

## Lopez Island Business Survey RESULTS

9-26-21

In September of 2021, twenty Lopez businesses responded to a 12 question survey with 100% completion rate. 68% of the businesses serve tourists directly and 21% serve tourists indirectly. Half are service-related, 25% are product-based, and 25% are restaurant or food service providers.

View the data at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-HHVMGCRY9/#>

From this informal survey, these statements can be made:

1. 68% of the surveyed businesses have seen an increase in business in recent years, and 63% believe the increase is COVID-related.
2. 60% responded that the increase has been good for their business, and an additional 27% said that the increase has been stressful for the owner and staff, but good for business. 0 responded that the increase has been bad for business. Two respondents chose to answer by writing:
  - "Tourism in 2021 matches 2019. (2020 was DOWN). The challenge this year is in staffing and supplies. The ferry difficulties add to this."
  - "Before covid I would have thought we'd need to hire an extra person because it was overwhelming at times."

3. 82% think that the current numbers of visitors/tourist on Lopez are a temporary result of COVID issues.

The complexity of the issues is illustrated by the answers to Questions #3 and #4.

4. Question #3 addresses the causes of the increase of customers on Lopez. All six of the possible answers had significant responses, with the top 3 being (in order):
  - Second-home owners moved to Lopez full time to avoid urban areas
  - Remote work allows more people to live here
  - We are a drive-to destination from large cities, and people aren't flying as they usually do
5. Question #4 asks about the nature of the customers. Again, all six options were selected significantly, with the top 3 choices being (in order):
  - Friends and/or family of locals
  - Vacation rental guests (Airbnb/VRBO)
  - Locals
6. 63% responded that national groups in their industry/business are dealing with similar issues.
7. 79% have experienced problems with purchasing supplies since March 2020.

The question of the moment (arguably, nationwide) seems to be:  
*Where are all our employees?* Question #8 attempted to outline a response.

8. The primary reasons cited for having trouble finding employees were, again, complex. From most to least important, the responses were:
- They can't find housing on Lopez
  - They can't find housing that's affordable to them
  - They have chosen to do other types of work
  - Unemployment subsidies
  - They are finding better paid jobs in construction, landscaping or housekeeping
  - They are worried about exposure to COVID-19

*It should be noted that this question read "if you are having trouble finding employees, what do you think are the primary reasons?" Since 60% of the respondents skipped this question, one must assume that 60% of the businesses are not having trouble finding employees, or are not trying to find any.*