

# MANY ARE TAKING THE PLUNGE FROM CORPORATE WORLD AND STARTING THEIR OWN SMALL BUSINESS

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Technology Investment Before They Get Started*

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That Of Choosing A Business Partner, 88% Agree That  
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More Efficient, Deliver Optimum Customer Service And Close  
More Sales”.*



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## **MANY ARE TAKING THE PLUNGE FROM CORPORATE WORLD AND STARTING THEIR OWN SMALL BUSINESS**

***But Small Business Owners Caution New Prospects: Plan Your Technology Investment Before They Get Started***

***Many Would Equate Choosing Their Technology Investment To That Of Choosing A Business Partner, 88% Agree That "Technology Is Like A Silent Partner That Helps My Business Be More Efficient, Deliver Optimum Customer Service And Close More Sales"***

**Toronto, ON** – According to a new Ipsos Reid survey, conducted on behalf of Microsoft Canada, many Canadians are making a lifestyle decision and are choosing to leave the corporate world and take the plunge and start up their own small business.

In fact, strong majorities of today's small business owners agree that "more women, seniors and corporate executives are starting up their own small business than ever before" (92%, 35% strongly agree) and, from what they've experienced, most agree that "many people today are making a lifestyle decision to leave the corporate world and start their own small business" (82%, 25% strongly agree).

According to small business owners, the most common reasons for deciding to leave the corporate world and start a small business are "to achieve a better work/life balance" and a "sense of freedom/no more boss" (72%). Other reasons for taking the plunge include "to be able to work at home more often to raise family" (47%), "earn a living following my passion" (46%), and some have "developed a new idea" (34%).



But, small business owners do offer some words of wary for those contemplating taking the plunge into the small business world, namely: 88% agree that someone starting their small business should “have the right technology in place before they begin work”.

Most small business owners agree that it’s important for prospective small business owners to plan their technology investment before they get started because it helps them achieve a competitive advantage –particularly when it comes to “access to relevant and timely business information” (75%), “promoting the business” (73%) and “helping to win new customers” (71%).

Many would equate choosing their technology investment to that of choosing a business partner, 88% agree that “technology is like a silent partner that helps my business be more efficient, deliver optimum customer service and close more sales”.

However, while most agree that technology is a crucial part of their business, many admit their business situation has a long way to go in terms of their level of technology:

- 46% would describe it as “Getting Their Feet Wet” – meaning they only use computers for running software such as word processing and spreadsheet programs and connecting to the Internet;
- 32% would describe it as “Swimming Along” – meaning a mix of desktops and laptops that work on a shared server, with the ability to use the Internet for research and for marketing as well as word processing, spreadsheet and presentation software;
- 23% would describe it as “Taking the Plunge” – meaning an integrated mix of desktops, laptops and mobile devices and server software that allow employees to share file, use the Internet, produce sophisticated client deliverables and manage customer relationships.



Small business owners aren't afraid to take care of their work in non-traditional work settings either. Fully six in ten (57%) have responded to a business email or call "sitting in traffic" (57%), while smaller proportions have done so in the "grocery store" (40%), and "while taking family to extracurricular activities" and "at the cottage/vacation home" (31%).

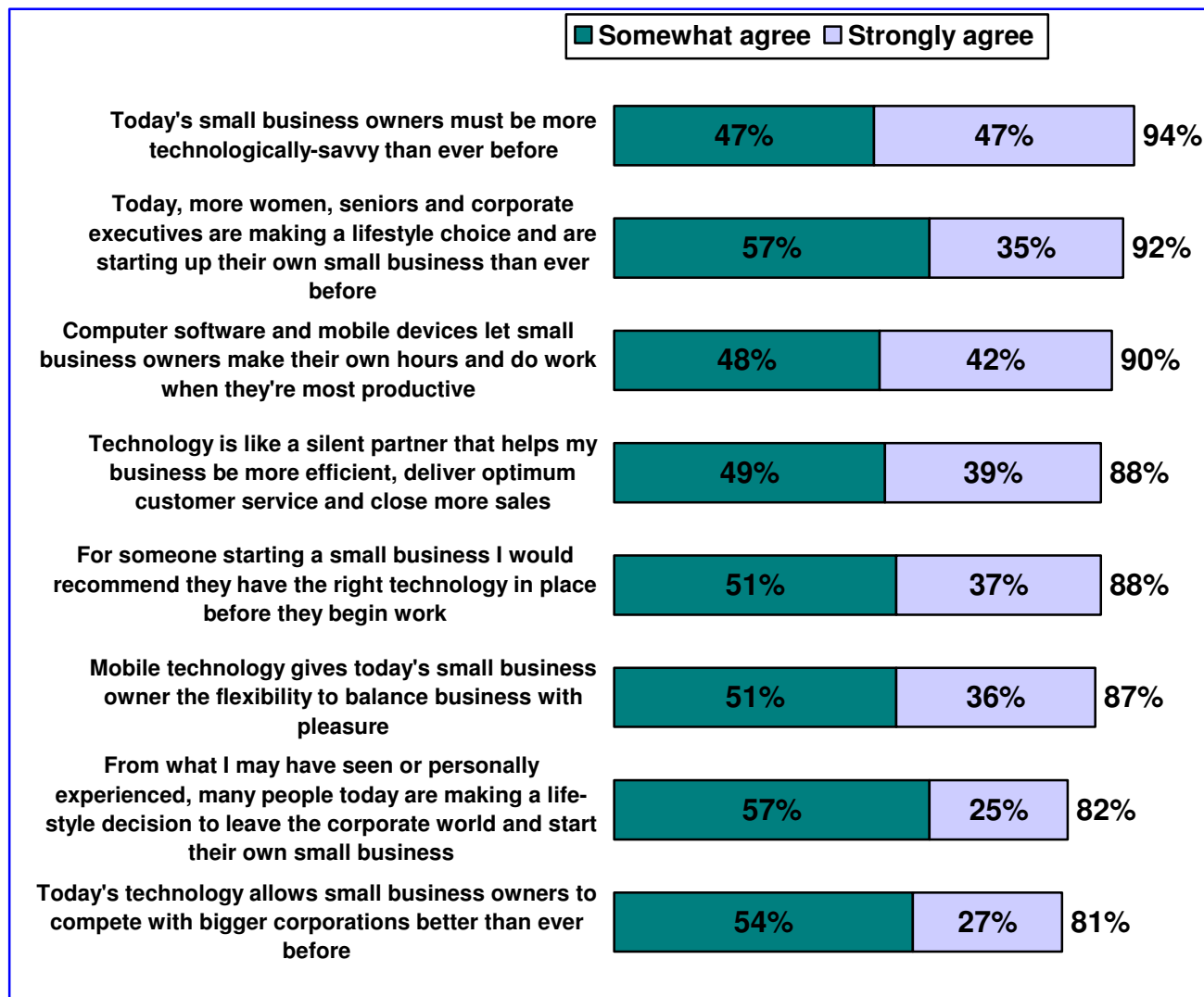
*These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted from September 21<sup>st</sup> to September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2006 via a regionally representative online Canadian sample of 1054 small business owners (for this study, small business was defined as 15 or fewer employees). For this sample, results can be considered accurate 95% of the time with a 3.1% margin of error, of what it would have been had this entire population been surveyed.*



## Technology And Today's Small Business...

### Technology And Small Business

Of Small Business Owners



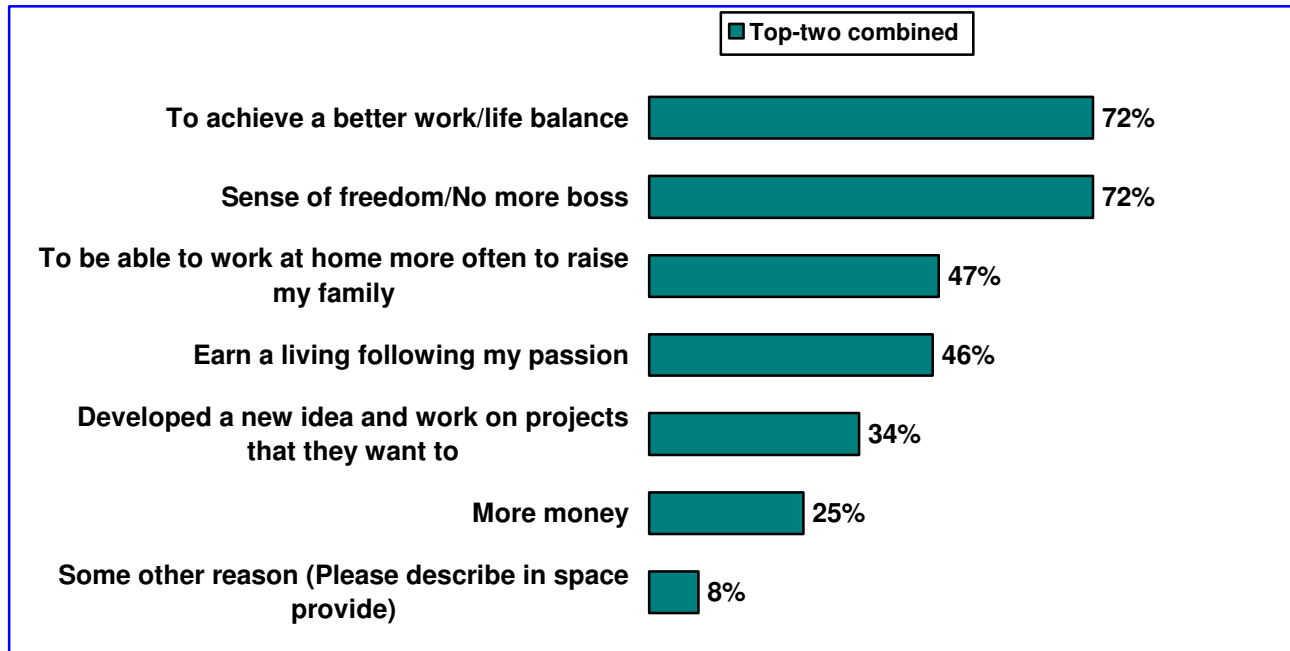
Thinking about what it is like to be a small business owner today, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements. N=1054

	<b>Business owners most likely to agree with statement</b>
<b>Today's small business owners must be more technologically-savvy than ever before</b>	Those in Atlantic Canada (98%) and Quebec (97%) and those age 55+ (97%)
<b>Today, more women, seniors and corporate executives are making a lifestyle choice and are starting up their own small business than ever before</b>	Women (95% vs. 88% among men), those age 55+ (95%), and those with no kids (93%).
<b>Computer software and mobile devices let small business owners make their own hours and do work when they're most productive</b>	Women (92% vs. 88%) and those in Atlantic Canada (96%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (95%).
<b>Technology is like a silent partner that helps my business be more efficient, deliver optimum customer service and close more sales</b>	Those in Quebec (94%) and those in Alberta (91%), and those with a post-secondary education (90% vs. 78% among those without post-secondary education).
<b>For someone starting a small business I would recommend they have the right technology in place before they begin work</b>	Women (90% vs. 85% among men), and those age 55+ (95%).
<b>Mobile technology gives today's small business owners the flexibility to balance business with pleasure</b>	
<b>From what I may have seen or personally experienced, many people today are making a life-style decision to leave the corporate world and start their own small business</b>	Women (87% vs. 77% among men).
<b>Today's technology allows small business owners to compete with bigger corporations better than ever before</b>	Those with post-secondary education (83% vs. 77% among those without post-secondary education).

## ***Better Work/Life Balance And To Gain Sense Freedom And No More Boss (72%) Are Most Common Reasons To Start Small Business...***

### ***Reasons For Starting***

*Among Those Who Agree Many People Are Deciding To Leave Corporate World To Start Small Business*



*From your experience, which of the following are the two most common reasons why people choose to leave the corporate world and begin their own small business?*

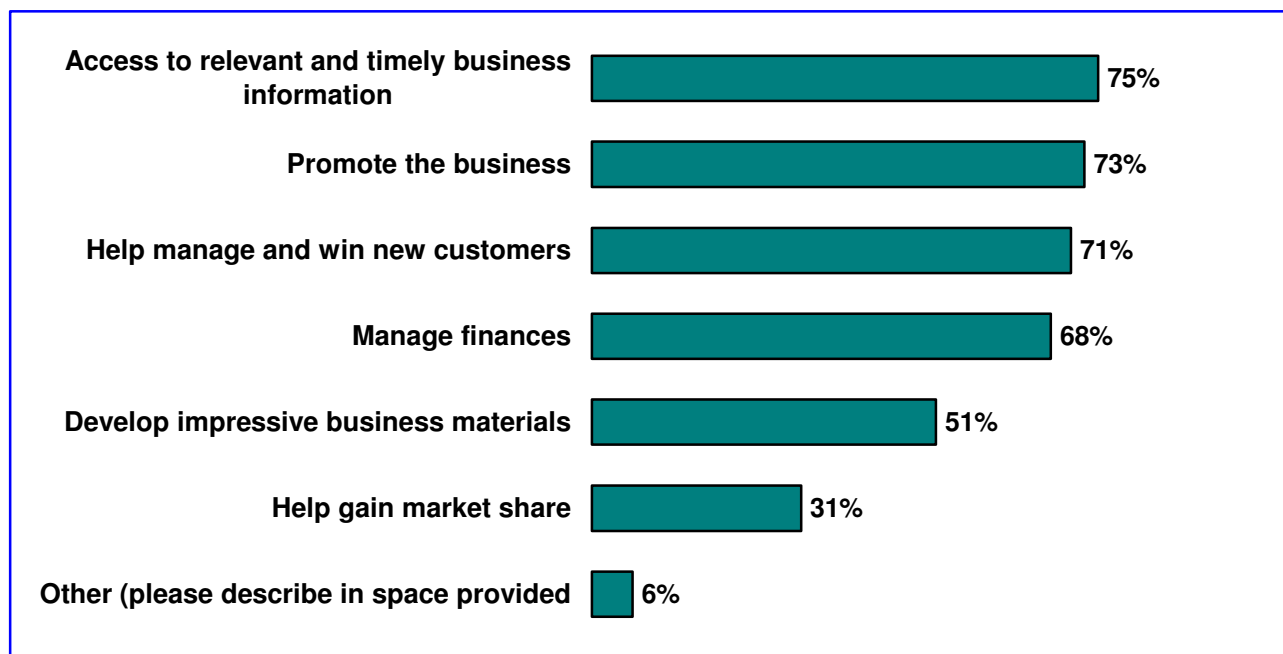
- Men are more likely than women to choose to leave the corporate world for “more money” (30% vs. 21%), while women are more likely to say “to be able to work at home more often to raise my family” (54% vs. 39%).
- Those with children are the most likely to say they wanting “to be able to work from home more often to raise my family” (65%) is one of the most common reasons to leave the corporate world and start a small business.
- Those in British Columbia (79%), Atlantic Canada (77%) are most likely to say “to achieve better work/life balance”, as are women (74% vs. 68% among men).



## *How Will Planning Their Technology Investment Help Small Business Owners Gain A Competitive Advantage?*

### **Planning Technology Investment**

*Among Those Who Agree That Someone Starting A Small Business Should Have The Right Technology In Place*



*You indicated earlier that you would recommend to anyone starting their own business that they have the right technology in place before they begin work? How will planning their technology investment help them gain a competitive advantage?*

- Women are more likely than men to recommend this in order to “promote the business” (77% vs. 68%).
- Younger adults age 18-34 are more likely to say “help manage and win new customers” (77% vs. 69%).





## ***Thinking About Their Own Situation, Half (46%) Of Small Business Owners Are “Only Getting Their Feet Wet” When It Comes To Their Level Of Technology...***

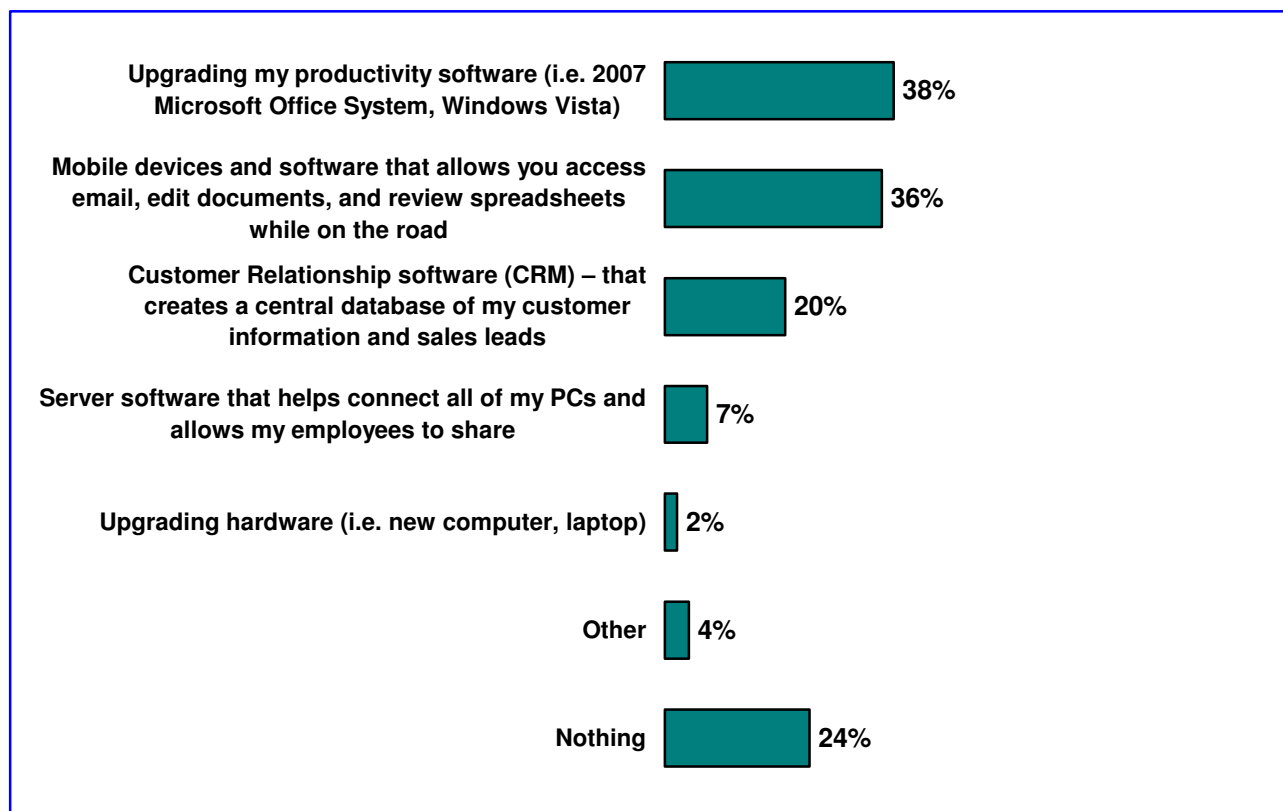
Thinking about their own business situation when it comes to their level of technology:

- 46% would describe it as “Getting Their Feet Wet” – meaning they only use computers for running software such as word processing and spreadsheet programs and connecting to the Internet;
- 32% would describe it as “Swimming Along” – meaning a mix of desktops and laptops that work on a shared server, with the ability to use the Internet for research and for marketing as well as word processing, spreadsheet and presentation software;
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## *If They Had Some Money To Spend On New Software For Their Business, Plurality (36%) Would Opt For “Mobile Devices” (36%)...*

### **Technology Wish List**

*Among All Small Business Owners*



*If you had some money to spend on new software for your business, which of the following would you go out and buy today?*

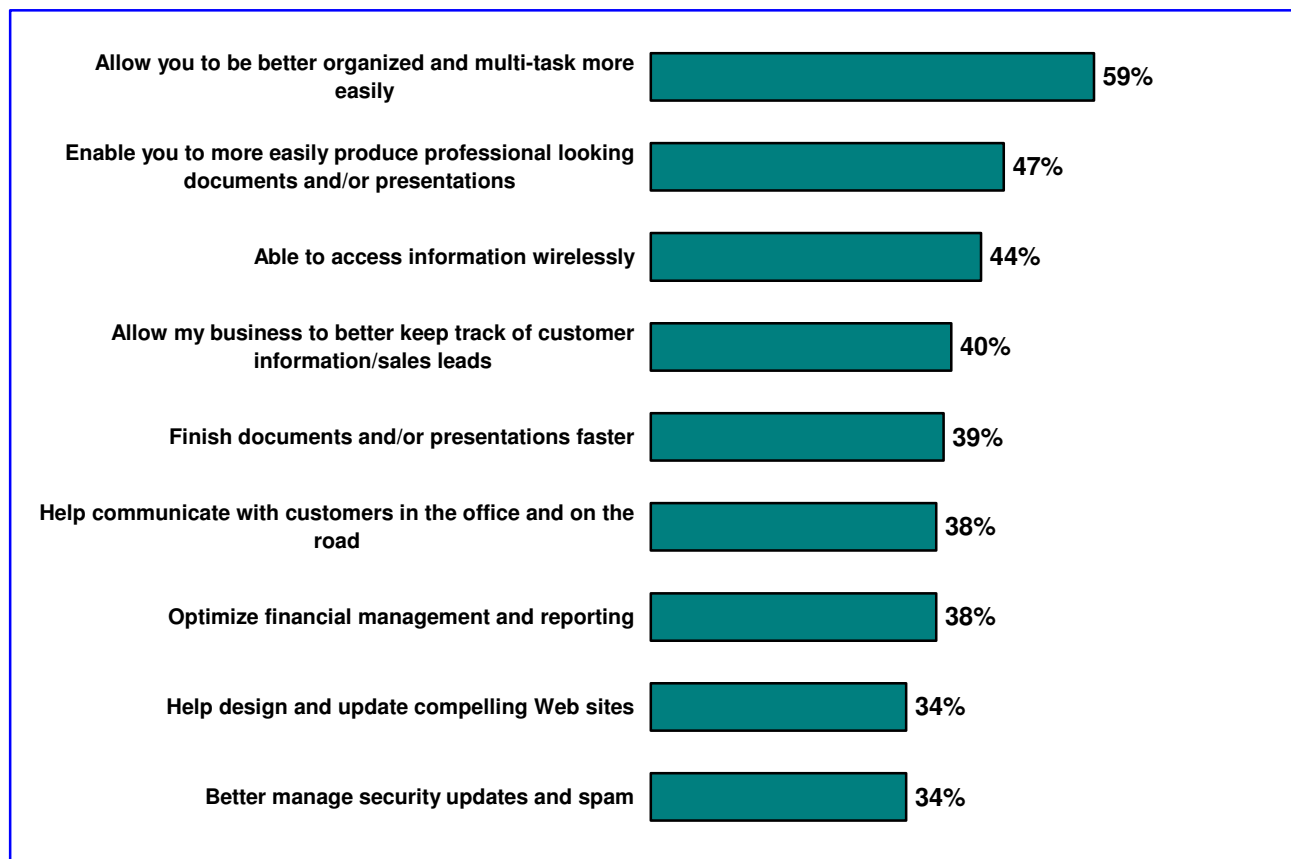
- Mobile devices and software are most popular among 18-34 year old business owners (45% vs. 32% among those ages 35 and over).
- Men are more likely than women to point to “upgrading my productivity software” (42% vs. 33%).



## *SMBs Look To Technology To Help Them Become More Organized And Multi-Task Better...*

### *Technology To Help With Work Schedule*

*Of Small Business Owners*



*Thinking about your work schedule as a small business owner, which of the following things would you most like technology to help you do better?*

- Men are more likely than women to want “greater flexibility and share files with colleagues in and out of the office” (23% vs. 16%).



**Ipsos Reid**

## ***Small Business Owners Have Taken Care Of Business “Sitting In Traffic” (57%) And “In The Grocery Store” (40%)...***

Small business owners aren't afraid to take care of their work in non-traditional work settings. Fully six in ten (57%) have responded to a business email or call “sitting in traffic” (57%), while smaller proportions have done so in the “grocery store” (40%), and “while taking family to extracurricular activities” and “at the cottage/vacation home” (31%).

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