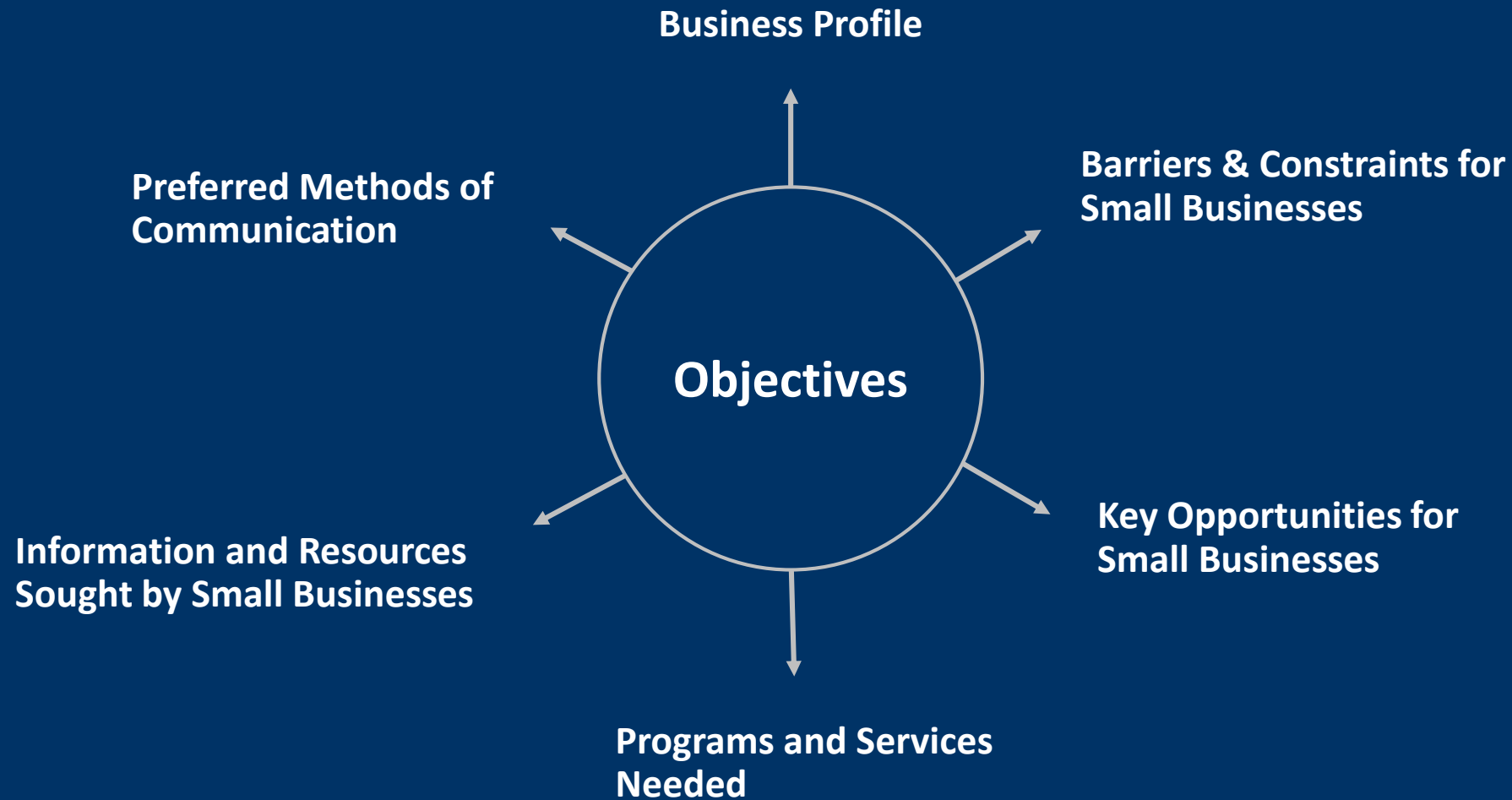


Department of State Growth

Small Business Research **2017**

Presentation to Small Business Forums





Using a quantitative approach (i.e. telephone interviewing), we surveyed 800 small businesses located across all of the 7 Enterprise Centres Tasmania regions.

To ensure the sample was representative of the number of small businesses in each of the Enterprise Centres Tasmania regions, the data was weighted.

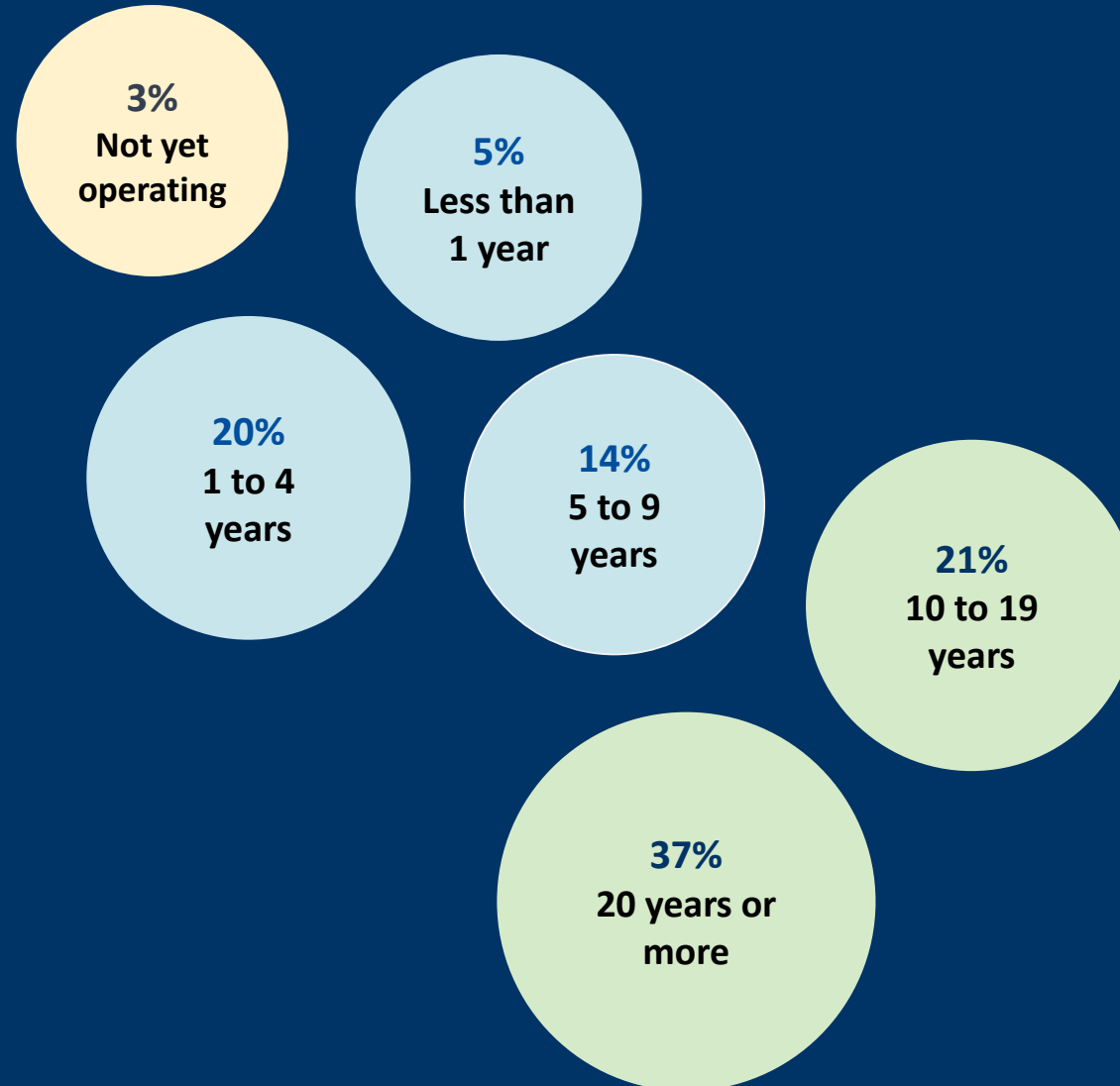
The total sample of 800 gives answers that will fall within ± 3.43 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

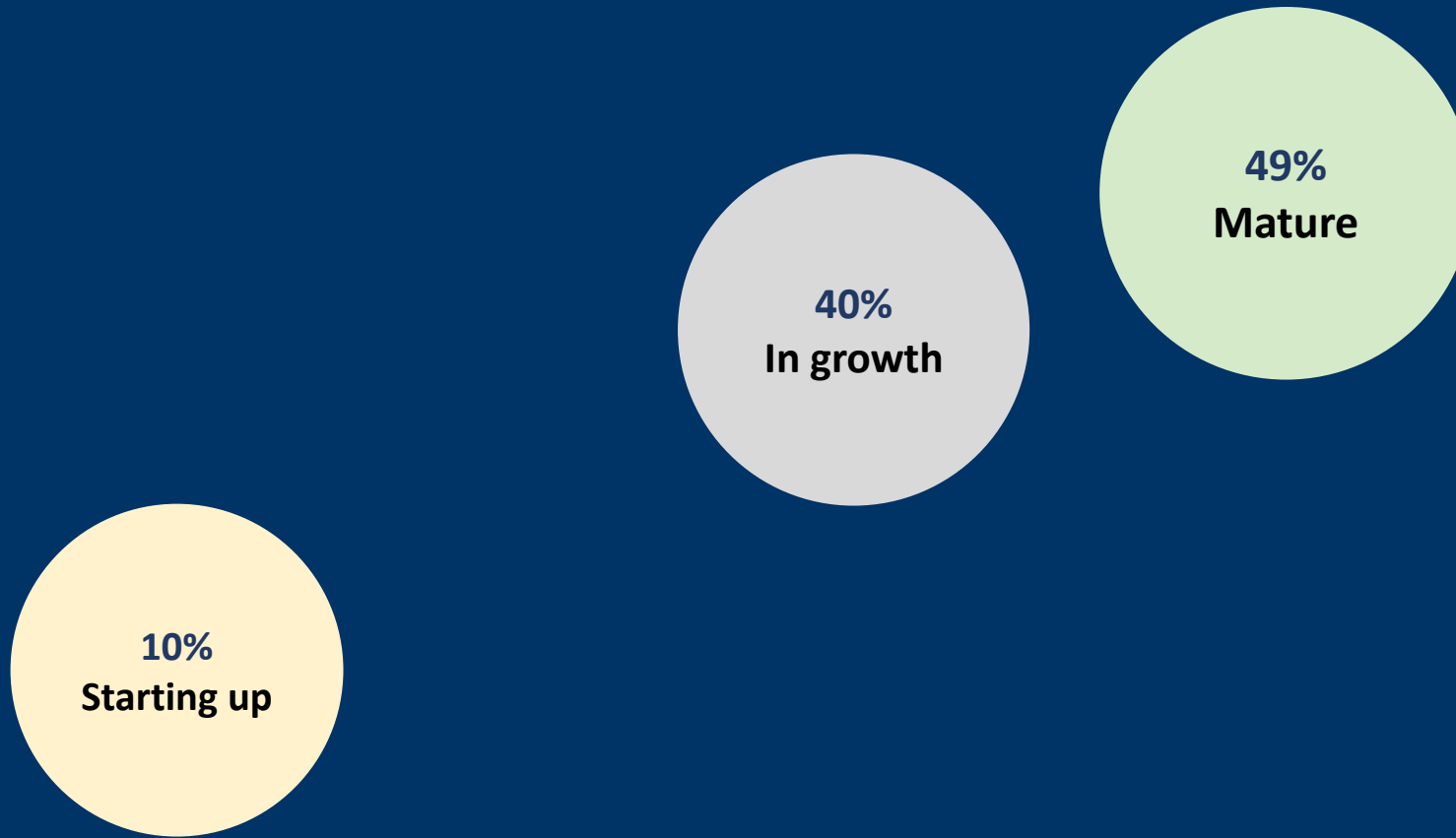
n=420 clients of the Department of State Growth's programs and services; and
n=380 non-clients drawn from EMRS' own database of small businesses.

For the purposes of this research, a small business is defined as a business employing less than 20 people.

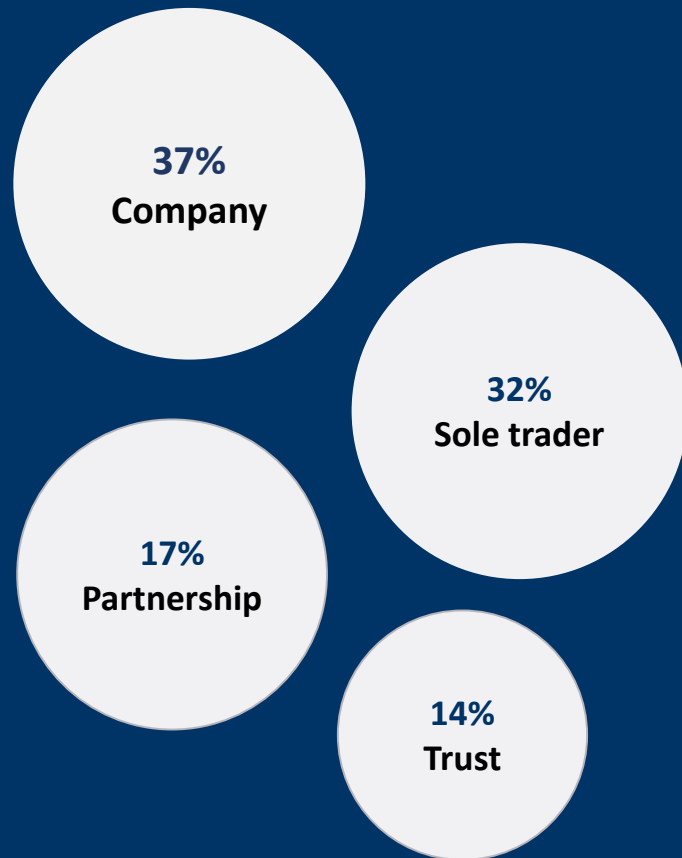


Using a qualitative approach, we facilitated one focus group with 13 small business stakeholders to gain insights into the small business sector from the perspective of those in the industry.



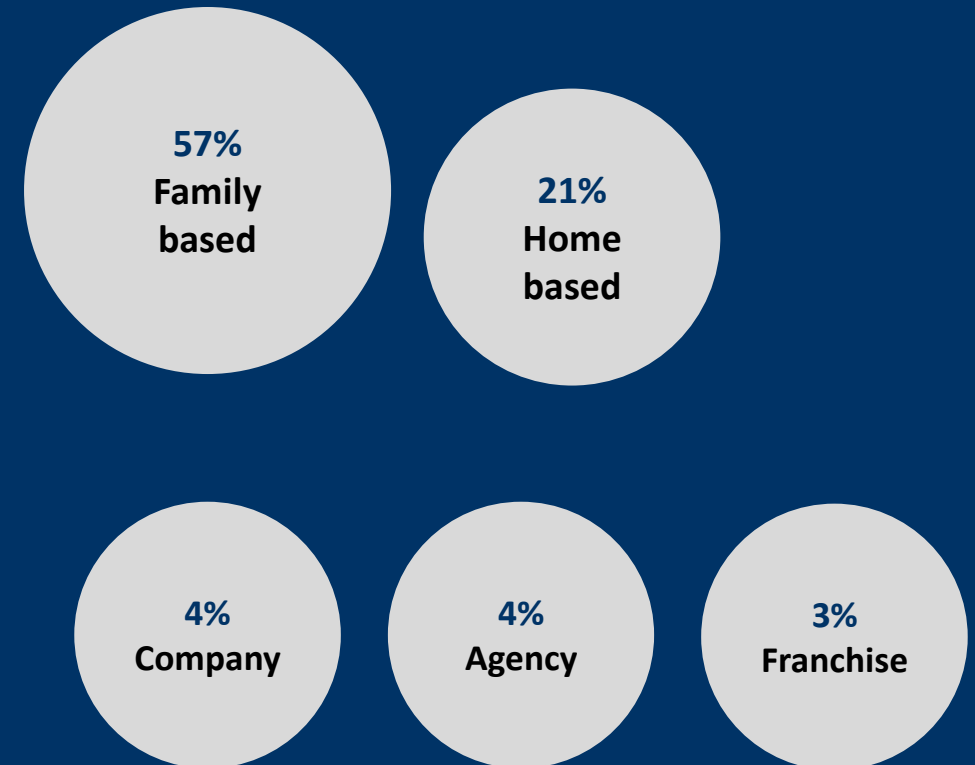


Business Structure

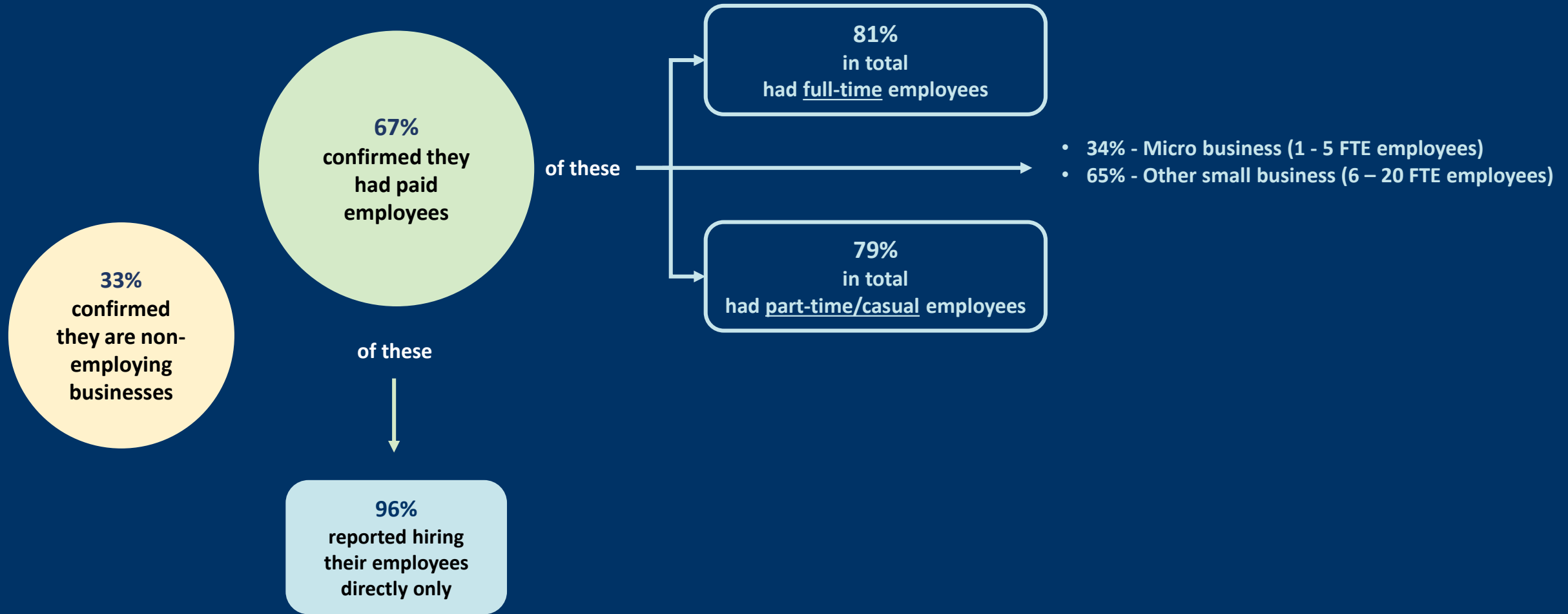


Q. I'm now going to read you a list of business structures.
Can you please tell me which best describes your business.

Business Type



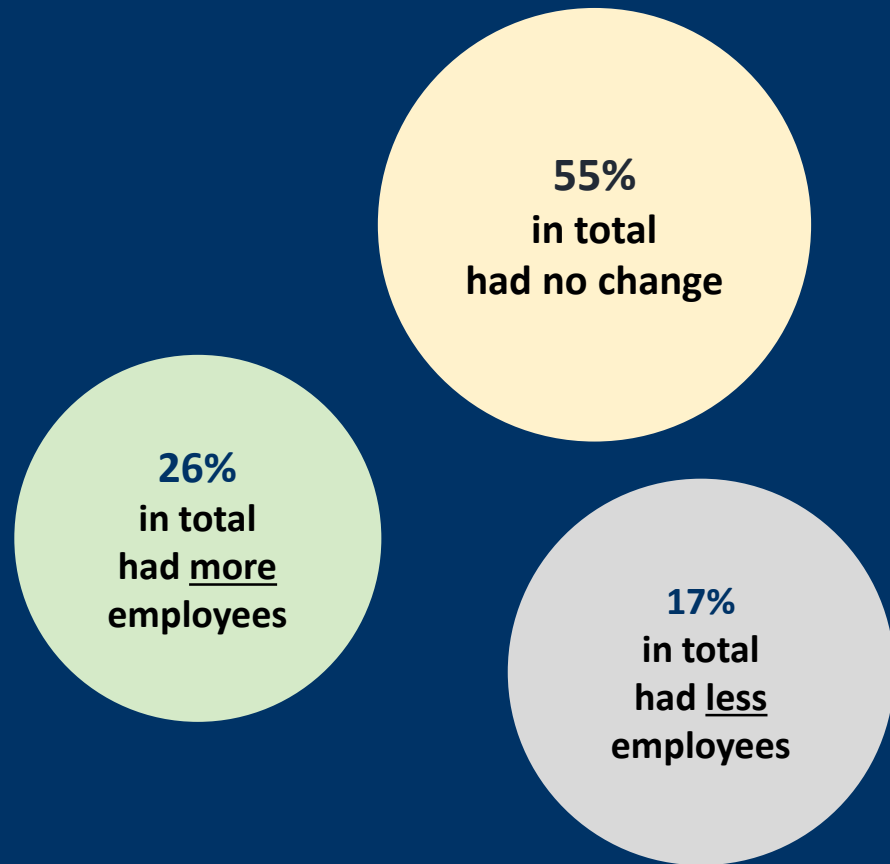
Q. I'm now going to read you a list of business types.
Can you please tell me which best describes your business.



Q. Apart from you, does your business have any paid employees?

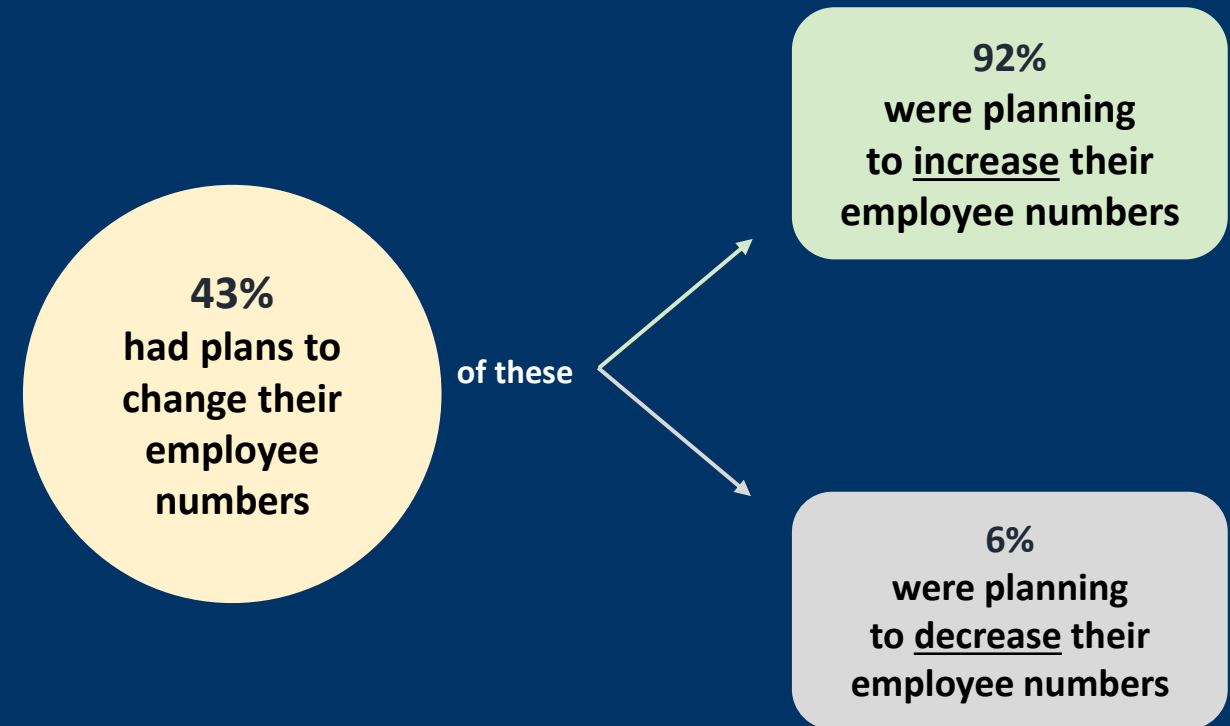
Q. Apart from you, how many people does your business employ full-time and/or part-time or casual basis?

Change in Employee Numbers Compared to 2 Years Ago



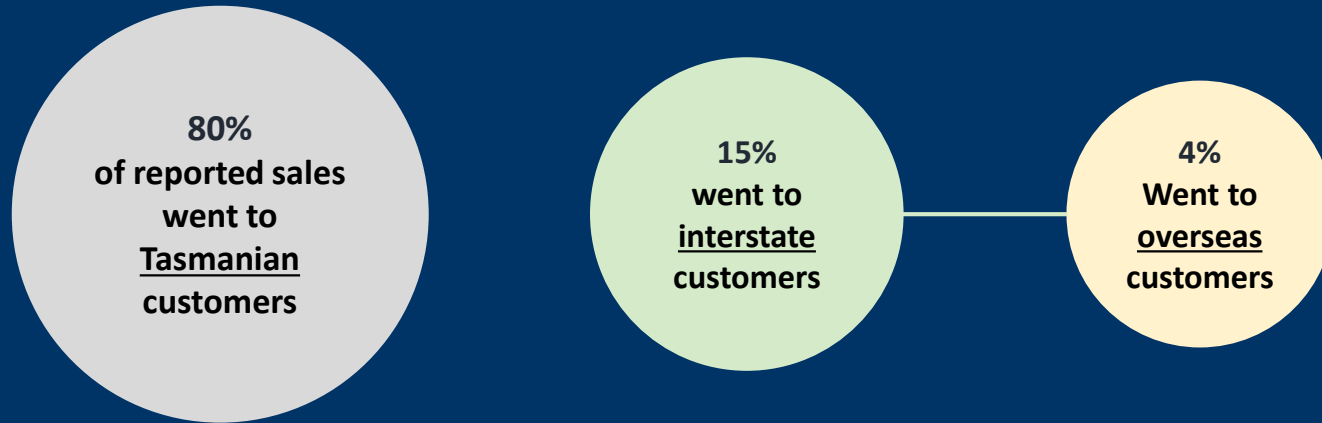
Q. Compared to 2 financial years ago, would you say that your business now has more or less employees?

Plans to Change Employee Numbers in the Next 2 Years

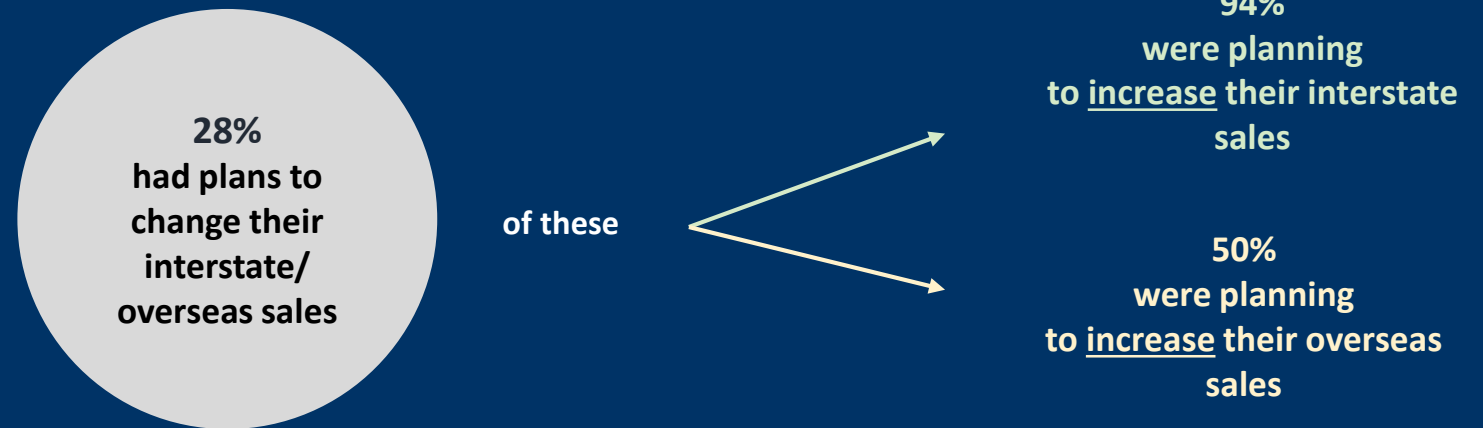


Q. In the next 2 financial years, do you have plans to change the number of your employees? Are you planning to increase/ decrease the number of employees?

Over the Last 2 Years



In the Next 2 Years

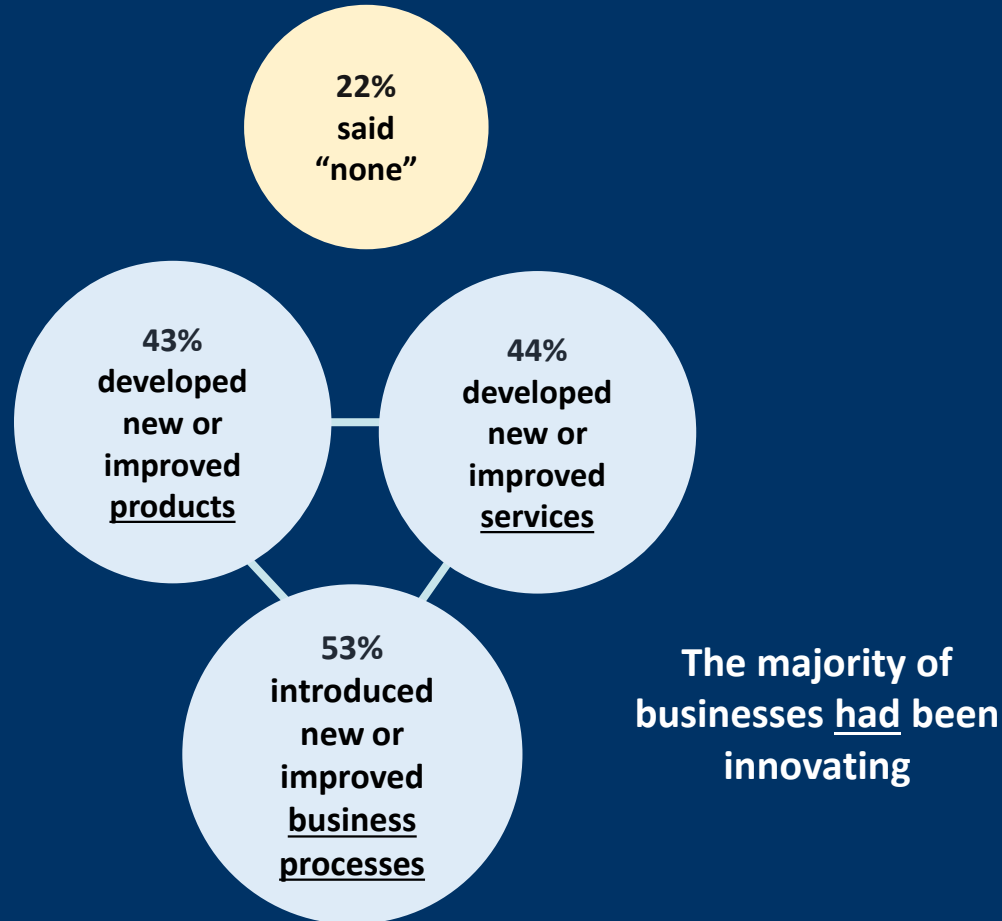


Q. Over the last 2 financial years, roughly what percentage of your sales went to Tasmanian customers/ interstate customers/ overseas customers?

Q. In the next 2 financial years, are you planning to change your volume of sales to interstate or overseas customers? Q. Are you planning to...

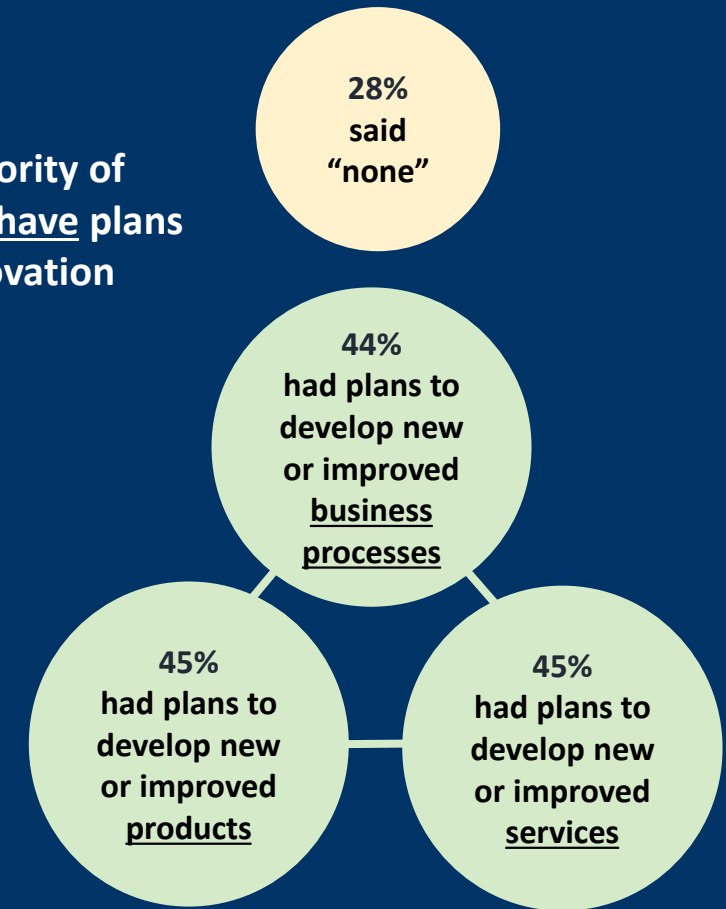
New Products, Services or Business Processes – Past & Future

In the Last 2 Years



In the Next 2 Years

The majority of businesses have plans for innovation



Q. In the last 2 financial years, which of the following have you done?

Q. Are you planning to develop any new or improved products, services or business processes in the next 2 years?

Training in the Last 2 Years



Training in the Next 2 Years



Q. Have you or any of your staff participated in training in the last 2 years?

Q. Are you or your staff planning to participate in any training in the next 2 years?

81%
felt there were
barriers, challenges
or constraints to
operating a
business
successfully

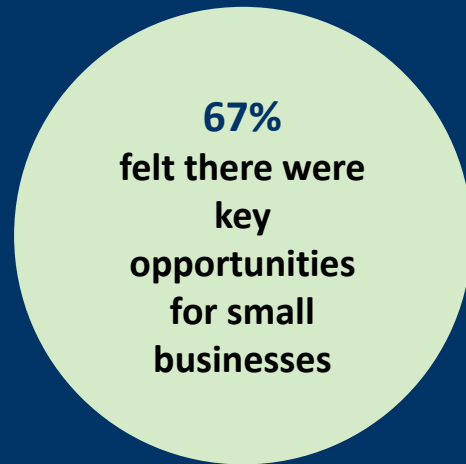
of these



The most frequently reported challenges, barriers and constraints were:

- *“Compliance with government restrictions/ regulations/ red tape/ registration” (28%)*
- *“High expense of freight/ inadequate freight equalisation/ transport costs within the state” (12%)*
- *“Distribution/ transport logistics/ limited transport infrastructure” (10%)*
- *“Poor access to markets/ limited markets for small businesses” (9%)*
- *“Inability to find skilled staff/ retain staff” (9%)*
- *“Competition/ competing with big business” (8%)*
- *“Lack of population/ less disposable income/ lack of demand” (8%)*
- *“Access to finance” (8%)*

15%
felt there
were not

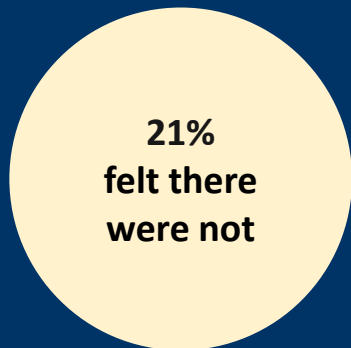


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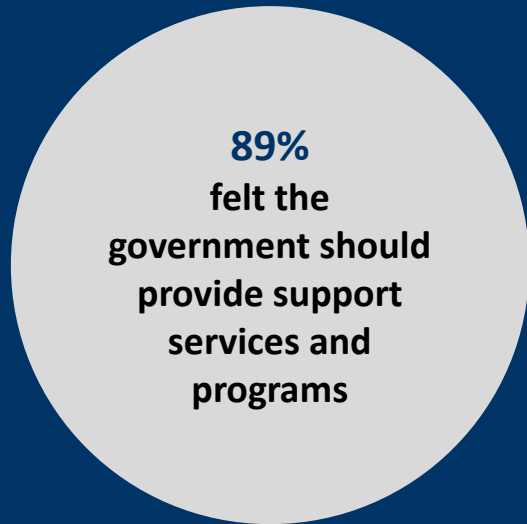
The key opportunities reported by the respondents were:

- *“Opportunities in tourism”* (25%)
- *“More government support/ funding/ reduce red tape”* (10%)
- *“Finding new niche markets/ market gaps/ unique products”* (10%)
- *“Tasmanian food and wine”* (7%)
- *“Always opportunities if you work hard/ you need confidence/ to have a go”* (7%)



Q. Do you see any key opportunities for small businesses in Tasmania to operate successfully?

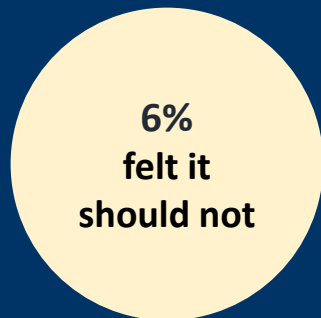
Q. What are these key opportunities?



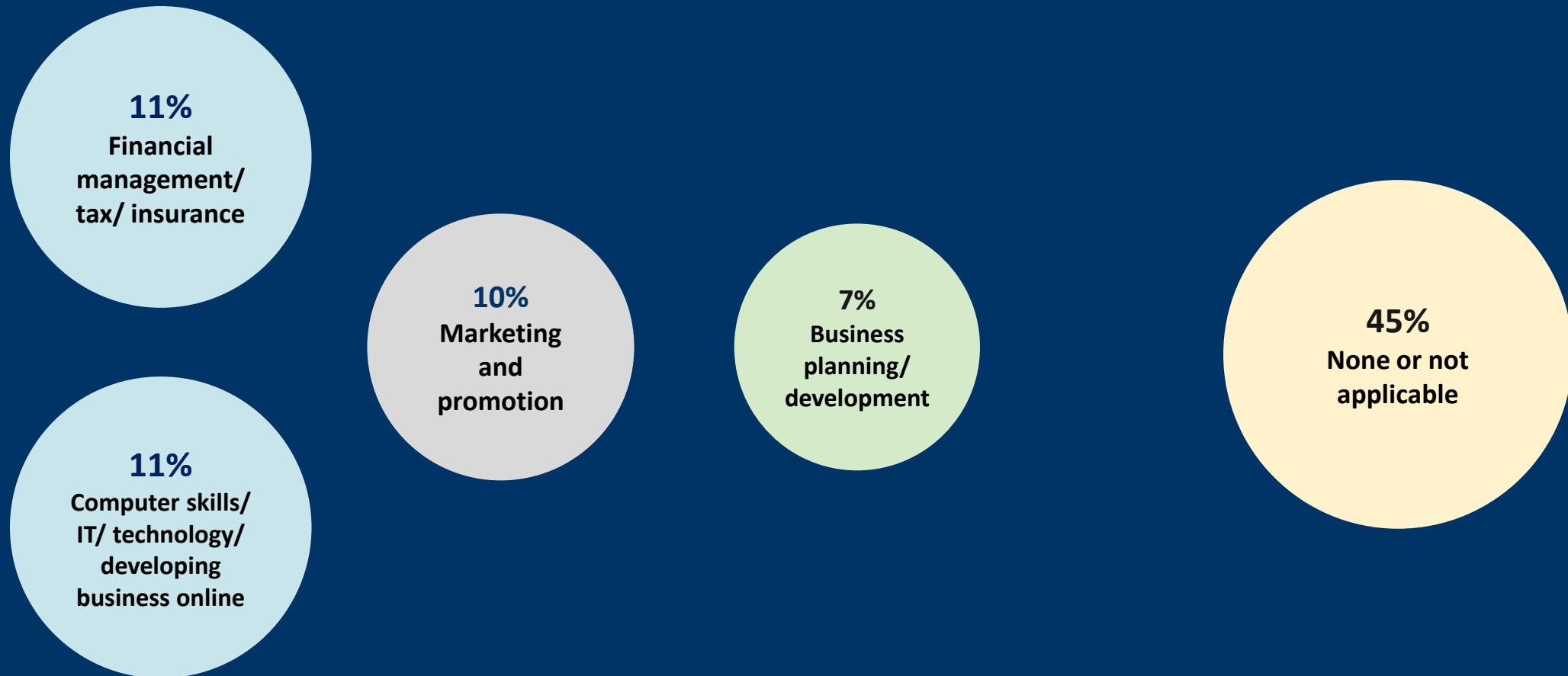
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The types of business support services and assistance programs reported most frequently were:

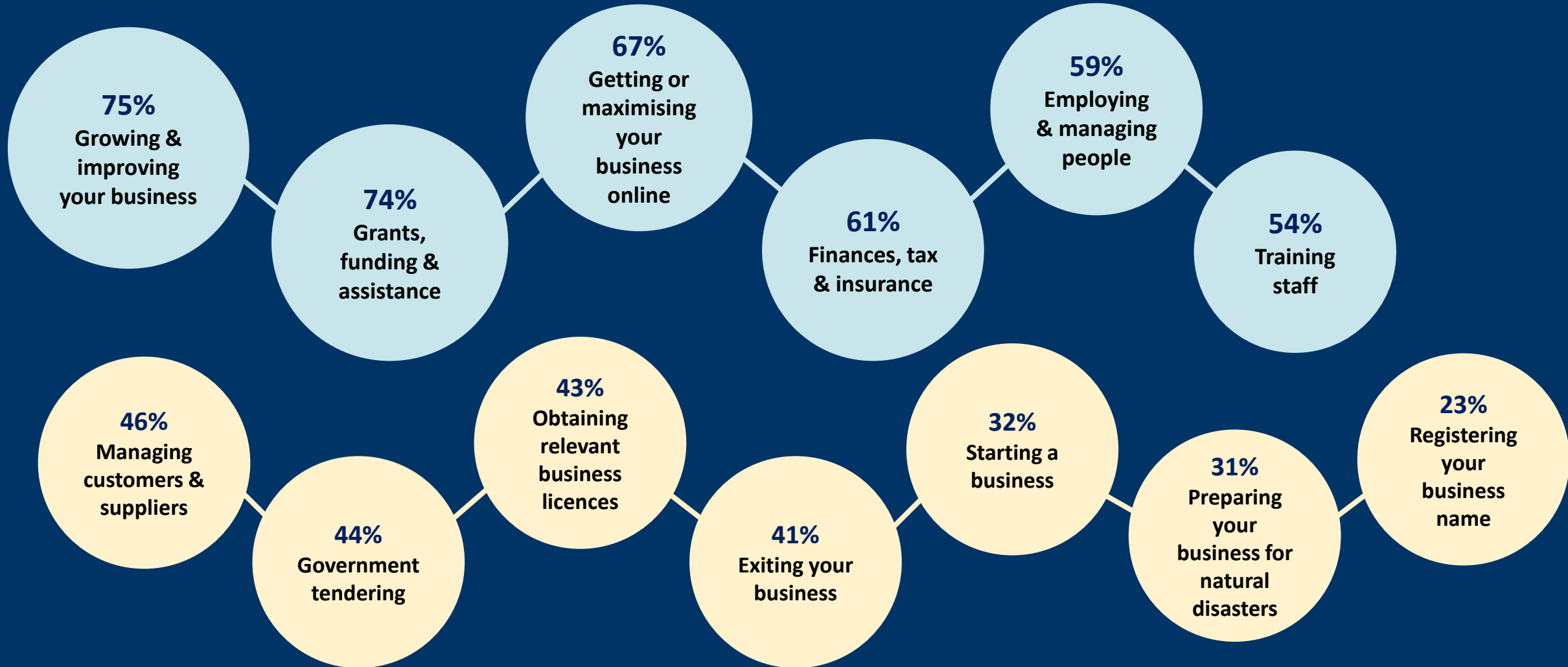
- *“Financial assistance/ funding/ grants/ loans”* (25%)
- *“Training/ up-skilling courses/ staff training/ apprenticeship schemes”* (16%)
- *“Advice/ assistance to set up a business”* (14%)
- *“Mentoring/ coaching/ support/ advice”* (12%)
- *“Financial advice/ help with taxes etc.”* (8%)



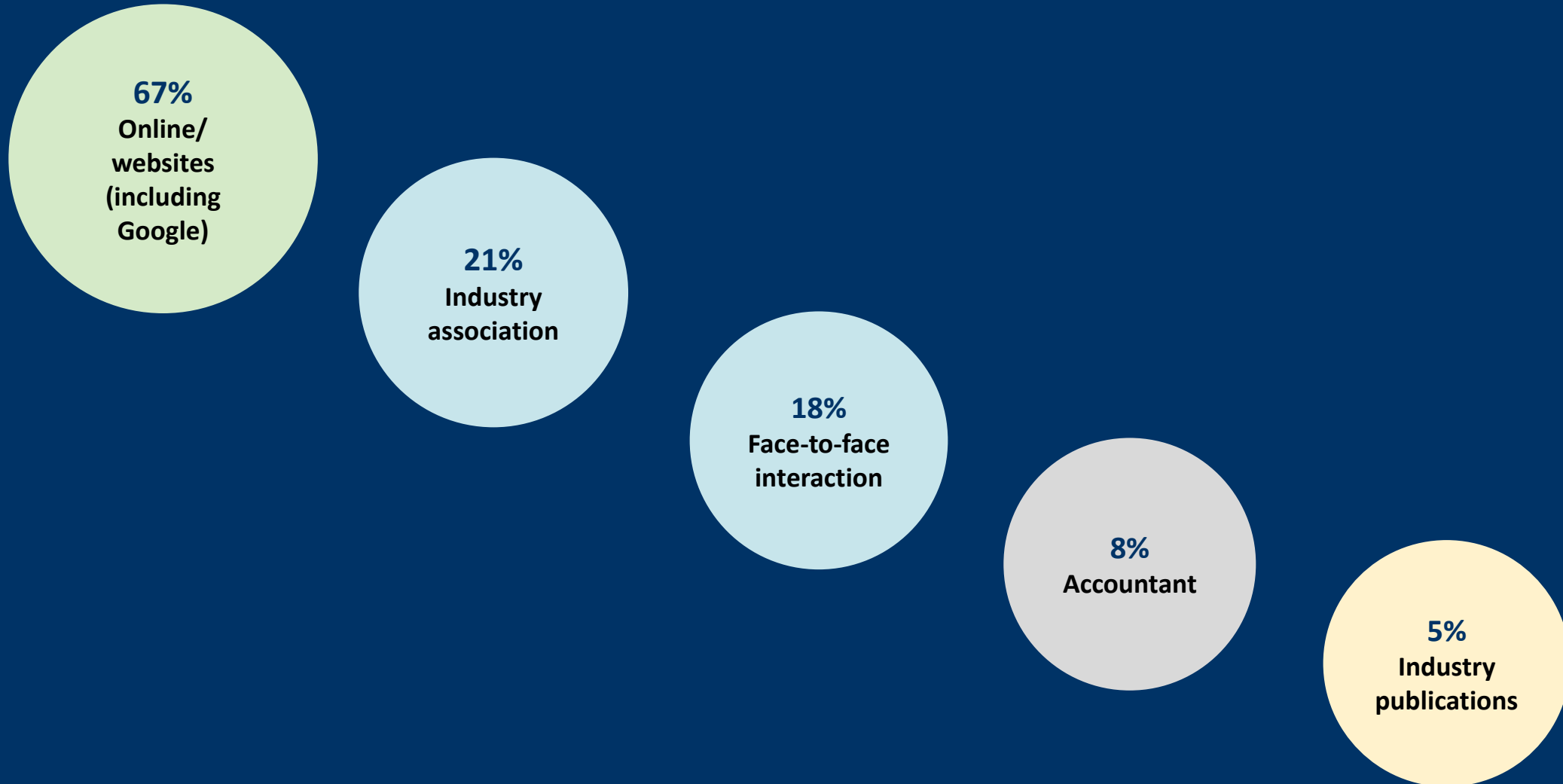
Q. Do you think the Tasmanian government should provide support services and assistance programs for small businesses in Tasmania to help them start, grow and/or overcome any barriers they face?



Information Businesses Need to Start & Grow



Q. I am now going to read you a list of some information topics often used by small businesses to help them start and grow. Please tell me which ones would assist your business.



Most Preferred Methods for Delivering Information

"Documents downloaded from a website" (62%)

"Small group training workshops" (49%)

"One-on-one training" (43%)

"Seminars, forums or conferences" (35%)

of these

Most Preferred Venues for One-on-One Training

42%
At my
business

28%
Off-site

28%
Either/
no
preference

Preferred Time Allocation for Business Information Sessions

54%
Half-day
sessions

21%
Full-day
sessions

7%
Sessions
over
several
days

of these

Preferred Time of Day for Business Information Sessions

"During work hours" (54%)

"After hours" (31%)

Of the total sample of respondents, 41% chose to provide an additional comment.

15%
More
awareness/
promoting
available
resources

11%
On the ground
contact/ talking
to small
businesses

9%
Easier access
to information

6%
Listen to
small
operators/
the little
people

15%
Financial
assistance/
funding/ grants

10%
Better
communication
with small
businesses/
feedback

9%
Reducing red
tape/ cost of
compliance

Q. Finally, do you have any additional comments on how the Department of State Growth can improve its programs, services and communications in support of the small business sector in Tasmania?