



Industry Insights Report 2020

Interviews Conducted July 2020 - September 2020
Cedar Valley Regional Partnership Survey of Existing
Business
April 2021



Black Hawk | Bremer | Buchanan | Butler | Chickasaw | Grundy

Business Background

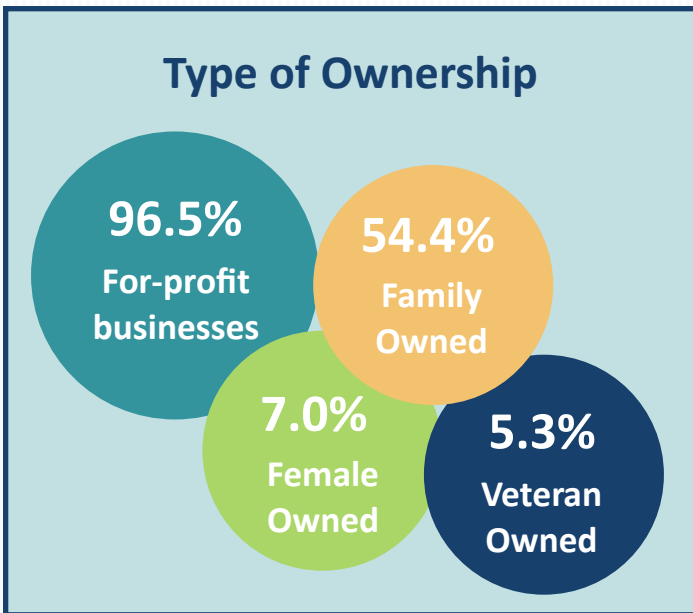
57 Businesses

Manufacturing—73.7%

Professional, Scientific, & Technical—8.8%

Wholesale Trade—7.0%

Other—10.5%

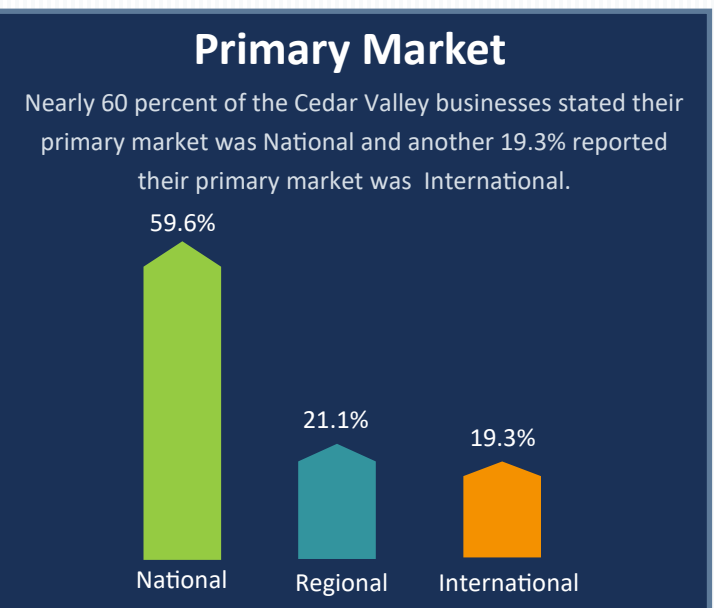
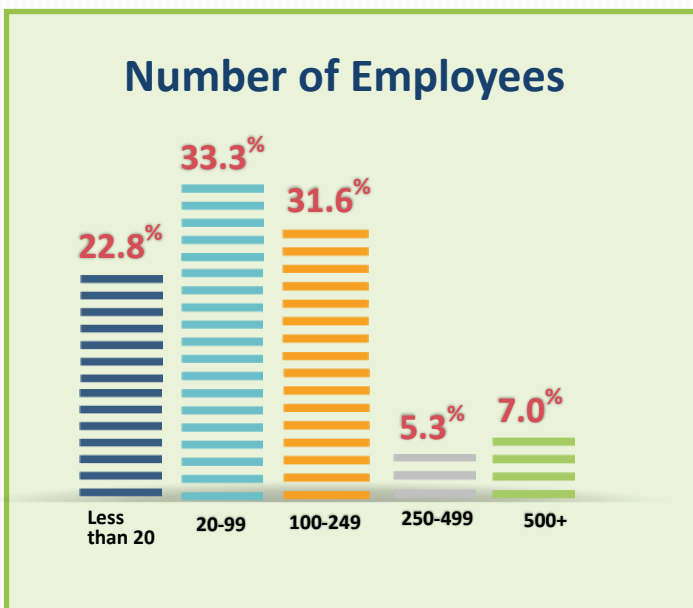


The Cedar Valley Region’s Business Retention and Expansion program utilizes the Synchronist Business Information System® developed by Blane Canada Ltd. as a tool to interview area businesses. Synchronist is designed to collect, analyze and report company data to give decision-makers valuable insight about the regional economy in order to plan economic programming to compliment the survey findings. Due to the unique challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Cedar Valley Region utilized a new set of interview questions and an online interview tool to enable the employer interviews to be conducted virtually.

The Cedar Valley Regional Partnership team completed 57 interviews from July 2020 to September 2020.

Geographically, the participants were located in the following counties:

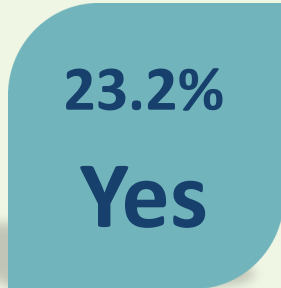
- Black Hawk 40.4%
- Buchanan 26.3%
- Bremer 14.0%
- Butler 10.5%
- Chickasaw 5.3%
- Grundy 3.5%



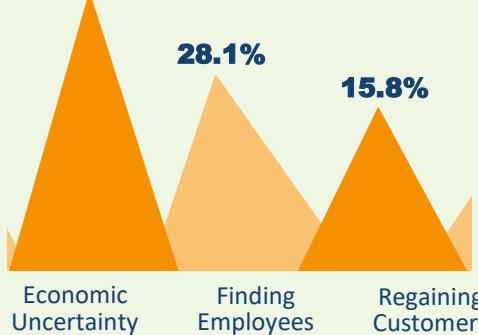
Key Performance Indicators

Financial Stress From Pandemic

A slightly higher percentage of Cedar Valley businesses stated their company was experiencing financial stress as compared to statewide respondents (19.9%).

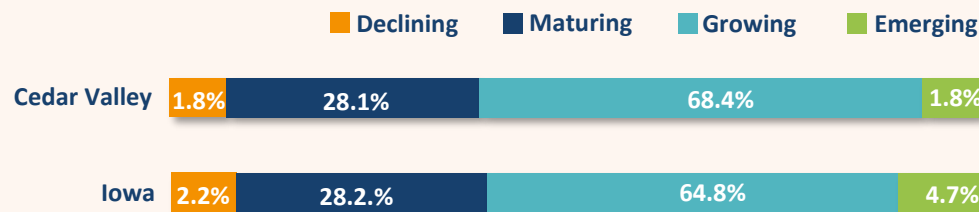


Recovery From Pandemic



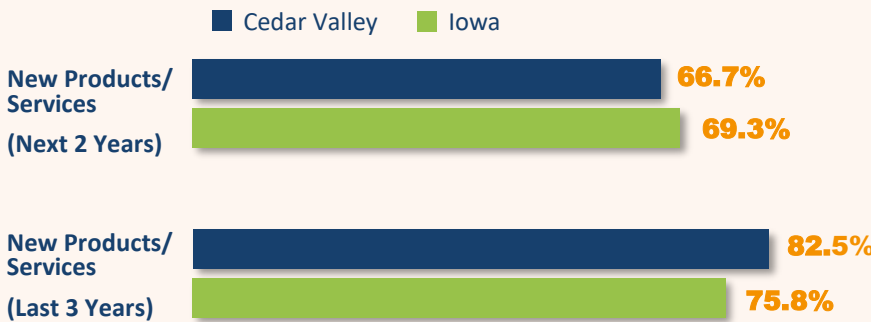
Like statewide respondents, the greatest barrier for recovery was economic uncertainty.

Note: Pandemic responses from July - September 2020



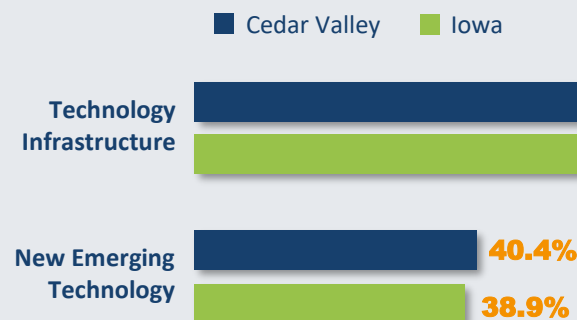
Product Life Cycle

Over two-thirds of the businesses (68.4%) reported their primary product/service was growing. This is nearly 4 percent higher than the statewide percent of companies (64.8%).



Product Investment

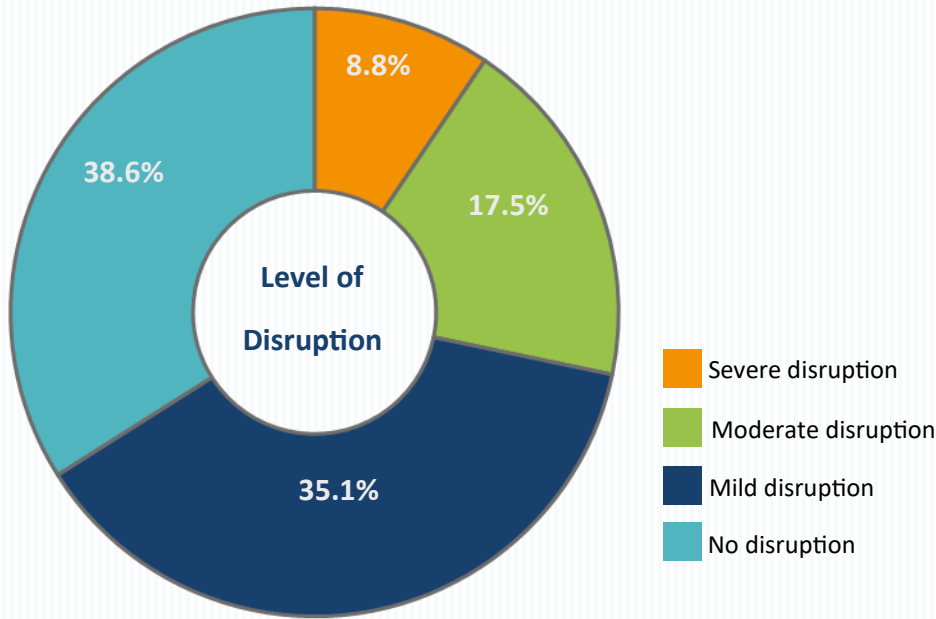
The percentage of businesses in the Cedar Valley that invested in a new primary product/service over the previous 3 years was considerably higher than the statewide average. Conversely, a slightly smaller percentage of Cedar Valley businesses plan to introduce a new product/service in the next 2 years.



Technology

A slightly lower percentage of Cedar Valley businesses stated their local technology infrastructure had been adequate during the pandemic as compared to statewide respondents. However, a slightly higher percentage anticipate future technology changes to their company operations.

Supply Chain



Almost 30 percent (29.8%) of the companies reported that they had either experienced negative disruptions in their supply chain in the last year or they anticipate disruptions within the next year. Additionally, 31.6 percent of the companies had no disruptions.

Workforce Characteristics

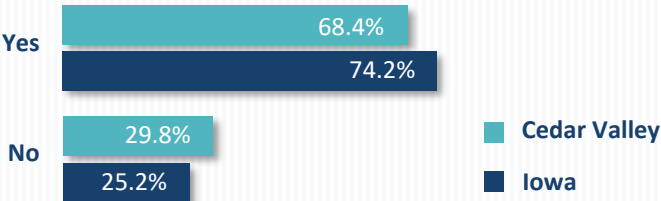
50.9% have **Recruitment Problems**

- Common Difficult-To-Fill Positions:**
- Production workers
 - Skilled maintenance mechanics/technicians
 - Machinists
 - Customer service/sales representatives

29.8% of companies stated they have lost high value employees in the last six months

Employees

Company at Normal Staffing Levels



Remote Work Policy

Yes 50.9%
No 47.4%

Remote Work Policy Moving Forward:

- Continue current policy—26.9%
- Expand policy—23.1%
- Scale back—7.7%

Expansion Plans

Plans to Expand

28.1%

28.1 percent of the companies have plans to expand in the next three years.

Total Investment is estimated over \$22.37 million.

An estimated 159 new jobs could be created.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Companies were asked what would be the most effective actions the broader business community could take to promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

25.0%

Financially support diverse students with higher education

31.3%

Support policies and organizations impacting education resources for underserved populations

43.8%

Implement programs to educate and train employees

24.1%

Create a diversity, equity and inclusion plan

31.0%

Develop hiring policies to attract/retain diverse employees

Companies have identified actions taken to foster diversity, equity and inclusion in the past few years.

Key Findings

The results of the 2020 business interviews highlight strengths with the Cedar Valley Region's economy:

- The majority of companies in the region appear to be growing with over two-thirds of the businesses (68.4%) reporting their primary product/service was growing. This is nearly 4.0 percent higher than the statewide percent of companies (64.8%).
- This growth will likely fuel business expansions across the region with over 28.0 percent of the companies stating they have plans to expand in the next three years.
- At the time of their interview, over two-thirds of the companies (68.4%) stated that their staffing levels were at their normal, pre-COVID levels.

However, the results also highlight a number of challenges that businesses in the Cedar Valley Region are facing, particularly financial and workforce challenges:

- At the time of their interview, 23.2 percent of the companies stated they were experiencing financial stress.
- Over 61.0 percent (61.4%) of the companies reported that they had either experienced negative disruptions in their supply chain in the last year or they anticipate disruptions over the next years.
- Half of the companies (50.9%) stated that they were experiencing workforce recruitment problems and among the companies with expansion plans, 56.3 percent stated they are having recruitment problems.
- Additionally, 29.8 percent of the businesses stated they had lost high value employees within the last 6 months and finding employees was the second highest barrier for recovery identified by employers (28.1%).



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Advancing Business Together



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