

NEWS RELEASE

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RESULTS OF FOURTH BC PULSE CHECK SHOWS TIME MAY BE RUNNING OUT FOR SOME BUSINESSES, EMPLOYEES

Kelowna: COVID-19 has dramatically affected businesses and communities across the Okanagan and the province and there are more challenges on the horizon according to the latest results from the province-wide Pulse Check survey completed in collaboration with the BC Chamber's MindReader platform and with the assistance of the Mustel Group. The results from Thompson Okanagan region are in close alignment with provincial averages and include:

- There is need for continued and measured support as two-thirds (65%) of businesses surveyed are using some form of government support.
- 27% of respondents who have employees on temporary layoff expect to have no choice but to sever those relationships once the extended layoff period ends at the end of August (with businesses prepared to provide severance/working notice as is required).
- Two-thirds of respondents say once government support ends, they will be forced to permanently lay off staff or significantly reduce hours if they want to have any hope of remaining sustainable over the next year or so.
- Of all government efforts, by far the most helpful program is the wage subsidy program. A very small number of businesses are accessing other programs (i.e. Commercial Rent Subsidy Program) or see them as helpful.
- Businesses are not particularly confident that when the province launches a recovery/rebuilding plan, the provincial government's plan will help their business succeed through the COVID period. Only 16% are confident, compared to 47% that are not confident that the plan will help them succeed.
- On the positive side, 36% (up from 31%) have increased their digital or e-commerce presence, and small groups have introduced new products or services (15%), advanced new marketing projects (10%) or advanced new research and development (6%).



- Businesses say the most important components of the BC recovery plan are providing payroll or wage supports and reducing taxes and fees. Cutting red tape, creating better investment conditions, providing direct cash flow support, and making regulations more efficient are other notable suggestions.
- Employers are still facing challenges getting employees to come back to work either because they are taking advantage of CERB or they still don't feel safe coming back to work even if all safety guidelines and protocols are in place.

The Kelowna Chamber has been extremely active over the last number of months to ensure the business community, not only in Kelowna but across the Okanagan has the resources they need. The Chamber has produced a Back to Work [Toolkit](#) which it has posted under “Helpful Tips” on its “Okanagan We Got This” [webpages](#). Together with valley chambers from Osoyoos to Enderby, the Kelowna Chamber is spearheading this digital support platform to help businesses understand the steps they need to take in order to make workplaces safe for our employees, guests, and customers. The site is also helping profile positive business stories, distribute critical government support information, and connect businesses and communities throughout the Okanagan.

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