



Atlantic Broadband's Research Reveals Changing Behaviors of Small and Medium Businesses During Pandemic

More Than Half of SMBs Are Optimistic That Their Businesses Will Emerge as Strong or Stronger Than Pre-COVID-19; Less Than Eight Percent Anticipate Permanent Closure

QUINCY, Mass, July 14, 2020 – [Atlantic Broadband](#), the nation's eighth-largest cable operator, today revealed the results of research conducted by [Independence Research](#), LLC of small- and medium-sized businesses which measured the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on business sentiment and SMB's technology investment plans.

The COVID-19 outbreak has impacted nearly every business in the United States. Many have been forced to temporarily or permanently close physical operations or transition employees to work from home situations. As an internet, phone and TV provider for businesses, Atlantic Broadband has worked closely with its customers throughout the pandemic to adapt its processes and to ensure connectivity, while network upgrades helped deliver needed capacity and reliability.

Atlantic Broadband commissioned Independence Research to survey small business IT decision-makers on their current sentiment and to understand how IT investment priorities may have changed over the past three months.

Key findings of the research include:

- **Small Businesses Are Staying Positive** – Despite the many challenges faced by SMBs, more than half (56 percent) of businesses surveyed are positively navigating the crisis and believe their business will emerge as strong or stronger than before. Less than 8 percent of respondents were pessimistic or anticipating permanent closure.
- **Impact to Business Operations** – Over 18 percent of businesses surveyed said they were forced to temporarily cease operations during COVID-19.
- **Working from Home** – More than half (52 percent) of SMBs surveyed indicated that working from home is not an option for their employees. 15 percent indicated that at least some portion of their workforce will continue to permanently work from home in the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak.
- **Preparing for a Second Wave** – A majority (56 percent) of businesses feel prepared for a second pandemic wave, while only 21 percent of respondents feel unprepared.

When asked what the most important change their business will make when the U.S. economy stabilizes, priorities included budget considerations, cleanliness and health-related policy changes, an increase in remote work and virtual communications/events. Many businesses also indicated a planned transition to online and eCommerce capabilities.

“In order to offer business customers optimal services and support, it is critical that telecom and IT providers understand how profoundly the COVID-19 pandemic will impact their customers in both the short and long-term,” said John Romagnoli, Senior Director, Commercial Products, Atlantic Broadband. “While we were pleasantly surprised to see that SMBs have a cautiously optimistic outlook, they are clearly wrestling with critically important decisions including how to work remotely in the most effective manner and technologies they will require as regional economies re-open and the possibility of regional COVID-19 hotspots.”

Key findings of the IT investment research include:

- **IT Budgets Remain** – Two-thirds of surveyed businesses said they plan to keep 2020 IT spending intact. 19 percent plan to increase their IT spending and only 17 percent plan to reduce their budget.
- **Investing in Collaboration** – IT spending will overwhelmingly focus on video conferencing and collaboration technology, followed by internet upgrades and cybersecurity.
- **Customer Support is Key** – Business respondents will prioritize customer support as they move forward from COVID-19. After customer service and support, faster internet was a high priority over lower priced services, indicating that customers are willing to spend more for assurances that they will have the services they need to operate.
- **Reliability is King** – In addition to customer service, small businesses are looking for true partnership from their vendors in order to manage effectively in the aftermath of the pandemic. Where reliability has historically ranked high on SMB priorities, it will increase dramatically post-pandemic.
- **Increased Appetite for Bandwidth** – The survey findings revealed that that SMB interest in Gigabit internet speed has grown significantly, along with the importance of upstream broadband capacity.

“We are seeing SMB owners and IT leaders stepping back to try to refocus their priorities and spending as they emerge from the crisis phase of COVID-19,” said Matt Davis, Founder and Principal Analyst, Independence Research. “Many of these businesses are planning to maintain or increase their technology investments, but they will direct spending on technologies that will directly impact their success post-pandemic. More importantly, they’ll be looking for technology partners that can guarantee reliability and quality service.”

This May 2020 survey was conducted of over 500 U.S. small business IT decision-makers located in areas of Atlantic Broadband’s footprint. Experts were surveyed across professional services, healthcare, manufacturing, construction and other vertical markets. The majority of those surveyed work for organizations with fewer than 25 employees.

ABOUT ATLANTIC BROADBAND BUSINESS

Atlantic Broadband Business delivers advanced Video, Internet, Business WiFi and Phone services to small and medium businesses over a highly reliable, fiber-rich, high-capacity network. It also offers customized, scalable Metro Ethernet enterprise solutions, including dedicated fiber with symmetrical speeds up to 10 Gbps, point-point and multipoint transport, and Hosted Voice solutions. Atlantic Broadband supports its business clients with 24/7 network monitoring and technical support, professional client care, and dedicated local account executives. To learn more, visit atlanticbb.com/business.

ABOUT ATLANTIC BROADBAND

Atlantic Broadband, a subsidiary of Cogeco Communications Inc. (TSX: CCA), is the eighth-largest cable operator in the United States, based on the number of television service customers served. The company provides its residential and business customers with Internet, TV and Phone services in 11 states: Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia. Atlantic Broadband is headquartered in Quincy, Massachusetts. To learn more about Atlantic Broadband, please visit www.atlanticbb.com.

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Media Contact

Andrew Walton

(617) 786-8800 ext. 102

awalton@atlanticbb.com

atlanticBB@matternow.com