

North America Edition



Swoop State of Business Survey 2024

There is huge optimism about the future of the economy, but work to be done on getting the right help to the businesses that need it



Swoop

Introduction



Welcome to the Swoop State of Business Survey 2024.

Each year, we survey our SMB customers to find out what matters to them, how they feel about the current and future state of business in the North America and where they see the next year going.

The report highlights the following:

- › Generally more optimism than RoW results last year
- › Managing cash flow is a big challenge for business owners
- › Traditional banks are being edged out by family/friends and online lenders

Broadly, this snapshot of SMBs in North America suggests a very positive attitude, though there are still opportunities for business owners to be better informed, to access funding from non-traditional sources and take full advantage of the opportunities they are presented with.



Andrea Reynolds, Co-Founder and CEO at Swoop says:

“As a champion for small businesses in North America, I’ve witnessed firsthand the incredible resilience, innovation and unwavering optimism that fuels their growth. The results of this survey reflect how the entrepreneurial spirit that thrives in North America is a testament to the potential for growth and prosperity that small businesses bring to our communities.”



Daire Burke, Head of North America at Swoop says:

“Since landing in North America, I’ve been taken aback by the sheer volume of SMBs and the outsized impact they make across the region’s economy. From the streets of New York to the quiet towns of the Midwest, I’ve seen firsthand the passion and dedication that drives these entrepreneurs to succeed. It’s an honor to be in a position to support these businesses and help them achieve their goals. I’m proud to be a part of such a vibrant and dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem.”



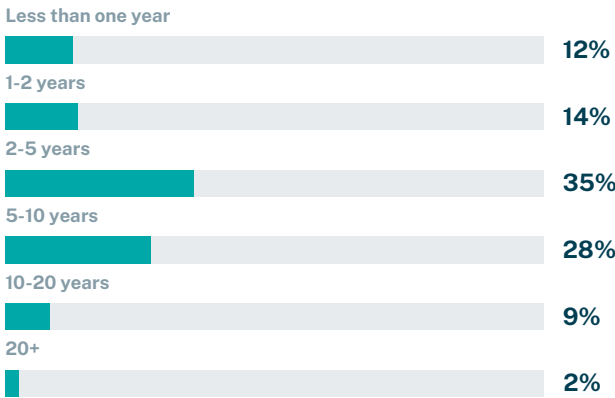
About the respondents



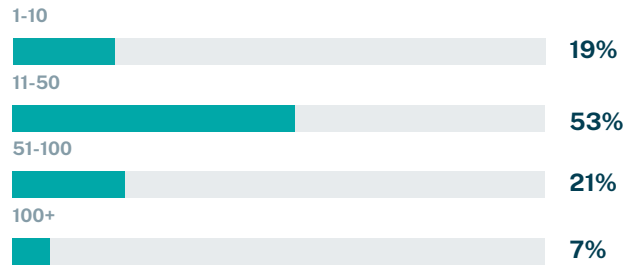
Swoop surveyed SMBs through a campaign launched on the Swoop newsletter and through our social media channels.

Breakdown of the respondents for age and size of business (by number of staff) are as follows:

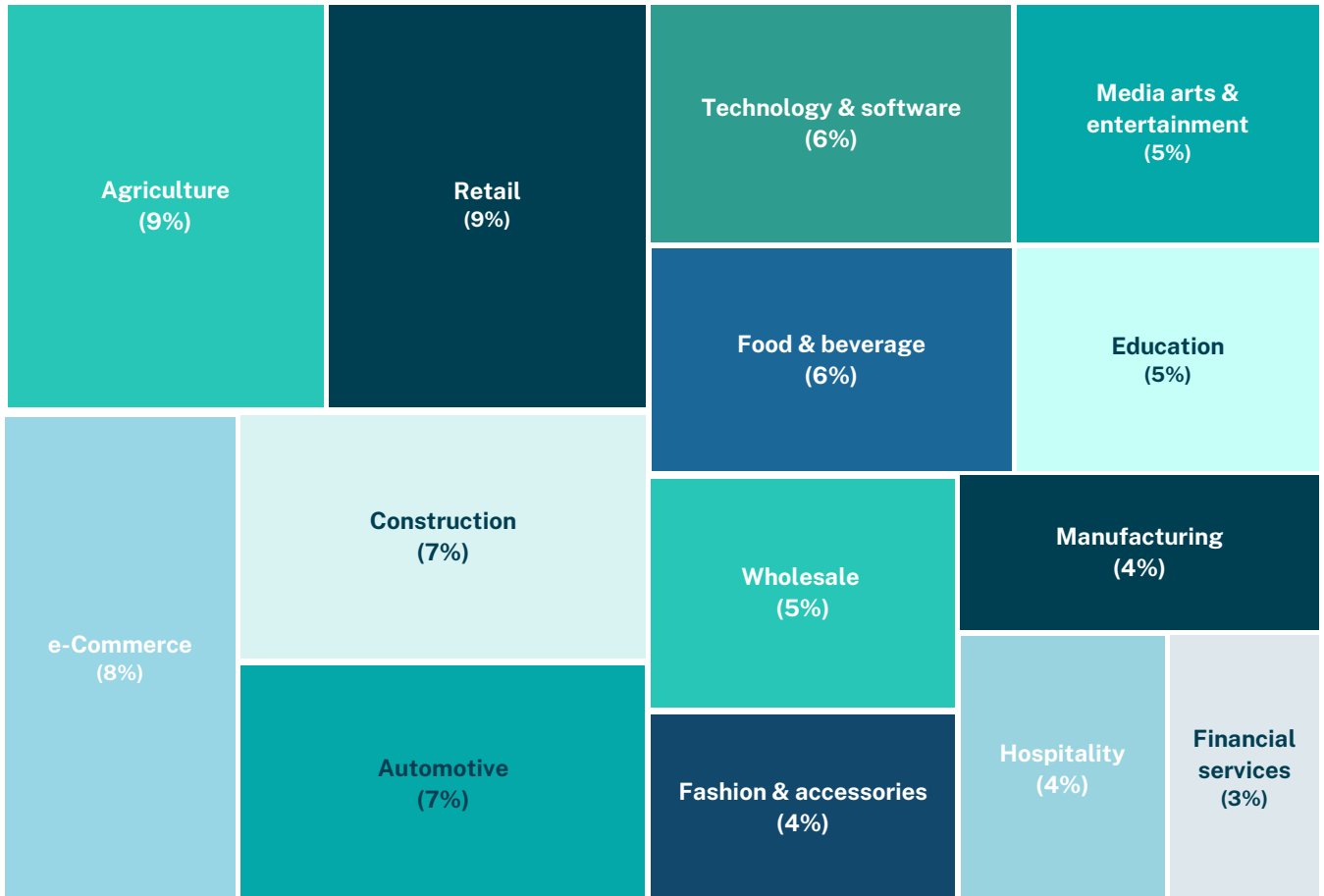
Age of business



Number of staff



Top Industries

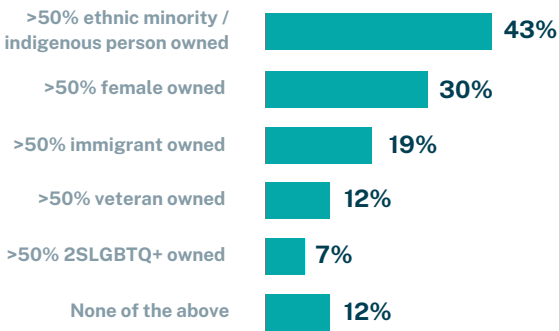


18% of respondents reflect industries such as Energy & mining, Real estate, Fitness, Healthcare, Wholesale & distribution, Social enterprise/ Non profit, etc.

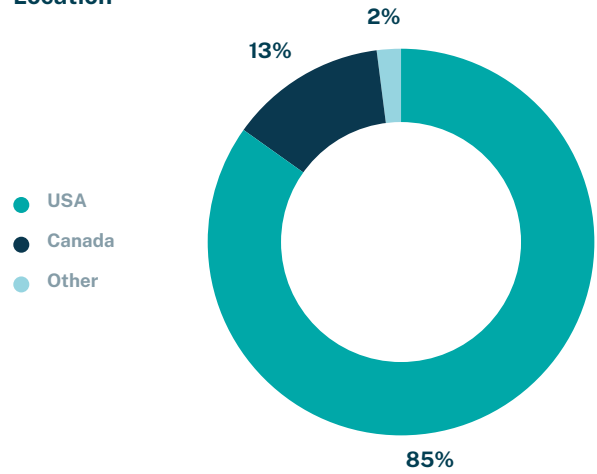
About the respondents



Ownership



Location



Daire Burke, Head of North America at Swoop says:

“We are delighted that we have captured such a broad range of North American businesses with this survey. These metrics show that we have been able to get opinions from a hugely diverse set of businesses in terms of age, size, industry and ownership.”



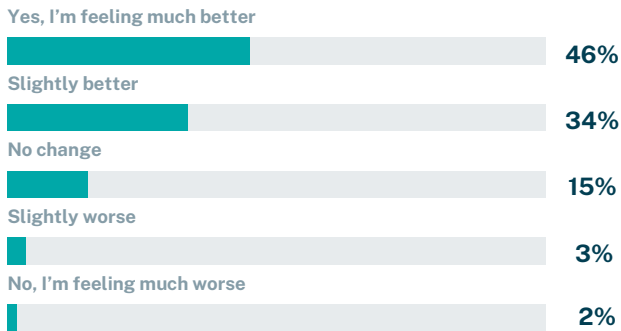
Results



Please note: other Swoop surveys carried out through our other markets have produced results that may be compared with this survey's figures; where appropriate, these results appear in brackets.

In 2024 have you been feeling more positive about your business than last year?

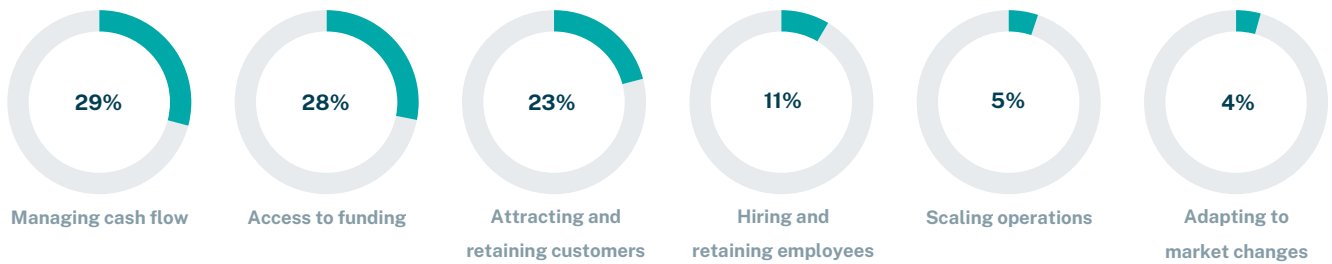
2024



2023



What is the most significant challenge your business is currently facing?





How would you describe your business' financial health?



Swoop says:

The survey results paint a mixed picture of the financial health of businesses in 2024. While a majority of respondents reported feeling either “much better” or “slightly better” about their businesses compared to the previous year, a significant portion still faces challenges related to cash flow, funding, customer acquisition and talent management.



Daire says:

“Stacked up against the rest of the world figures from last year, there is a clear bias towards optimism from this cohort.”



Andrea says:

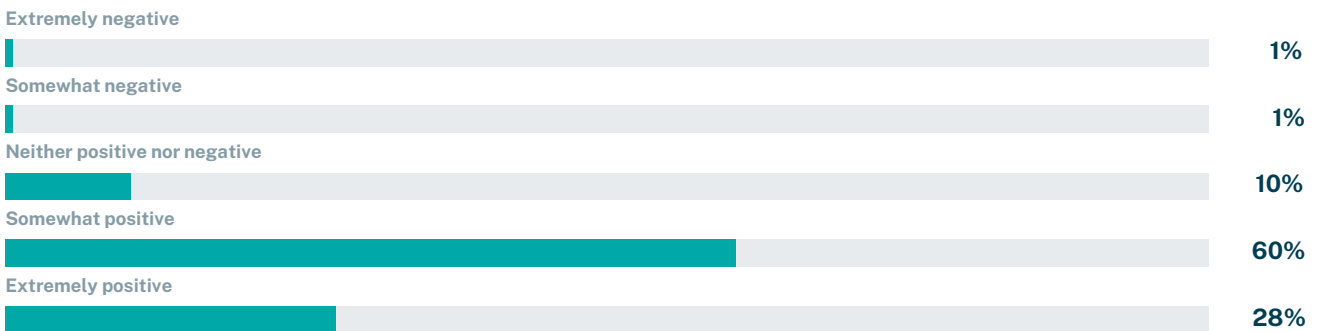
“Despite these challenges, it’s encouraging to see that such a large percentage of businesses are reporting positive financial health, indicating resilience and adaptability in the face of economic uncertainty. We know, however, that the persistent challenges related to cash flow and funding highlight the ongoing need for support and resources to help businesses navigate these obstacles and achieve sustainable growth.”

Business and market sentiment

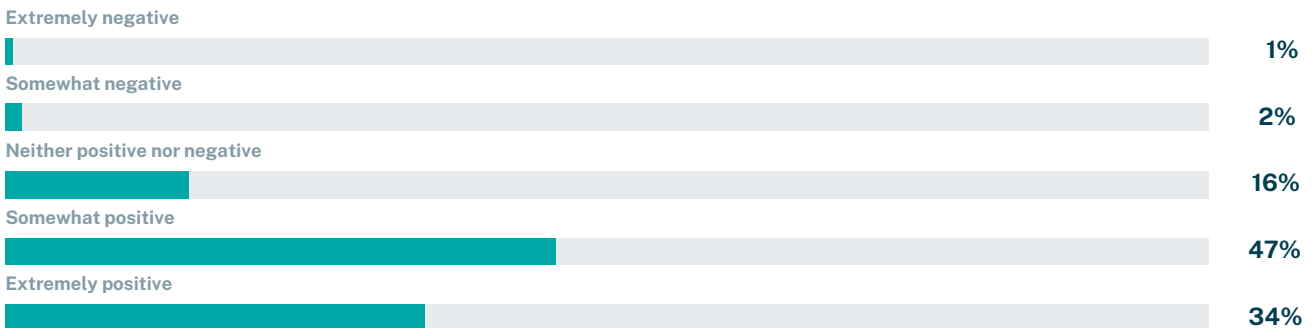


Please note: other Swoop surveys carried out through our other markets have produced results that may be compared with this survey's figures; where appropriate, these results appear in brackets.

How confident do you feel about the future of the market you operate in?



How confident are you about the economy in 2024/25?



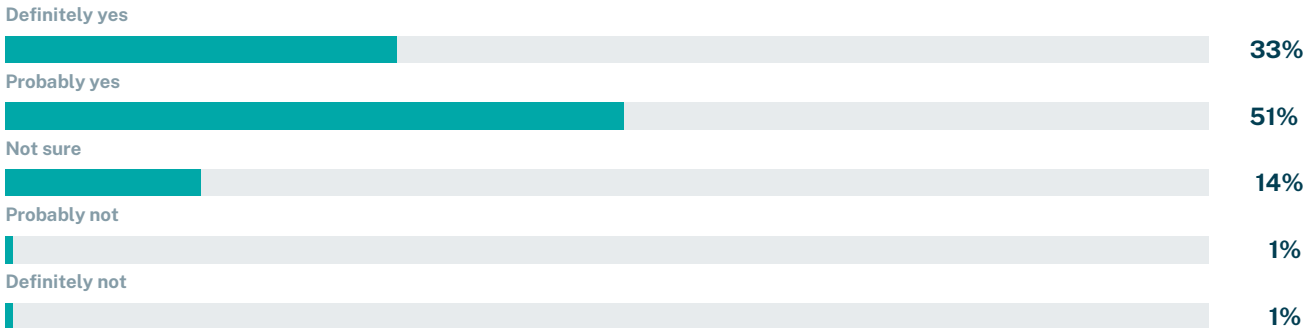
Swoop says:

The survey results reveal a generally positive outlook for both the market and the economy in 2024/2025. While a small percentage of respondents expressed negative sentiment, a large majority expressed either somewhat or extremely positive confidence in both areas. This suggests a prevailing optimism and belief in the potential for growth and success in the coming year.

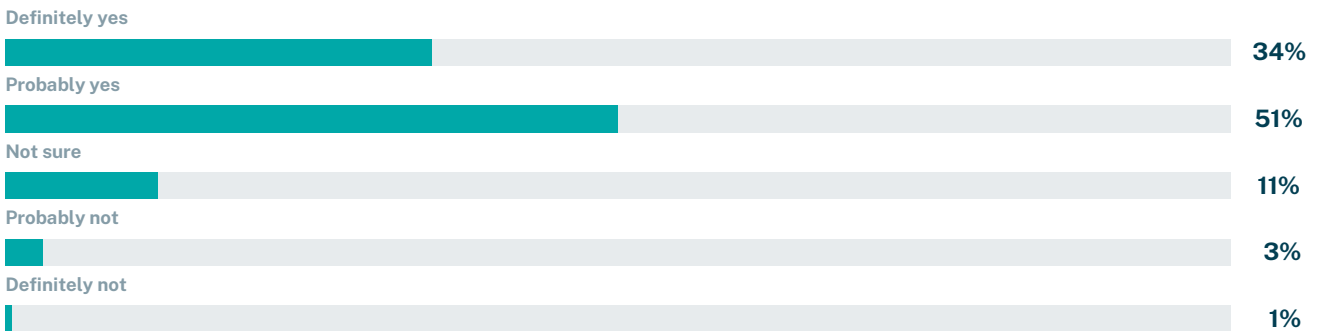
Business and market sentiment



Are you expecting revenue to increase over the next 12 months?



Do you feel you're well equipped to take advantage of business growth opportunities over the next 12 months?



Swoop says:

The survey data indicates a positive outlook for business growth and investment in the coming year. A significant majority of respondents anticipate an increase in revenue over the next 12 months, demonstrating confidence in their ability to capitalize on market opportunities. Furthermore, the high percentage of respondents planning to invest in R&D suggests a focus on innovation and long-term growth. The positive sentiment regarding future business opportunities aligns with the optimistic outlook on the market and economy expressed in previous responses.



Daire says:

“The survey results paint a picture of a business landscape poised for growth and innovation. The strong belief in increased revenue and the commitment to R&D investment highlight the resilience and adaptability of businesses in the face of ongoing challenges. While there is always uncertainty, the prevailing optimism suggests that businesses are well-positioned to capitalize on emerging opportunities and drive economic growth in the coming year.”

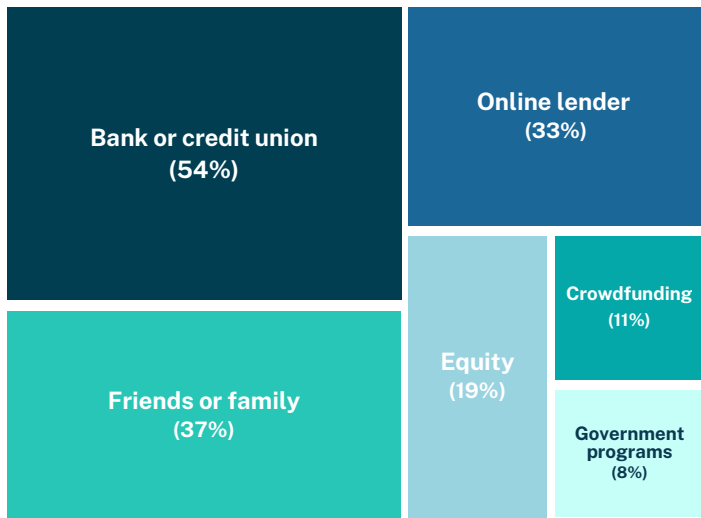
Your funding experience



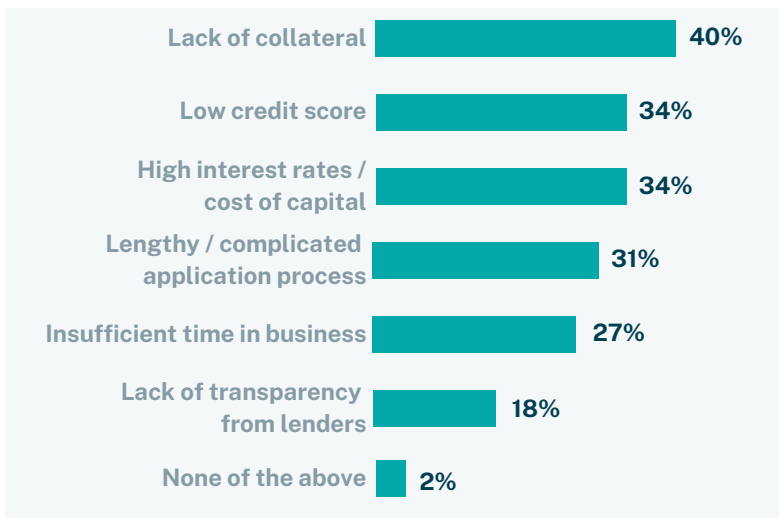
Have you applied for external funding in the last 12 months?



If yes, where did you source funding?



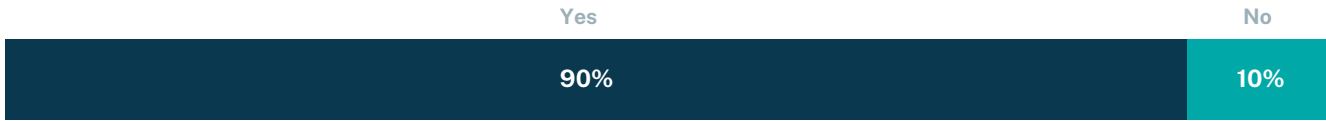
What challenges have you faced in securing business funding?



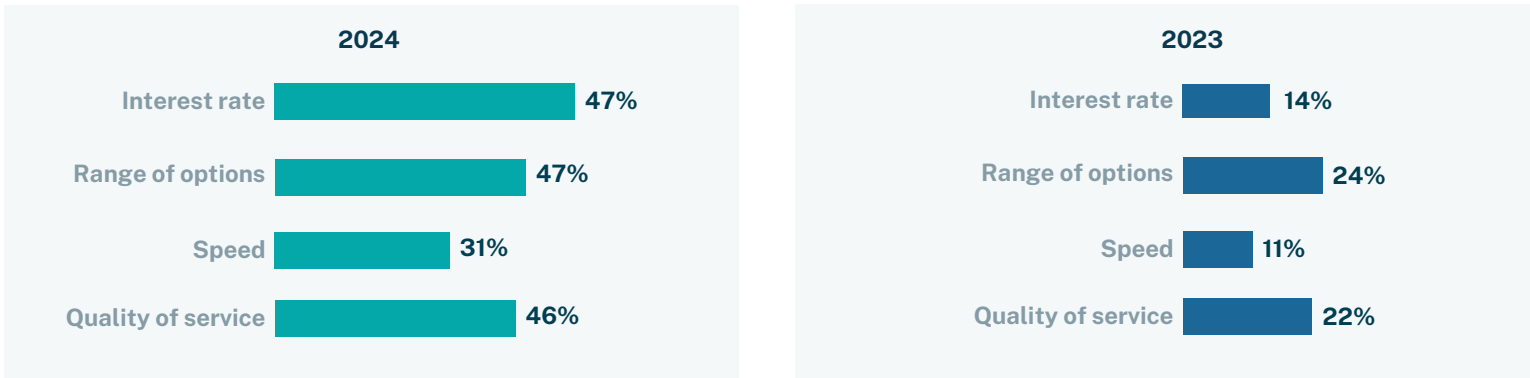
Your funding experience



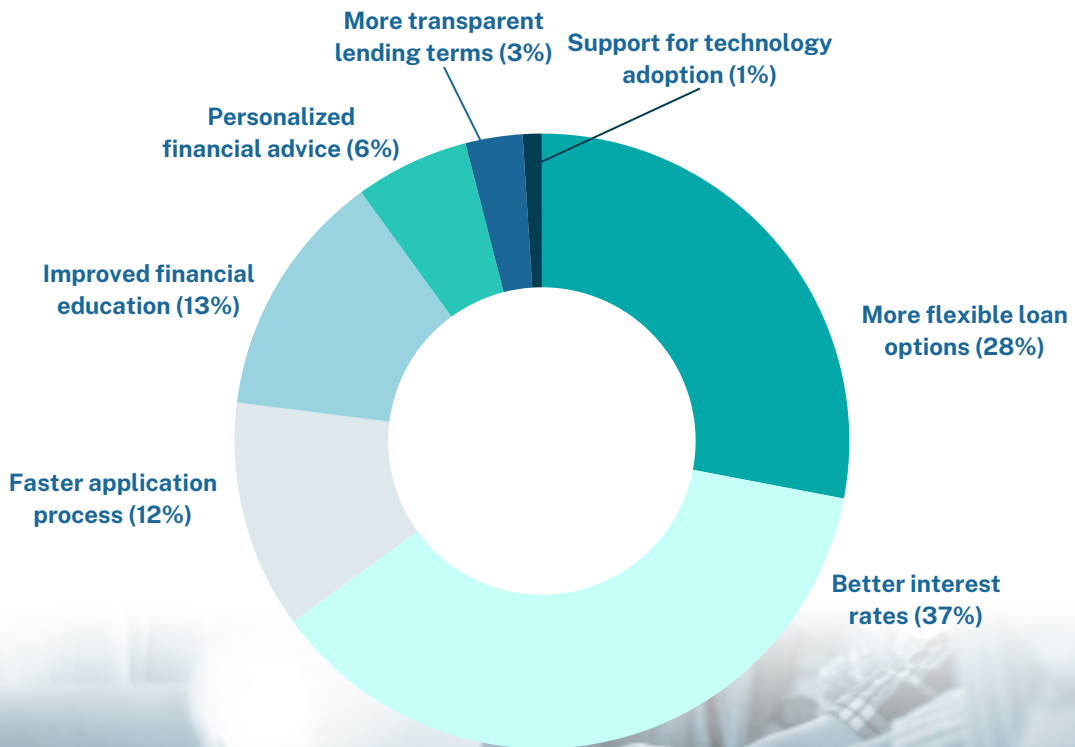
Will you apply for external funding in the next 12 months?



When making funding decisions, what are the key factors to consider?



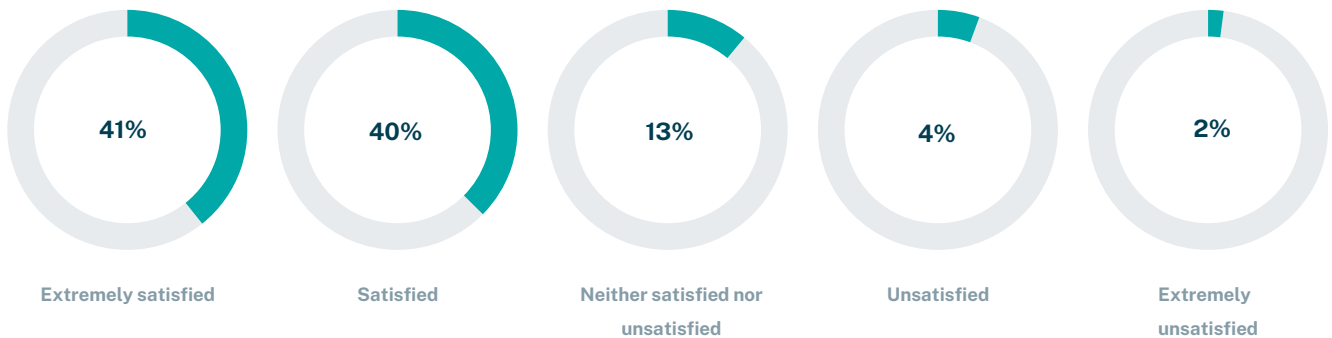
In what ways could financial institutions better support your business' growth and sustainability



Your funding experience



How satisfied are you with the funding options currently available to your business?



Swoop says:

The survey data reveals a strong demand for external funding among businesses, with a significant majority having applied for funding within the past year. While traditional sources like banks and credit unions remain popular, there is a growing reliance on online lenders and alternative funding options. Businesses continue to face challenges in securing funding, however, with challenges that include a lack of collateral, low credit scores and high interest rates. These findings highlight the need for innovative and accessible funding solutions that address the specific needs of businesses.

When evaluating funding options, businesses prioritize a combination of factors. Interest rates remain a key consideration, but other factors such as the range of options available, speed of the application process, certainty of funding and the quality of service provided by lenders also play important roles. This suggests that businesses are seeking funding solutions that not only offer competitive terms but also provide a positive and supportive experience.



Daire says:

“Swoop provides customers with resources they need to make the best decisions for their businesses. We are continuously reviewing the products we offer to ensure that where there’s a problem, Swoop will have a solution.”

One big factor for business owners is time, as the need for funding is often unexpected or has to be in place before an immovable deadline. Swoop can speed up some the process and we are pushing for open banking to become more widespread in North America as we have seen the positive impact this has had in other territories.

Business owners who don’t have a financial background often don’t know what help is out there for them. At Swoop, we know our success is built on being able to find the right deal for customers and earning their trust to support them beyond the scope of their original need.”



Entrepreneurs share their triumphs and challenges



The Swoop State of Business Survey 2024 reveals a mix of challenges and triumphs faced by business owners. Many respondents, such as one who sells gasoline, highlighted the difficulty of securing funding despite a strong track record. This sentiment is echoed by others who point to limitations based on credit score or business size.

On a more positive note, the survey also showcases the resilience and resourcefulness of entrepreneurs. Comments such as “determined to keep pushing” and “starting a small scaled business with limited funds” demonstrate a strong will to succeed. Additionally, positive experiences with Swoop suggest there are solutions that can make the funding process smoother.

Building a supportive ecosystem for businesses

The comments offer valuable insights for building a more supportive ecosystem for businesses. Here are some key takeaways:

- **Improved access to funding:** Several comments highlight the need for more flexible loan options, lower interest rates and programs designed for businesses with less-than-ideal credit.
- **Financial education:** Entrepreneurs expressed a desire for better financial education resources to help them understand different funding options and navigate the application process.
- **Transparency and communication:** Clearer communication from lenders regarding loan terms and expectations is crucial for building trust. Additionally, some entrepreneurs mentioned receiving vague feedback from investors. More specific guidance on how to improve proposals would be beneficial.

By addressing these concerns, financial institutions and support organizations can empower entrepreneurs to access the resources they need to thrive.



Daire says:

“The entrepreneurial dream is alive and well across the whole continent. Swoop is determined to use our voice to keep the pressure on lenders to make their products more available and useful to the customers we serve.”



Andrea says:

“At Swoop we have always put customer empowerment at the forefront of our business. We want Swoop customers to be informed and educated about their choices so that they make the best decisions for themselves. Transparency is key to this and I want to make sure that we remove complexity and confusion.”



Final remarks



The Swoop State of Business Survey 2024 data provides valuable insights into the current state of business sentiment, funding trends and challenges faced by businesses in North America. Key findings include a positive outlook for the market and economy, a strong demand for external funding and a focus on data-driven decision-making. Businesses are prioritizing factors such as interest rates, range of options, speed and quality of service when evaluating funding options. While challenges related to funding access and affordability persist, the overall sentiment remains optimistic, suggesting a resilient and adaptable business landscape.

Based on these findings, businesses are encouraged to proactively explore funding options and develop strong relationships with those who will enable them to access funding. Building a solid financial foundation and maintaining a positive credit history can significantly improve access to funding. Additionally, businesses

should consider diversifying their funding sources and exploring alternative financing options. For Swoop, the survey highlights the need to be proactive in offering more flexible loan options, competitive interest rates, faster application processes and improved financial education and support. By addressing these needs, Swoop can better serve the evolving needs of businesses and contribute to a more supportive and inclusive financial ecosystem.



About Swoop

Swoop helps SMBs take control of their finances. While 68 percent of SMBs regularly cite access to finance as one of the main barriers to growth, Swoop gives businesses access to funding across grants, borrowing and equity.

Swoop makes funding quick and simple, using AI technology to analyse every opportunity available, matching SMBs with relevant funding and savings solutions in a matter of seconds.

We work with over 1,000 funding providers from mainstream banks to alternative lenders, venture capital funds, SBA, angel investors and grant agencies.

Swoop also empowers businesses to identify savings on business banking, foreign exchange, insurance and more — helping them switch seamlessly

For more information or to join the thousands of businesses elevating their finances, visit www.swoopfunding.com/us

