



Early impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Vancouver Island businesses



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On April 9, Smart Dolphins circulated a survey to our clients, as well as the broader Vancouver Island business community in an effort to uncover the early impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

What the survey highlights is the diversity of the impact. Brick-and-mortar businesses and those that service that sector faced immediate drops in revenue and have had to initiate layoffs. Not-for-profits are struggling to maintain donations and are challenged to adapt quickly to remote work. Tech-savvy businesses have experienced very little impact and are operating as usual.

In terms of the immediate changes of those surveyed, most have cut sales and marketing and labour expenses. Common concerns include: team moral (culture) and employee safety.

“ Every day is a new day, but after being through 1980, 1991, 2000 and 2008, you get perspective that life goes on. Don't panic just use reason and think through the scenarios, be a caring leader, first and foremost look after your people.

— **Steve Nagy, Graphic Office**

The number one IT-related challenge is communication within a remote workforce.

Based on the qualitative responses, we were able to identify three underlying trends:

1. The importance of mobility, specifically, remote work tools, like Microsoft Teams.
2. Workplace culture.
3. A push toward innovation.



Use the crisis as an intensive opportunity to learn. We are doing things now that were on our five year plan. This is a huge opportunity for innovation. And think about how you can add value to people through help and support. Embrace that challenge rather than sinking in the fear and uncertainty.

— **Andy Spurling, Proline Property Management**

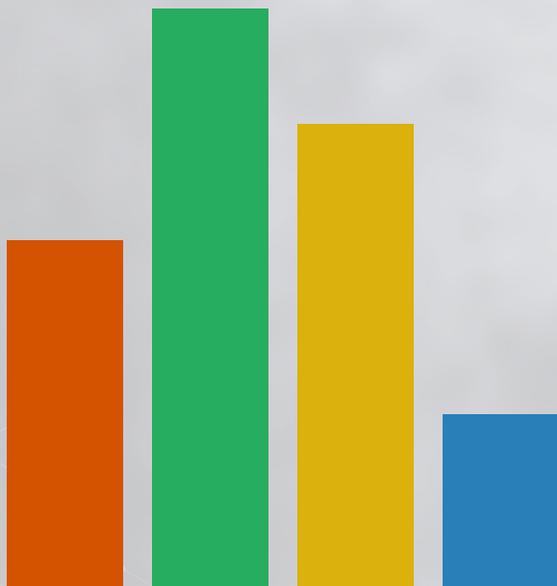
WORKPLACE IMPACT

- 31% of respondents have 80-100% of their team working remotely.
- The majority of respondents made no changes to staffing in the month of March.
- 26% of respondents reduced their staff by more than 20% in the month of March.
- 22% anticipate an overall decrease in staff by more than 10% throughout 2020.
- 4.8% of respondents anticipate an increase of staff by the end of 2020.
- 5.6% of respondents decreased their revenue by more than 20% in the month of March.

“ Embrace remote work as much as possible...As an organization using hosted tools and a managed service provider, we are fortunate that the transition to remote work has really been a non-issue for us. But we are obviously an exception to the norm in that regard.

— Anonymous

TOP IT CONCERNS



- Communication in a dispersed team
- IT security
- Business continuity
- Collaboration

PRIMARY CONCERNS

- Team morale
- Employee safety
- Lost revenue



Impact

63%

96%

63% of respondents indicated that they were highly impacted early on.

96% of respondents anticipate a high impact by the end of 2020.



Stay calm, look for creative ways you can help the community at this time whether personally or professionally, try to envision and prepare for what your organization's reality may look like 3 - 6 months from now.

— Jill Shaw, KidSport

ADVICE

- Access government assistance.
- Embrace innovation.
- Stay positive and don't panic.
- Adapt quickly to the emerging "new normal."
- Keep informed.
- Get lean.
- Embrace remote work.
- Put people first.

MORE TO COME...

VIDEOS | BLOGS
POCASTS WITH LOCAL LEADERS

CONTACT

DAVE MONAHAN

DAVE@SMARTDOLPHINS.COM