

**COON RAPIDS BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION
STRATEGIES PROGRAM
Interview Guide**

Business ID: _____
Supplied by Coordinator:
Also record on pages 1 &4 of
survey

BUSINESS NAME:

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Website _____

PERSON INTERVIEWED: _____

Job title: _____

Date of visit: _____

Email _____

OTHER KEY OFFICIALS IN THIS ESTABLISHMENT:

Owner _____

Chief Exec. Officer _____

Plant Manager _____

Personnel Officer _____

VOLUNTEER VISITORS:

Note to Visitation Coordinator: After placing the ID number on this cover sheet and on pages 1 and 4 of the survey, remove the cover sheet and file separately to ensure confidentiality of results.

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION STRATEGIES PROGRAM

Background

We believe our existing businesses are our best prospects for future development. The purpose of this program is to see how we can help them succeed.

- I. This program is sponsored locally by the following organizations:
 - City of Coon Rapids
 - Connexus Energy
 - Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
 - University of Minnesota Extension

- II. Technical and applied research assistance for this program is provided by the University of Minnesota Extension.

- III. Business, government, and educational leaders have agreed to help us work with our local businesses on this program.

- IV. The survey is a cooperative effort involving volunteers drawn from other businesses, local government, and educational institutions.

- V. The objectives of the program are:
 1. To demonstrate support for local businesses
 2. To help solve immediate business concerns.
 3. To increase local businesses' ability to compete in the global economy
 4. To establish and implement a strategic plan for economic development.
 5. To build community capacity to sustain growth and development.

- VI. Confidentiality - Your individual answers to this survey are confidential and will not be released except as required by law. Your response will be summarized with those of others to produce an overall result in percentages or averages. **If we find an issue in your survey response in which a certain individual or individuals may be able to respond to your concern in a beneficial way, you will be asked at the end of the survey whether you authorize us to release your survey information to them.**

- VII. The "Skip It Rule" - If there is a question that you feel might be best to skip, we will do that; just let us know. There is no need to explain your reasons.

- VIII. Copy of Final Report - Copies of the summary will be provided to all businesses that participate in this survey.

Business ID: _____ Supplied by Coordinator

COON RAPIDS BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION STRATEGIES PROGRAM
Interview Guide

Community or township: Coon Rapids _____ **Date:** _____

1a. Is all the information on the cover sheet complete and correct? (Circle ONE answer)

(1) Yes (2) No → **1b. If No, make the necessary corrections.**

2a. Did your business begin its operation in this community? (Circle ONE answer)

(1) Yes (2) No → **2b. If No, where did you move from and when?**

	<u>Community</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Year</u>
	_____	_____	_____

→ **2c. If Yes, what year?** _____

3. What type of facility is this? (Circle all that apply)

- (1) Branch
- (2) Distribution
- (3) Headquarters
- (4) Home-based business
- (5) Manufacturing
- (6) Office-operation (non HQ)
- (7) Research & Development
- (8) Retail Sales Office
- (9) Other: _____

4. Is your business locally owned? (Circle ONE answer)

(1) Yes (2) No → **4b. If No, where is your corporate headquarters located?**
(Please identify city, state, & country) _____

5. Do you have multiple locations? (Circle ONE answer)

(1) Yes (2) No

→ **5b. If Yes, where are they located?** _____

6. Which of the following North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) categories best describes your business? (Circle ONE answer)

1. Administration/Support/Waste Management/Remediation Services	11. Manufacturing
2. Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing/Hunting	12. Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction
3. Accommodation/Food Services	13. Other Services
4. Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	14. Professional/Scientific/Technical Services
5. Construction	15. Public Administration
6. Educational Services	16. Real Estate/Rental and Leasing
7. Finance/Insurance	17. Retail Trade
8. Health Care Services/Social Assistance	18. Transportation and Warehousing
9. Information	19. Utilities
10. Management of Companies & Enterprises	20. Wholesale Trade

Your product / service

7. We are interested in learning about your primary products and services.

a. Name the major products or services offered by this establishment	b. What percentage of your total sales comes from each? (Total should equal 100%)	c. Are sales of this product or service? (Circle ONE answer)
(1)	%	(1)Increasing (2)Stable (3)Decreasing
(2)	%	(1)Increasing (2)Stable (3)Decreasing
(3)	%	(1)Increasing (2)Stable (3)Decreasing
(4) Other products or services (specify)	%	(1)Increasing (2)Stable (3)Decreasing
Check total (should equal 100%)	100 %	

8a. What is special or unique about your major products or services? (BR&E visitor: Please take detailed notes here.)

8b. What are the one or two most important reasons that customers might choose your competitors over you?

Labor Force

9. Please estimate how many workers (including yourself) are employed by you at this location? We'd like you to break this out between full-time and part-time for the two time periods shown.

	a. Full time	b. Part time (as defined by the business)	c. Seasonal (hired by the business)	d. Temp agency employees
Currently				
Three years ago				

10. If the number of employees changed from three years ago, please identify up to 3 reasons for the employment change. (Circle UP TO THREE reasons)

(a) Business did not exist 3 years ago
(b) Change in management
(c) Change in profits
(d) Change in subcontracting
(e) Changes in worker efficiency
(f) Corporate decisions/policies
(g) Entered new markets
(h) Expansion
(i) Government regulation
(j) Growth in demand
(k) Increased competition
(l) Lack of demand
(m) New products/services
(n) Renovation
(o) Technological changes
(p) Other _____

11. What is the average hourly starting wage paid to employees in each category? (If you do not have employees in that category, write *Not Applicable* or *NA*)

(a) Professional/Managerial (managers, accountants, HR professionals etc.)	\$ _____
(b) Information Technology	\$ _____
(c) Engineers, Scientists and Technicians	\$ _____
(d) Arts, Design and other Creative Occupations	\$ _____
(e) Healthcare Related	\$ _____
(f) Office and Administrative (secretaries, office clerks, receptionists, etc.)	\$ _____
(g) Unskilled Service Workers (food prep., retail sales, housekeeping, etc.)	\$ _____
(h) Agricultural	\$ _____
(i) Construction	\$ _____
(j) Repair and Skilled Maintenance (not janitorial)	\$ _____
(k) Unskilled Manufacturing (assembly, production helpers, etc.)	\$ _____
(l) Skilled Manufacturing (welders, machinists, etc.)	\$ _____
(m) Transportation	\$ _____

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12. Does your company have problems recruiting employees in the following categories? (Circle ONE answer per line)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Unsure</u>	<u>Not Applicable</u>
(a) Professional/Managerial (managers, accountants, HR professionals etc.)	1	2	3	NA
(b) Information Technology	1	2	3	NA
(c) Engineers, Scientists and Technicians	1	2	3	NA
(d) Arts, Design and other Creative Occupations	1	2	3	NA
(e) Healthcare Related	1	2	3	NA
(f) Office and Administrative (secretaries, office clerks, receptionists, etc.)	1	2	3	NA
(g) Unskilled Service Workers (food prep., retail sales, housekeeping, etc.)	1	2	3	NA
(h) Agricultural	1	2	3	NA
(i) Construction	1	2	3	NA
(j) Repair and Skilled Maintenance (not janitorial)	1	2	3	NA
(k) Unskilled Manufacturing (assembly, production helpers, etc.)	1	2	3	NA
(l) Skilled Manufacturing (welders, machinists, etc.)	1	2	3	NA
(m) Transportation	1	2	3	NA

13. If you answered "yes" for any category in question 12 above, identify up to 3 of the most important reasons for your recruiting problem. (Circle UP TO THREE.)

- (a) Competition for employees
- (b) High cost of training employees
- (c) High wage rates for labor
- (d) Inadequate labor skills
- (e) Lack of child care
- (f) Poor work attitudes
- (g) Workers cannot pass screening (drug, criminal record check, etc.) please specify _____
- (h) Workers lack documentation of legal work status
- (i) Workers will not commute into the area
- (j) Workers will not relocate into the area
- (k) Other _____

14. Please estimate the commute time for your employees.

- (a) Within a 15 minute drive one way _____%
 - (b) 16-30 minute drive one way _____%
 - (c) 31-60 minute drive one way _____%
 - (d) 61+ minute drive one way _____%
- Check total (should equal 100%) 100%**

15. What resources are you currently using to locate new employees? (Circle ALL that apply)

- (a) Ad in local community papers
- (b) Ad in metro / state-wide papers
- (c) Hire our own apprentices
- (d) Hire people who were initially temporary employees
- (e) Internet advertising on job boards (e.g. Monster, Craig's List, etc.)
- (f) Internet advertising on our own website
- (g) Internet advertising through social media (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)
- (h) Job Fair
- (i) Minnesota Workforce Center
- (j) Placement office of four-year, community and / or technical colleges
- (k) Private search firm
- (l) Professional associations
- (m) Promote from within
- (n) Referrals from existing employees
- (o) Sign in the window
- (p) Temporary agency / staffing service business
- (q) Union
- (r) Walk-in
- (s) Word of mouth
- (t) Other _____

16a. Do you expect the number of employees you have in each of the following categories to increase, decrease or stay the same over the next three years? (Circle 1, 2 or 3 for each category)

b. If you expect a change, how many employees will be added or subtracted? (Indicate by how many)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Stay Same</u>	<u>Decrease</u>	<u>How Many?</u>
(a) Professional/Managerial (managers, accountants, HR professionals etc.)	1	2	3	_____
(b) Information Technology	1	2	3	_____
(c) Engineers, Scientists and Technicians	1	2	3	_____
(d) Arts, Design and other Creative Occupations	1	2	3	_____
(e) Healthcare Related	1	2	3	_____
(f) Office and Administrative (secretaries, office clerks, receptionists, etc.)	1	2	3	_____
(g) Unskilled Service Workers (food prep., retail sales, housekeeping, etc.)	1	2	3	_____
(h) Agricultural	1	2	3	_____
(i) Construction	1	2	3	_____
(j) Repair and Skilled Maintenance (not janitorial)	1	2	3	_____
(k) Unskilled Manufacturing (assembly, production helpers, etc.)	1	2	3	_____
(l) Skilled Manufacturing (welders, machinists, etc.)	1	2	3	_____
(m) Transportation	1	2	3	_____

17. Overall, how do you rate your employees with respect to their attitude toward work and their productivity? (Circle ONE answer per line)

	Poor	Below Average	Fair	Above Average	Excellent
(a) Attitude toward work	1	2	3	4	5
(b) Productivity	1	2	3	4	5

18. Employees and owners often need additional training.

(a) Do you need training for either workers or managers?

(1) Yes (2) No

(b) If yes, circle the categories below and please estimate the number of employees

Number of people needing this training

- (a) General Skills _____
- (b) Managerial Skills _____
- (c) Sales and Marketing _____
- (d) Computer Skills _____
- (e) Other Skills (please list) _____

19. How do you currently train your employees? (Circle ALL that apply.)

- (a) A government supported program (e.g. Minnesota Job Skills Partnership or similar program)
- (b) Apprenticeships
- (c) Contract with private vendors for online training
- (d) Contract with private vendors for on-site training
- (e) Contract with public vendors (technical colleges, etc.) for online training
- (f) Contract with public vendors (technical colleges, etc.) for on-site training
- (g) Do not provide any employee training
- (h) In-house training (one-on-one by supervisor or co-worker, training department classes, etc.)
- (i) Self-taught (manuals, videos, training materials)
- (j) Send employees to training offsite
- (k) Other (Please list) _____

Customers

20. We are interested in the location of your customers. Please estimate the percent of your gross sales coming from the following locations:

a. Local (within 25 miles)?	_____ percent
b. Regional (26-100 miles)?	_____ percent
c. Outside the region but in the United States?	_____ percent
d. Outside of the U.S.?	_____ percent
	100% TOTAL

21a. Is your business currently exporting internationally? (Circle ONE answer)

(1) Yes, we export directly from our business

29. If you said in Question 28 that you are considering downsizing, selling, moving or closing, what are the reasons? (Circle ALL that apply)

- (1) Changing market conditions
- (2) Overcrowded building
- (3) No land for expansion
- (4) Transportation problems
- (5) Crime/vandalism
- (6) Low work productivity
- (7) Environmental concerns
- (8) Rigid code enforcement (including ordinances and building codes)
- (9) High local taxes
- (10) High state taxes
- (11) Lease expiration
- (12) Poor telecommunications/internet
- (13) Insufficient labor supply
- (14) Retiring
- (15) Another business opportunity
- (16) Business incentives from other jurisdiction(s)
- (17) Trying to sell business but unable to sell it
- (18) Other (specify) _____

30. If moving or expanding at another location (Yes to Question 28d or 28g), where are you considering? (Circle ALL that apply)

- (1) In same city as currently located
- (2) Another city in this county (specify city) _____
- (3) Another county in the state (specify county and city) _____
- (4) Another state (specify city and state) _____
- (5) Outside of the United States (specify city and country) _____
- (6) Undecided

31. If not expanding your business, what is the single biggest factor or issue preventing you?

32a. Do you rent / lease or does this business own this facility? (Circle ONE answer)

- (1) Rent /Lease
- (2) Own

└───┬───> 32b. If Rent / Lease, when does the current rental agreement expire?

33a. Does your company currently own or rent / lease sufficient property to allow for expansion if necessary? (Circle ONE answer)

- Yes (1)
- Maybe (2)
- No (3)

└───┬───> 33b. If Maybe or No, what type of land, buildings, and space needs do you foresee?

Community Factors

34. If your business had to select a new location in the near future, how important would each of the following factors be in the decision-making process?

	Not at all Important 1	2	3	Very Important 4	Not Applicable n/a
<u>A. Workforce</u>					
1) Availability of skilled labor	1	2	3	4	n/a
2) Availability of unskilled labor	1	2	3	4	n/a
3) Wage rates	1	2	3	4	n/a
4) Employee health care cost	1	2	3	4	n/a
5) Union presence	1	2	3	4	n/a
<u>B. Education and Training</u>					
1) K-12	1	2	3	4	n/a
2) Higher education within a reasonable drive	1	2	3	4	n/a
3) Technical training programs	1	2	3	4	n/a
<u>C. Transportation/Location</u>					
1) Highway accessibility	1	2	3	4	n/a
2) Air service	1	2	3	4	n/a
3) Proximity to major markets	1	2	3	4	n/a
4) Proximity to raw materials	1	2	3	4	n/a
5) Proximity to service suppliers	1	2	3	4	n/a
6) Railroad service	1	2	3	4	n/a
<u>D. Land, Buildings, and Credit</u>					
1) Availability of land	1	2	3	4	n/a
2) Cost of land	1	2	3	4	n/a
3) Availability of buildings	1	2	3	4	n/a
4) Cost of buildings	1	2	3	4	n/a
5) Availability of loans	1	2	3	4	n/a
6) Cost of loans	1	2	3	4	n/a
<u>E. Utilities</u>					
1) Energy cost (electric, natural gas)	1	2	3	4	n/a
2) Energy reliability (electric, natural gas)	1	2	3	4	n/a
3) Telecommunications & broadband reliability	1	2	3	4	n/a
4) Telecommunications & broadband cost	1	2	3	4	n/a
5) Broadband speed	1	2	3	4	n/a

	Not at all Important 1	2	3	Very Important 4	Not Applicable n/a
<u>F. Local Business Support</u>					
1) Community attitude towards business	1	2	3	4	n/a
2) Community promotion of itself and business	1	2	3	4	n/a
3) Chamber of commerce	1	2	3	4	n/a
4) Economic development authority	1	2	3	4	n/a
5) Incentives for business investment in facilities, worker skills or more workers	1	2	3	4	n/a
<u>G. Quality of Life</u>					
1) Recreational opportunities	1	2	3	4	n/a
2) Cultural opportunities	1	2	3	4	n/a
3) Social organizations and networks	1	2	3	4	n/a
4) Housing supply	1	2	3	4	n/a
5) Housing costs	1	2	3	4	n/a
6) Health care facilities	1	2	3	4	n/a
7) Availability of child care	1	2	3	4	n/a
<u>H. Government and Regulation</u>					
1) Fire Department	1	2	3	4	n/a
2) Police Department	1	2	3	4	n/a
3) Sewer & Water	1	2	3	4	n/a
4) Street Maintenance	1	2	3	4	n/a
5) Environmental regulations	1	2	3	4	n/a
6) Planning and zoning	1	2	3	4	n/a
7) Code enforcement	1	2	3	4	n/a
<u>I. Local Government Financial Management</u>					
1) Property Taxes	1	2	3	4	n/a
2) Other Local Taxes and fees	1	2	3	4	n/a
3) Spending priorities	1	2	3	4	n/a
4) Budget process & financial management	1	2	3	4	n/a

35. Based on the following factors, please rate your satisfaction with your current location as a place for your company to do business.

	Very Dissatisfied 1	2	3	Very Satisfied 4	Don't know DK
<u>A. Workforce</u>					
1) Availability of skilled labor	1	2	3	4	DK
2) Availability of unskilled labor	1	2	3	4	DK
3) Wage rates	1	2	3	4	DK
4) Employee health care cost	1	2	3	4	DK
5) Union presence	1	2	3	4	DK
<u>B. Education and Training</u>					
1) K-12	1	2	3	4	DK
2) Higher education within a reasonable drive	1	2	3	4	DK
3) Technical training programs	1	2	3	4	DK
<u>C. Transportation/Location</u>					
1) Highway accessibility	1	2	3	4	DK
2) Air service	1	2	3	4	DK
3) Proximity to major markets	1	2	3	4	DK
4) Proximity to raw materials	1	2	3	4	DK
5) Proximity to service suppliers	1	2	3	4	DK
6) Railroad service	1	2	3	4	DK
<u>D. Land, Buildings, and Credit</u>					
1) Availability of land	1	2	3	4	DK
2) Cost of land	1	2	3	4	DK
3) Availability of buildings	1	2	3	4	DK
4) Cost of buildings	1	2	3	4	DK
5) Availability of loans	1	2	3	4	DK
6) Cost of loans	1	2	3	4	DK
<u>E. Utilities</u>					
1) Energy cost (electric, natural gas)	1	2	3	4	DK
2) Energy reliability (electric, natural gas)	1	2	3	4	DK
3) Telecommunications & broadband reliability	1	2	3	4	DK
4) Telecommunications & broadband cost	1	2	3	4	DK
5) Broadband speed	1	2	3	4	DK

	Very Dissatisfied 1	2	3	Very Satisfied 4	Don't know DK
<u>F. Local Business Support</u>					
1) Community attitude towards business	1	2	3	4	DK
2) Community promotion of itself and business	1	2	3	4	DK
3) Chamber of commerce	1	2	3	4	DK
4) Economic development authority	1	2	3	4	DK
5) Incentives for business investment in facilities, worker skills or more workers	1	2	3	4	DK
<u>G. Quality of Life</u>					
1) Recreational opportunities	1	2	3	4	DK
2) Cultural opportunities	1	2	3	4	DK
3) Social organizations and networks	1	2	3	4	DK
4) Housing supply	1	2	3	4	DK
5) Housing costs	1	2	3	4	DK
6) Health care facilities	1	2	3	4	DK
7) Availability of child care	1	2	3	4	DK
<u>H. Government and Regulation</u>					
1) Fire Department	1	2	3	4	DK
2) Police Department	1	2	3	4	DK
3) Sewer & Water	1	2	3	4	DK
4) Street Maintenance	1	2	3	4	DK
5) Environmental regulations	1	2	3	4	DK
6) Planning and zoning	1	2	3	4	DK
7) Code enforcement	1	2	3	4	DK
<u>I. Local Government Financial Management</u>					
1) Property Taxes	1	2	3	4	DK
2) Other Local Taxes and fees	1	2	3	4	DK
3) Spending priorities	1	2	3	4	DK
4) Budget process & financial management	1	2	3	4	DK

36. Do you have any suggestions for improving the items above (in Question 35.) that you gave lower ratings to? If so, please give the item number and your suggestion for each item:

37 a. Do the following community features related to tourism have a positive impact, no impact, or negative impact on your business? (Circle ONE answer for each item)

	Very Positive Impact		No Impact		Very Negative Impact
(a) Activities for children and teens	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(b) Amusement and recreation activities	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(c) Arts and cultural events	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(d) Community atmosphere	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(e) Community diversity	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(f) Festivals or events	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(g) Historic atmosphere (downtown, barns, etc.)	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(h) Information for tourists	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(i) Landscapes (downtown, farm, natural)	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(j) Lodging facilities	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(k) Meeting/conference facilities	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(l) Museums/historic sites	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(m) Natural environment	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(n) Outdoor recreation (including hunting/fishing)	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(o) Proximity to potential visitors	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(p) Seasonal tourism	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(q) Transportation access for potential visitors	+2	+1	0	-1	-2

37b. Which of the features listed in Question 37a do you feel should be the focus of a marketing image for this community? (Please list the LETTERS for UP TO THREE choices)

- _____ First choice
- _____ Second choice
- _____ Third choice

38a. Please rate the following factors about retail in this community. (Circle ONE for each item)

	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4	Don't Know DK
(a) Advertising	1	2	3	4	DK
(b) Coordinated store hours	1	2	3	4	DK
(c) Customer service	1	2	3	4	DK
(d) Exterior atmosphere of the area (e.g. front entrances, rear entrances, landscaping, street trees, store fronts, sidewalks, cleanliness, signage)	1	2	3	4	DK

	Poor			Excellent	Don't Know
(e) Feeling of safety (e.g. lighting, security)	1	2	3	4	DK
(f) Group advertising	1	2	3	4	DK
(g) Hours - Evening	1	2	3	4	DK
(h) Hours - Weekend	1	2	3	4	DK
(i) Internet presence (i.e. can you find community retailers online?)	1	2	3	4	DK
(j) Knowledge and friendliness of local personnel	1	2	3	4	DK
(k) Merchandising by retailers	1	2	3	4	DK
(l) Other (specify)	1	2	3	4	DK
(m) Parking situation (e.g. number of spaces, location)	1	2	3	4	DK
(n) Prices	1	2	3	4	DK
(o) Public restrooms	1	2	3	4	DK
(p) Quality of merchandise handled by merchants	1	2	3	4	DK
(q) Special events or promotions in the shopping area	1	2	3	4	DK
(r) Traffic flow / signage	1	2	3	4	DK
(s) Variety of businesses	1	2	3	4	DK
(t) Variety of places to eat	1	2	3	4	DK

38b. What three items from the above list are the most important to be improved (*Identify UP TO THREE LETTERS from the above list*)

_____ First choice

_____ Second choice

_____ Third choice

39. Considering all the factors in Question 38, how would you rate the overall atmosphere in your local shopping area? (*Circle ONE answer*)

(1) Poor (2) Below Average (3) Average (4) Above Average (5) Excellent

40. What is your overall opinion of your community (i.e. where your business is) as a place to conduct business? (*Circle ONE answer*)

(1) Poor (2) Below Average (3) Average (4) Above Average (5) Excellent

