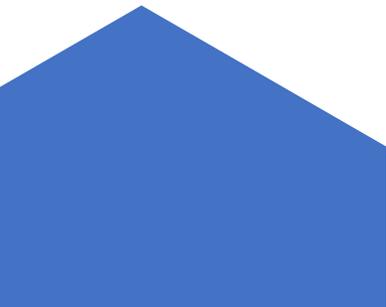# Dufferin
BOARD of TRADE

2020 Dufferin Business Issues Survey Results

September 2019

Introduction

The Dufferin Board of Trade (DBOT) is a non-profit community building organization in its 110th year serving Dufferin County and the Headwaters Region. DBOT works to make the community better by helping local business thrive. When local businesses are succeeding the local economy flourishes and businesses can better support local charities, events, and their employees.

We actively seek input from our valuable members and the business community. That input is used to identify the issues impacting business in our region, and help our organization shape our strategic priorities to support businesses in the areas they need it most.

The annual Dufferin Business Issues Survey is our largest tool to seek input from the business community.

The Process

The Dufferin Business Issues Survey was distributed online, with responses captured utilizing an online survey platform. The survey was open from July 29th until September 3rd and 73 responses were collected. The survey consisted of 27 questions and covered five major sections (Business Information, Global Trade, Business Confidence, Economic Outlook, and Workforce).

Survey Results

This report contains a breakdown and graphical representation of survey responses. In instances where data exceeds a total of 100%, respondents were permitted to select more than one answer on the survey.

BUSINESS INFORMATION

The survey was open to both Dufferin Board of Trade members and non-members, with 53% of respondents being current members and 45% non-members. Within the business information section of the Dufferin Business Issues Survey, respondents were asked questions pertaining to their organization's size and location within Dufferin County in order to ensure adequate representation across Dufferin's municipalities, as well as to allow for further segmentation of the data by municipality. **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** represent the business size (number of employees) and location of respondents respectively. The three largest municipalities in Dufferin were represented with the highest number of respondents; Orangeville (49%), Shelburne (10%), and Mono (14%).
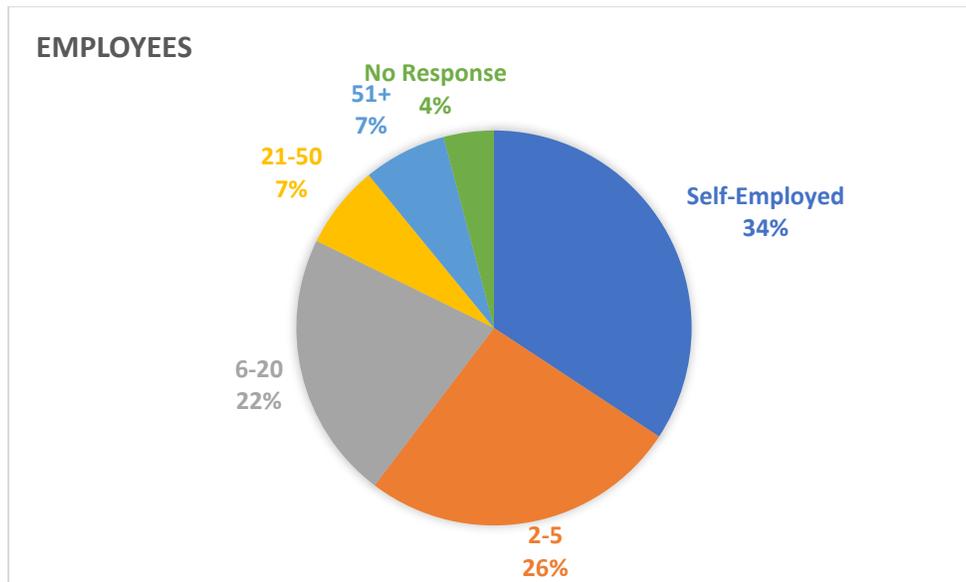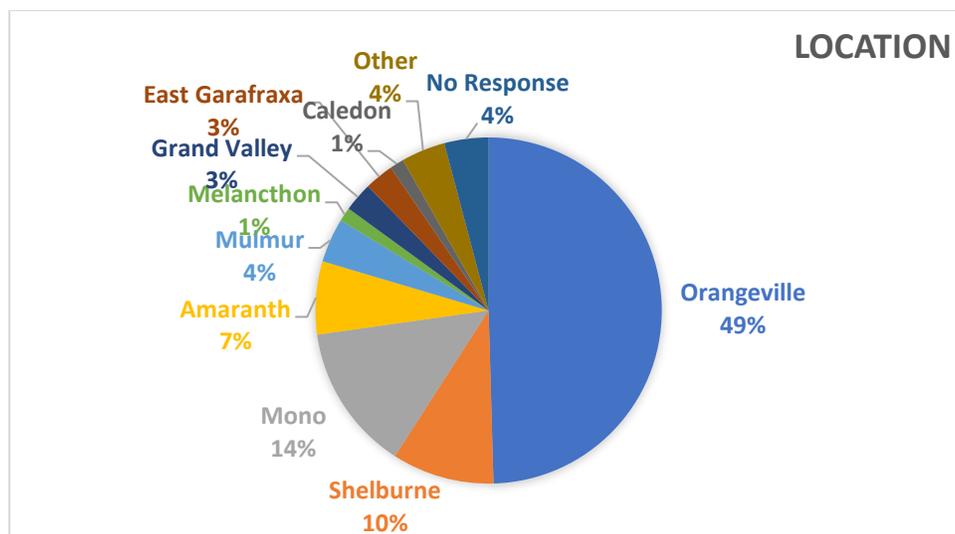
Figure 1: Number of Employees

EMPLOYEES

- No Response 4%
- 51+ 7%
- 21-50 7%
- 6-20 22%
- 2-5 26%
- Self-Employed 34%

Figure 2: Location

LOCATION

- Other 4%
- Caledon 1%
- East Garafraxa 3%
- No Response 4%
- Grand Valley 3%
- Melancthon 1%
- Mulmur 4%
- Amaranth 7%
- Mono 14%
- Shelburne 10%
- Orangeville 49%

Position in the Company

71% of respondents were the business owner or partner, 11% were the President or CEO, 8% were Managers, 4% were an employee, with 5% electing not to say.

GLOBAL TRADE

Questions surrounding global trade were asked to develop a profile of the primary markets that Dufferin businesses serve, and the ways in which businesses engage in global trade. 83% of respondents were not involved in global trade, 11% were involved in some form of global trade, with 5% not responding (**Figure 3**)**.** Of those businesses that were involved in global trade, 37% were active in importing, and 63% were involved in exporting (**Figure 4**).
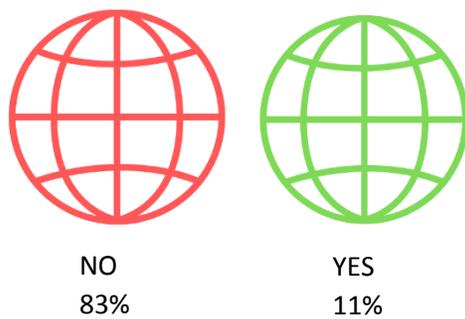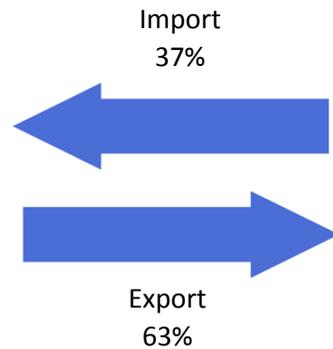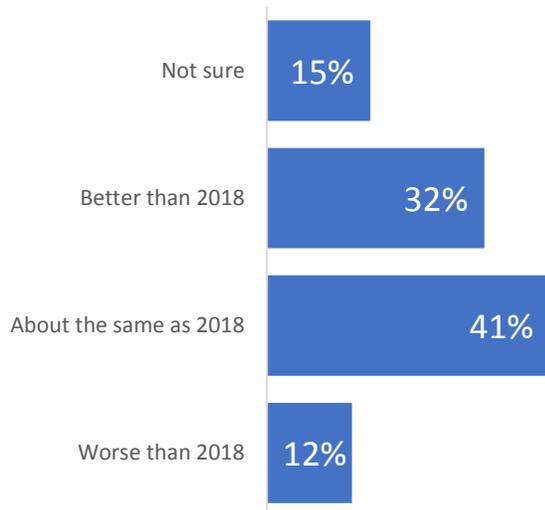
Figure 3: Respondents Involved in global trade

Figure 4: Exporting activities

NO
83%

YES
11%

Import
37%

Export
63%

BUSINESS CONFIDENCE

Figure 5: Business Performance 2019 v. 2018

Business confidence questions related to the respondent's perception of their company's performance in 2019 (**Figure 5**), and their level of confidence in how their business will perform in 2020 (**Figure 6)**

2020 Projections

In the 2019 Business Issues Survey, 54% of businesses reported that they felt their business would perform better in 2019 than it had in 2018. In this year's survey, only 40% of businesses have that same outlook for 2020.
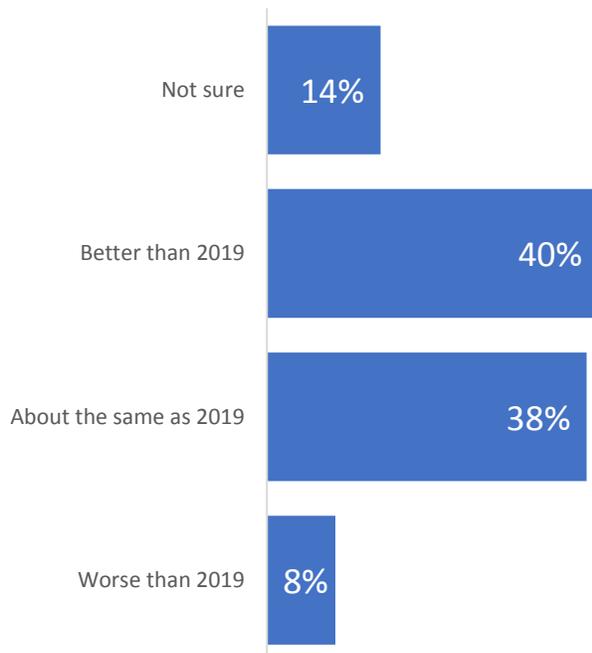

Figure 6: Anticipation of business performance in 2019

BUSINESS PRIORITIES & CONCERNS

Top Priorities

Respondents were asked to select their top 5 priorities their business will focus on in 2020.
Figure 7 demonstrates the top 5 areas of focus include: marketing and advertising (68%), building connections with the business community (48%), reducing operational costs (44%), strategic planning and focus (42%), and attracting employees (35%),

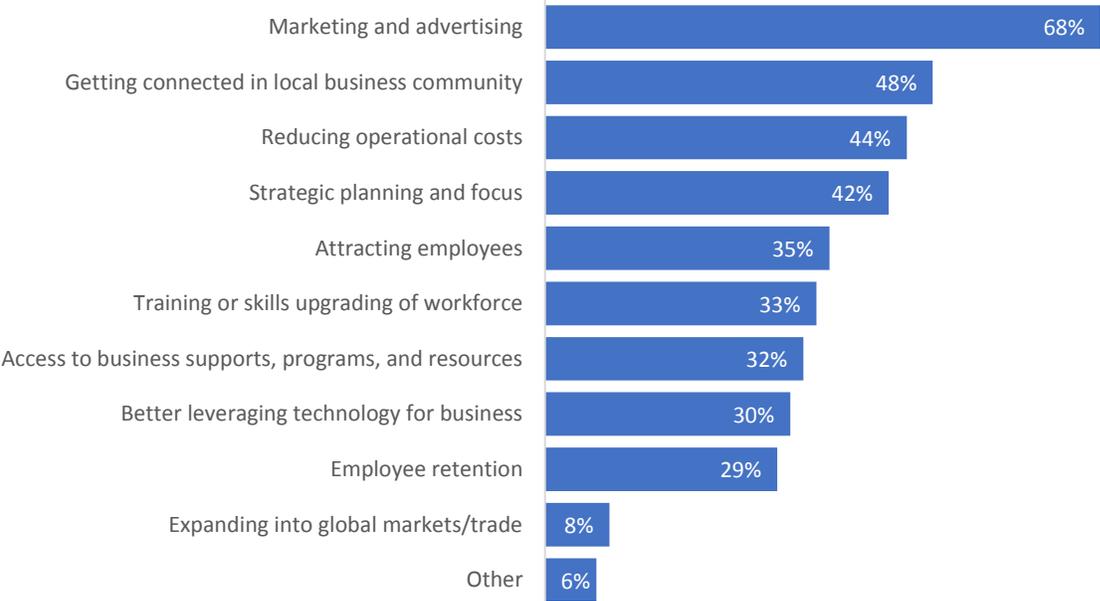| Priority	Percentage
Marketing and advertising	68%
Getting connected in local business community	48%
Reducing operational costs	44%
Strategic planning and focus	42%
Attracting employees	35%
Training or skills upgrading of workforce	33%
Access to business supports, programs, and resources	32%
Better leveraging technology for business	30%
Employee retention	29%
Expanding into global markets/trade	8%
Other	6%

Figure 7: Top Priorities for 2020

Biggest Concerns

Respondents were asked to indicate the biggest issues of concern they feel their business will face in 2020.

Figure 8 demonstrates the top 5 concerns business face are: government red tape and regulations (43%), business taxes (41%), attracting employees (40%), high speed internet access (37%), and cost of rent/lease/purchasing space (35%).
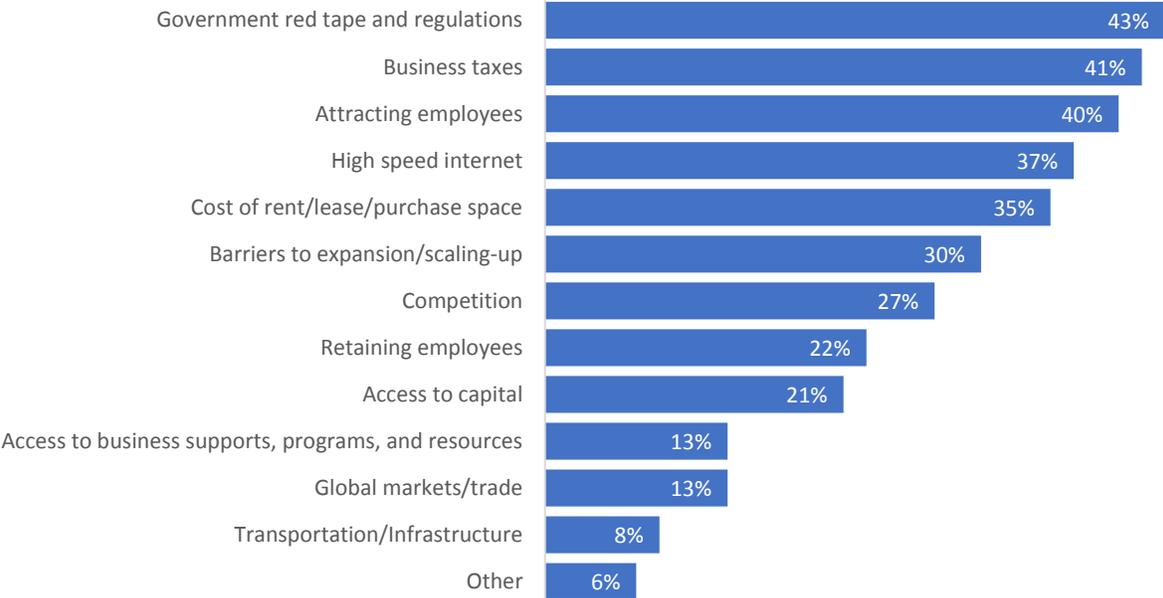
Concern	Percentage
Government red tape and regulations	43%
Business taxes	41%
Attracting employees	40%
High speed internet	37%
Cost of rent/lease/purchase space	35%
Barriers to expansion/scaling-up	30%
Competition	27%
Retaining employees	22%
Access to capital	21%
Access to business supports, programs, and resources	13%
Global markets/trade	13%
Transportation/Infrastructure	8%
Other	6%

Figure 8: Biggest Concerns for 2020

Dufferin
BOARD of TRADE

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Economic outlook questions pertained to the respondent's overall perception of how well they believe the economy will perform in 2020 when compared to 2019 (**Figure 9**). Confidence in a strong economy in 2020 is low with only 15% of businesses reporting that they believe the economy will perform better than it did in 2019. 67% of respondents believed the economy will perform the same or worse than it did in 2019, and 18% are unsure.
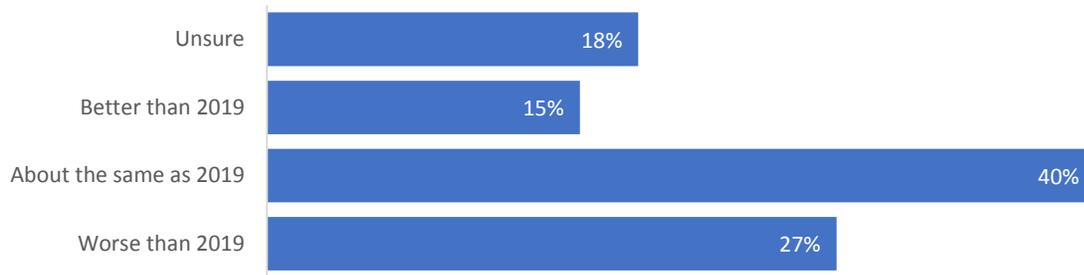

Figure 9: Anticipation of Economic Performance in 2020

Businesses were asked to select the most important factors driving Dufferin County's economic growth and prosperity (**Figure 10**). The top 2 factors included: creating a live work community (48%), access and affordability of high-speed broadband (45%), with the third factor a tie between support for existing businesses and business occupancy costs (30% each. Respondents were asked to comment on what the most important issue to be addressed in terms of Dufferin's economic development. Responses are included in the appendix.
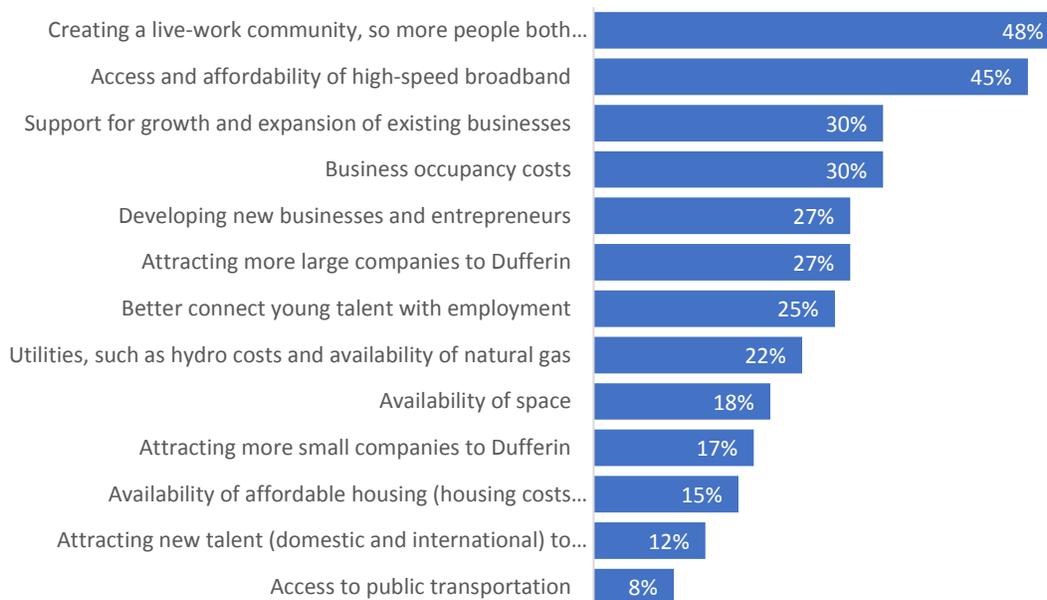

Figure 10: Top Factors that Drive Economic Growth in Dufferin

Workforce

In 2019, employment remained stable with 46% stating that their employment levels remained about the same as 2018. Only 9% reported lower employment levels, and 20% reported higher levels. Of those businesses that needed to hire 62% were able to fill all their positions with candidates that met their needs and requirements, and 37% were not (**Figure 11**). This shows a positive increase over 2019 responses, where 47% of employers indicated they were unable to fill all their positions with the right candidates. Respondents were asked to specify why they were not able to fill the positions that were available, responses are included in the appendix.

Figure 11: Business was able to fill all open positions with candidates that met needs

Overwhelmingly, respondents reported that when looking for employees they seek candidates that will be with them long term and grow within the organization (62%). **Figure 12** demonstrates what types of commitment respondents are looking for in new hires.
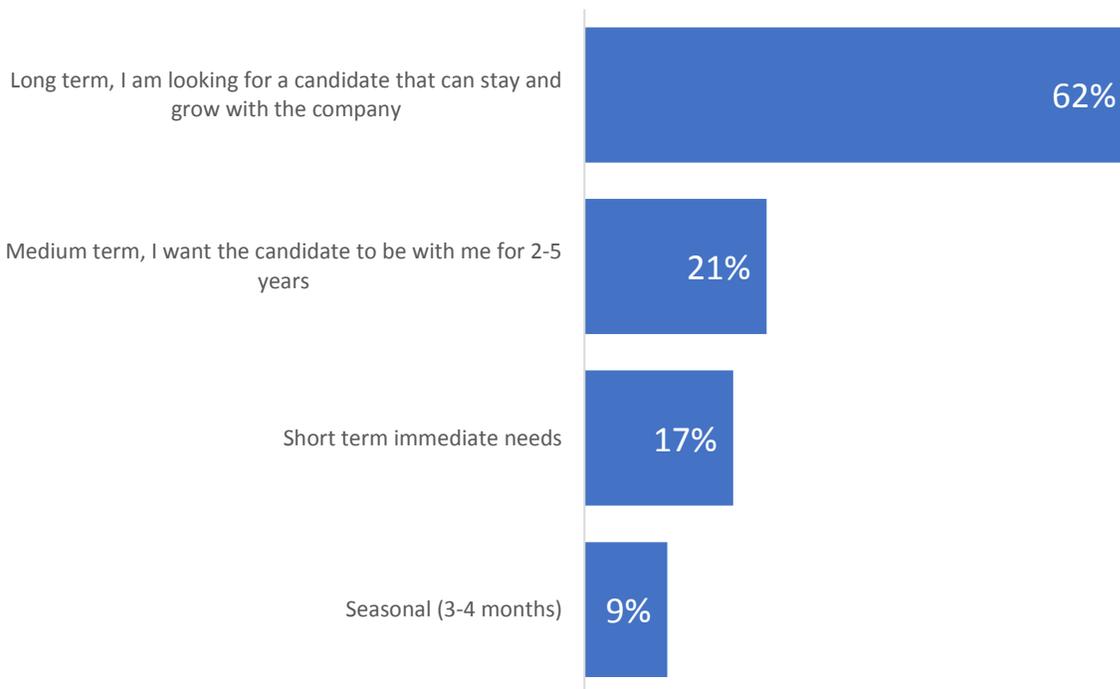

Figure 12: Employment commitment sought by employers

Survey respondents were asked to select their top three requirements when selecting a new employee candidate (**Figure 13**). Results showed that good communication and soft skills were a top priority (75%), followed by experience in the field (45%), and a good organizational culture fit (41%).

Figure 13: Hiring requirements for new employee candidates.

To understand how employers typically look for applicants, respondents were asked to report the methods they use to fill a position (**Table 1**). When posting a job, the majority of respondents utilized their own network connections (62%) as well as an online job posting service (55%).

Table 1: Methods used to fill a position

Response	Total %
I use my network	62.5%
Online job posting service	55.3%
I ask employees for referrals	41.0%
Georgian Career and Employment Community Services	16.0%
Newspaper posting	14.2%
Not applicable (I don't hire)	10.7%
Other	10.7%
I use an employment service / agency	3.5%

Employee Incentives

Respondents were asked what types of additional benefits/incentives they offer employees. An overwhelming number of respondents (71%) give employees flexible working schedules. The next most common incentives were paid professional development opportunities (35%), employee bonuses (31%), and additional vacation time (31%), as shown in figure 14.
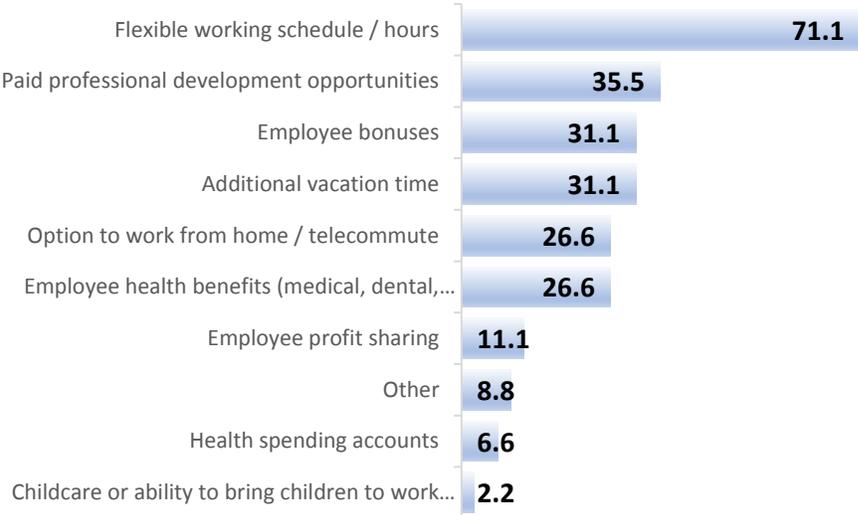
Benefit	Value
Flexible working schedule / hours	71.1
Paid professional development opportunities	35.5
Employee bonuses	31.1
Additional vacation time	31.1
Option to work from home / telecommute	26.6
Employee health benefits (medical, dental,…	26.6
Employee profit sharing	11.1
Other	8.8
Health spending accounts	6.6
Childcare or ability to bring children to work…	2.2

Figure 14: Employee benefits.

CONCLUSION

Dufferin County businesses are primarily small businesses who want to engage with their community. Business leaders in our region worry about government red tape, taxes, and attracting employees, and are cautious about their future performance. They see the most important factors driving Dufferin County's economic growth as the need to create a live-work community and the need to create accessible/affordable high-speed internet access. Business leaders value opportunities to increase their marketing and get connected within the local business community. Most local businesses seek to hire employees with good communications and soft skills for the long term.

The Dufferin Board of Trade will share this data collected with the local municipalities and support agencies. The information gathered here will help shape our projects and activities for 2020, ensuring we support businesses in the priority areas they have identified.

Top priorities your company will focus on in 2020:

- Securing new clients
- Overall growth
- Expand domestic sales
- Customer satisfaction

Issues of concern your company will face in 2020:

- Possible recession?
- Insurance costs
- Economy
- Carbon Tax

Within the last year have you been able to fill all of your positions with candidates that meet your needs and requirements? If Not, comment what issues you had.

- However very few have experience and it has become taxing and time consuming to continually train new employees
- Unreliable, unmotivated poor work ethic.
- Still searching for accounting technician role
- We are looking for commission sales people and everyone wants salary instead
- experience in building materials and house construction / renovations is very rare when looking at the resumes we see.
  The delivery aspect of my business doesn't have a lot of applicants with proper DZ or Boom truck experience
- we have so many vacancies we are constantly into over time costs
- No qualified people in the area to fill the skills for the positions
- No one want to works. High schools are promoting I.T. and ignoring trades including truck driving as being a worthwhile stable reliable well-paying job
- No public transit, lack of ability to get to work
- Lack of skilled workforce
  Lack of available skilled workers

Please prioritize your hiring requirements for new employee candidates.

- Have care and passion
- Willingness to work and learn.
- attitude, hire for interst train for skills
- It's hard to find motivated people