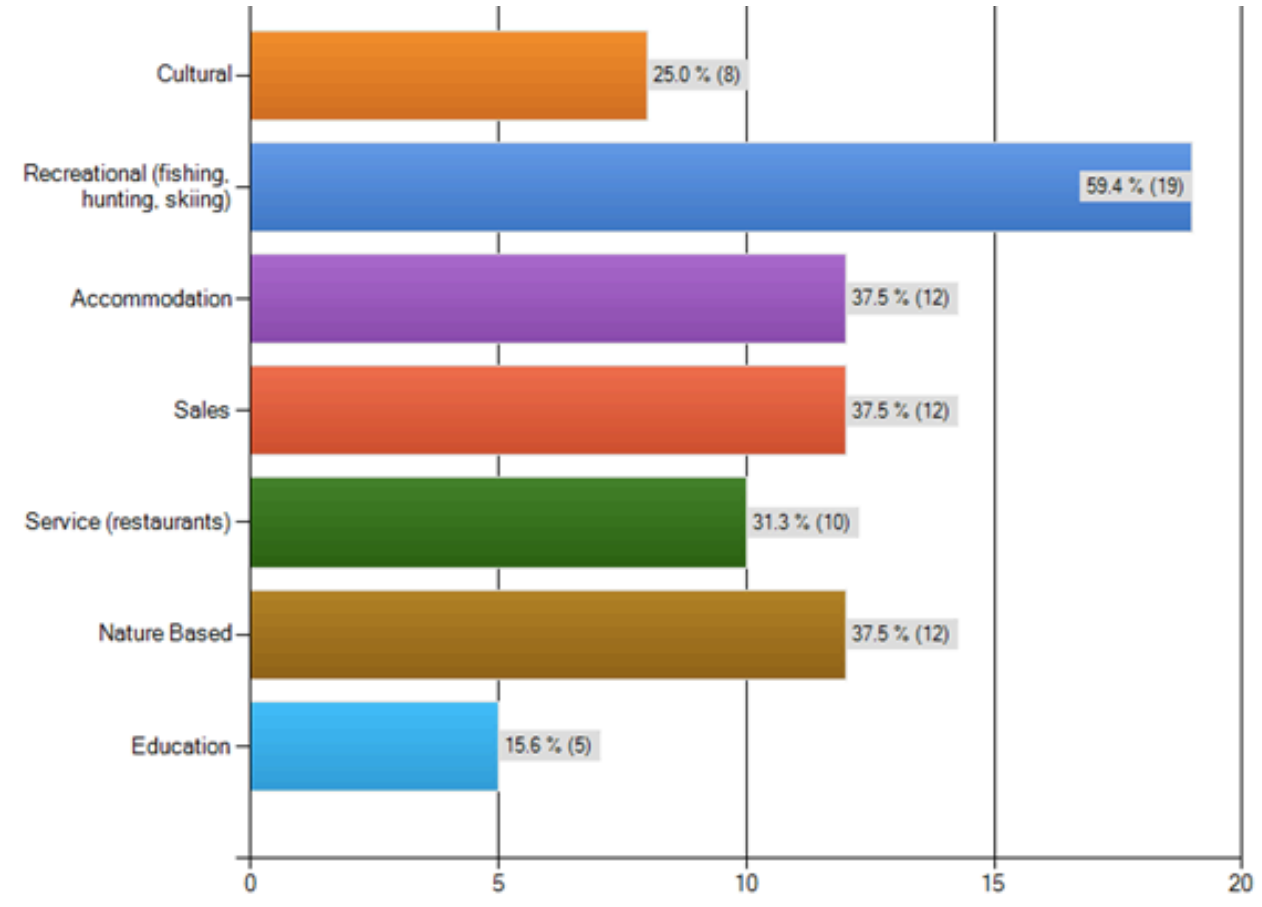
The following are some key points that we, the **Saskatchewan Boreal Forest Learning Centre**, have taken from this project:

- 1. Many tourism operators find the Big River area to be a naturally beautiful, resource-rich region and are optimistic about their industry.**
  - however; many expressed a need to beautify the town and improve infrastructure in the area
- 2. While many businesses support the tourism industry in general, there were some cautionary tones about 'over-development', particularly on lakes.**
  - some people felt that 'over-development' could threaten the natural beauty of the area and in turn, hurt the tourism industry in the long-run
  - some concerns also arose about the price of land and other living costs rising, leaving locals on fixed-incomes behind
- 3. Many tourism operators want to see better cooperation with other businesses and more support from the local/municipal government.**
  - some people felt alienated from other businesses and from municipal affairs
  - many people felt as though it was very difficult to move forward with the development of their tourism operations
  - many people expressed that there is too much bureaucratic 'red tape' when looking for permits and licenses
  - the various levels of government could be streamlined to address this problem
  - more integration with big players like the Prince Albert National Park would help tourism providers

## 2.0 ABOUT LOCAL BUSINESSES

### 2.1 Business Type



In which of the following **tourism industries** do you operate?  
(Check all that apply)



**Where** does your business operate? (Check all that apply.)




LOCATION	NUMBER	PERCENT
<b>Town of Big River</b>	17	38.6%
<b>Delaronde Lake</b>	7	16.0%
<b>Ness Creek</b>	5	11.4%
<b>Saskatoon</b>	4	9.1%
<b>Cowan Lake</b>	3	6.8%
<b>Nesslin Lake</b>	2	4.5%
<b>Ness Lakes</b>	1	2.2%
<b>Bodmin</b>	1	2.2%
<b>Hackett Lake</b>	1	2.2%
<b>Shellbrook</b>	1	2.2%
<b>Northern Provincial Forest</b>	1	2.2%
<b>Prince Albert National Park (West Side)</b>	1	2.2%

Is your head office located in the Big River area?

<b>Yes</b>		<b>85.3%</b>
<b>No</b>		<b>14.7%</b>

## 2.2 Trends

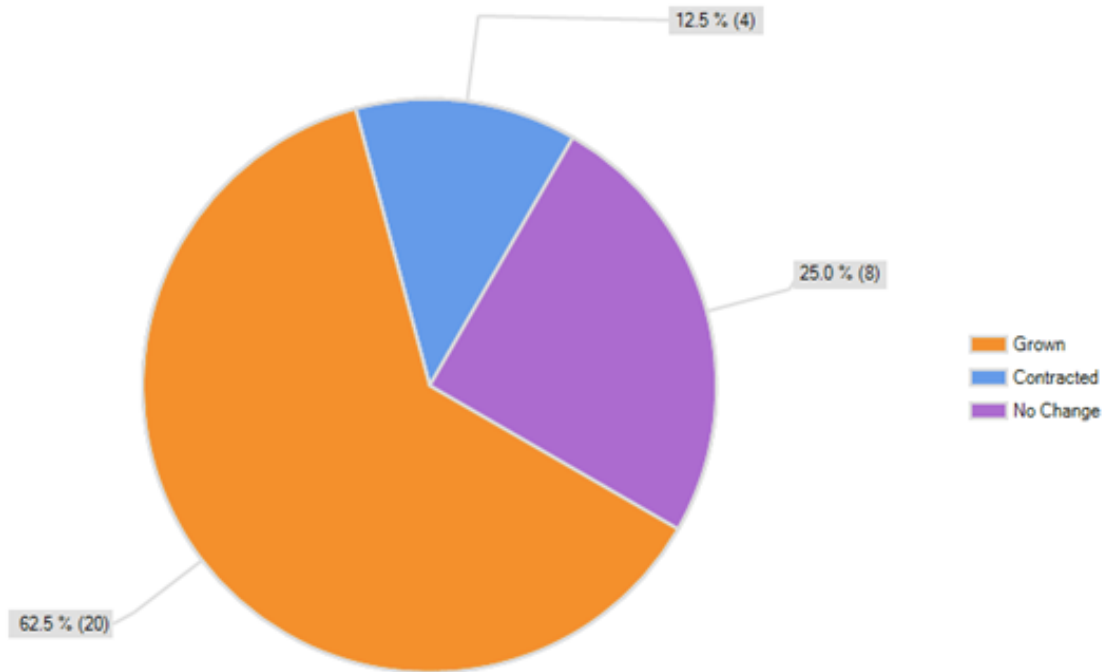
How have you been affected by the **downturn in the Forest Industry?**

Positively		12.1%
Negatively		36.4%
None		57.6%

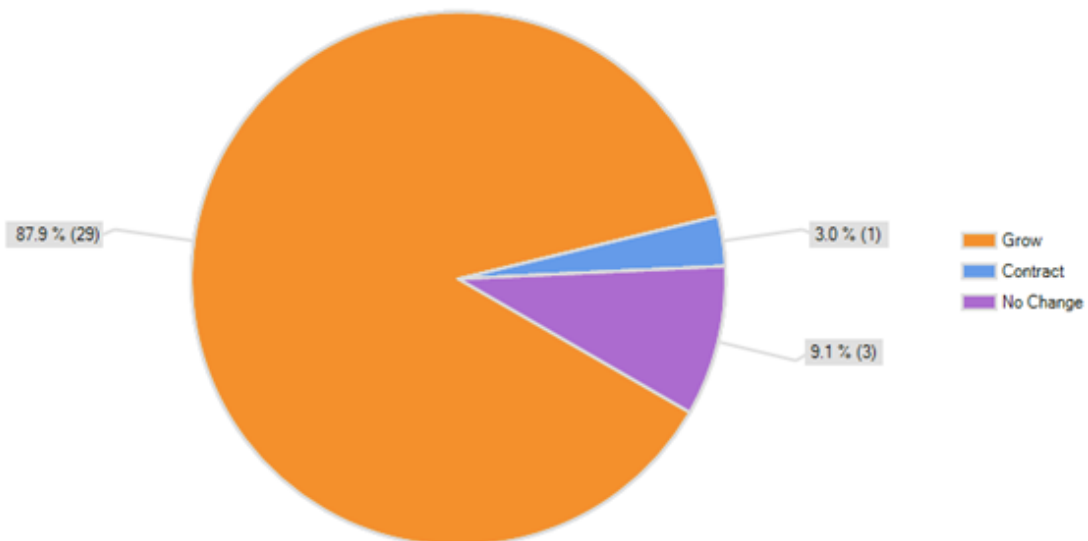
Additional Comments:

I did not notice much change with the downturn in the forest industry. My major effect has been with decision of other businesses choosing not to purchase supplies through me but rather to bring in from city store - prices same except added transportation. This shows a lack of support for local business collaboration, making for strained work relationships
Realistically the shut down did not effect us to much. Deer populations thrive on (logging) 'cutaways' so the loss of the mill did not effect us to much as there is enough 'cutaways' for a healthy deer population. The whole idea of trophy hunting means you take the biggest deers at their prime as to not disturb the younger generations. The slow down did effect the area in terms of less chances for local training, often people have to leave to be trained.
Although there are less local people camping there is still a steady stream of tourists.
Hard to measure, more recreation based - no effects felt - more people with the tourism boom
Tourism has been able to get a foothold - forestry was an obstacle
It has created more diversity in the community.
At the beginning there were negative effects. There are more people gone, less camping as often one spouse is staying and there is less time for recreation.
Have not really noticed to many negative effects as a lot (>90%) of our customers come from outside of Big River.
Both positively and negatively (-) relied on support from forest companies which are now under-employed (+) allowed time and space for tourism to develop
Loss of Business Revenue
We have recently opened, so we have not felt anything directly
Sales have increased since mill closure, more people at home. If they work away then they want to be home more often.
Down turn in sale of products - estimated at 50%
Less people - Less jobs
Not as many people were passing through the town; as a result not many people shopping at the tourist center. We have a gift shop so sales were down. The past couple of years things have started to pick up.
Loss of jobs, resulting in reduced investing in the area.
I opened my business after the mill shut down.
Business has slowed down, due to less people being in town.
A lot of my previous clientele are working away from home, they are getting services elsewhere.
When the Big River local and regional economy is suffering it has an effect on our festival and music camp in terms of attendance by nearby patrons (they are off working elsewhere, have less entertainment dollars to spend) and in terms of sponsorship (businesses and organizations are less able to support us).
New business, un-affected.
Occupancy went down the first two years but has returned.
Our activities are not directly related to the forest industry per se. We might be affected once we start building our centre - whether we will find the tradespeople and workforce we need to build it.
With the Mill shut down families have moved away.
The town has turned its prospect towards tourism; which is what our primary business is.

Has your business **grown, contracted or remained the same** in the past five (5) years?



Do you see your business **growing, contracting or remaining the same** in the next five (5) years?



## 2.3 Wishlist

What **resources** would **help your business to grow?**

More human resources training and grants.
More population
We would like to see more consultation that really matters with local and provincial governments.
Through the outfitters association we have tried to move things to better the situation of hunters and trappers but most decisions are out of our hands. We can do fine, but there is just too much over regulation and it is really hampering the growth rate for this area.
More Tourists
More local employment, would help to fill out our customer needs during low times.
More tourism, more people - any industry in the community
Good employees
Government services IE Natural Gas
The current economy has slowed down sales but we are still growing. We've planned a few new site developments including a new swimming area and playground. The DFO is cooperating as well as they can but they do have limited capacity, as there is a lot more activity on delaronde.
Internet presence.
Internet presence. Attending and possibly hosting more sport and leisure shows.
Financial investment - business friendly RM & town, proactive RM - an attitude of "how can we make sure that this works for all of us" - municipal, provincial, federal job creation - streamlining government bureaucracy - better communication between government agencies - increased incentives for community infrastructure - road development - more lead time in hiring summer students on Service Canada programs
More communication with town of Big River.
More tourism, the towns people used to be my bread and butter and the tourists the gravy but that has changed as people have moved away.
More tourism, and the mill reopening
Advertising, as well as more resources available to people
More tourism IN and THROUGH town, more signage for town, Roads upgrades.
More development of tourism in the Big River area and more business and employment opportunities in the Big River area and an overall comfort in the Canadian economy.
Suitable and available workers
If they opened the mill to create more jobs. Jobs bring people
The govt. grant that our town was awarded will help with signage to bring more people to town.
More businesses coming to the town of Big River, such as opening up the Big River Mill.
The mill opening up would increase population and as a result, sales in recreational property
More people in town
More full time cottage owners, the population of Big River growing. Also, marketing to the population outside of Big River
Money. Increased awareness of our programming. More tourism in the local area which would bring more people to our event.
Municipal contracts Educational grants (business training, etc..)
A variety of shopping and more activities in the community - Improved recreation ( Golf Course, Snowmobile Trails, Mapped ATV trails, Ski Hill)
Support of the RM and Town for infrastructure. A legal road in to the Ness Creek site would help as there are restrictions for building without one!
More industry, more people
More Advertising
The world wide web is the way of the future.

## 3.0 PRODUCT AND SERVICES




### 3.1 Product/Service Type

What is your **service / product**?

To coordinate, promote, and put on an annual festival in the boreal forest at the Ness Creek Site.
Custom logo-ing, promotional items, liquor
Hunting, trapping and accommodation
Camping, Accommodation, Recreation, Fishing, Hunting
Camping, Recreation, Accommodation
Golf course
Rides into the national park for environmental education (bison viewing)
Marina, Lot Sales, Service
Lot Sales
Campgrounds
Camping, Accommodation, Recreation, water sports.
Cultural, recreational & ecological tourism
Retail (Cultural)
Food / Alcohol
Regional Park campground
Restaurant
Natural health services and product
Restaurant, Hardware, Fishing, Hunting Supplies and licenses, gas, confectionery
Selling lakefront, lakeview and lakeside properties (lots) and selling "ready to move in" cabins
Gifts and Restaurant - eating establishment
Tourism
Providing directive aid to tourists.
Land Development
Recreational property
Campground
Accommodation
Alcohol / Good times (Bar)
Hairdressing / Retail
A music camp and festival as well as year round programming (including concerts, camps, workshops, dances and other events)
Ecological Design workshops
Accommodation
The centre will be a four season cultural centre offering a space for a variety of cultural/recreational activity. We also offer cultural programming.
Skiing, Downhill, Cross country
Outfitting, hunting
Our service is to provide an outlet to the average working person by way of recreational rentals.

### 3.2 Trends




Has your **product or service changed** in the past five (5) years?

Grown		62.5%
Contracted		12.5%
No Change		25.0%

Comments:

New management, more improvements, more aesthetics
We have added Eastside routes
New project 25% of sales to date
200% increase - horizontal growth - more events, partnerships
Usual things like menu changes
We just started our business - selling lots in the last four years
Continual re-evaluation of what is required
Business Increase
Investing in Recreational or Residential in the area has reduced.
This is our first year
Continue to try to improve our services for the people of the community.
We have offered more services as we have increased as an organization.
We only started 4 years ago, with a focus on the space. Now we do a fair bit of programming, depending on volunteer availability.
We are a new business.

Do you anticipate your **product or service changing** in the next five (5) years?

<b>Grow</b>		<b>87.9%</b>
<b>Contract</b>		<b>3.0%</b>
<b>No Change</b>		<b>9.1%</b>

Comments:

We stay with what we have because we have a very good product, animals are healthy and their numbers high in this area. The customers who we have stay with us because they are true trophy hunters. We would like to expand but unsure as the costs and red tape will hinder any activities.
More accommodation, a new shower house, power hook ups
More employment (seasonal/students) - potential is positive
The Eastside and outback demand will grow - adding multiple night trips - add ecological programming (native grasses)
New Lodge Cabins
More people are wanting permanent sites
Improved infrastructure - value-adding to existing events
Same as above
Seasonal Store add on, recreation equipment and a propane tank exchange
Our lots/development will hopefully remain the same with just less lots to sell
Generally yes; always seeking new and interesting things to bring in
Expect to have a larger tourism base
As the market grows with the oil and gas and hopefully the mill opening up again, this will promote people investing in the area
There may be a change in my services/product if I make changes in the direction of my career.
We will continue to evolve our service offerings as we grow.
More focused with time
We hope to have the building constructed within 5 years and be doing more programming then
More Ski-do, Cross Country and Horse Trails
We plan to grow into which ever area is needed. We will see this as the months go on and the public alerts us to their needs.

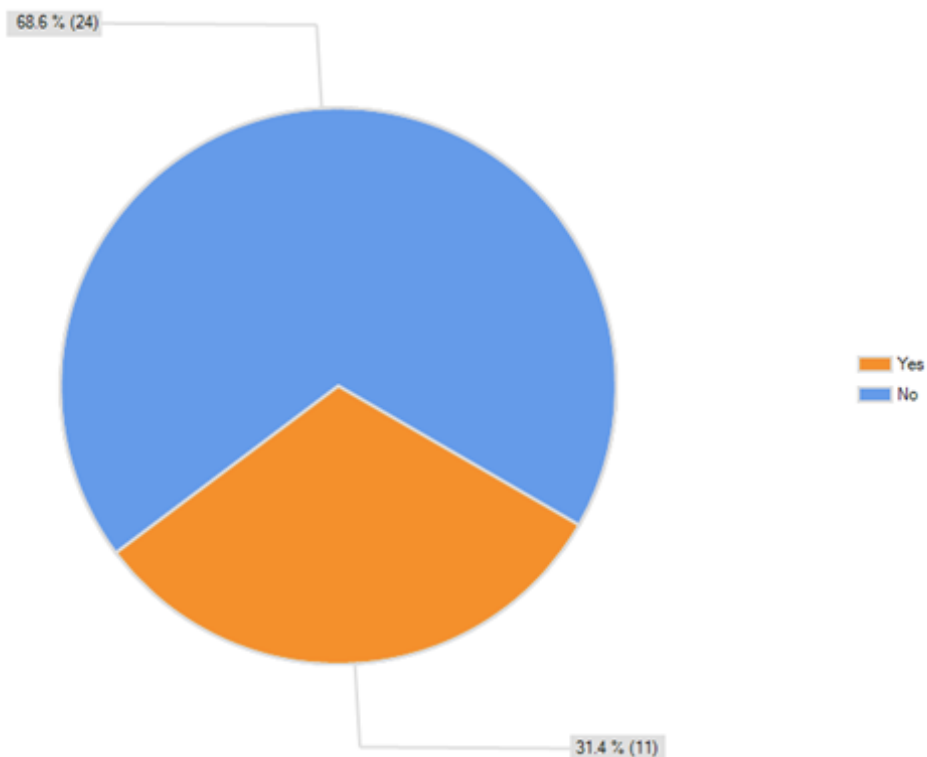
## 4.0 EMPLOYEE PROFILE

### 4.1 Workforce Size

How many **employees** do you have?

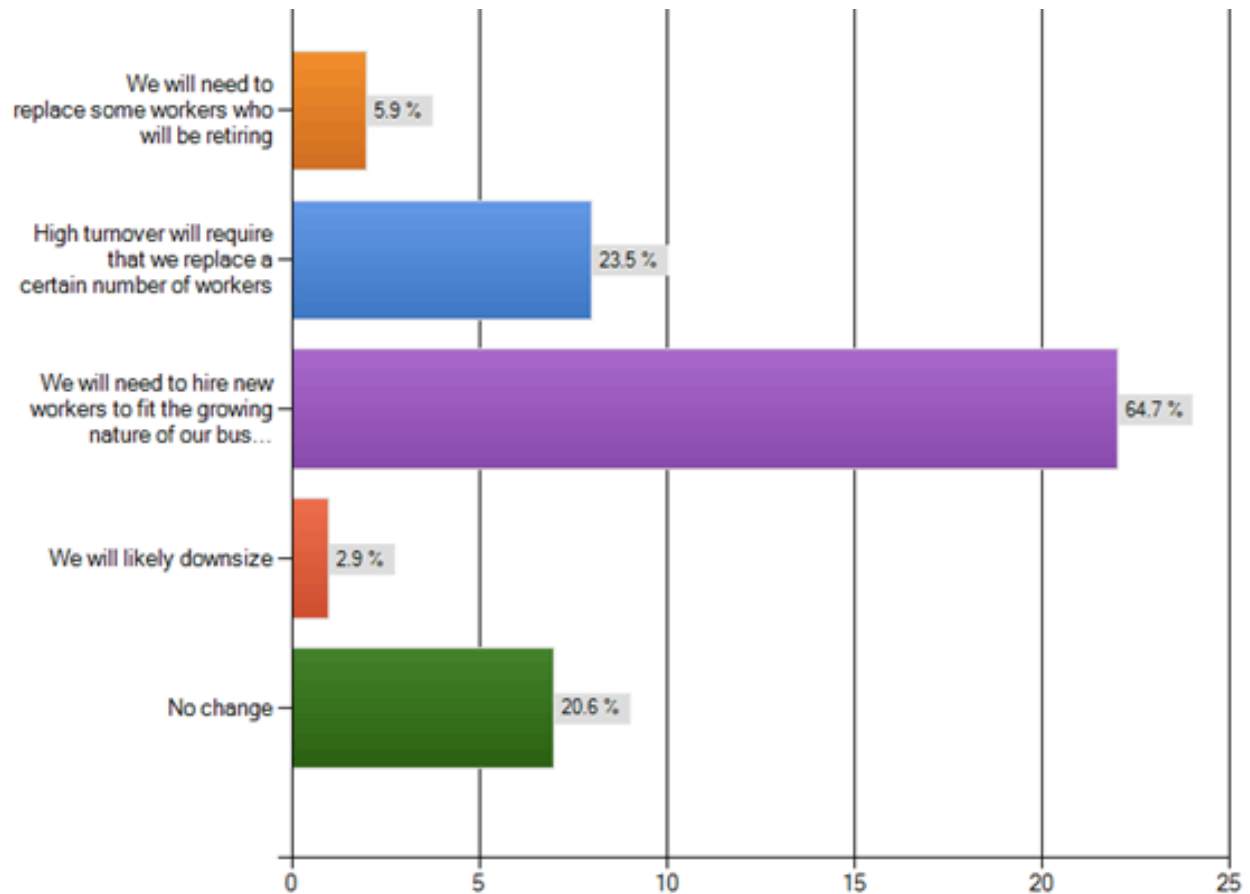
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	FULL-TIME (NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS)	PART-TIME (NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS)	SEASONAL (NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS)	VOLUNTEER (NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS)
<b>1 - 5</b>	23	12	7	3
<b>6 - 10</b>	2	2	0	0
<b>11 - 20</b>	1	2	1	3
<b>21 - 50</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>50+</b>	0	0	0	2

Do you **import workers** from outside 100km of Big River, SK?

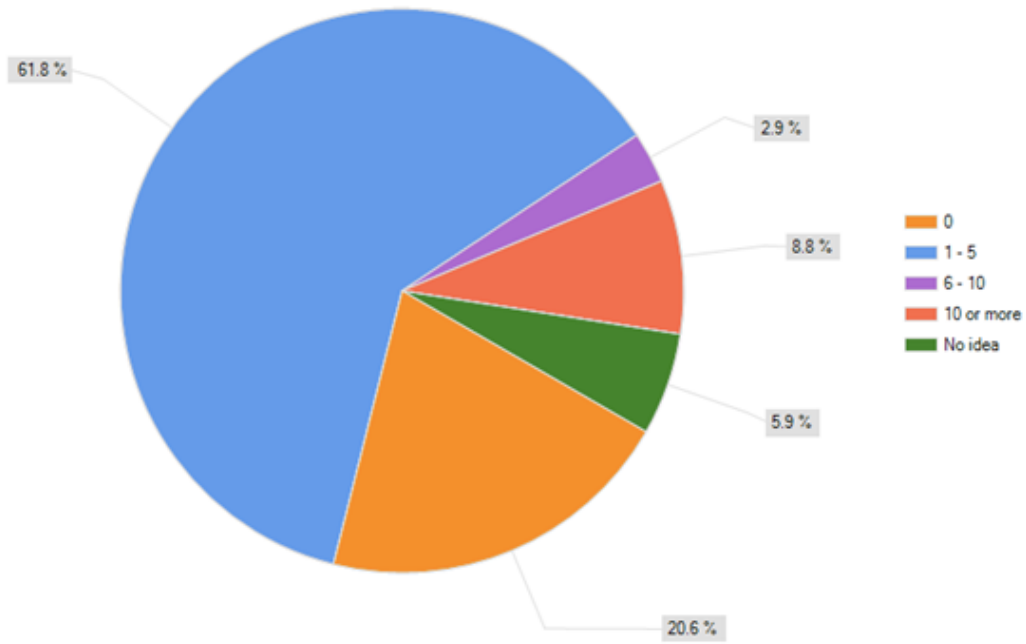


## 4.2 Trends

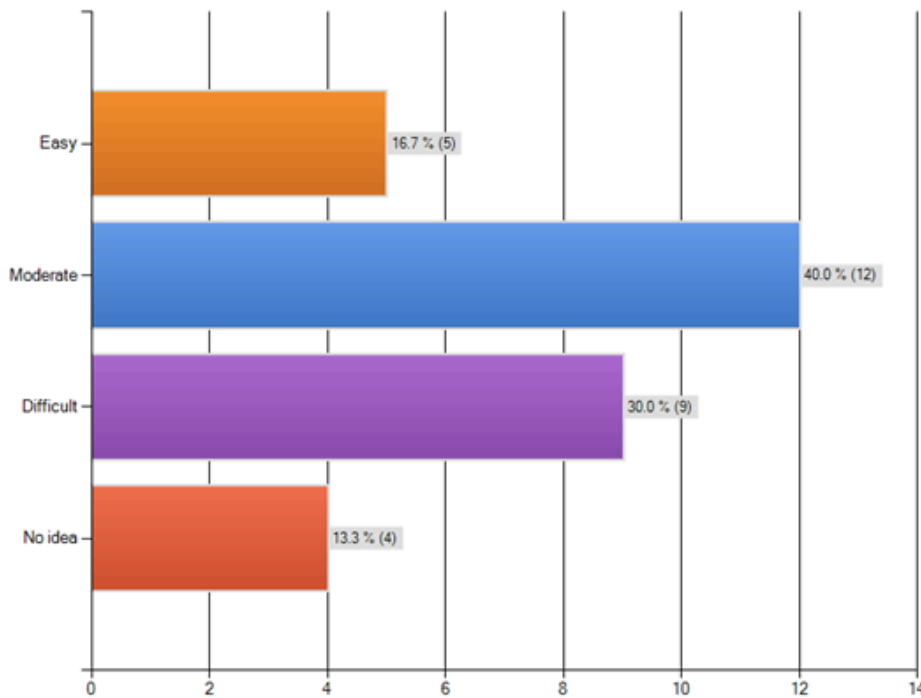
How will your **employee base** likely **change over the next three (3) years?**  
Check as many as apply:



How many **new hires** do you expect to make within the next two (2) years?



Overall, how difficult do you anticipate it will be to fill these positions?

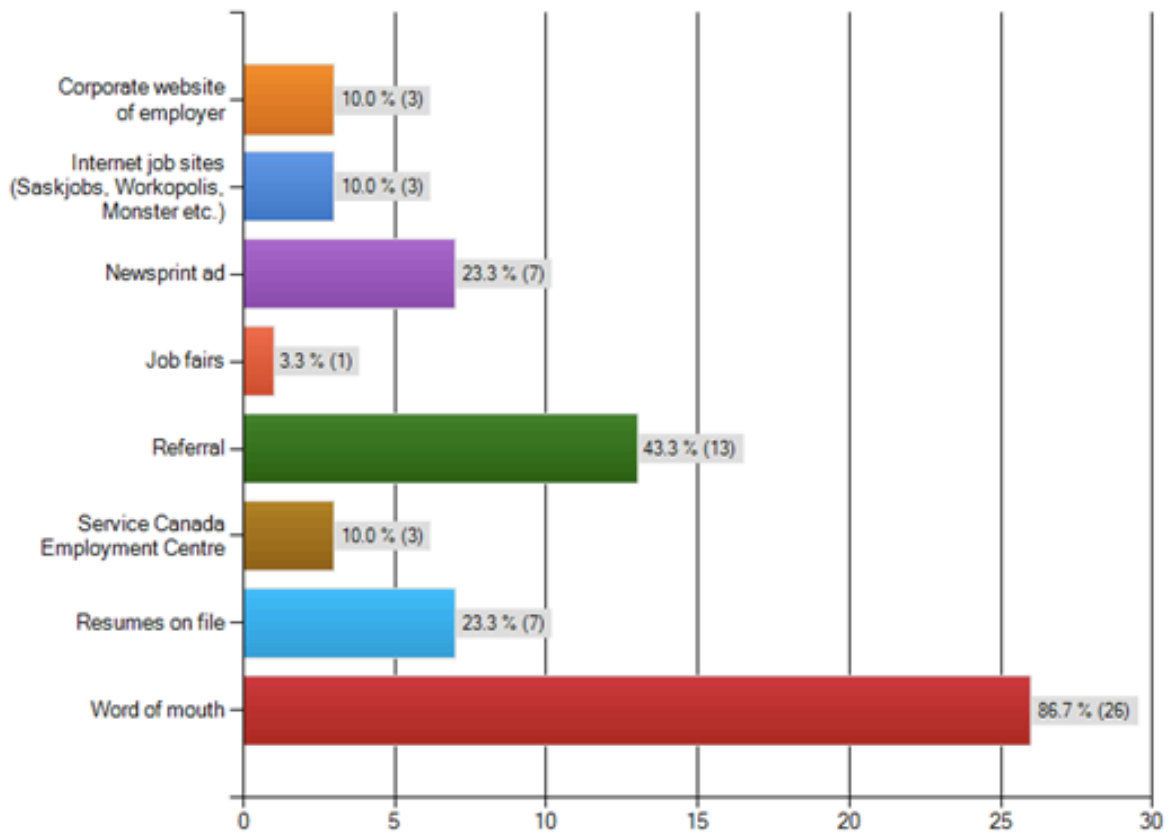


### **4.3 Training & Recruitment**

What types of **training / experience** do you expect these individuals to have?

Event management, Human resources, administration.
Knowledge of product, sales experience, good communication skills
Local people with strong knowledge of the area, as clients have more ease with local people
On the job training, equipment use
First aid, park certification - horse savvy, administrative experience - social networking - marketing experience
Service Industry
Common sense, people skills, experience / training in power equipment and equipment operation.
Animal awareness (bears)
Safety and first aid - skills and tradespeople
People skills!
I plan training on the job.
Alternative health and wellness experience
Willing and able to work, Strong Work Ethic, Pride in ones work
Mainly good attitudes and a willing desire to work hard and serve customers well - mainly on the job training - Food safety courses are also needed
People Skills
Basically to know the area or be willing to learn and explore.
Trade skills
Being able to count / make change / honesty
Background in arts/culture events
Business administration Permaculture Design training
Good communication skills, public relations, high standards, strong sense of cleanliness
Event planning, cultural tourism operator, construction of green buildings
Public Relations
The expertise in dealing with the tourist's needs and expectations.

What method(s) do you use to **recruit new employees**? (Check as many as apply)



**OTHER:** Help Wanted Signs

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What are the most **significant barriers** to you as an employer in having a **well-trained and skilled workforce**? (Please rate each of the following):

	Significant Barrier	Somewhat of a Barrier	Not an Issue / Not Applicable	Don't Know	Response Count
Too busy	16.1% (5)	32.3% (10)	45.2% (14)	6.5% (2)	31
Cost	26.7% (8)	23.3% (7)	46.7% (14)	3.3% (1)	30
Awareness of existing training programs	10.3% (3)	10.3% (3)	55.2% (16)	24.1% (7)	29
Awareness of government sponsored training support program	10.3% (3)	27.6% (8)	44.8% (13)	17.2% (5)	29
Relevant training is not offered in Big River Area	29.0% (9)	19.4% (6)	51.6% (16)	0.0% (0)	31
Unable to release employees from their duties for training	12.9% (4)	19.4% (6)	64.5% (20)	3.2% (1)	31
Losing employees which my company has trained to other companies	9.7% (3)	25.8% (8)	61.3% (19)	3.2% (1)	31
Loss of productivity during training period	6.5% (2)	19.4% (6)	61.3% (19)	12.9% (4)	31
Skilled workers that I need are not available in Big River area	25.8% (8)	25.8% (8)	45.2% (14)	3.2% (1)	31
Skilled workers available in area, but wage expectations too high	16.7% (5)	36.7% (11)	43.3% (13)	3.3% (1)	30

Comments:

My two employees have been with me for 10 years and so have not experienced barriers.

Wages are not an issue as I do pay higher than most tourism business - training and experiences offered through job training are very valuable - workers must be good with horses - sometimes there is problems with 'horse culture'

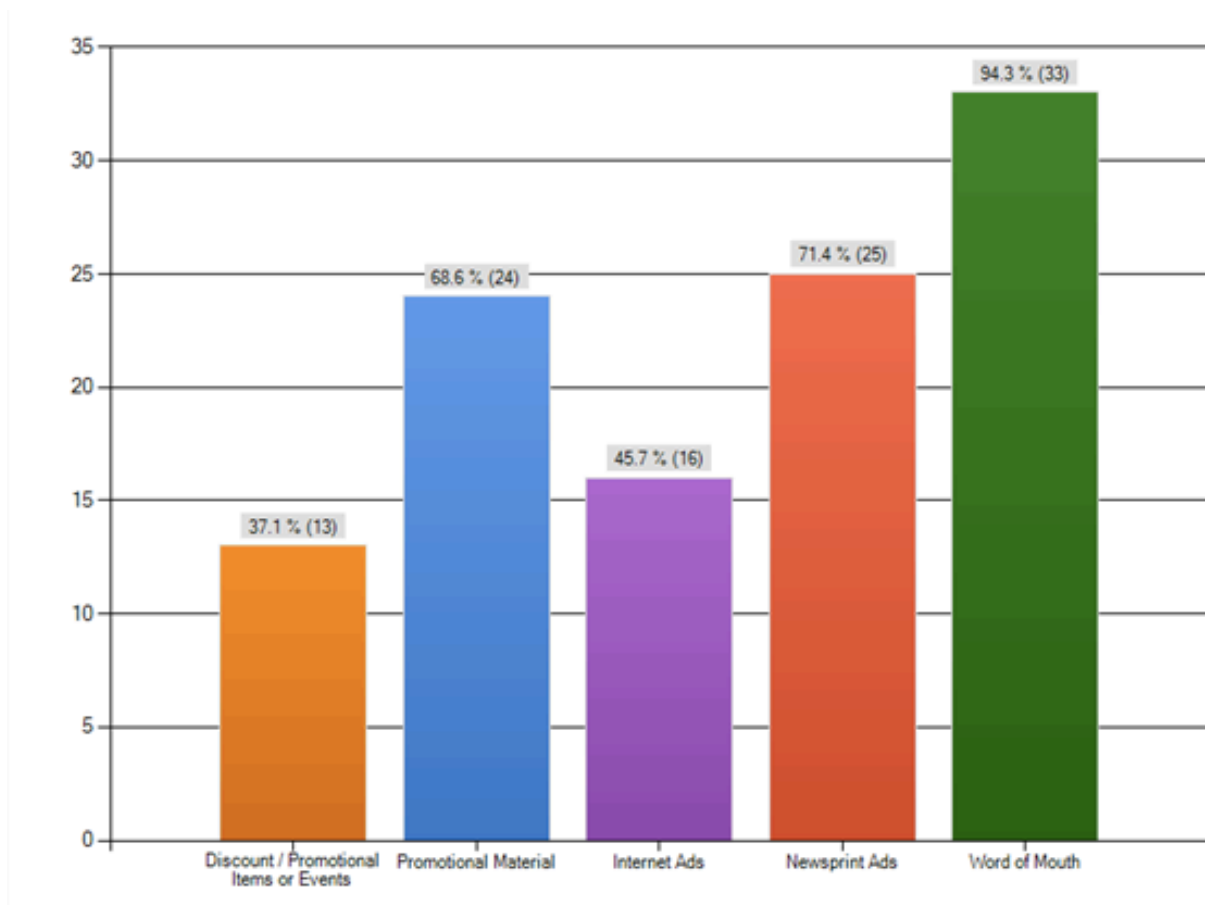
It is hard to find workers because of the seasonal work.

I do not have any employees.

## 5.0 CUSTOMER PROFILE

### 5.1 Marketing Strategies

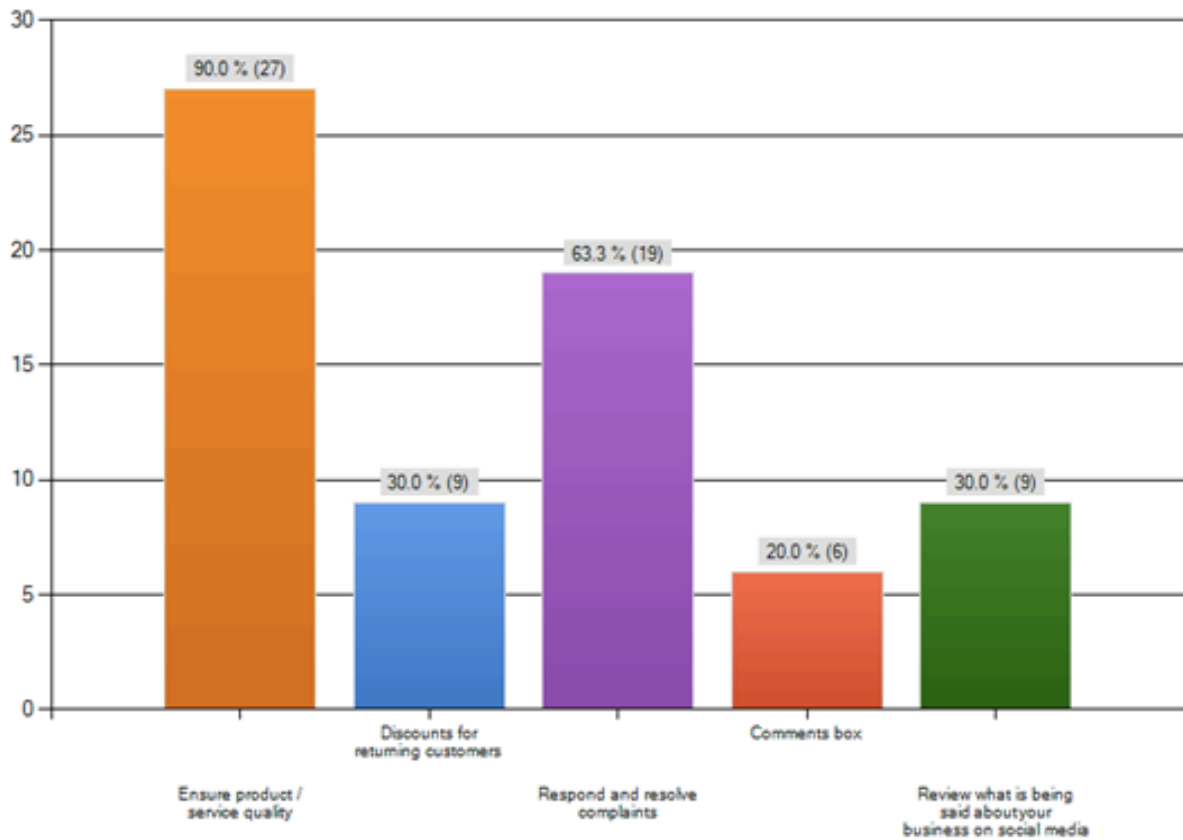
What methods do you use to **attract customers**? (Check as many as apply)



Other:

We attend Safari club international every year.
DMO; advertising while consulting social media articles and television with special media; mantracker didn't hurt
Radio
Big River trade shows
Destination Marketing Organization
Good Location, Good Staff
Tradeshows
Since we are a Land Development company we use Kijiji, word of mouth and a Real Estate Agent to promote our development.
Hosting events that are targeted to cross markets.

What methods do you use to **retain customers**?



Other:

We also do surveys for festival attendees feedback
Three quarters of our customers are returns
Quality - must not water down the experience - engage customers on social media
Good support from the towns people.
Our comments box and a survey and/or evaluation at each event.
We don't really have a customer base at this point.

## 5.2 Wishlist

What resources or services would help you **attract customers**?

None; we are at capacity
If the Government did not have as stringent boarder regulations, as some hunts have been canceled due to people being turned away at the border. Less red tape on the local level.
A new store, more power hook ups and capacity, more accommodations, restaurant and bar and some boats for rent. However to do all this we would need a loan!
Destination Marketing Organization DMO

## *Big River & Area Tourism Business Survey*

Accommodation (need more), or else we have to move to east side of park or build -
DMO - Destination Marketing Organization
If the RM was more cooperative and developed a tax incentive rather than the current scheme of tax on subdivisions which is a disincentive. A better road coming from town, if rainy it is bumpy and dangerous if dry very dusty, this has caused the loss of sales
Website
For the majority of summer we are full and have a hard time handling our capacity. A proper web page would help.
Support from Sask Tourism & government - better cooperative marketing opportunities
More help from town to attract people instead of chasing away.
More Tourism
Web page
Website
Paved roads.
More integrated services from all levels of government, local committees and groups
I rely on word of mouth
Better Roads
Doctor
Taxi Service
Money for more advertising.
Better Roads to allow tourist easier access to their destination.
Destination Marketing Organization
Using the world wide web

What resources would help you to **retain your customers**?

Human resources and a solid volunteer core
Good service brings back people and then they bring back their friends
More security
Staff must work to engage customers after the visit - quality service/standards programs through DMO - front line staff - reliable, knowledgeable
The lakes are the best at it because they are beautiful
Better infrastructure & amenities - more accommodation
Better front staff
Friendly service
Can't think of any
Discounts for returning customers

## 6.0 COMMUNITY PROFILE

### 6.1 Strengths & Weaknesses

What are the **community's strengths** as a place to do business?

Physical setting, community support, volunteers, donations, and business support.
Great wilderness, lakes, forests and lots of (logging) 'cutaways' which is good for deer populations
The fact that Big River is in a boom
Vast beautiful wilderness and many events and places to draw people to the area and keep them occupied while they are here
Unique shops, helpful businesses, more and more of them - strong service industry, all the essentials
Good services - strong business; but we need more - niche markets for arts and culture, wilderness and wildlife
Diversity
A very nice community, the people are open and generous and the services good, things such as the health food store help add depth to the community and service a wider range of tourists.
The people are very friendly, and there is a vast wilderness with lots to see and to do.
This area has the best wildlife and fishing around, the beautiful wilderness is key to this area.
Well serviced: banks, liquor store, restaurants, gas stations, etc - friendly community - positive outlook
The beauty of the wilderness. All the natural attractions and the freedom to enjoy them.
Increasing Tourism
If a customer is satisfied they will return.
A growing tourist economy with a high volume of tourists
Supportive community, committee involvement in planning, lots to offer, great recreation, beautiful place, wild west part of the province
Friendly people, great tourism area
The geographical location of being built on a lake certainly has its advantages - Diversity of members in the community
Close knit community with friends and neighbors ready to help one another.
Big River is picturesque
Friendly people.
Wild nature surrounding the town. Being the last town on the road and having a strong community spirit.
Easy accessibility, diversified, price point.
Location.
Natural beauty Friendly people Enough amenities without too much commercialism
Small town community friendliness
The natural beauty of the area, the strength of the Ness Creek site as a gathering place for cultural activity
Remote Wilderness, Friendly People
The community is an ideal place to do the type of business we wish to open. It's location is an ideal place for which most people wish to go to experience

What are the **community's weaknesses** as a place to do business?

The remoteness at times!
Locals shopping out of town when prices are same or in some cases even better particularly when these are other local businesses people - shop local, it helps everyone out
More activities for the youth in town. Too much over regulation cannot go forward as fast as we would like to. There is too much municipal red tape. Our hospital could be properly staffed. The co-op could use better produce.
All the changes to by-laws and their enforcement.
Not enough money in the community for investment and maintenance
Competition with hardware and grocery - accommodation in town, B & B - town infrastructure takes time
Tourism still stuck on fishing and quad and power vehicles - culture and art are underutilized as is access to PA park - more integration
Attitude
Subdivision rules, the hospital is an issue and really needs a doctor in the community. I do not want to bank in Big River
Lack of doctor in the hospital. We could use more retail stores for consumer goods and clothing.
For our business there are wildlife issues especially with children.
Unfriendliness - local politics - lack of cooperation - incentives for new business
No support from other businesses and from the town.
Not enough people living here
If a business has been opened & shut down repeatedly the community tends to give up on that business and it takes a bit more work to get them back as customers
Lack of working together as a community, No major employment (industry)
Hospital, day care, clothing stores (boots work gear etc), dentist, better health facilities
not enough infrastructure in place for new businesses to start up whether it be commercial or industrial
Limited in population especially during the colder months
Limited Services
Not a lot of high paying jobs available.
Not overly friendly to non-locals
No paved streets. Few sidewalks. Behind the times.
The area has small population base, and the territorial outlook that if you are not from here you never will be. The community is like most small towns who feel the need to protect themselves from outside forces
Not enough population in community for the number of hairdressers.
Location.
The risk of becoming over-developed
Very high taxes for services rendered - Poor leadership & lack of long term planning with no communication with the existing businesses
Remote, gravel roads.
Smaller and Fewer Businesses
One weakness that you might experience would be the lack of cell phone coverage as you get out of the last tower reception.



## 6.2 Outlook

Has your **attitude** toward doing business in this community **changed** during the last five (5) years?

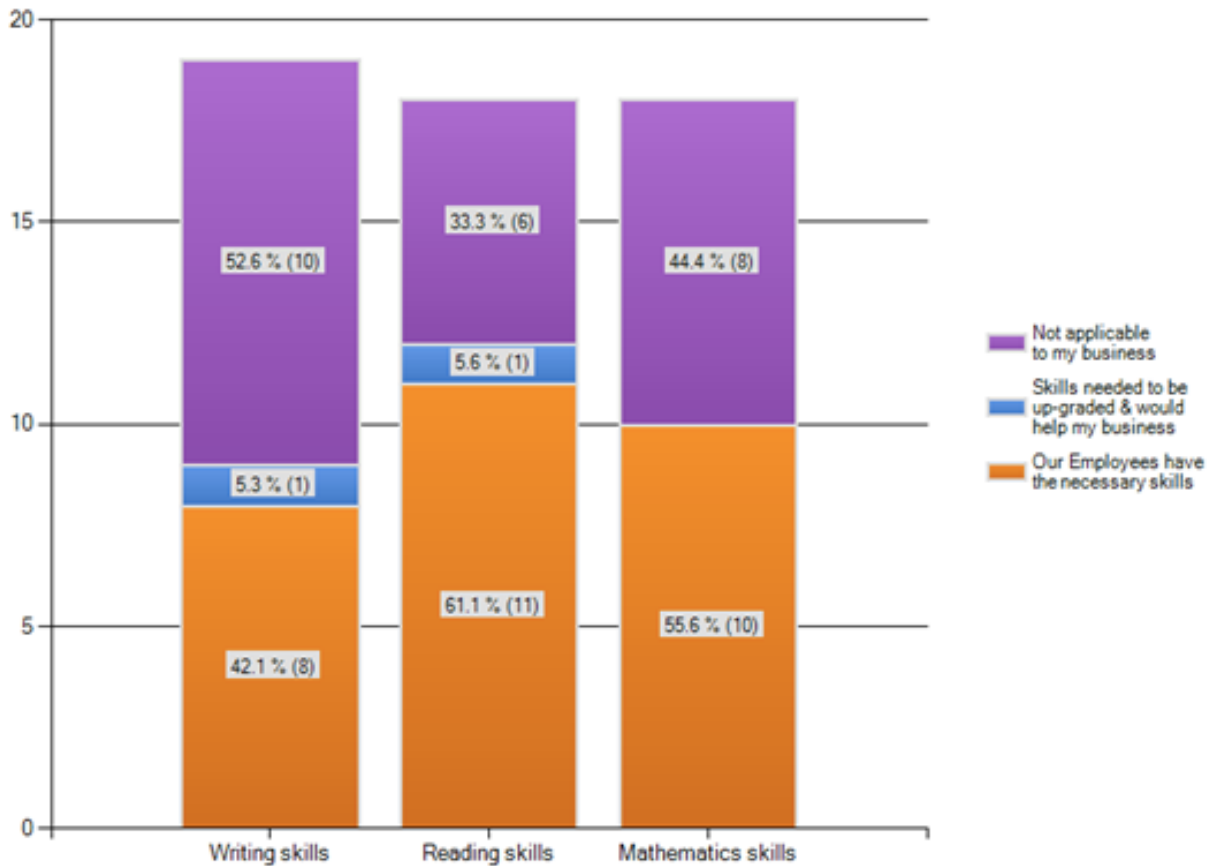
No
No
Sometimes it is like they are taking away all the good ideas and want everybody to have tunnel vision, there is just too much local government, with a much to stringent criteria. There should be a certain amount of discretion that can be practiced to help tourism providers and developers stream line their expansions and improvements. There would be more going if there was less legislation and regulations to deal with. Logging is not such a bad thing if it is done right, there is no question of regenerations when you look at the state of the cutaways. It is very hard for a new business to start in this area, there is little incentives for little local businesses, it is set up more for larger businesses who can battle the red tape. I would also like to see more trapping happening in this area. Expansion should be an upbeat positive experience not something to be fretted
My attitude toward doing business has defiantly become more positive
No
No - need more competition - source locally whenever possible
No, remains positive
No
Not really
No change
Not really, we know what is happening in this area. We would love more people to come to our business but it is difficult to expand. We have a lot of permanent sites but the real money maker is in daily sites
No
No
No
No
Nope, I just opened
Yes it has been a bit of an eye opener
Nope! I love what I do
Somewhat - we have been very lucky with support from most of the local businesses
No
Yes Most people in the Big River Area do not support my business. Most of our clients are from the cities
No
Originally, we heard alot of negative feed-back but OUR attitude has changed and we are turning the page and getting involved in the community more which will hopefully result in positive, supportive feed-back!
No...it is a great place to business
I started out really liking Big River, now...I am annoyed at Big River's "stale" state
No
No
Yes. We have received increased support from the local and regional community which has made us feel all warmer and fuzzier about hosting our event in the area
No
I was hoping that the local community would be more interested in our project - we need to do more to engage them
No

## APPENDIX I - SKILLS SECTION


Is your current workforce in any need of training or upgrading in terms of **Basic Literacy Skills**?

<b>Yes</b>		<b>3.1%</b>
<b>No</b>		<b>96.9%</b>

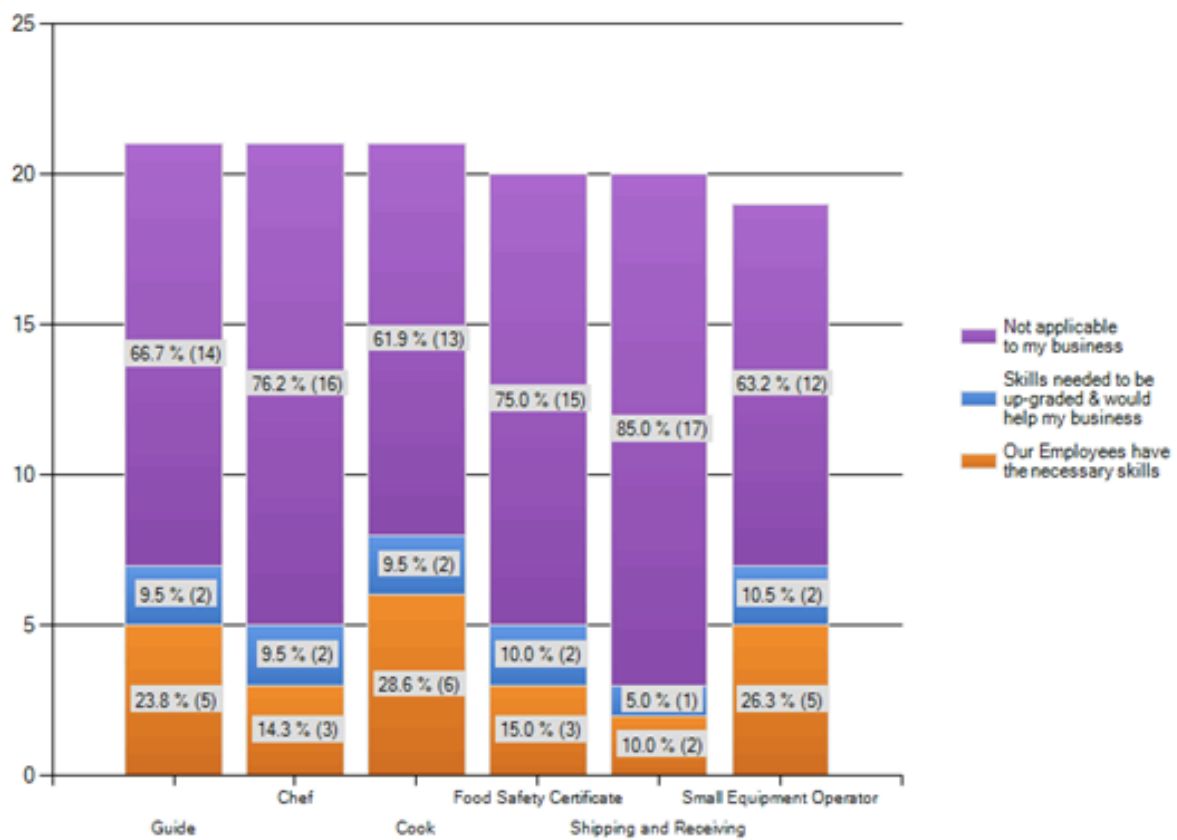
What sorts of skills upgrading and training is required?



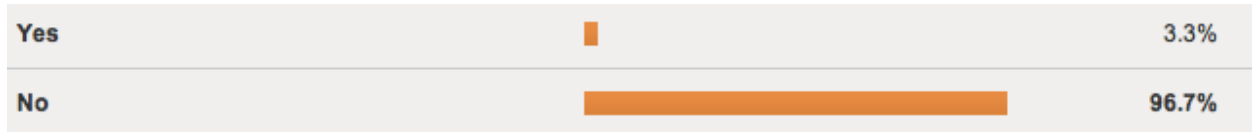
Is your current workforce in any need of training or upgrading in terms of **Technical Skills**?

<b>Yes</b>		<b>19.4%</b>
<b>No</b>		<b>80.6%</b>

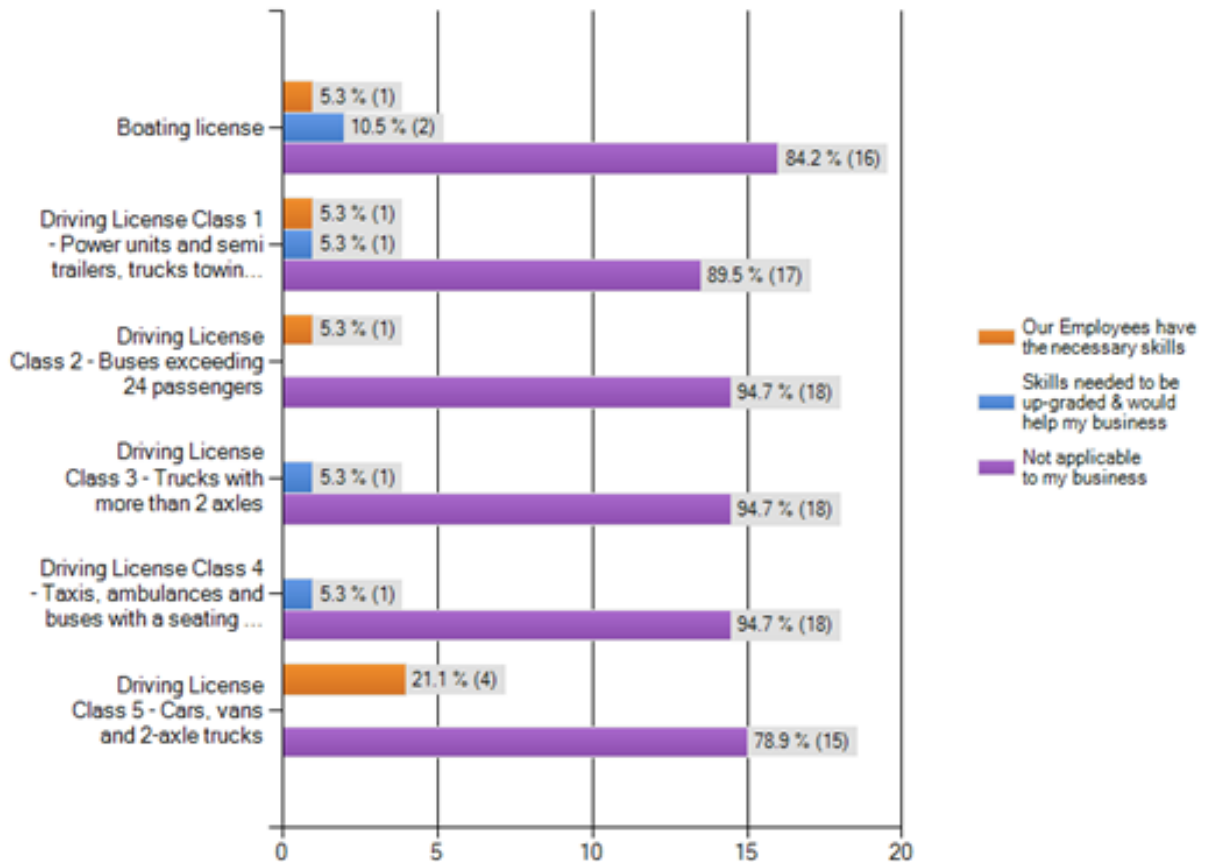
What sorts of skills upgrading and training is required?



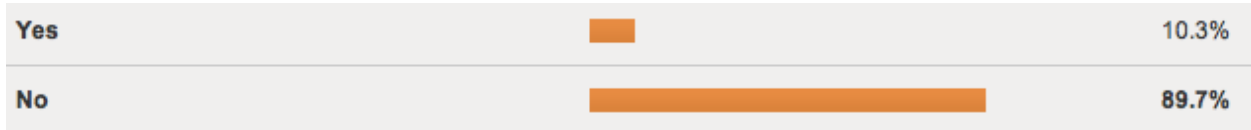
Is your current workforce in any need of training or upgrading in terms of **Transportation-related Skills**?



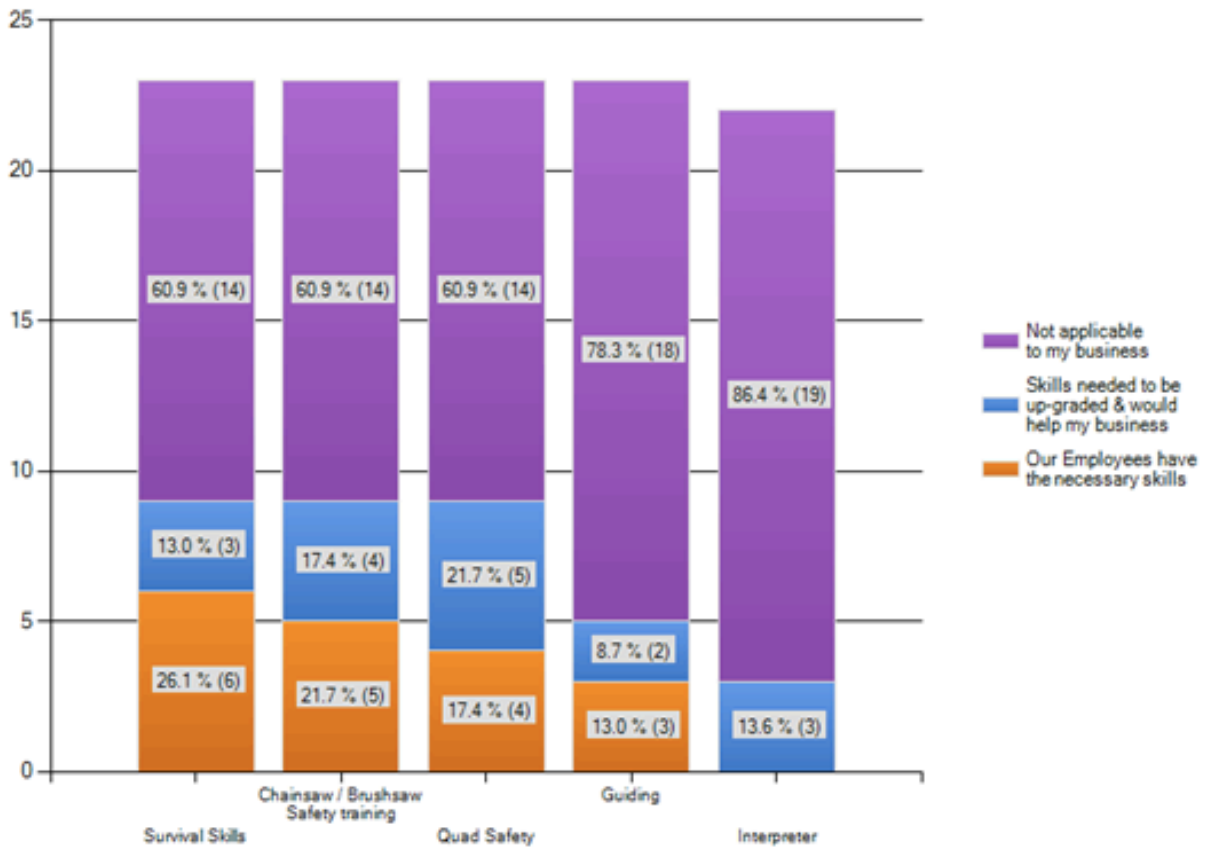
What sorts of skills upgrading and training is required?





Is your current workforce in any need of training or upgrading in terms of **Forest-related Skills?**



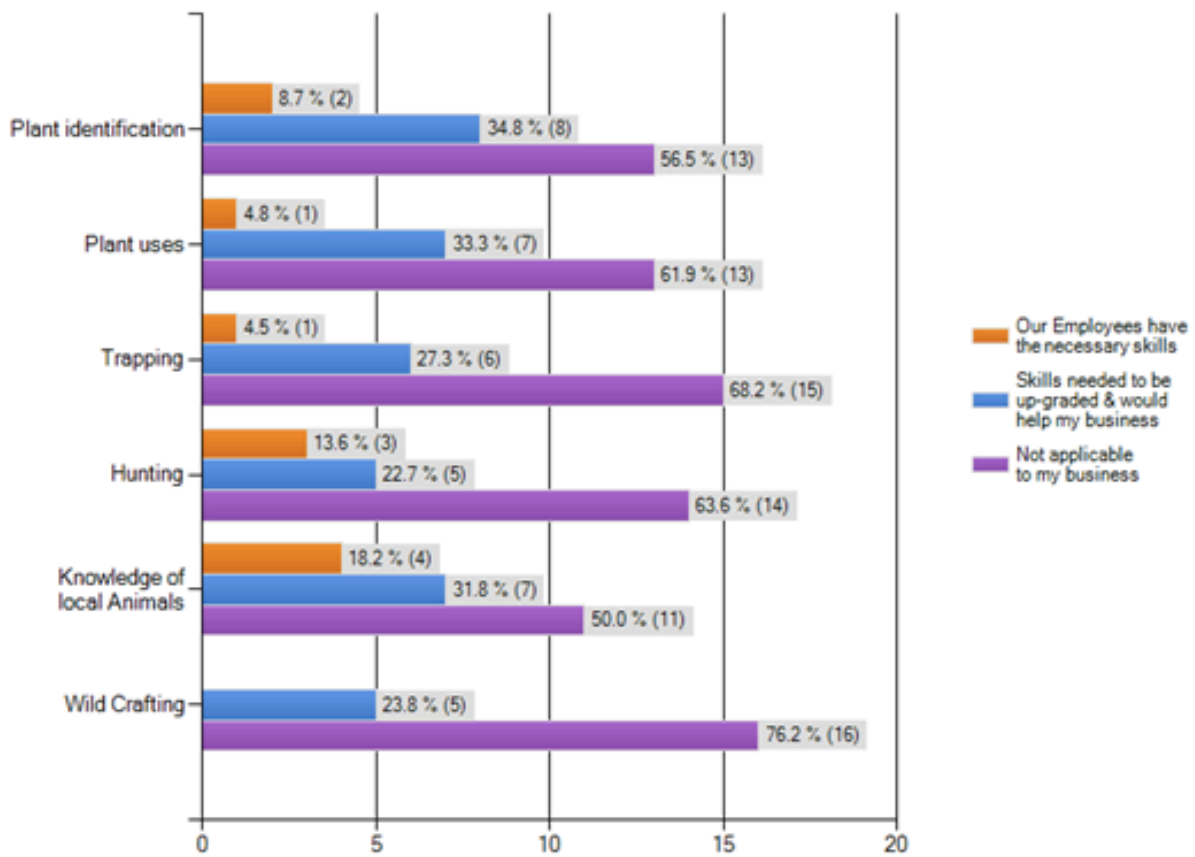
What sorts of skills upgrading and training is required?





Is your current workforce in any need of training or upgrading in terms of **Traditional Ecological Knowledge**?

<b>Yes</b>		<b>30.0%</b>
<b>No</b>		<b>70.0%</b>

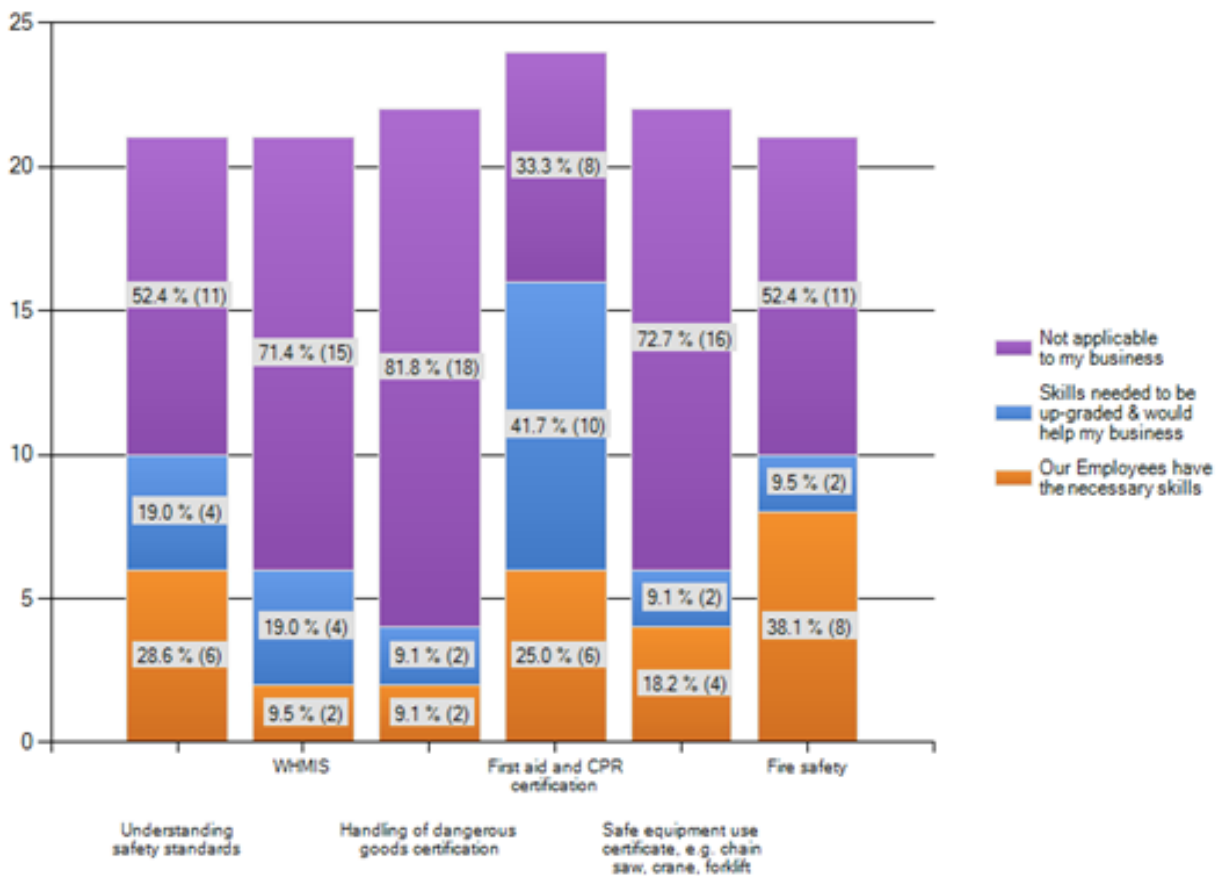
What sorts of skills upgrading and training is required?





Is your current workforce in any need of training or upgrading in terms of **Health and Safety Skills?**

<b>Yes</b>		<b>32.3%</b>
<b>No</b>		<b>67.7%</b>

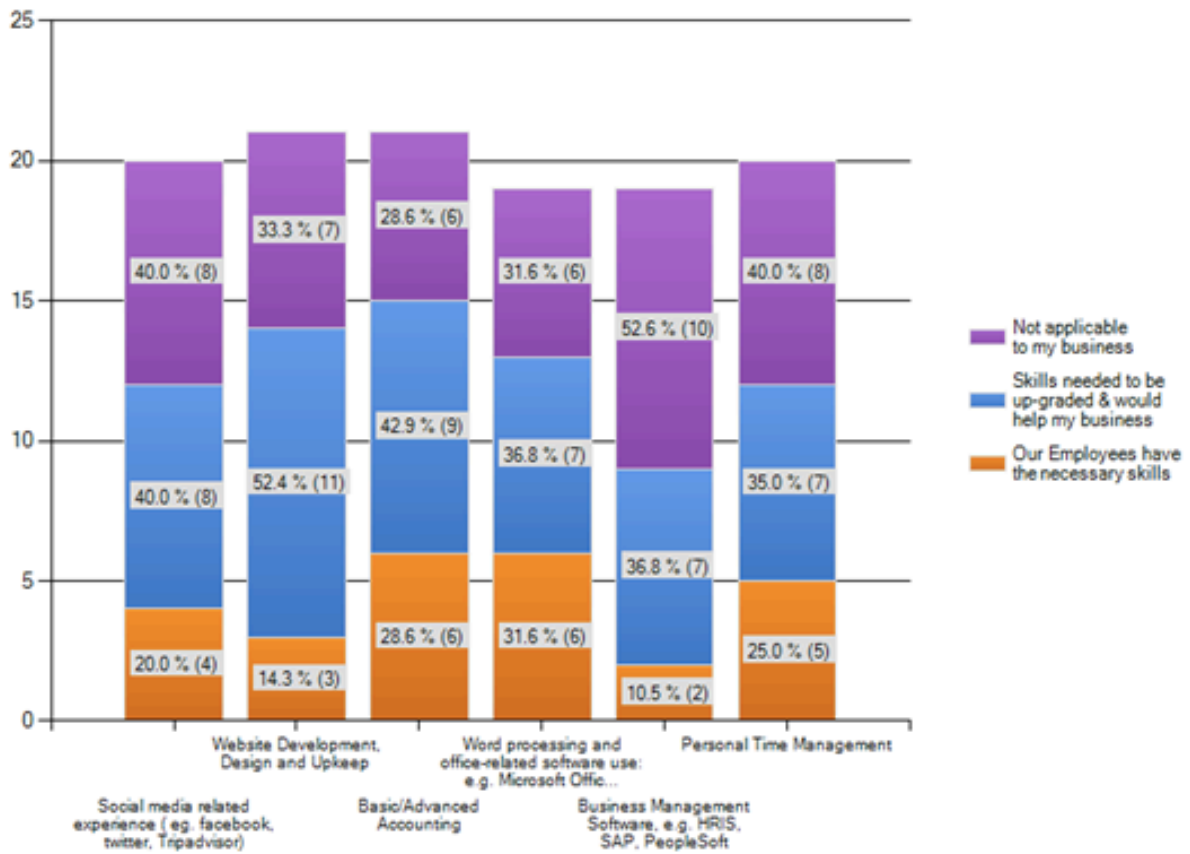
What sorts of skills upgrading and training is required?



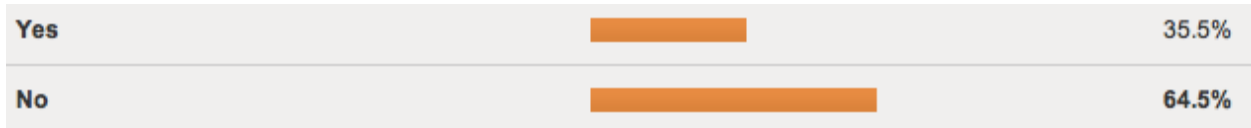
Is your current workforce in any need of training or upgrading in terms of **Administrative and Accounting Skills?**

Yes		30.0%
No		70.0%

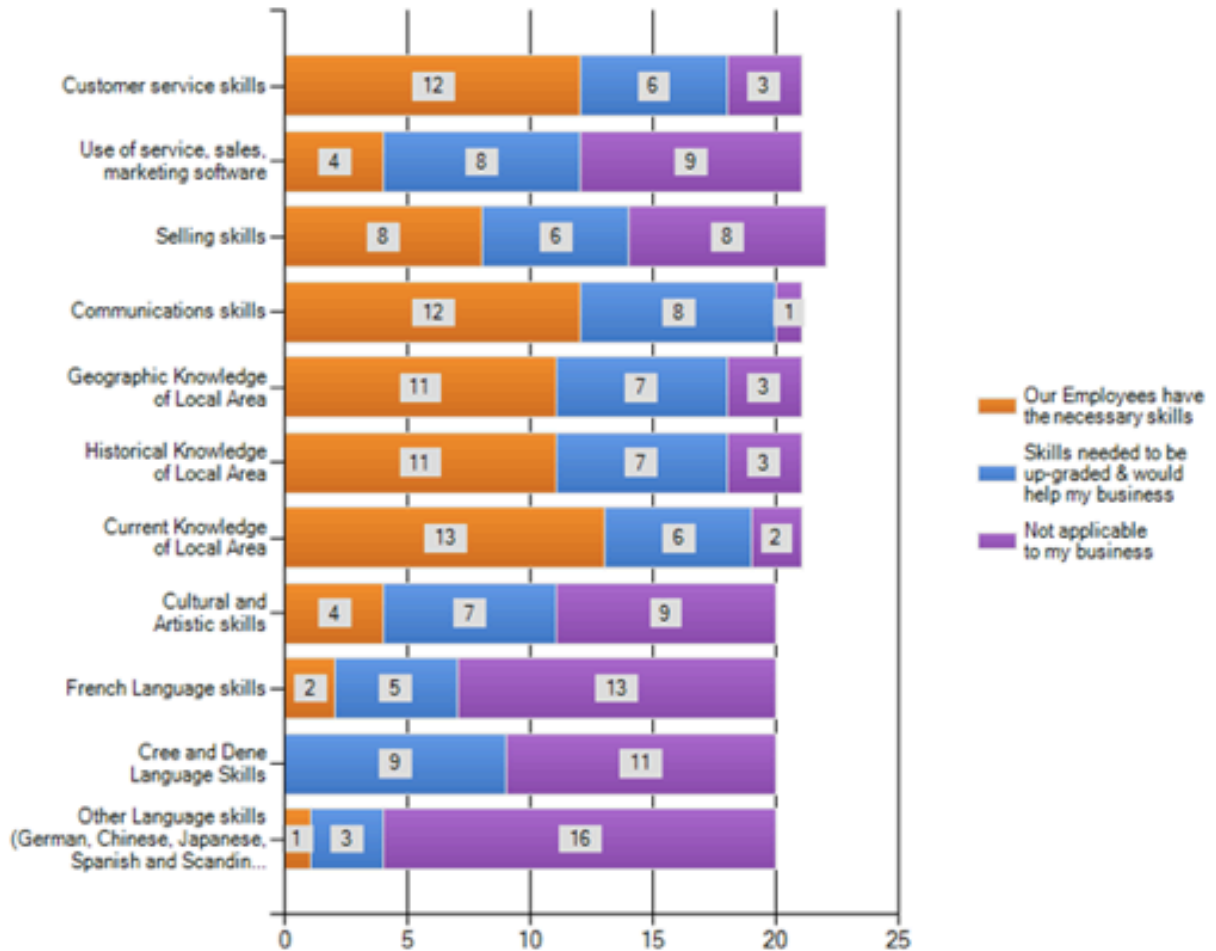
What sorts of skills upgrading and training is required?





Is your current workforce in any need of training or upgrading in terms of **Service, Sales, and Marketing Skills?**



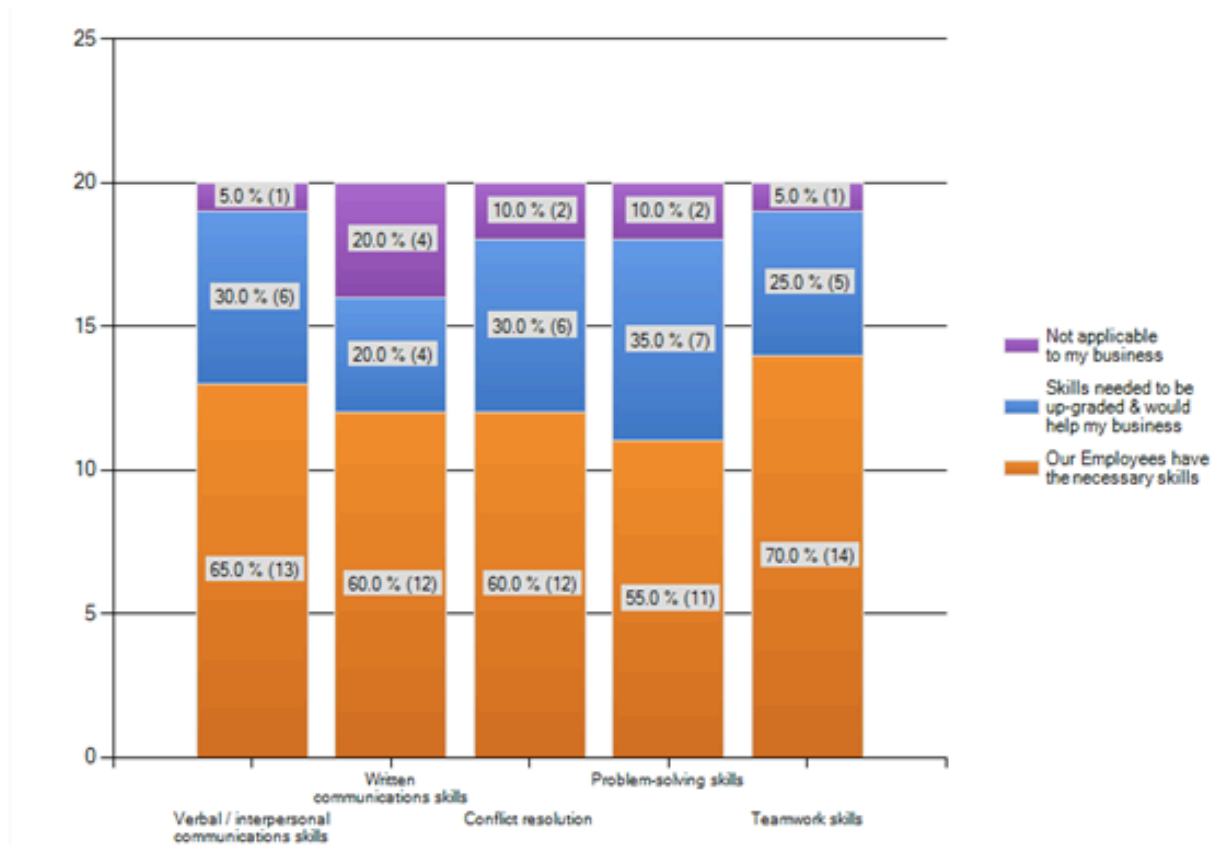
What sorts of skills upgrading and training is required?





Is your current workforce in any need of training or upgrading in terms of **Human / Working Relationship / Decision-making Skills**?

Yes		26.5%
No		73.5%

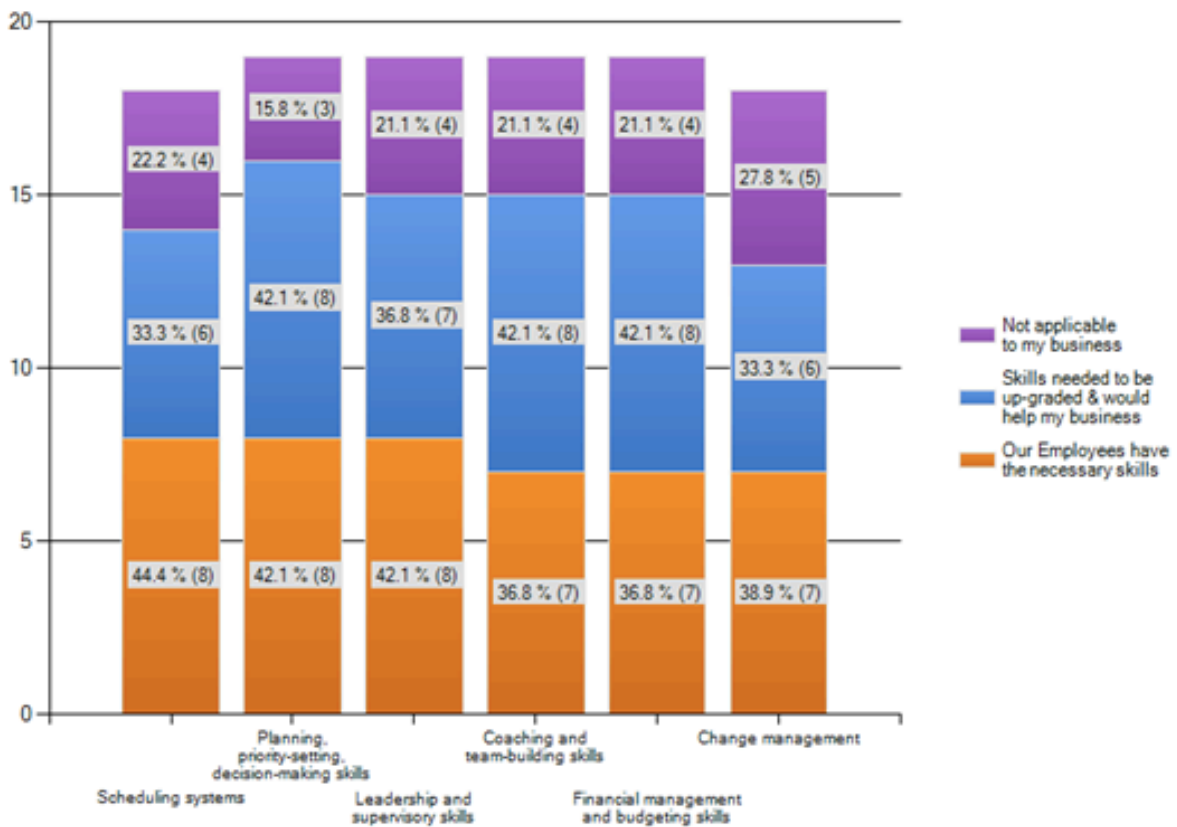
What sorts of skills upgrading and training is required?



Is your current workforce in any need of training or upgrading in terms of **Management and Supervisory Skills**?

<b>Yes</b>		<b>27.3%</b>
<b>No</b>		<b>72.7%</b>

What sorts of skills upgrading and training is required?



## APPENDIX II - FINAL COMMENTS

This area was a bit of a secret but not for much longer. Tourism developments are going to happen and it is better to work with it then against. You have a better chance of making the most positive experience for both your business and the community if you work with what is happening. Work with it rather than against it and you will also have an easier time managing it. We need to try and push for more innovation in this area but there is little to no cooperation from local / provincial governments. The Canadian dollar is just too high and this is hurting tourism. Especially when people have to travel so far.

Things are getting better and better in Big River. It is good for the community to attract more people through the many developments. I would like to see more cooperation between tourism providers. Tourism is forever, logging goes in and out.

Our business has always been in tourism and only lately has the town really been involved in bringing people to the area. It would be more beneficial if there was increased cooperation with and through all the local tourism businesses. The developments around do help to bring people to our business as we have a nice beach and a great lake for recreation.

No 'us' against 'them' - more cooperation with providers is needed - on the verge of tapping into tourism industry, slow, but it is coming - must keep a handle on the growth - keep within parameters of the law and bylaws - positive outlook for developments - Big River can and should control when there will be growth - straight economic growth from resource extraction is not the be all end all - slow steady growth is better for the community than fast rampant growth

If anything, more positive - high growth potential, which can be managed with an ecological mind - tourism saved the town - town has improved socially without compromising anything - tourism and the people it attracts helps the town to grow - vitality of Ness Creek and other events can be seen in how they were allocated money for their road

The RM and the Town should continue to fund the EDC. If we never saw Weyerhaeuser again it would be to soon. This change in the local economics helped me and many others diversify. The vast wilderness we have is a major asset to this community. Our business would like to see more cooperation with the government and Saskenergy

The community could use redecorating, the down town beautified and the businesses perked up. It would also be better if the sewage (although treated) was not put into Cowan lake. The hospital situation does need to be taking care of. Why does Big River not have a doctor or the hospital properly staffed? As a business which is not from this area there is considerable worry with consistency and a small town mentality. This is a little community and understandable you do not want to stir it up, however there is room for refreshment with some aspects. There is a problem with jobs in the community, and something like the EDC not getting funding is just outrageous. If you want to attract people to the town then you need something like the EDC there to help it along. It would also be nice if there was more accommodation around town, and more public events. Our business would eventually like to put condos into the development but doing so with the RM seems like it would be very difficult. The town could also use a movie theatre as many of the tourists want to do town things and not just nature or water based recreation, this would help it to develop into more of a resort community. The town is very giving but it is a small town and there are things that come along with that, one worry is conflicts of interest among town council and the RM.

## *Big River & Area Tourism Business Survey*

It is good to know that the government and the community are working to bring people to the community. All the government had to do was allocate some wood to the mill, why not? Just to have the mill be completely gone does not make too much sense as this area has always been a forestry community. It was not good to see so many families move away. The area is also hard for new businesses to establish themselves. It is a beautiful area and the wilderness that exists here should be protected. Commercial fishing is also a problem as over fishing affects not just the operator but the local people and the tourists, there should be more money for restocking and monitoring. A lot of people come from Alberta to go fishing here and it is important to maintain a healthy stock, not just for the environment but also for recreation. In terms of all the resorts it is nice to have all those people coming to the community but it may be an overkill, it is nice to see development but not too much in the area.

Our business is in a great area, the only issue is with distance and transportation, the price of fuel is an increasing problem as people less apt to drive so far.

In terms of our business we would like to get into selling fresh game, but government regulations would hinder it. In terms of our community, we should try to bring more businesses into town. There is a lack of communication, and we need more communication between groups. The area needs one central tourism marketing group. All these groups causes people to work against each other and we need to work together! There are too many organizations that I do not understand (Tourism Sask., Northern Tourism, Big River Tourism, Businesses own advertising, Destination Marketing Organization) The area is growing and you can see it, look how many new developments are in the area. More developments are good for the people. We need to get out of the past (1970) and realize the resources we have in this area other than forestry. It would be good for the mill to be going. There is resistance to change, but tourism is happening, and the town should work harder to rework its image.

It has become essential to (re)train during business hours. It is hard during the winter to keep staff on full time as it is generally a loss and our business works to serve the community rather than simply go for profit. Our staff is our most valuable asset.

Big River could use a new cold beer and wine store. Low cost of living including property. There needs to be proper environmental management if the mill starts back up. Tourism is welcomed by businesses but not so much by the towns people. Sask Environment (forestry branch) needs to enforce forest regulations more, and they need to keep an eye on the reforestation. Some of those planted blocks need to be thinned, it wont grow back as good as it could. The need to build less roads when they are logging! We need more paved streets. There is also conflict of interest with a few different community projects, and many people are pissed off and do not support them anymore. We should be able to take our Quads into town. A lot of waste associated with cutting and processing of lumber, this should also be addressed. There will likely be more small scale forestry operations.

Open the Mill. Need a loaning institution other than banks Need the RM of Big River to work with the Developers. Too much Red Tape.

Big River is a beautiful community but needs to welcome outsiders more. We are bringing economic growth and FREE advertising for the community. In all of our promotion material, we talk positively about Big River, we hope someday soon, that that our positivity will overcome the negative hurdles, and help build Big River into a inviting thriving community. Personally, I enjoy being a part of this community.

I think it would be helpful to prepare a survey for those who do use the services of Big River to have their opinions.

Town very reluctant to make changes.(eg. Rezoning properties as requested). Many guests comment that they wish we had an improved liquor store.