



CITY OF
QUESNEL

BUSINESS WALKS 2016

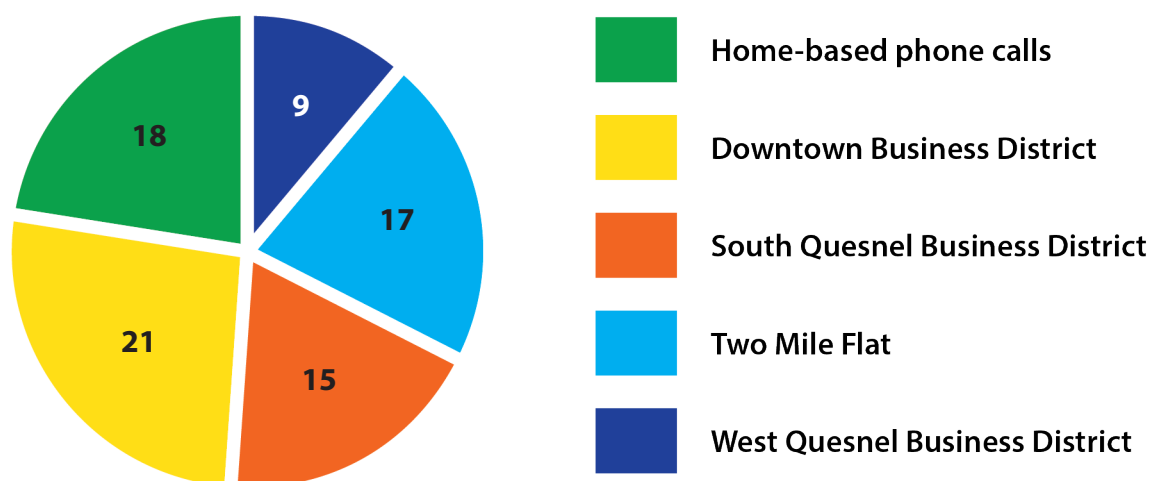


Volunteers from left to right: Greg Lawrence (Community Futures), Simon Turner (Chamber of Commerce), Dale Richardson (Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Skills Training), Shaylyn Robertson (City of Quesnel), Laurey-Anne Roodenburg (City Councillor), Donna Jacobsen (Quesnel Downtown Association), Emily Colombo (Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Skills Training), Amy Reid (City of Quesnel), Siggie Stoldt (Community Futures)

Quesnel's 3rd annual Business Walks was held on October 20th, 2016. A total of 80 businesses were reached by a volunteer team, 62 through scheduled walk-ins, and 18 unscheduled home-based business phone interviews. Businesses were selected randomly on the basis of being locally owned and operated, and the business owner or manager available for interview.

The purpose of a Business Walk is to listen to the business community by engaging in brief, yet thought-provoking conversations with business owners. Responses are compiled into a comprehensive document that will be utilized to organize resources in an efficient manner. By identifying where gaps need to be filled or where further resources are not required, strategic decisions can be made about the effective allocation of resources to positively impact the entire community. Businesses will be receiving information packages with a complete list of all business resources available to them, in addition to specialized follow up calls from the appropriate department or entity to owners that made requests.

WHERE DID WE VISIT?



Business owners were asked four questions during their interview:

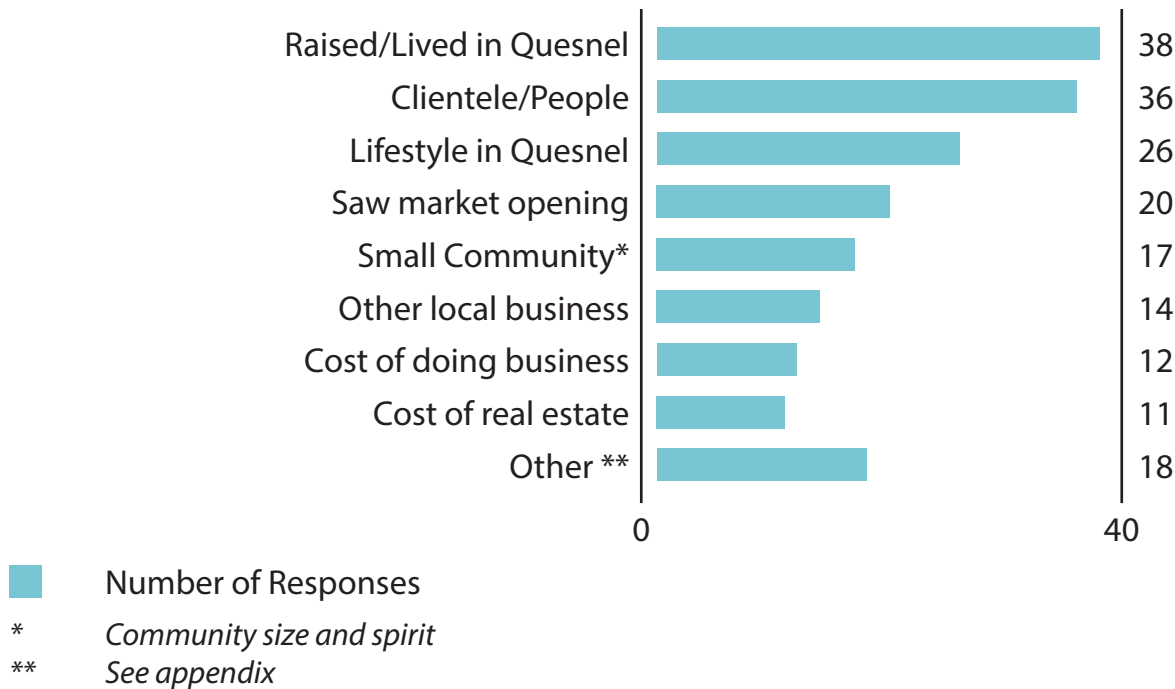
1. How is Business?
2. What do you like about doing business in Quesnel?
3. There are many existing tools to help business in our community. Are you aware of these tools? What are the top 3 ways to share this information with you?
4. What other tools, services, or resources would you like to see help business in Quesnel?

1. How is Business?

Responses to this question were quite varied in all business districts across all variety of industries. Of the 80 business, 35% reported that business is good to increasing, 51% of responses rated their business at fair to steady, and the remaining 14% rated it slow and poor. There is a slight shift from the good to increasing category to the fair and steady category based on previous responses in previous Business Walks. Some respondents attributed these changes to the current economic climate, seasonal and fluctuating business cycles, and the weather.



2. What do you like about doing business in Quesnel?



Based on the responses received, it appears the majority of business owners like doing business in Quesnel because they were raised here or chose to live here. The second largest response to why our owners like doing business in Quesnel is attributed to their loyal clientele and people living the community. Owners have friends and family here, and like the small, friendly atmosphere provided by doing business in a small community. This question produced responses that are consistent with data collected in previous business walks.

3. There are many existing tools to help business in our community. Are you aware of these tools? What are the top 3 ways to share this information with you?

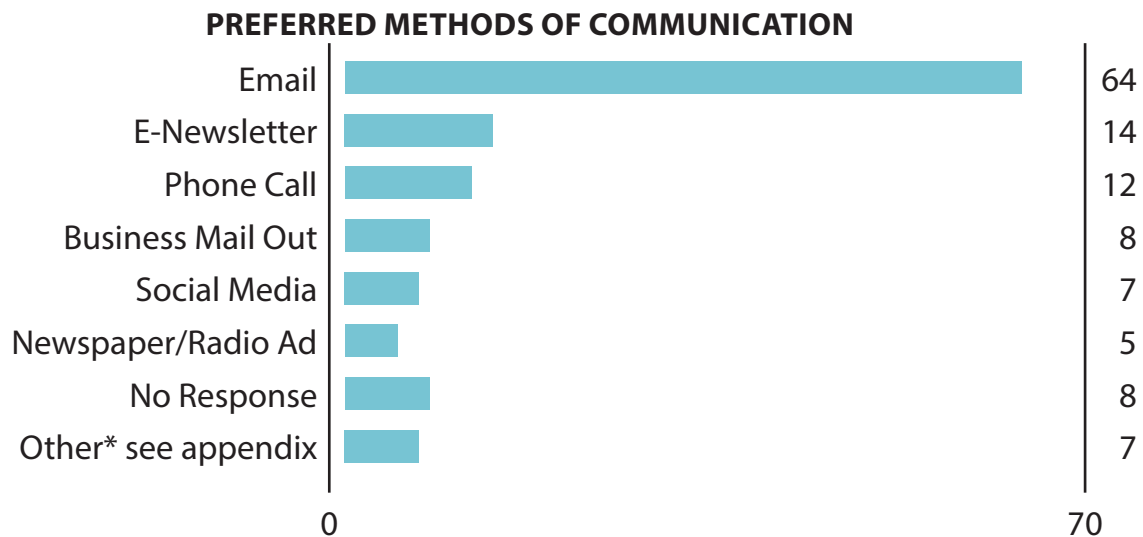
Part 1:

AWARENESS OF EXISTING BUSINESS SERVICES



This question was intended to gauge the awareness of available business resources in our community, so that unaware businesses can be provided with resources. **Note:** Many businesses that responded “Aware” suggested they only knew of some business resources available to them and not all.

Part 2:

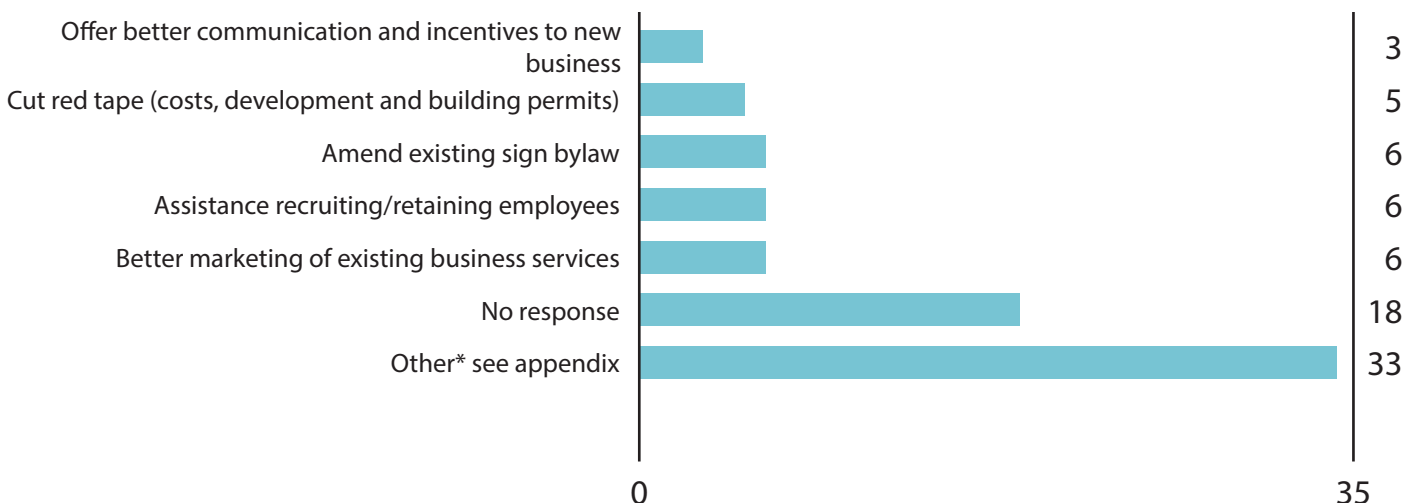


■ Number of Responses

* See appendix

It is clear that email is the best method to reach business owners. However, alternative communication outlets will be used to reach businesses that prefer other methods. This is important to consider when promoting existing or new business resources including workshops, new grant opportunities, or events related to business in the community among others. Our intent is to reach a larger portion of the business community, not only ones that utilize email as a means to communicate.

4. What other tools, services, or resources would you like to see help business in Quesnel?



The responses to the final questions were quite varied, and were largely dependent on the type and location of the business. There were 18 business owners that did not give a response, some because they are self-sufficient, content with current resources, or did not know. The above categories were clustered together based on similar responses. For ‘other’ responses please see the appendix.

APPENDIX**Question 2: What do you like about doing business in Quesnel?**

Response: Other

- Robust downtown core
- Ease of doing business with the City of Quesnel
- Accessibility of local suppliers (2)
- Location
- Good working relationships
- Less competition in comparison to Vancouver
- Strong established local network (2)
- Being home every night
- Customer loyalty
- Niche quality product (2)
- Great place to raise kids
- Ability to work from home
- Ease of transportation and distribution (2)
- Making a living

Question 3: What are the top ways to share business information with you?

Part 2 Response: Other

- Face to Face visit (4)
- Word of Mouth (3)

Question 4: What other tools, services, or resources would you like to see help business in Quesnel?

Response: Other

- Business consultation before and during reconstruction of Reid Street
- Façade improvements to storefronts (2)
- Awareness of Customer Appreciation Day (First Tuesday of each month)
- Address challenges facing businesses during Billy Barker Days on Reid St.
- Better relationship between businesses and business associations
- Cardboard Recycling Program
- Inclusion of St. Laurent during Christmas holidays decorating
- Low or no-cost services
- Local commercial lending/transactional services
- Sewer Service in 2 Mile Flat (3)
- Enhanced local procurement (2)
- Create multi-use trails
- Build connector to Blackwater
- Paving on Keis Ave.
- Improved cell service (2)

APPENDIX**Question 4: What other tools, services, or resources would you like to see help business in Quesnel?**

Response: Other

- Car rental at airport (2)
- Better flight availability and assurance
- Road to Valemount from Wells and Barkerville
- Increased taxi availability
- Access to capital with low interest rates for business start-ups
- Decrease property taxes within the Cariboo Regional District
- Bank in South Quesnel
- Promote business growth by issuing permits and resolving traffic issues (2)
- Offer more in depth accounting courses & QuickBooks tutorials
- Do not increase business license fees
- Maple Park Mall improvements – roof is leaking
- Encourage risk-taking
- Downtown washroom
- Marketing assistance
- West Quesnel Business Association Restaurant Tour
- More rural economic development
- Family Fun Center
- Increased education and training opportunities for trades (2)
- Beautification