

Rural Entrepreneur Survey

TOOLS FOR ENERGIZING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Web: <http://www.ruraleship.org>

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BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

This **Rural Entrepreneur Survey** was designed to gather information from entrepreneurs at the community level. The survey can be administered in a one-on-one interview or in a larger group of entrepreneurs. The purpose of the survey is to gain a better understanding of four primary questions:

- Who are these rural entrepreneurs?
- What type of businesses do they operate?
- What future plans do they have for the business, such as entering new markets or seeking new financial capital?
- What are their attitudes toward entrepreneurship? This survey can provide useful baseline data about a community's entrepreneurs.

The data can be used to identify areas where future resource investments may be needed. For example, if entrepreneurs expect to seek professional or technical advice in the future, the community may want to identify existing service providers or invest in creating new sources of technical assistance. The survey can be tailored to meet the specific needs of a community. For example, if a community is considering the creation of a business incubator, questions could be added under the Optional section to address the entrepreneurs' interest in locating in an incubator facility or using the services provided by such a facility.

Background and Introduction:

Welcome to the *Entrepreneur Survey*. Your responses will be kept completely confidential and none of your individual information will be disclosed. We appreciate your willingness to share your story with us! Contact information will be used only if follow-up questions are necessary and to provide general demographic information for all those completing the survey.

About the Entrepreneur:

- Name of owner: _____
- Address: _____
- Phone: _____
- Fax: _____
- Email: _____
- Website (if applicable) _____
- Sex: Male [] Female []
- Marital status:
 - Single _____
 - Married _____
 - Separated _____
 - Divorced _____
- Number of children: _____
- Highest level of education completed:
 - Eighth grade _____
 - High school _____
 - College _____
 - Grad school _____
- How many total years of personal business experience do you have? _____
- Was either of your parents ever involved in owning and operating their own business?
 - Yes _____ No _____
 - If yes, identify which parent and briefly describe the business activity.
 - _____
 - _____

About the Business:

- Name of business: _____
- What year was this business started? _____
- What year did you become the owner of this business? _____
- Which best describes how you came to own this business?
 - Started the business _____
 - Purchased the business _____
 - Inherited the business _____
- How is your business organized?
 - Sole proprietorship _____
 - Partnership _____
 - Subchapter S corporation _____
 - Corporation _____

- Which best describes your primary business activity?

Service _____
 Retail (including restaurants) _____
 Finance/insurance/real estate _____
 Transportation _____
 Business and professional services _____
 Wholesale/distribution _____
 Manufacturing _____
 Construction _____
 Other _____

Please describe briefly _____

- How many years of experience in this specific business activity do you have? ____
- In an average week, how many hours do you devote to your business? ____hours
- How many employees do you have? _____ Full-time_____ Part-time _____
- How many family members are employed in your business? _____
 Full-time _____ Part-time _____
- How many family members are investors in your business? _____
- What percent of the business do you own? _____%

Future Plans for the Business:

How likely is your business to do each of the following in the next two years?

Please use the following scale in answering these questions:

1=very unlikely 2=unlikely 3=haven't considered this 4=likely 5=very likely

Circle the best response.

Add a new product or service	1 2 3 4 5
Sell to a new market	1 2 3 4 5
Research new markets	1 2 3 4 5
Expand distribution channels	1 2 3 4 5
Expand advertising and promotion	1 2 3 4 5
Invest in new equipment	1 2 3 4 5
Replace current equipment	1 2 3 4 5
Expand current facilities	1 2 3 4 5
Redesign current facilities	1 2 3 4 5
Seek additional financial capital	1 2 3 4 5
Computerize current operations	1 2 3 4 5
Upgrade computer systems	1 2 3 4 5
Redesign operating activities	1 2 3 4 5
Expand the scope of operating activities	1 2 3 4 5
Seek professional or technical advice	1 2 3 4 5
Add specialized employees	1 2 3 4 5
Invest in offsite training for employees	1 2 3 4 5

Attitudes toward Entrepreneurship:

Please use the following scale in answering these questions:
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=not sure 4=agree 5=strongly agree
Circle the best response.

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| My business is the most important activity in my life. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I will do whatever it takes to make my business a success. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I plan to eventually sell my business. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I would like to make a significant contribution to the community by developing a successful business. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I would rather own my own business than earn a higher salary working for someone else. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Owning my own business is more important than having more time to spend with my family. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I would rather own my own business than pursue another promising career. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| It is important for an entrepreneur to understand and accept risk in order to start and operate a successful business. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I would be willing to have conflict with my family in order to operate my own business. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I would mortgage my house to provide capital for my business. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I would be willing to have less security for my family in order to operate my own business. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I run my own business to continue a family tradition. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I run my own business to contribute to the welfare of my relatives. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I run my own business in order to live in a desirable location for my family. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I run my own business to increase my family's status and prestige. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I run my own business to have more flexibility in my personal and family life. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Resources for Other Entrepreneurs:

- Are you willing to mentor other entrepreneurs? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, are you willing to mentor other entrepreneurs:
One on one _____
Through an entrepreneurs' network that meets periodically _____
Through an entrepreneurs' network on the Internet _____
Other _____
Please describe. _____
- Do you think an entrepreneurial or vocational internship/apprentice program would be useful in helping people gain experience in starting their own businesses?
Yes _____ No _____
- Would you be willing to participate in such an entrepreneurial apprentice program?
Yes _____ No _____

<< Optional >>

If you were starting your business today, what type of resources (e.g., financial, mentoring, technical, marketing, etc.) would be most helpful to you? Please rank in order of importance with "A" being most important.

- A _____
- B _____
- C _____
- D _____
- E _____

List the skills and experience you have that were most critically important in starting your own business. Please rank in order of importance with "A" being most important.

- A _____
- B _____
- C _____
- D _____
- E _____

List the skills and experience that you wish you had when you started your own business. Please rank in order of importance with "A" being most important.

- A _____
- B _____
- C _____
- D _____
- E _____

Have you faced shortages of skilled employees in your area that have negatively affected your business? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what specific types of skilled employees (e.g., machinists, computer operators, financial analysts, etc.) are lacking in your area?

About the Center

The Center for Rural Entrepreneurship is a RUPRI or Rural Policy Research Institute national research and policy center with founding support from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation of Kansas City, Missouri. Our mission is to *enable every rural resident to achieve his or her full entrepreneurial potential*. This mission will be achieved by collaborating with individuals and organizations engaged in the study, practice and policy of rural entrepreneurship. The Center supports research, field work, and policy development through collaborations with national, state and community interests. For more information on the **Center for Rural Entrepreneurship** contact Taina Radenslaben at 402-323-7336 or taina@ruraleship.org.

