



Cheetahs Continue

Lessons on How to Survive and Thrive
from Missouri's Fastest Growing Businesses





This report, developed by the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (Missouri Department of Economic Development) and the Business Research and Development Group (University of Missouri) follows up on the December 2008 collaboration “Chasing Cheetahs: Lessons from Missouri’s Fastest Growing Businesses.” In particular, this report focuses specifically on the businesses from the 2008 report that sustained employment growth in a down economy.

The University of Missouri’s Center for Advanced Social Research was instrumental in conducting the survey for this report. Additional support was provided by the United States Economic Development Administration; the United States Employment and Training Administration; and the Missouri Small Business & Technology Development Centers. Contributing authors: Schmidt, D.C., Romitti, M., Reichart, T. and Spell, A.

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OVERVIEW

While many government agencies want to assist companies that are adding jobs, they often lack the current information needed to create effective measures. Economic development strategies at the state level typically include some combination of attracting companies to the state, retaining companies that are already there, and helping small firms grow. The third part of that strategy often gets less attention, but the data clearly demonstrates the majority of new net job creation comes from small firms (Stangler and Litan, 2009). What is lacking are in-depth studies that gather data directly from those growing firms in their own states that could better inform policy efforts.

The “*Cheetahs Continue*” study surveyed existing Cheetahs that continued to add jobs from 2006-2009, and a subset that doubled their workforce during that time period (“Super Cheetahs”). Questions revolved around four broad categories: Reasons for Success, Business Climate, Home Range, and Policy Issues. In addition, a subset of firms, mostly the Super Cheetahs, participated in depth interviews. Findings indicated Super Cheetahs have an innate market orientation, a willingness to embrace change as it relates to responding to their markets, an intrinsic desire to serve others, and a down-to-earth simplicity. These firms combined several individual practices that research links to the success of firms. (i.e. Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Slevin and Covin, 1998).

Cheetahs Continue dives deeper into the reasons for continued success, the connection these firms have to the local economy, and in some cases how these Cheetahs compare to the broader business community. Some findings include:

- 60 percent of Cheetahs believe customers choose them because of internal factors-Better Quality and Service, far ahead of external factors such as Low Price (9%)
- 55 percent of the businesses buy at least two-thirds of their goods and services from firms within 100 miles of their location
- 58 percent of those surveyed serve in a voluntary capacity for boards, committees, or other organizations within their community

In addition, detailed interviews supported the notion that many Cheetahs gained valuable industry experience before striking out on their own; a conclusion supported by a recent Kauffman study that found over 75 percent of entrepreneurs in high-growth industries had six or more years of experience in the business (Wadhwa, Aggarwal, Holly and Salkever, 2009). Looking for the next entrepreneur in your existing business community seems like a good idea.




DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

In December of 2008, the Missouri Economic Research & Information Center (MERIC), the research arm of the state Department of Economic Development, partnered with the University of Missouri's Economic Development Administration – University Center (MU's EDA-UC) to publish a report on Missouri's fastest growing businesses. These firms, dubbed "Cheetahs," had employment that doubled in a five-year period between 2001 and 2006. Building on the success of this report, MERIC and MU's EDA-UC set out to do a follow-up of these Cheetahs to look at employment performance from 2006-2009.

Data used in the baseline analysis comes from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). This data is produced through a federal/state cooperative effort that compiles monthly employment data, quarterly wages data, and business identification information from employers subject to state unemployment insurance laws (see www.bls.gov). MERIC is the BLS affiliate within the state of Missouri. The QCEW acts as a quarterly census count of all employers, employment, and wages for Missouri, covering 98% of total jobs and available at the county, Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), state, and national levels by industry.

Of the Cheetah firms from the original report, 1,630 showed continued growth in the three years following. This amounts to an impressive 26% of original Cheetahs that continued to add employment during tough economic times. These Cheetahs can be found across the state and in nearly every industry.

The original study found the most helpful reasons for success to be highly concentrated in two categories: internal factors such as human capital and external factors such as customer demand. The Cheetahs Continue study explored these two areas in more depth and found that 60% of respondents believe customers buy from them because of internal factors (better quality/better service). When asked what has enabled the business to continue to grow, 27% of respondents noted it was due to strategic planning (internal) and 23% noted demand (external).



In addition to gathering quantitative data on the continued growth of Cheetahs, the study looked at results from the 2010 Missouri Business Survey to compare those responses to similar issues that were addressed. This survey was administered to nearly 1,000 business owners, both large and small and from across the state, to gather their opinions about a variety of economic, workforce, disaster recovery, and business development issues.

TELEPHONE SURVEY

To better understand how these fast-growing businesses have handled the current economic climate, the Center for Advanced Social Research (CASR) of the University of Missouri completed 593 telephone interviews with representatives of these firms/organizations. The survey instrument was jointly developed in late 2010 by researchers of MERIC, MU's EDA-UC, and CASR. Issues addressed in these interviews focused on gaining information on multiple subjects, including:

- business practices
- business environment
- government policy
- use of technology
- access to financing

DEPTH INTERVIEWS

In addition to the survey tool used to conduct these interviews, 20 of the Cheetahs were chosen to participate in depth interviews conducted for this report. Consistent with the service orientation of the U.S. economy, 75% (15) of the companies are service providers and 25% (5) are providers of physical products, and some of the latter have strong service components. Additionally, 50% (10) of the businesses serve industrial customers (businesses, institutions, and governments); 30% (6) serve consumers; and 20% (4) serve both types of customers. These interviews helped to gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives of business owners across a range of industries.

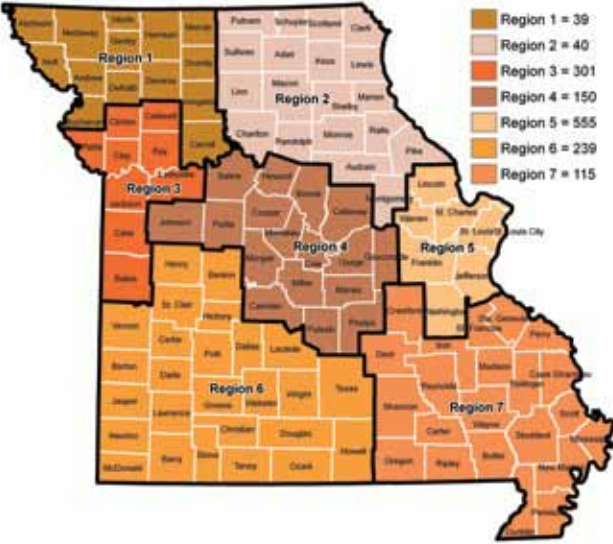
CHEETAH SIGHTINGS

The percentage of Cheetahs that showed continued growth varied little by region, from 22% - 26%. This wide dispersion of Cheetahs shows a pattern similar to the initial Cheetah report, and once again shows that these fast-growing firms are thriving in both city and rural life.

As in the first Cheetah study, the nearly equal prominence of growing Cheetahs in all parts

of the state is better understood when considered as a percentage of total businesses. For the St. Louis and Kansas City regions, this group of Cheetah firms represented 1% of all businesses in the region. The balance of the state was close behind at 0.8%.

CHEETAHS BY REGION



SIZE OF BUSINESS

Small businesses accounted for the large majority of growing Cheetah firms. All but 2 were “small businesses” (under 500 employees) by Small Business Administration’s definition. Of the Cheetahs that showed continued growth, over 80% had less than 50 employees. The table to the right shows percentages across business size.

Employment Size of Business

Employment Size	Percent
5-9	29%
10-19	26%
20-49	26%
50-99	9%
100-249	7%
250-499	2%
500+	1%

TYPE OF BUSINESS

Growing Cheetah firms were found across multiple industries. The Educational Services industry, while small in number, had the highest percentage of Cheetahs with sustained growth between 2006 and 2009. This was the only industry in which at least 40% of the Cheetahs saw continued growth. These businesses ranged from fine arts schools to sports and recreation instruction.

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services had the most Cheetahs in absolute terms, and had a relatively high percentage of Cheetahs that sustained growth as well, with 35%. A mix of computer services, engineering, and law offices helped contribute to this growth.

Health Care and Social Assistance followed closely, with 34% of the original Cheetah firms showing continued growth.

Health Care and Private Education, as industries, have been recession-proof for the most part. The large number of Professional Service Cheetahs that grew despite the industries' overall decline during the recession is impressive.

Growing Cheetah Firms by Industry			
NAICS	Industry	Firms	% of original*
23	Construction	155	14%
31-33	Manufacturing	89	24%
42	Wholesale Trade	157	31%
44-45	Retail Trade	181	27%
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	70	27%
51	Information	26	30%
52	Finance and Insurance	89	28%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	52	23%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	217	35%
56	Admin and Support and Waste Management	126	29%
61	Educational Services	26	43%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	184	34%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	24	24%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	91	26%
81	Other services	93	22%
n/a	All Other	50	26%
Total		1630	26%

*Denotes percentage of Cheetah firms from the 2008 study that showed continued growth between 2006-2009

REASONS FOR SUCCESS

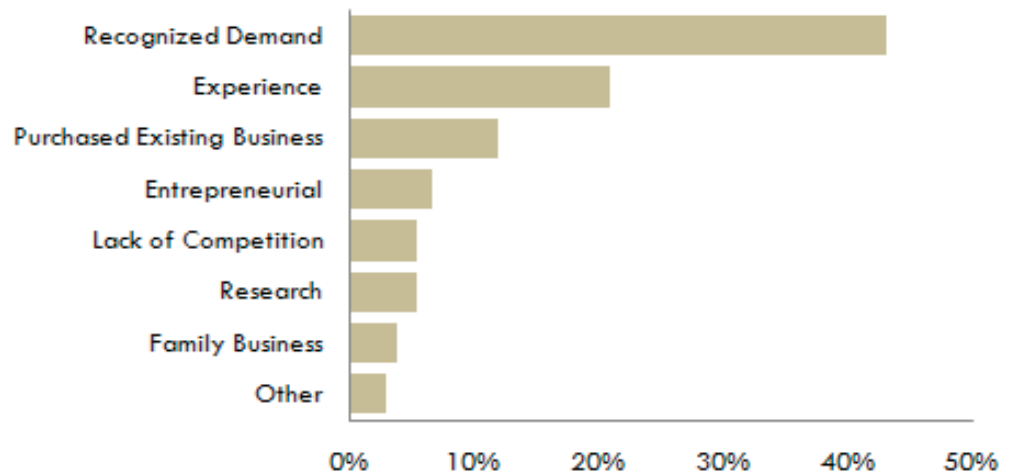
“I think it's a real personalized level of service. So much even real small customers feel as though they aren't small. That would be one of the main things.” - Chemical Products Manufacturer

When exploring what was behind the success of these businesses, two general areas were looked at: success originating from the business formation stage and continued success due to business development. As concluded in the depth-interviews, many of the business owners interviewed came from a less-than-satisfactory employment situation in which they believed they could satisfy the market better than their current employer. This belief carried over into their operations and was passed on to their employees, resulting in a great emphasis on customer satisfaction and service.

FORMATION

In the business formation stage, 43% of business owners believed there was a viable opportunity in the marketplace because they recognized demand. Another 21% had prior business experience that led them to believe there was an opportunity. Taken together, 64% indicated they formed their businesses based on a need in the marketplace that was unfulfilled. In terms of planning, over half (57%) had NO business plan in place.

What made you believe that there was a viable opportunity in the marketplace?





Regardless of the sources of their business ideas, most of the owners started their businesses without first doing much in the way of formal market analyses. They had an idea of how it would work and moved forward confidently. There were a few exceptions, where the owners had carefully analyzed the opportunity and developed business plans to varying degrees, but they were in the minority.

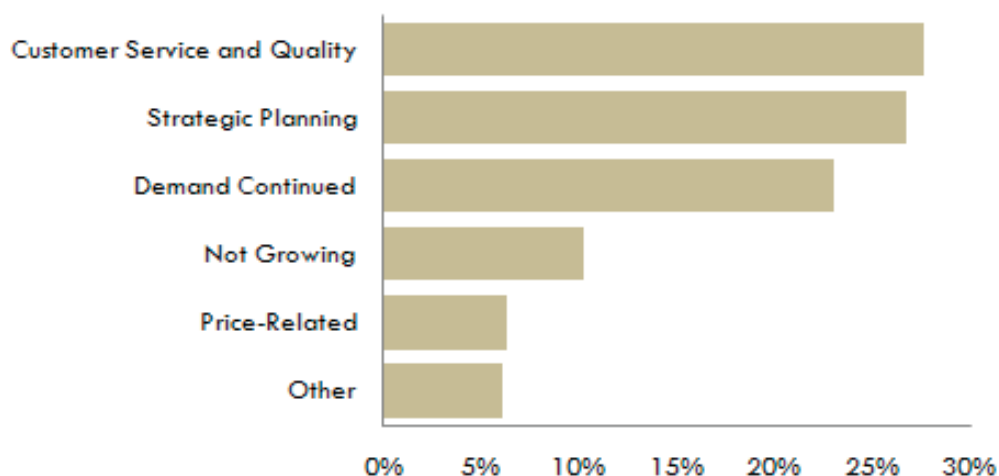
Thirteen of the 20 in-depth respondents indicated that the business opportunity they pursued was revealed to them while they were employees of other companies. Most commonly, their employment proved unsatisfactory and they simply believed, based on little analysis, that if they started a similar business they would be successful, usually because they thought they could perform some aspect of the business better than their employer.

CONTINUED SUCCESS

Reasons for continued success were split among three predominant categories: customer service and quality (28%); strategic planning (27%); and demand for product (23%). Over half of the respondents saw internal factors (Customer Service, Strategic Planning) as reasons for continued growth.

"Before they invest money, study it. That's the best thing I can say. Study what you're trying to do and your clients and especially look at your competitors.."
- Engineering Consultant

What are the key factors (or factor) that has enabled your business to continue to grow throughout the recession?



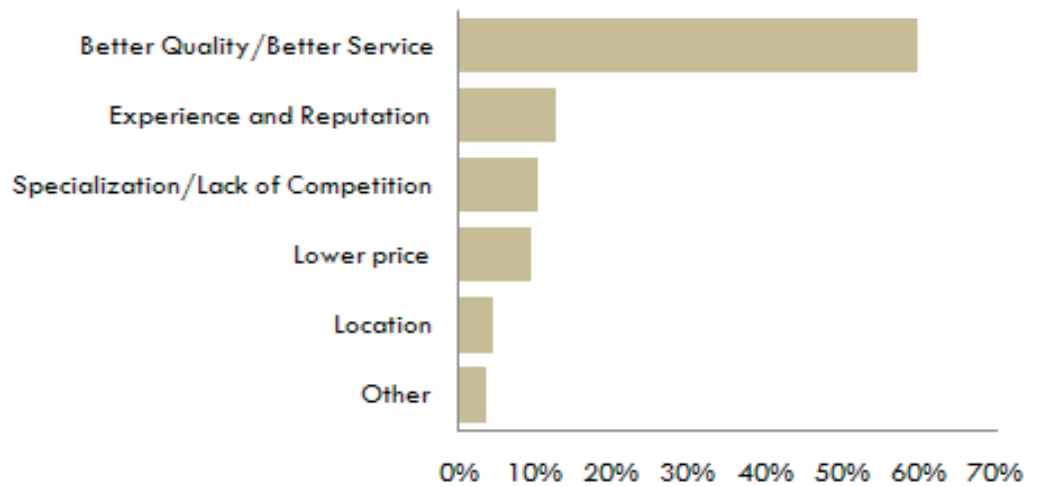


In terms of competition in the marketplace, 60% of respondents suggested their customers buy from them because of better quality or service. Another 13% responded that they have an advantage due to experience and reputation. This suggests that from the owner's perspective, much of the success is owner/employee-driven, and relies less on factors outside of the businesses' control.

While entrepreneurs are by definition risk-takers, recent research shows that the moderate risk-taker has a better business survival rate than owners with very low or high risk attitudes (Caliendo, Fossen, and Kritikos, 2008).

Interviews with Missouri's Cheetahs seemed to support this notion of owners who were less concerned with "growth for growth's sake" than with maintaining control and being personally satisfied.

Why do your customers buy from you versus your competitors?



TRILOGY ANALYTICAL LABORATORY

"Reasons for Success"

PARTNERS: CARRIE MAUNE, BRUCE
MALONE, KRAIG BOND

Trilogy Analytical Laboratory of Washington, MO, is a food safety laboratory serving the agricultural community with food safety analysis. Trilogy has expertise in a variety of specializations, including allergens, meat speciation ID, mold ID, and organic acids.

Partners Carrie Maune, Bruce Malone, and Kraig Bond identified a need for quality research and analysis services in a niche market. They founded the business in a location with a good employment base and were able to qualify for USDA loans geared toward the industry.

Trilogy delivers solid customer service, *keeping its clients satisfied and engaged with good products and constant contact throughout the research process.* The firm is proud to provide quality jobs and a good working environment for their employees while they make an impact in a very niche industry.

SUPERIOR RENTS *"Reasons For Success"*

OWNERS: DAN & STEVE WOHNOUTKA

Superior Rents, owned by brothers Dan and Steve Wohnoutka, is a quality construction tool and equipment rental business in southwest Missouri. The company caters to small contractors, as well as homeowners looking for a friendly and helpful environment in which to rent tools and equipment for construction projects. The Wounoutka brothers had no experience in the rental business, but they realized a need in their community and talked with future competitors and the Missouri Small Business & Technology Development Centers to confirm their assessment of the opportunity. They founded their business with a strong philosophy of hard work and genuine concern for customer needs.

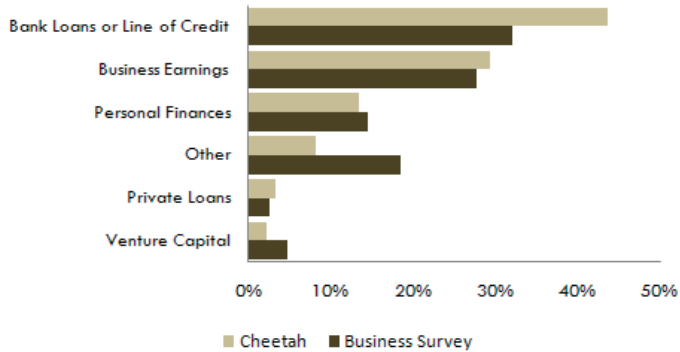
The firm's *bold approach toward putting customers first* enabled Superior Rents to grow nearly ten-fold in its second year, allowing the owners to add two more stores and increase their inventory. Creating and maintaining a good relationship with banks, as well as *hard work and customer service*, enabled the company to access capital to keep

BUSINESS CLIMATE

“If you need credit, it's lots of luck. I mean the only way we were able to get it was a very small bank. We had to put up all of our personal assets and everything else to get it. You know not being a large company we really didn't have the assets that the banks wanted. At one time that was a problem and it could be a problem again in the future.” – Engineering Consultant

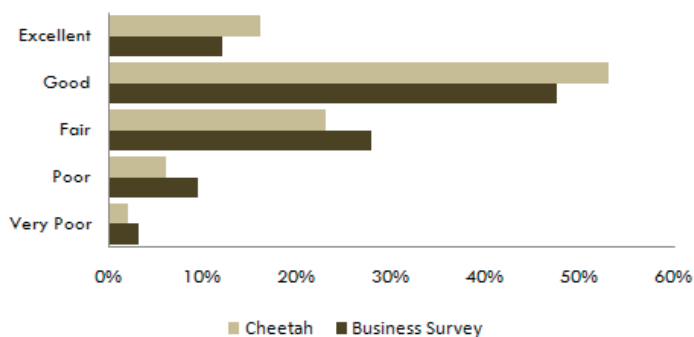
Thirteen of 20 owners from the depth interviews viewed financing as a major obstacle to growth. A significant percentage from the larger survey of Cheetahs, 44%, use bank loans or lines of credit for their primary type of financing, and 61% said their ability to access credit has not changed in recent months. This suggests financing is an ongoing challenge for firms, but high-growth firms may find it easier to obtain financing.

What is the primary type of financing your business uses?



In general, the Cheetahs answered *more optimistically* about business performance than the Business Survey respondents. When asked to rate current business performance in terms of revenue or sales, 69% of Cheetahs considered current performance to be either Excellent or Good, compared to 60% of Business Survey respondents.

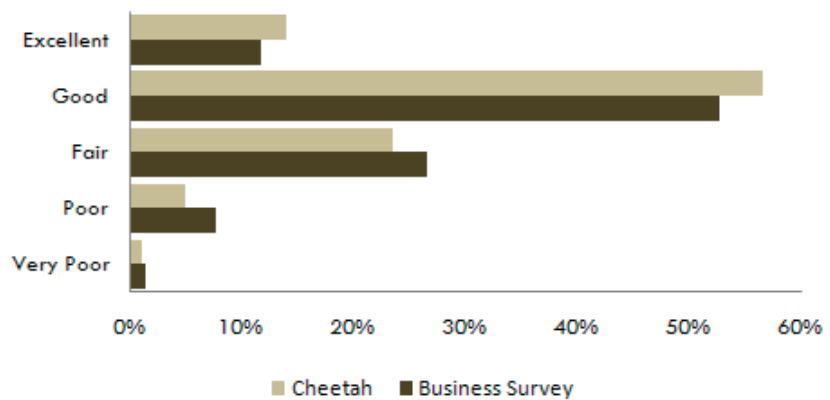
How would you rate your current business performance in terms of revenue or sales?





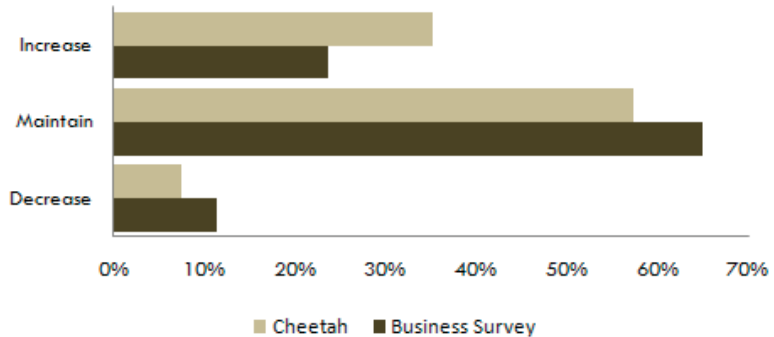
There was a similar disparity among responses from these groups when asked about expected business performance over the next 12 months. Seventy-one percent of Cheetahs expected Excellent or Good performance, while only 64% of Business Survey respondents expected the same.

How would you rate your expected business performance in terms of revenue or sales over the next 12 months?



When looking at future employment levels, Cheetahs were again more optimistic. Thirty-five percent of Cheetahs expected to increase employment levels as compared to 24% of Business Survey respondents.

Over the next 12 months, does your business plan on increasing, maintaining, or decreasing your current employment levels?

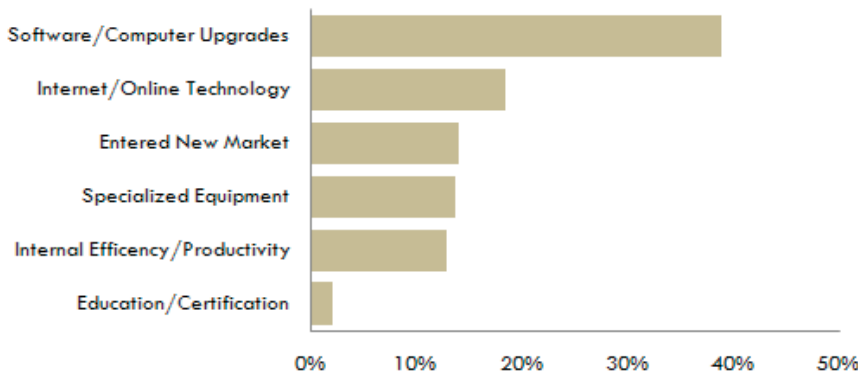




INVESTING TO GROW

Cheetahs were asked a series of questions to gain insight into issues related to business investments. Two out of three Cheetahs indicated they incorporated a new process or technology that contributed to the company's overall growth, with 39% indicating it was an investment in software or computer upgrades.

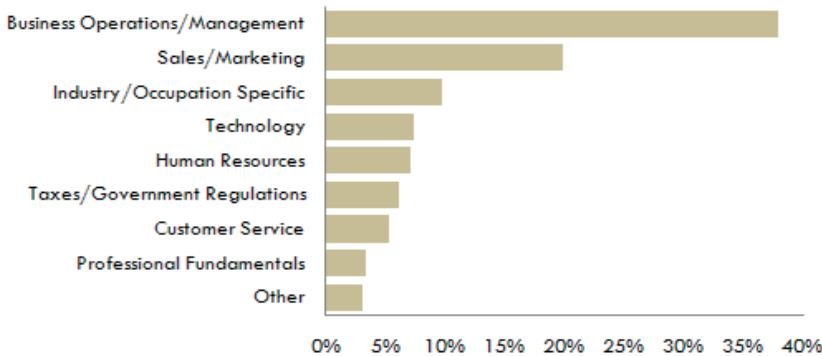
What was the process or technology that contributed to your growth?



When asked what type of investment would likely expand growth, most Cheetahs cited Technology and Equipment (22%) followed by Worker Development (18%) and Advertising (17%).

Most of the Cheetahs, 38%, would choose business operations/management consulting to help improve their business, suggesting firms with higher levels of job creation face challenges as their firms grow.

If you could have access to free expert consulting to help improve your business, what type of consulting would you select?



Internet Opportunities

A 2010 Small Business Administration Survey showed that 2 out of 3 business owners felt that internet service was important to very important in reaching more customers.

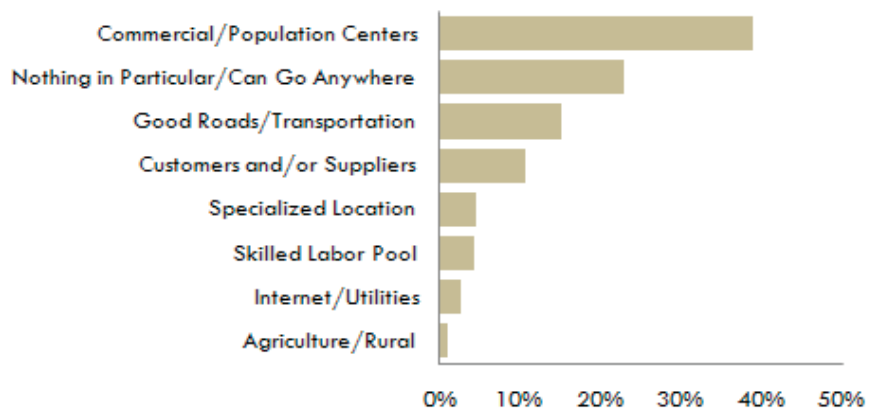
Interviews with Missouri Cheetahs supported the notion that the internet was increasingly important to marketing efforts. However at the current time few were taking full advantage of it.

HOME RANGE

“Make sure to do your research with companies in the area, people you’re planning on doing business with. Make sure that when you invest your money that you’re going to have a customer on the other side to start your business” - Steel/Metal Fabricator

While 39% of the Cheetahs responded they need to be close to commercial/population centers for their business to be successful, 23% didn’t feel proximity was an issue in terms of business success. This idea of business mobility bodes well for rural areas without close access to population centers. It also suggests that as growth businesses expand to take advantage of new internet infrastructure, access to new markets and new suppliers can be the result, opening new possibilities not “geographically tethered.”

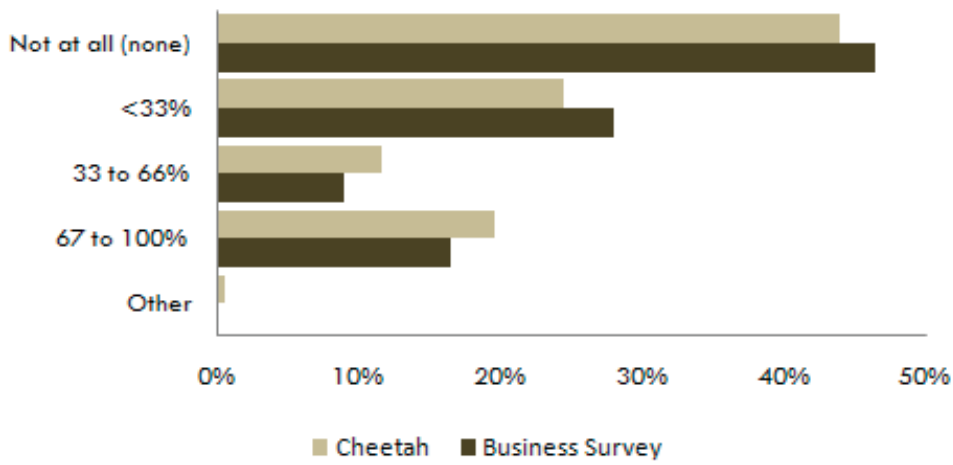
What do you need to be “close to” in terms of physical proximity for your business to be successful?



The Cheetahs surveyed have market areas that are generally close to home. When asked what percentage of their business is dependent on out-of-state sales, 69% of the respondents indicated less than one-third. However, Cheetahs were somewhat more likely (20%) than the general business community (16%) to get two-thirds or more of their sales from out of state.

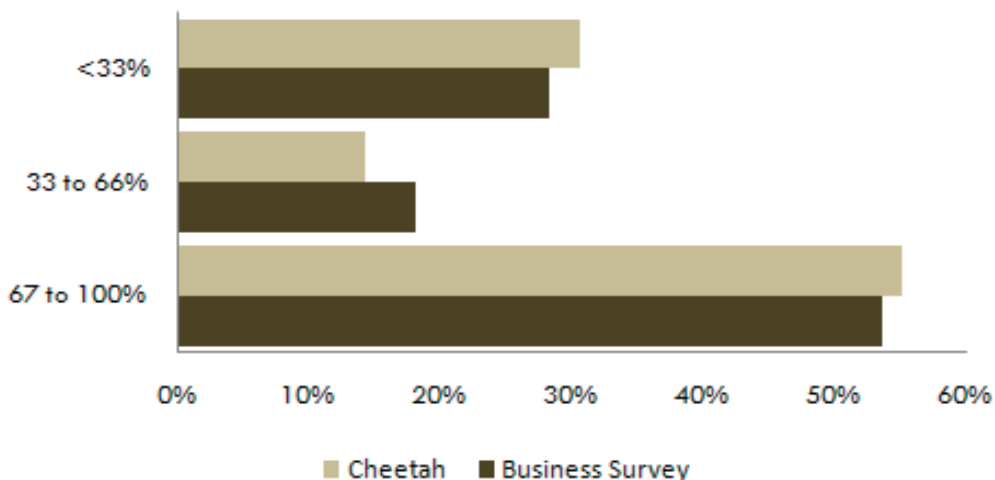


Approximately what percentage of your business is dependent on out-of-state sales?



The majority of businesses, 55%, buy at least two-thirds of their goods and services from firms within 100 miles of their location. This exchange of goods within the regions has a great economic impact on the community and on the state.

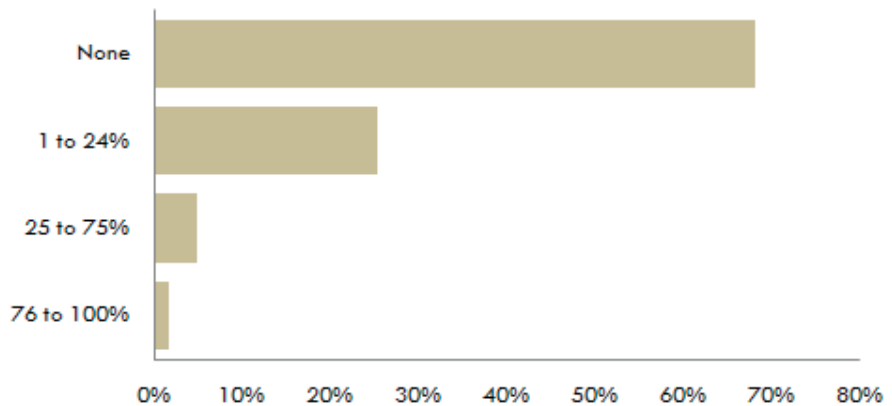
Approximately what percentage of goods and services do you purchase from firms within 100 miles of your location?





Although nearly 8 out of 10 Cheetahs have a website, 68% said none of their business comes from online sales. Only 7% bring in more than one fourth of their business from online sales, again suggesting future opportunities for new markets as internet access and speed improve across the areas of the state that currently have lower levels of service.

Approximately what percentage of your business comes from online sales?



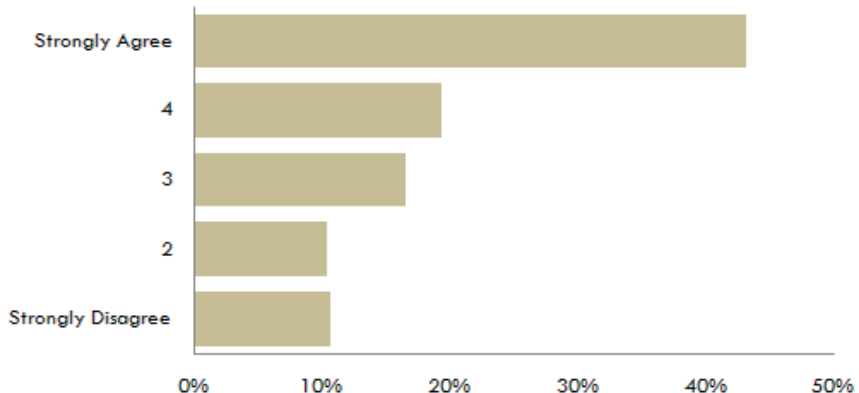
Serving Others

In-depth interviews with Cheetahs revealed a high motivation to serve others. Most were more concerned with providing benefits to customers than "striking it rich." A surprising number seem relatively unconcerned about achieving major growth and are more interested in staying in "control" of the company so they can continue to benefit their customers in a way that seems personally important to them.

COMMUNITY MATTERS

The majority of Cheetah owners grew up in Missouri (63%). In looking at responses related to the topic of *community involvement*, many of the Cheetahs feel a connection to the locality in which they operate. When questioned about community involvement, 62% "somewhat" or "strongly" agreed that it is *important to the success of their business*. This is further reflected in the fact that 58% serve in a voluntary capacity for boards, committees, or other organizations within their community.

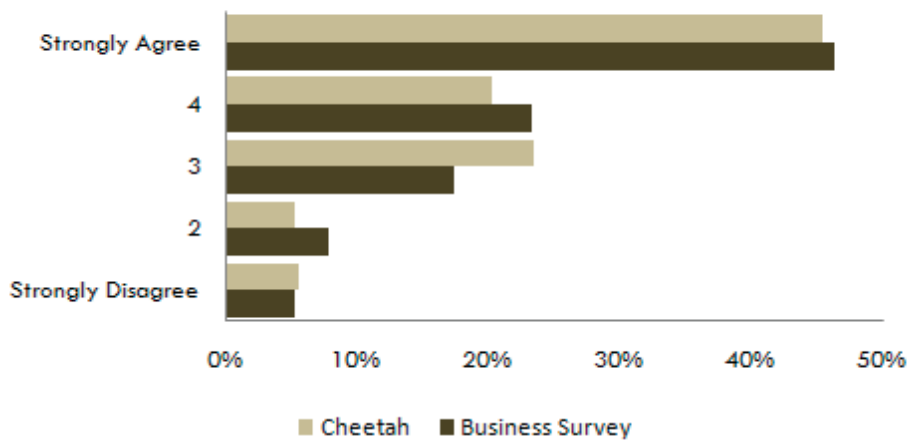
Community involvement is important to the success of your business





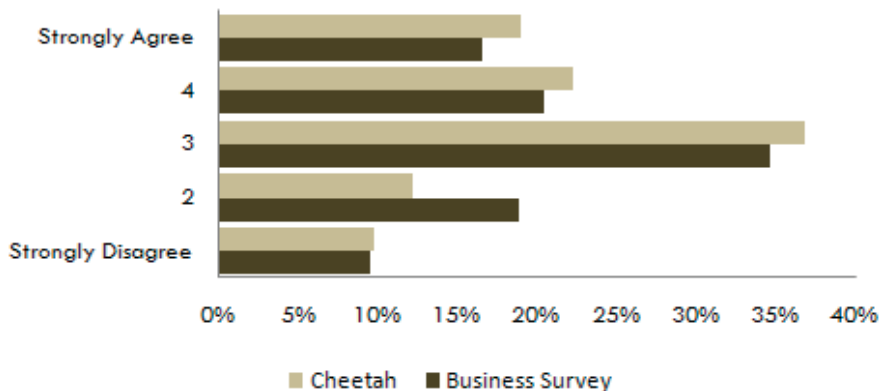
The large majority (68%) of the Cheetahs agreed that local children will have the opportunity to stay in the community and work in their respective fields in the future. There isn't a significant difference in the Cheetah responses compared to Business Survey responses.

Local children will have the opportunity to stay in the community and work in your field in the future



Most businesses either agreed or were neutral when asked if they felt businesses in their community had sufficient resources to help them operate.

Businesses in my community have sufficient resources, advice, training, or other assistance to help them in operating a business ...



GOOD TIMES RENTALS *"Community Matters"*

OWNERS: DARYL WILLIAMS

Good Times Rental in northern Missouri supplies customers with equipment for parties, weddings, and special events. Owner Daryl Williams realized that his small store was filling a need in his community and needed only minor changes to be profitable. By increasing efficiency, upgrading equipment and software, and focusing on customer service, the company has increased its capacity and made it easier to manage supplies and sales. As a result, Williams is able to spend the time he used to spend at his desk working outside the office with customers and working in the community. *Solid relationships with the community and effective customer service* are key factors for success in the rental business. By making transactions more personal and customer-focused, Good Times Rental has been able to weather the economic downturn and expand its markets in an unfavorable climate. According to Williams, "My boss doesn't sign my paychecks; every customer who walks through that door does."



INTUITIVE MEDICAL SOFTWARE

"Community Matters"

OWNERS: CRAIG FRAZIER AND HOWARD FOLLIS

Intuitive Medical Software (IMS) of Springfield is an electronic medical records company that sells hardware and software to practice-based physicians. Craig Frazier, one of the company partners, worked in the informatics and IT industries for 30 years before joining IMS to help raise capital and take the firm's products to an ever-expanding market. The company's size, its well-defined niche market, its innovative information management system product, and a strong talent pool made the company a true competitor in the industry.

IMS realized the *importance of networking and public appearances in their industry* and took steps to create a strong public image and cultivate a strong professional network. Physicians have high regard for one another's opinions, so Frazier knew that maintaining a solid reputation in a market dominated by word of mouth required that the firm's products received strong acceptance for their convenience and innovation. One way in which IMS is building its reputation is by leveraging hand-held technology, such as the iPad, to enable doctors to access patient information at the touch of a finger anywhere at any time.

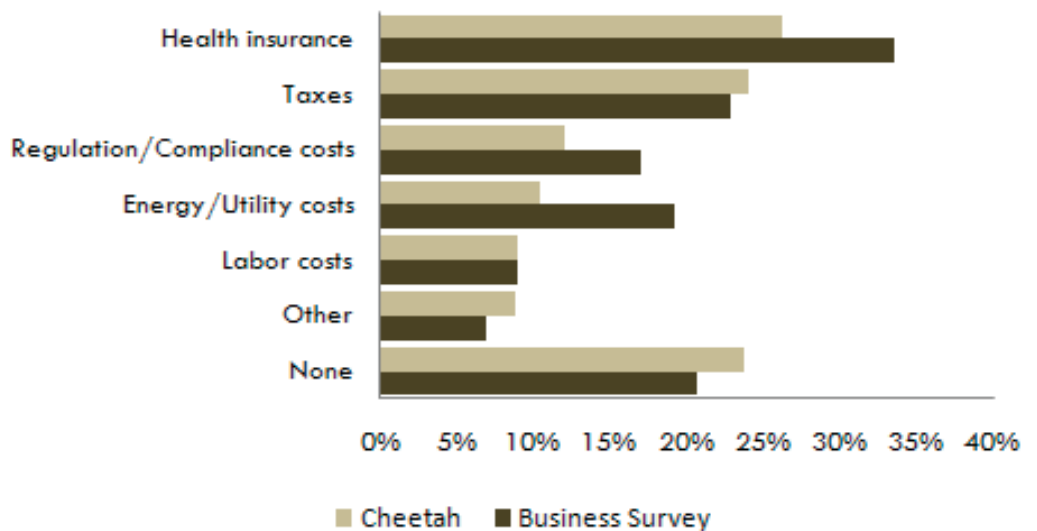
POLICY ISSUES

As in the previous study, businesses were asked if there was a specific state or local policy that hindered growth in the last five years. Overall results were nearly identical, with 77% saying there were no policies that hindered their growth, compared to 78% in the previous study.

On the subject of government assistance, respondents from the initial Cheetah study indicated a need for regulatory reform, lower taxes, and lower healthcare costs. Similar results were found from a series of questions asked in the most recent survey, suggesting that, while the most Cheetahs didn't specifically consider policies as obstacles, they do think improvements can be made.

Cheetahs were asked about business costs for which they felt they paid too much. Out of 593 respondents, 155 checked "Health Insurance," while 142 checked "Taxes."

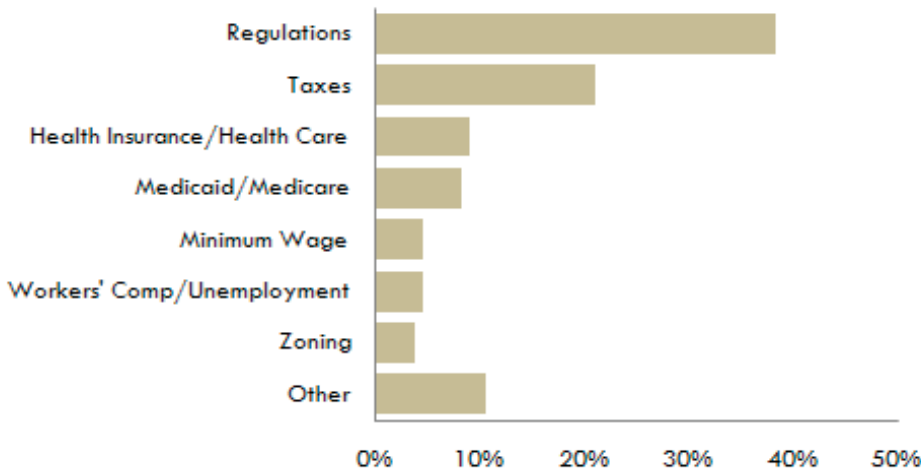
What is something you pay "too much for" in Missouri?





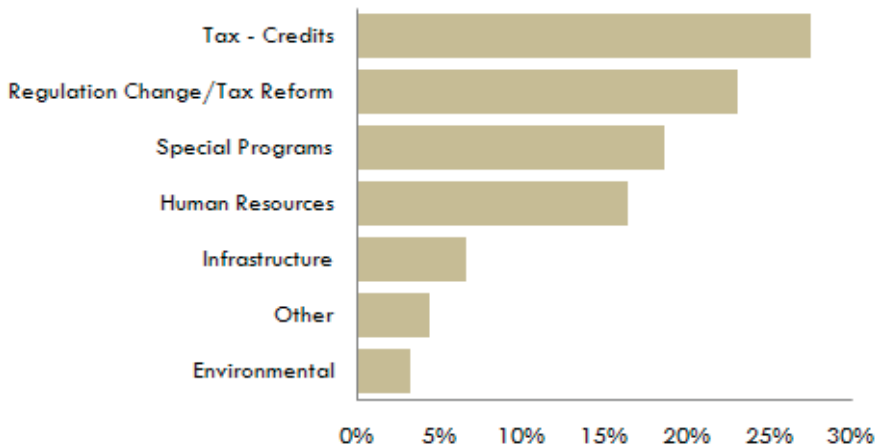
While fewer than one in four Cheetah respondents felt there was a specific state or local policy that hindered their employment growth over the past five years, 59% of these felt *policies related to either regulations or taxes were a hindrance*. These views were reflected in the depth interviews as well, as a common concern was the tax structure's negative effect on growth and the perceived need for government to streamline compliance processes. It was evident that regulations should be fewer, simpler, and easier to conform to for small businesses to grow.

Could you briefly tell me what that policy was about?



Conversely, 16% of the Cheetahs felt there was a policy that helped their employment growth. *Tax credits* were cited as the top policy that helped growth for this group at 27%, followed by *regulation change* (23%); *special programs* (19%); and *human resources* (16%).

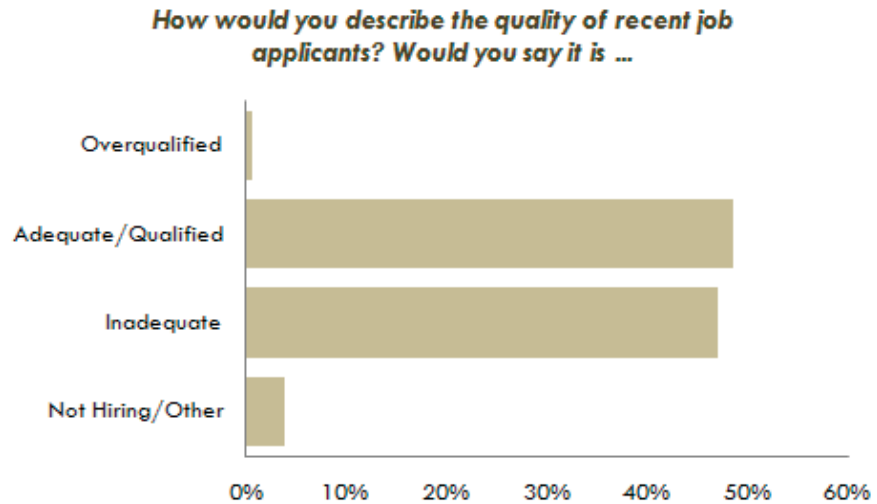
Could you briefly tell me what that policy was about?



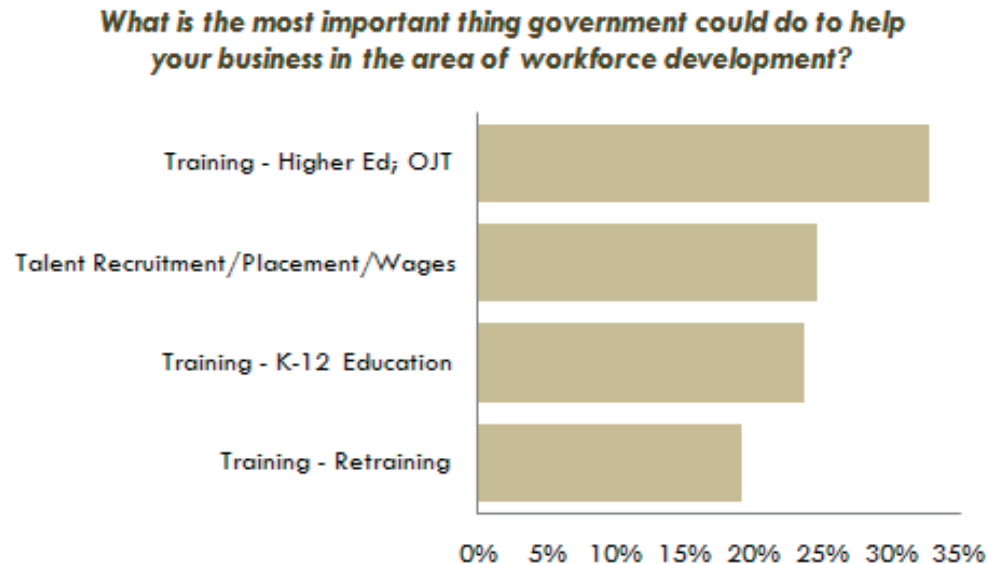


WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

One of the *most common obstacles* to growth brought up in the depth interviews was recruiting and keeping qualified personnel. Cheetahs were split when asked about the quality of recent job applicants, with 48% believing they were adequate/qualified and 47% believing they were inadequate.

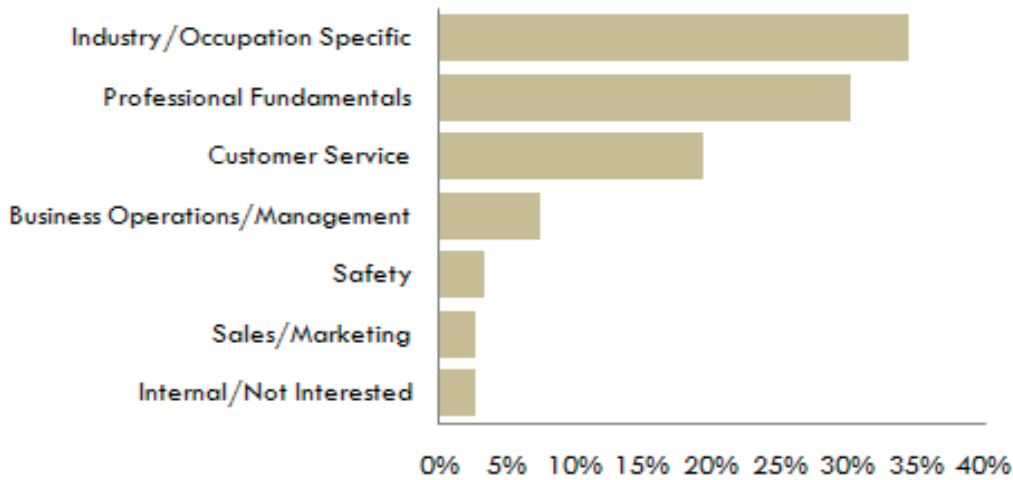


Training was cited as the *most important thing* government could do to help with workforce development. Most expressed a desire for higher education or On-the-Job Training (OJT).



Industry/occupation-specific training was the most desired instruction with 34% expressing interest. This was followed closely by professional fundamentals training at 30%.

If you could send your employees to free training for a few weeks, what would you have them train in?



IODITECH *"Policy Issues"*

OWNERS: CURTIS THOMAS

Kansas City-based Ioditech is an iodine derivatives manufacturer that maintains a modern production facility as well as a fully functioning analytical laboratory. Owner Curtis Thomas saw that he could leverage his experience in the chemical manufacturing industry with a vast client base to create a highly successful entity. Curtis takes a hands-on approach in dealing with customers, keeping them satisfied and engaged in the production process and explaining how company investments in updated manufacturing improve the ability of the company to meet client needs. By streamlining the sales process to focus on markets unaffected by the economic downturn and focusing on meeting customer demands, Thomas has been able to grow the firm quickly.

Thomas is *involved in the political process* to ensure the new regulations and laws for his industry are truly beneficial to small businesses and will allow the incorporation of easier work processes. He works to help lawmakers create and pass legislation that will enable him to make Ioditech as productive and profitable as possible.

ARCHON ENGINEERING

"Policy Issues"

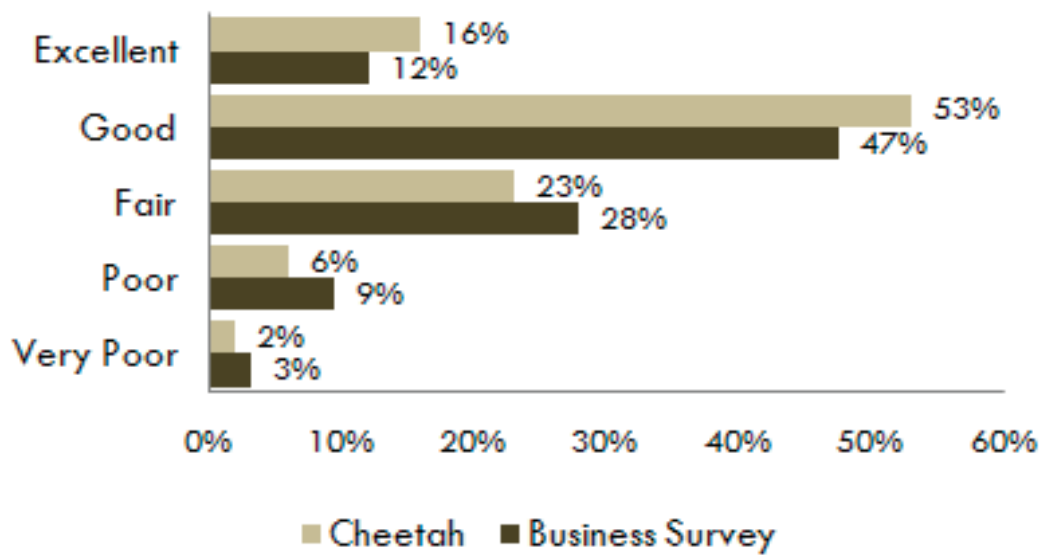
OWNERS: ROBERT SMART & TOM DEVINCENTIS

Archon Engineering is a small Columbia, MO-based engineering consulting firm specializing in power generation with a specific focus on fossil and nuclear power plants. After 24 years in the industry, Robert Smart started Archon when he realized that his specific expertise held great potential for business growth. He knew that very few small companies could provide Archon's kind of service with the same high-quality standards. With a list of potential clients gleaned from Smart's years in the industry and a focus on personalized customer service, Archon has quickly made a name for itself in an industry traditionally dominated by large companies.

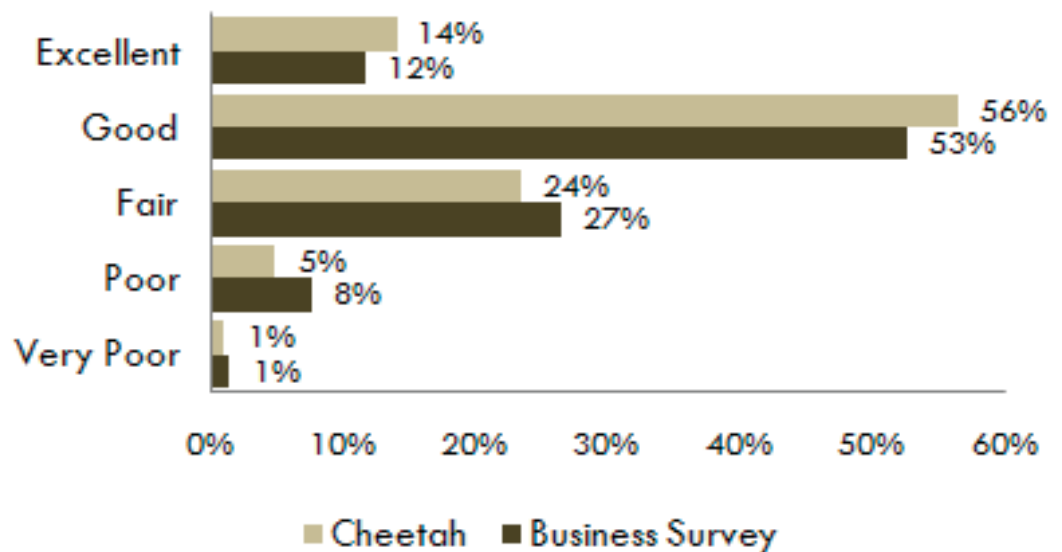
Because Archon is *one of a handful of companies that can comply with Nuclear Regulatory Commission regulations*, the firm can bid on many jobs other companies – particularly other small businesses – cannot. With a robust quality assurance program, Archon Engineering has been able to use government regulation to its advantage to do work in a highly regulated field.

APPENDIX - SURVEY RESULTS

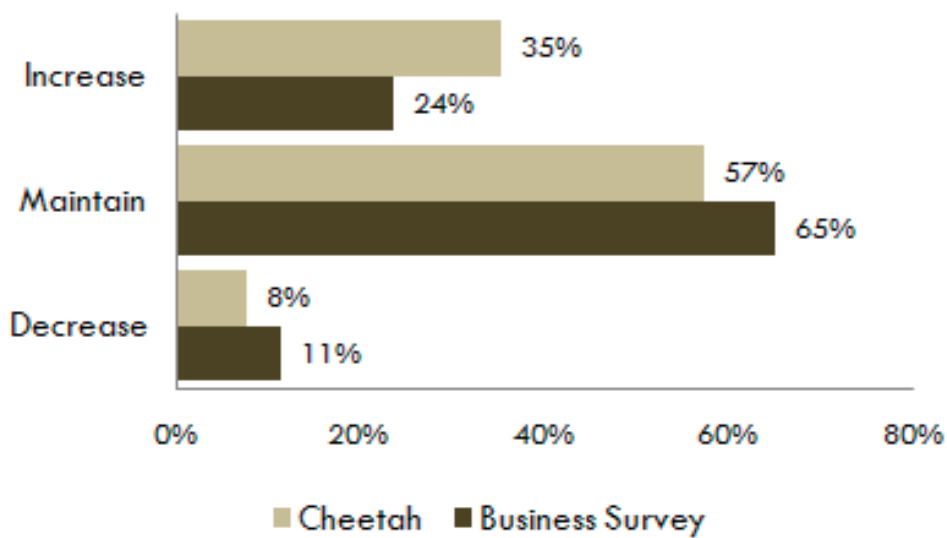
Q1: How would you rate your current business performance in terms of revenue or sales?



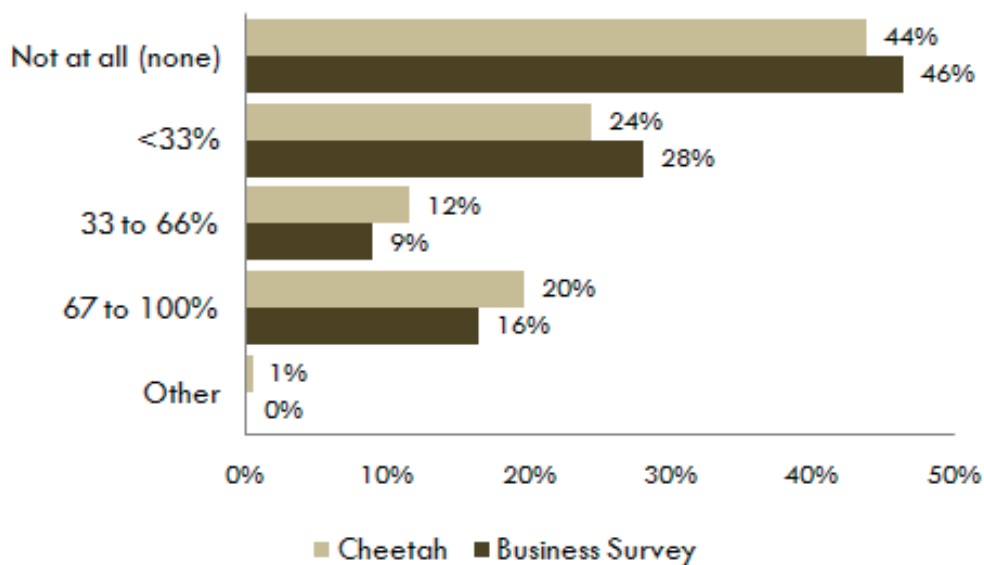
Q2: How would you rate your expected business performance in terms of revenue or sales over the next 12 months?



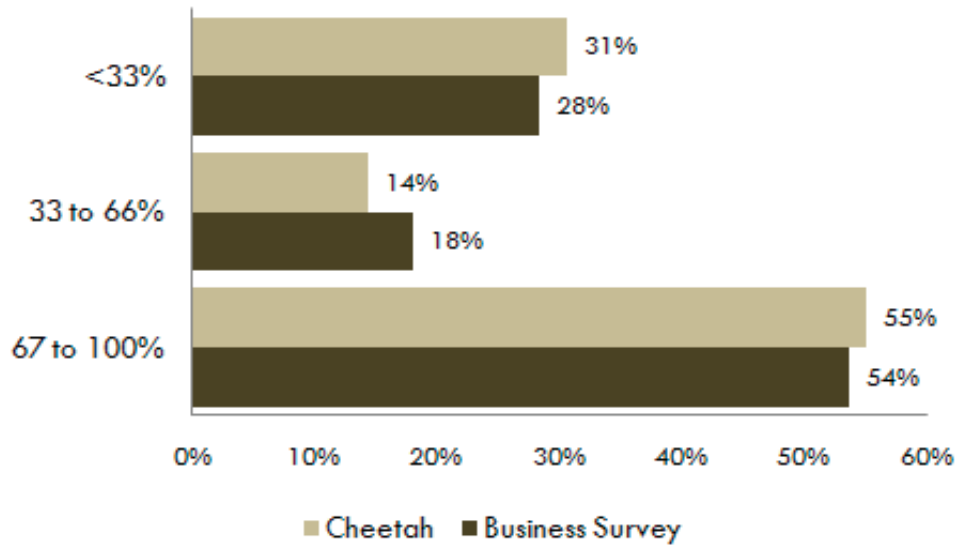
Q3: Over the next 12 months, does your business plan on increasing, maintaining, or decreasing your current employment levels?



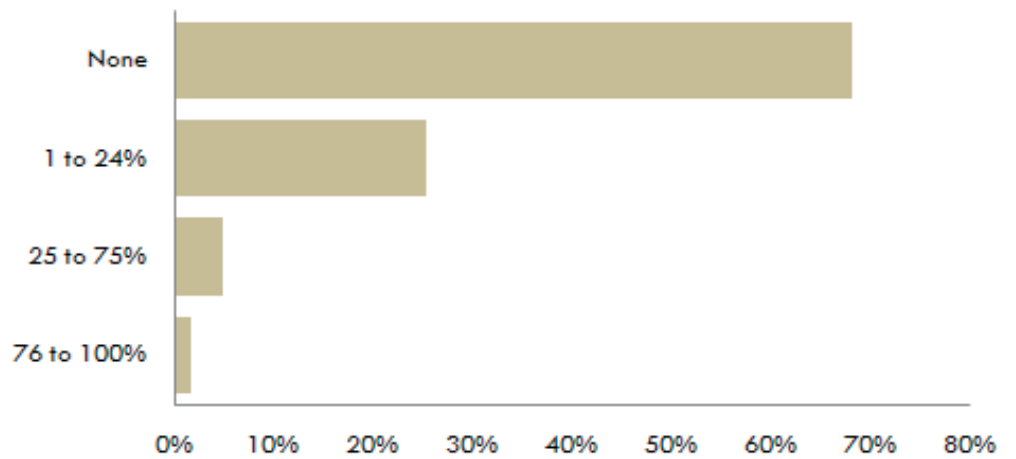
Q4: Approximately what percentage of your business is dependent on out-of-state sales?



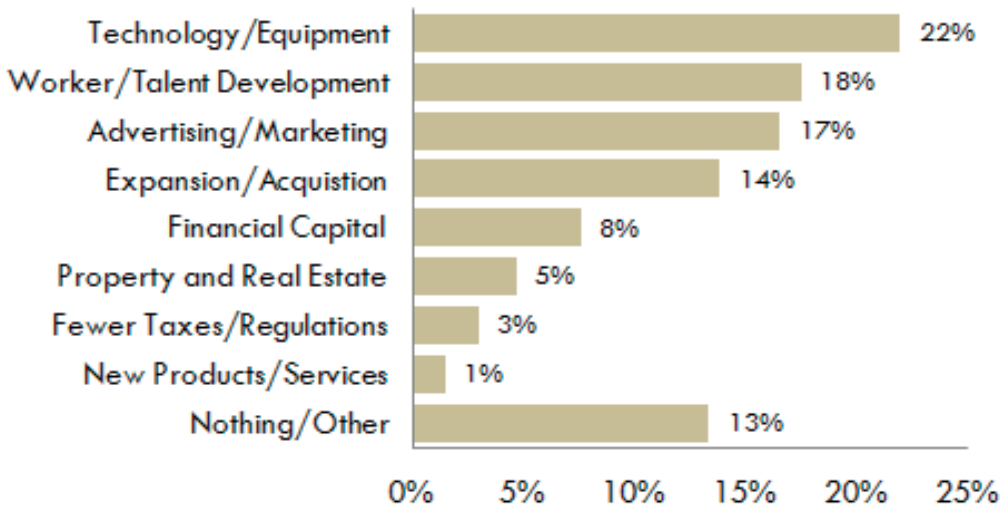
Q5: Approximately what percentage of goods and services do you purchase from firms within 100 miles of your location?



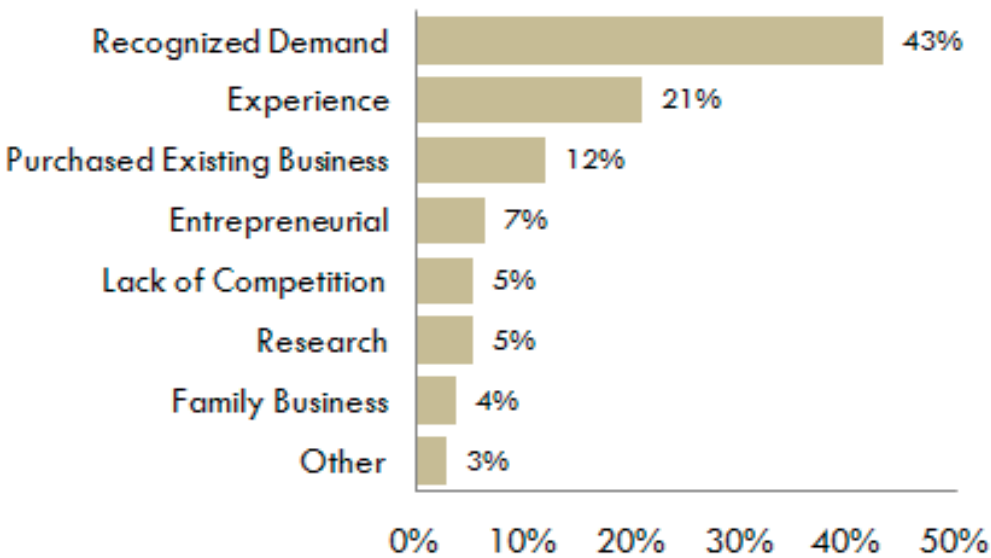
Q6: Approximately what percentage of your business comes from online sales?



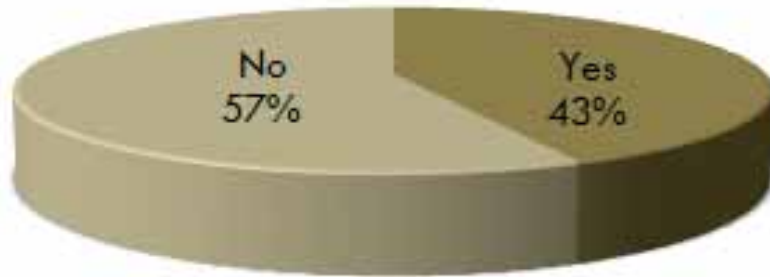
Q7: What type of investment, if any, would most likely expand your growth potential?



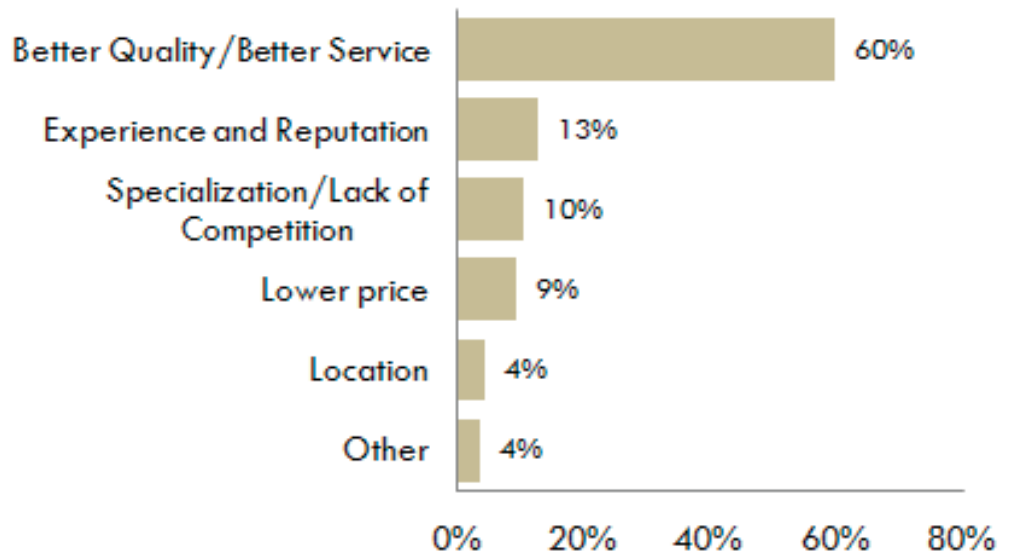
Q8A: What made you believe that there was a viable opportunity in the marketplace?



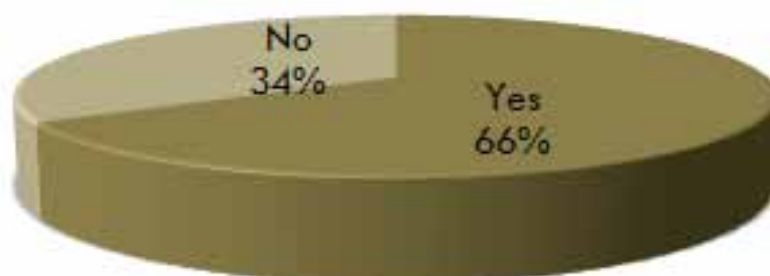
Q8B: Did you write a formal business plan?



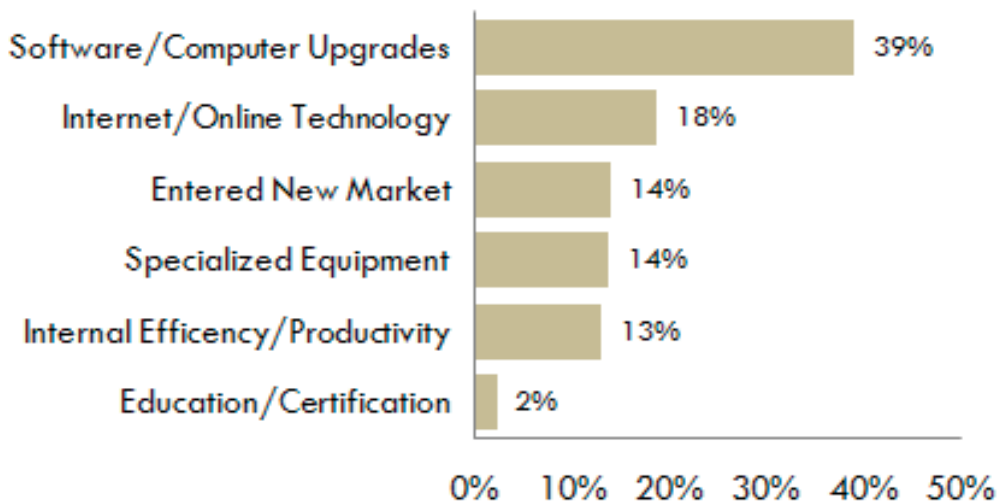
Q9: Why do your customers buy from you versus your competitors?



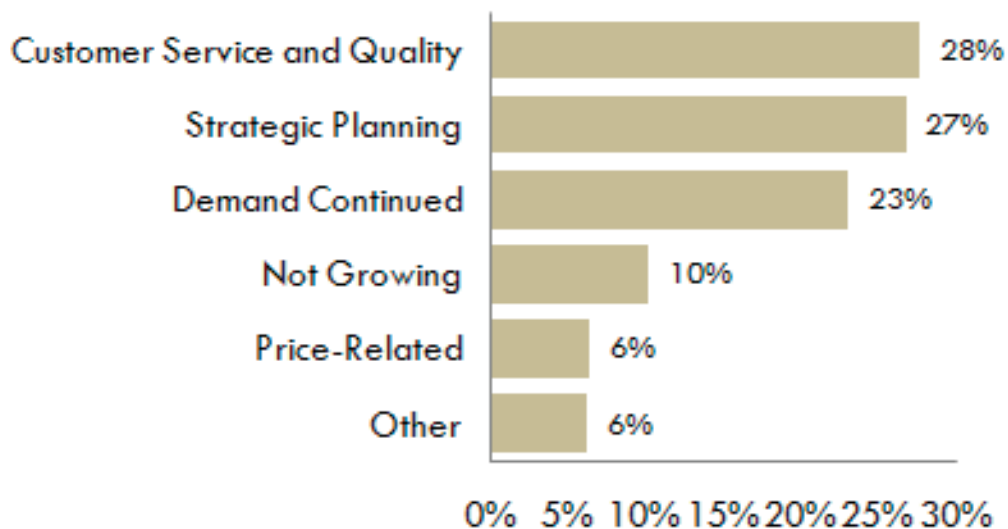
Q10A: Have you incorporated any new processes or technologies that have contributed to your company's overall growth?



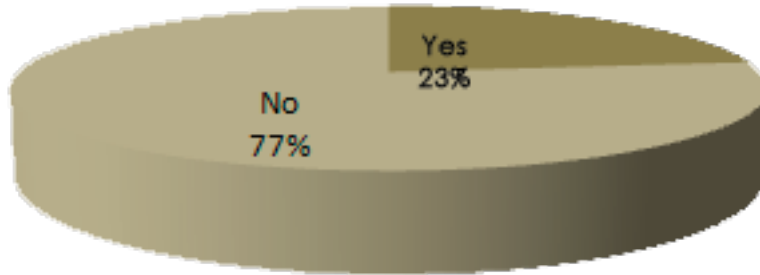
Q10B: What was the process or technology that contributed to your growth?



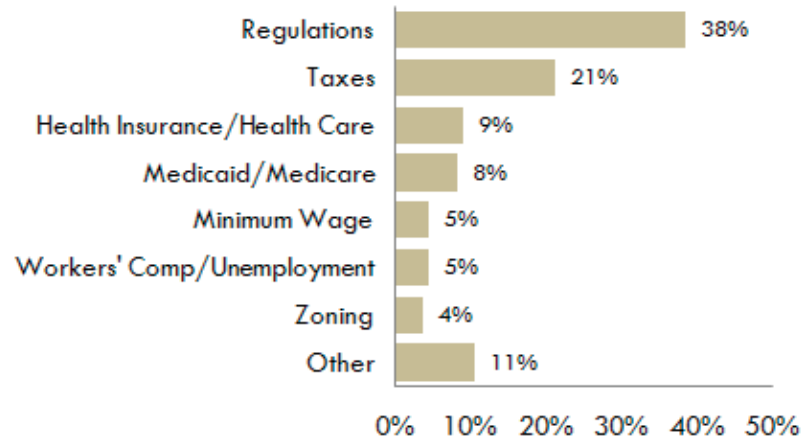
Q11: What are the key factors (or factor) that has enabled your business to continue to grow throughout the recession?



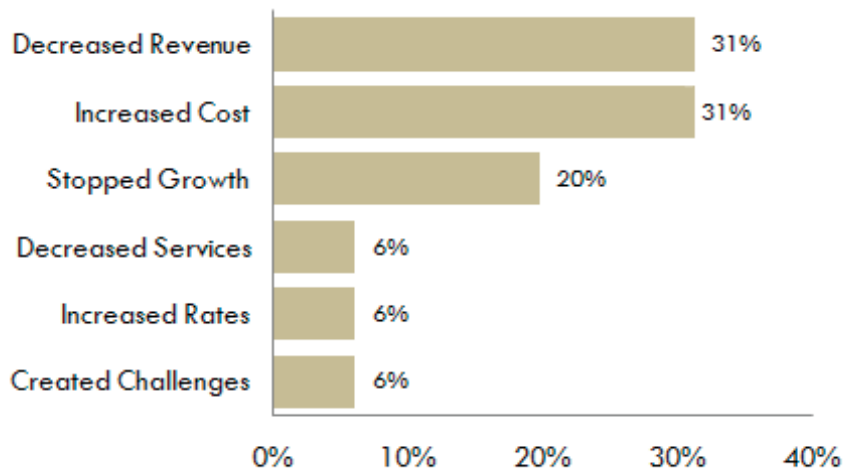
Q12A: Over the past five years, was there a specific state or local policy that hindered your business' employment growth?



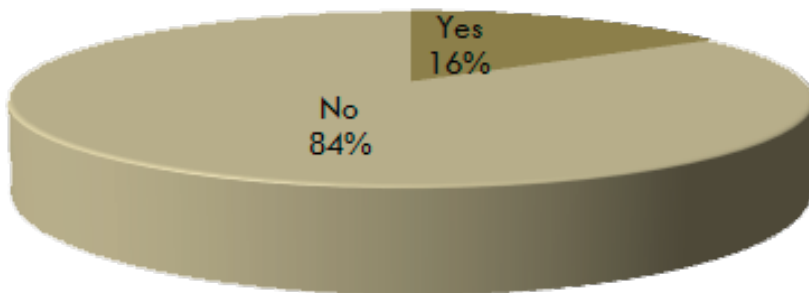
Q12B: Could you briefly tell me what that policy was about?



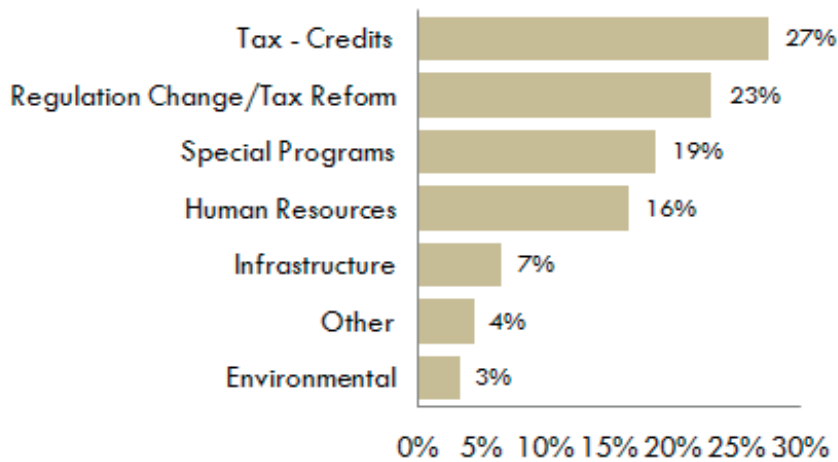
Q12C: How did this policy directly affect your business?



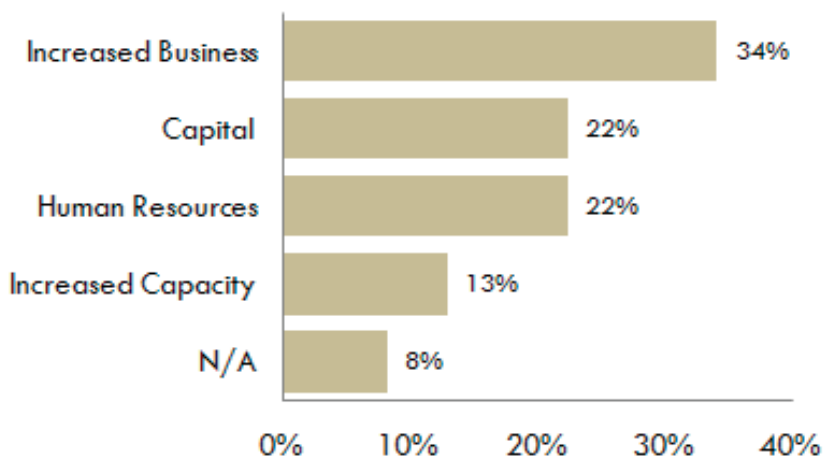
Q13A: Over the past five years, was there a specific state or local policy that helped your business' employment growth?



Q13B: Could you briefly tell me what that policy was about?

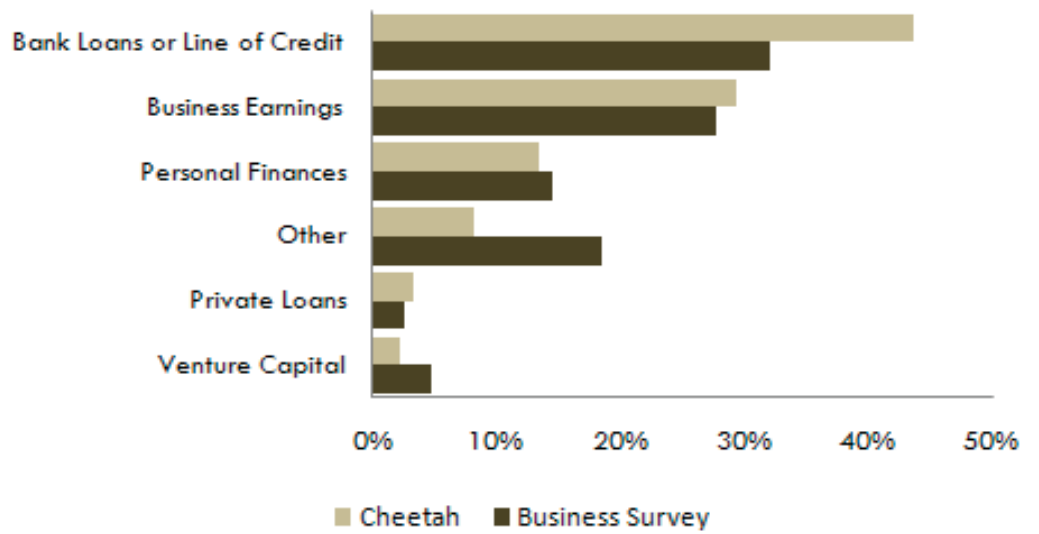


Q13C: How did this policy directly affect your business?

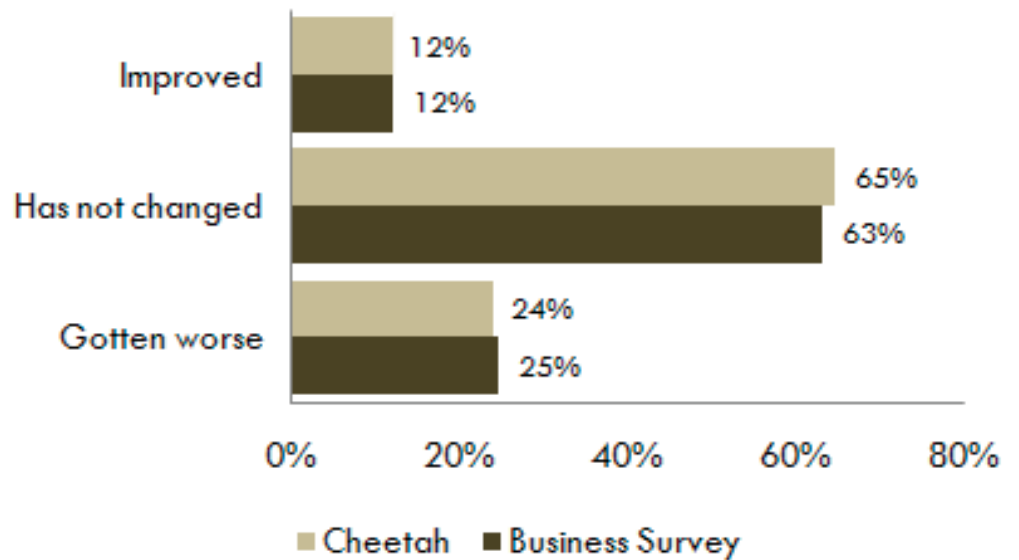




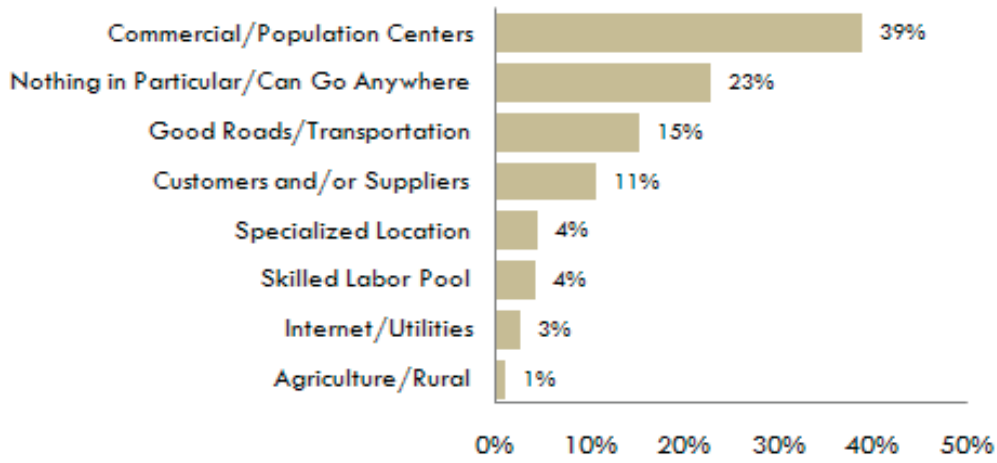
Q14: What is the primary type of financing your business uses?



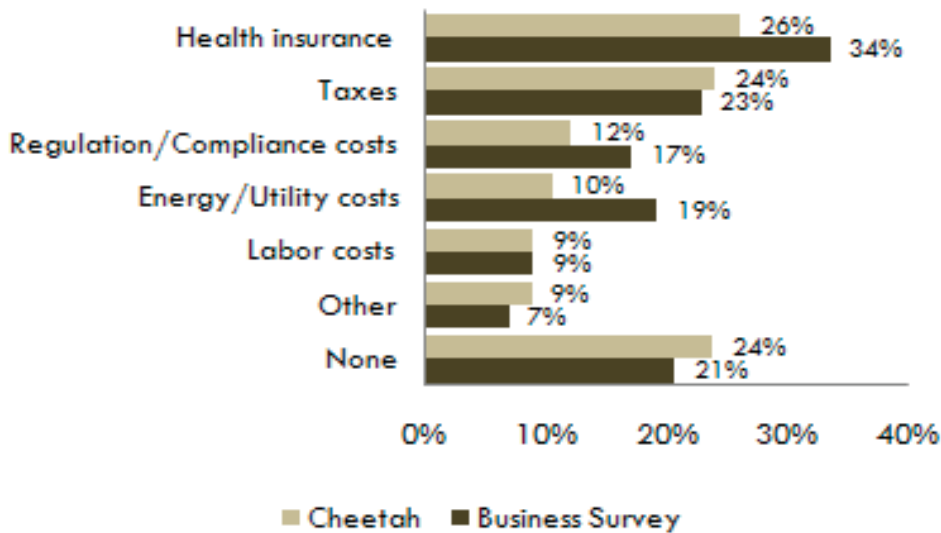
Q15: How would you describe your ability to access credit for your business in recent months? Has it:



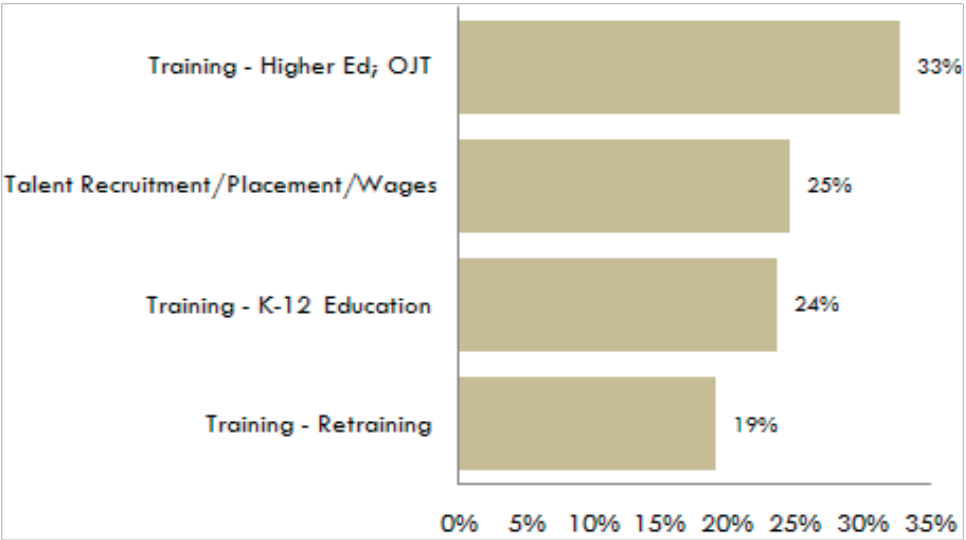
Q16: What do you need to be “close to” in terms of physical proximity for your business to be successful?



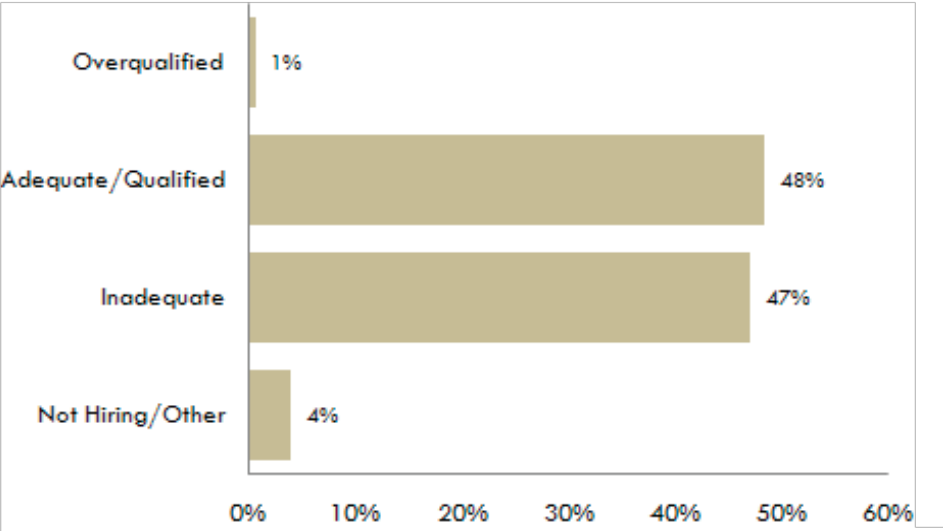
Q17: What is something you pay “too much for” in Missouri?



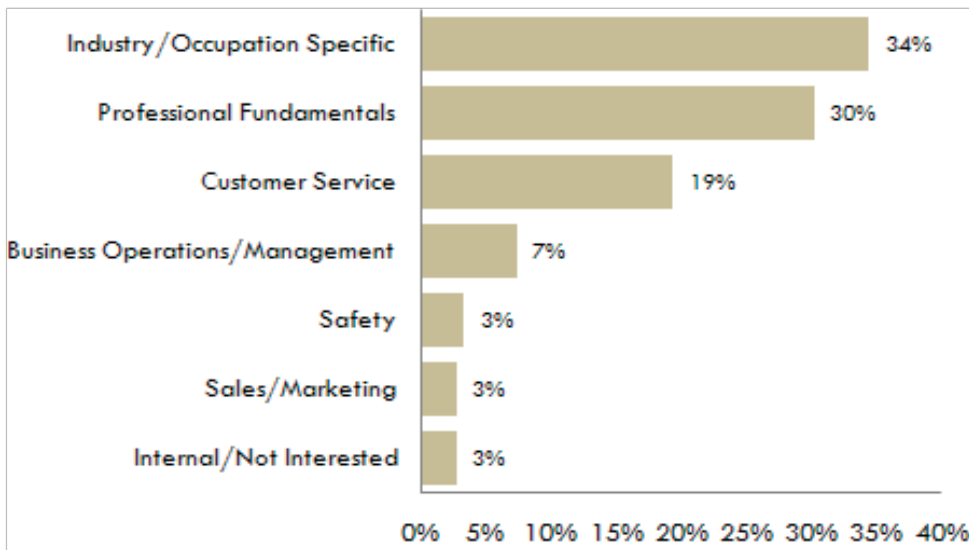
Q18: What is the most important thing government could do to help your business in the area of workforce development?



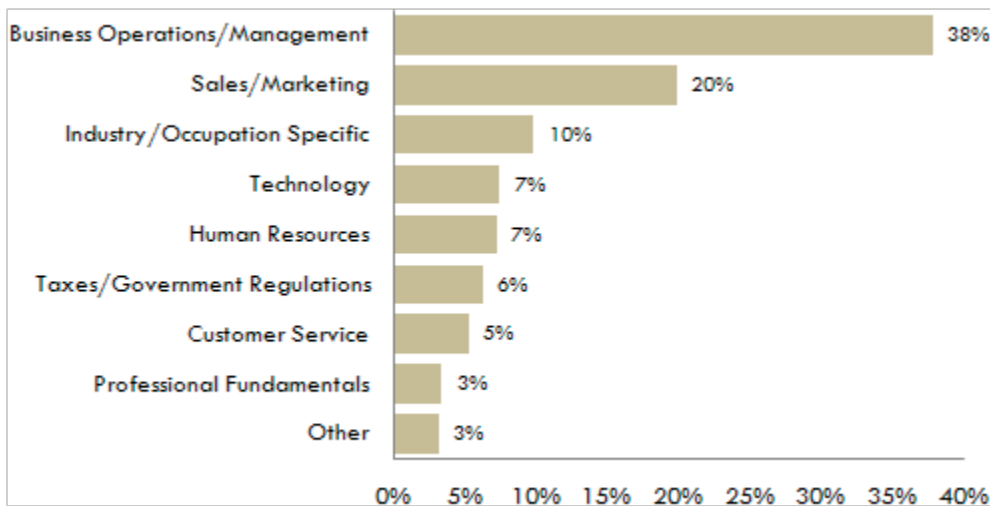
Q19: How would you describe the quality of recent job applicants? Would you say it is ...?



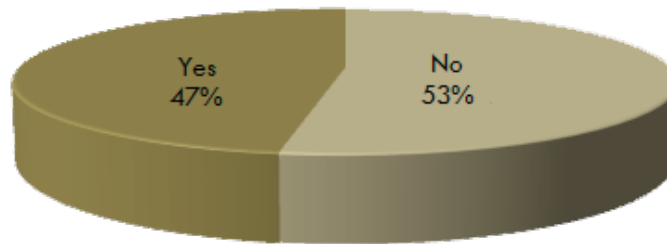
Q20: If you could send your employees to free training for a few weeks, what would you have them train in?



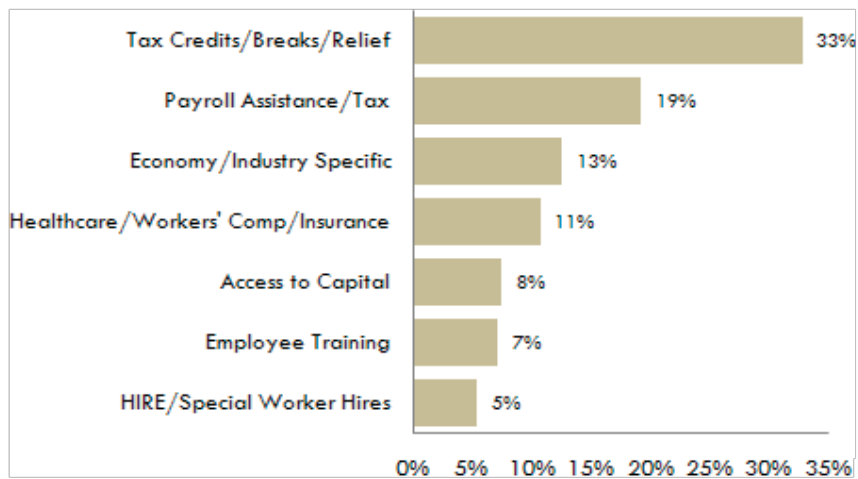
Q21: If you could have access to free expert consulting to help improve your business, what type of consulting would you select?



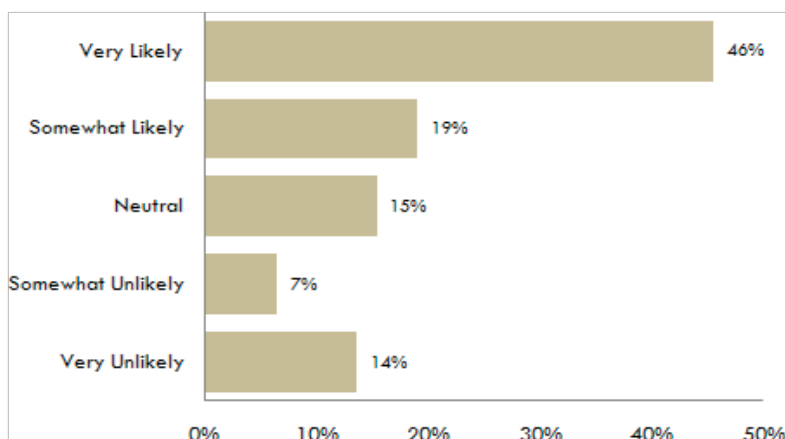
Q22A: Could the government provide an incentive that would make you more likely to hire additional workers?



Q22B: If yes, please specify:

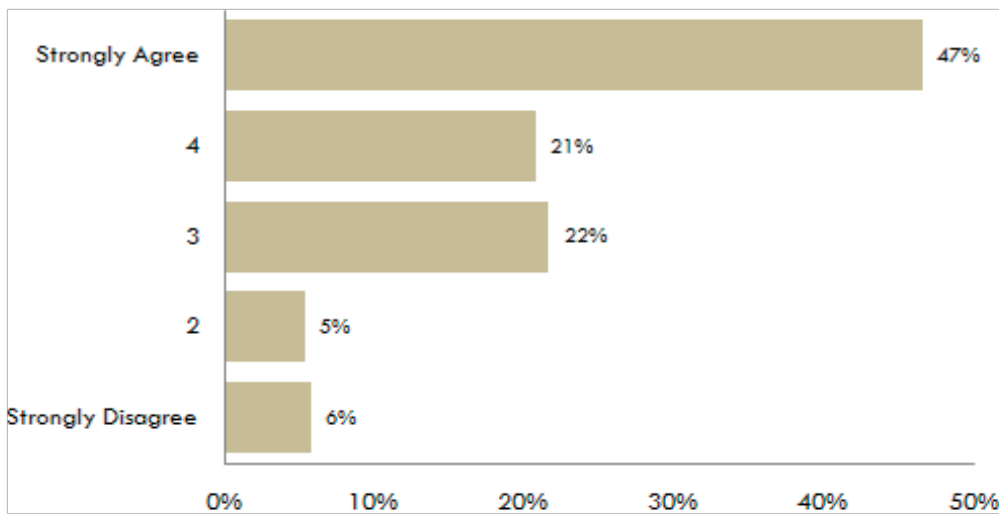


Q23: How likely you would be to hire additional workers if you were able to retain 100% of the withholding tax on new employees for 5 years?

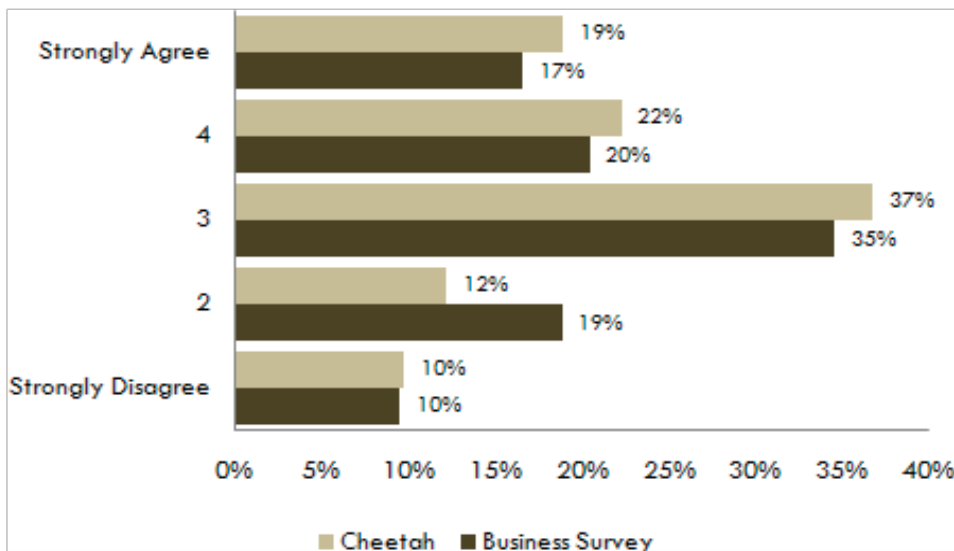




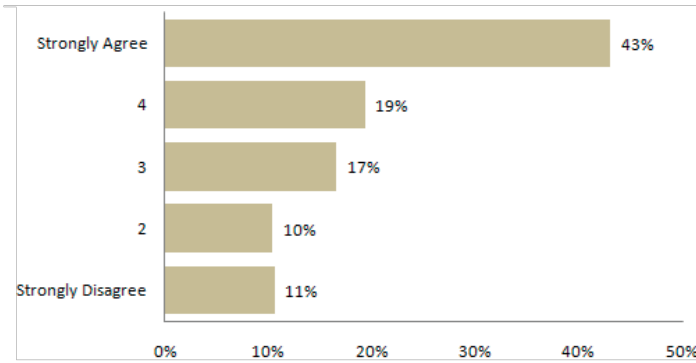
Q24: Local children will have the opportunity to stay in the community and work in your field in the future:



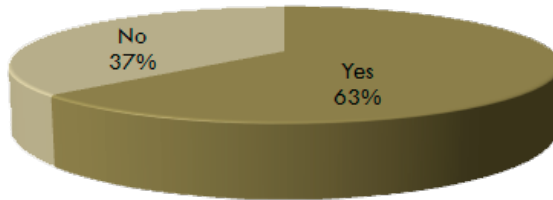
Q25: Businesses in my community have sufficient resources, advice, training, or other assistance to help them in operating a business:



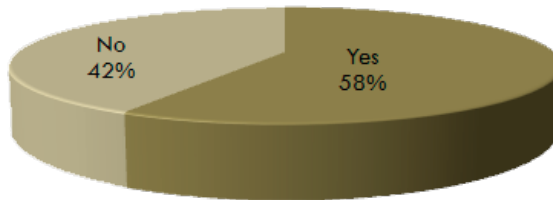
Q26: Community involvement is important to the success of your business:



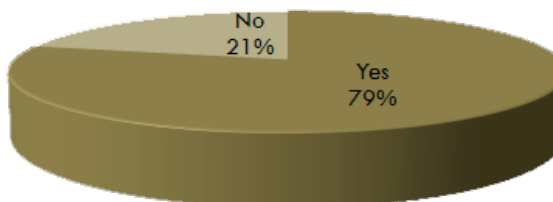
Q27: Did you grow up in Missouri?



Q28: Do you serve in a voluntary capacity for any boards, committees, or organizations within your community?



Q29: Does your company/organization have a Web site?





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RESOURCES

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BUSINESS RESEARCH AND INFORMATION DEVELOPMENT GROUP (BRIDG)
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