

Focus NJ and Brother International Corporation Release Survey on Health of New Jersey Businesses Post-Pandemic

“Back To Work In A Post-Pandemic World” Surveyed New Jersey Businesses on Their Challenges & Plans After COVID-19

BRIDGEWATER, NJ — May 26, 2021 — During the pandemic, most New Jersey businesses experienced a loss in productivity, and are spending an average of \$34,000 on new technologies to increase it, according to a new survey conducted by [Focus NJ](#) and [Brother International Corporation](#). The survey conducted in April 2021, “Back to Work in a Post-Pandemic World,” ascertained the health of New Jersey businesses statewide, as well as their plans and challenges after the coronavirus pandemic.

“The pandemic has accelerated the evolution of the workplace by forcing businesses to confront and embrace our increasingly mobile, decentralized world,” said Dan Waldinger, Senior Director of B2B Marketing, Brother International Corporation. “Businesses are realizing they must embrace tools needed to enhance collaboration, and subsequently, productivity, amid the so-called ‘hybrid workforce,’ with some employees working remotely, and some returning to the office.”

Forty-five percent of respondents reported that some form of their workforce is still operating via remote workforce, while 55% reported that their entire staff is now working in-person. Respondents were mixed on their plans to offer additional remote-work flexibility for workers after the pandemic.

Other key findings of the survey include:

- Of applicable businesses, the majority (65%) will either allow remote-work options after the pandemic, or are considering it currently
- A plurality of respondents (42%) believe it will take longer than a year to break even on revenues lost during the pandemic
- 66% reported actively encouraging employees to get the COVID-19 vaccine

Among other notable data, the two most common physical office modifications cited by respondents were increased distancing between employee workstations, followed by glass/plexiglass barriers. In total, only a plurality (39%) expect these changes to be permanent.

“The unprecedented non-essential business closures and stay-at-home orders from mid-March to mid-June of 2020, followed by continued operational restrictions, were really a one-two punch that the state’s businesses are still trying to recover from,” said Nicole Sandelier, Executive Director, Focus NJ. “With a continued loosening of restrictions thanks to our tremendous progress against the pandemic, I am hopeful that businesses will be able to recover quickly.”

Methodology

The Focus NJ Back to Work in a Post Pandemic World Survey was conducted from April 1 to April 26, 2021. In total 711 respondents participated in the online survey. The findings of this survey may be accepted as accurate, at a rate of 95% confidence level, within a sampling tolerance of approximately +/- 3.7%. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

About Brother International Corporation

Brother International Corporation has earned its reputation as a premier provider of home office and business products, home appliances for the sewing and crafting enthusiast as well as industrial solutions that revolutionize the way we live and work. Brother International Corporation is a wholly owned subsidiary of Brother Industries Ltd. With worldwide sales exceeding \$6 billion, this global manufacturer was started more than 100 years ago. Bridgewater, New Jersey is the corporate headquarters for Brother in the Americas. It has fully integrated sales, marketing services, manufacturing, research and development capabilities located in the U.S. In addition to its headquarters, Brother has facilities in California, Illinois and Tennessee, as well as subsidiaries in Canada, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Peru and Mexico. For more information, visit www.brother.com.

About Focus NJ

[Focus NJ](#) – the Center for Economic Research and Workforce Solutions – is a nonpartisan, nonprofit research foundation launched by the New Jersey Business & Industry Association in February 2020. It provides deep analysis of public policies, industry trends and economic indicators that impact New Jersey’s overall affordability, workforce and competitiveness.

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Questions & Results

Q1 Are you an owner, manager and/or primary decision maker for operational decisions at your business(including finance, human resources, and/or risk management)?	
Yes	90%
No	10%

Q2 Is your business a women-owned, minority-owned, and/or a veteran-owned firm?	
Yes	30%
No	62%
I do not wish to disclose	8%

Q3 Please select the designation(s) that describe your business.	
Women-owned	73%
Minority-owned	27%
Veteran-owned	18%

Q4 For tax purposes, what is your company's business structure?	
S Corp	35%
Limited Liability Company (LLC)	33%
C Corp	14%
Sole Proprietorship	8%
Nonprofit Organization	5%
Partnership	1%
Closed Corporation	1%
Cooperative	0%
Other	1%
Not sure	2%

Q5	
Please select the description that best describes your company.	
For profit, private	89%
For profit, publicly traded	5%
Nonprofit/Government	6%

Q6	
In what counties is your business located?	
Monmouth	17%
Bergen	16%
Essex	14%
Middlesex	14%
Union	13%
Ocean	13%
Morris	12%
Somerset	11%
Passaic	9%
Mercer	9%
Burlington	7%
Hunterdon	7%
Hudson	6%
Camden	5%
Atlantic	5%
Sussex	4%
Warren	4%
Cumberland	4%
Gloucester	3%
Cape May	3%
Salem	3%
None of the above	-

Q7	
Which of the following best describes the industry your business is in?	
Construction	13%
Manufacturing	11%
Retail Trade	9%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	9%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	9%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	6%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	5%
Wholesale Trade	5%
Educational Services	3%
Finance and Insurance	3%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	3%
Accommodation and Food Services	3%
Transportation and Warehousing	2%
Information	2%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1%
Utilities	1%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1%
Public Administration and Government	0%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0%
Administrative, Support and Waste Management/Remediation Services	-
Other	14%

Q8	
Was your business considered an “essential business” during government-mandated, non-essential business closures?	
Yes	53%
No	34%
Unsure	13%

Q9	
About how many people does your business currently employ in total, including seasonal, part-time and full-time staff?	
1	18%
2 – 4	26%
5 – 9	16%
10 – 19	12%
20 – 49	12%
50 – 99	6%
100 – 249	5%
250 – 499	1%
500 or more	2%
Mean	62.0
Median	6.3

Q10	
Before the COVID-19 health crisis, what percentage of your workforce worked remotely at any given time?	
0%	68%
1% – 24%	20%
25% – 49%	4%
50% – 74%	3%
75% – 99%	2%
100%	3%

Q11	
What percentage of your workforce is currently working remotely?	
0%	55%
1% – 24%	20%
25% – 49%	7%
50% – 74%	5%
75% – 99%	7%
100%	7%

Q12-A: With 'Not applicable'

Have you experienced or do you anticipate experiencing a reluctance from your remote staff to return to work at your business's physical location?

Yes	18%
No	29%
Not sure	6%
I did not/do not have any staff working remotely	21%
I do not intend to have remote staff return to work at business's physical location	3%
Not applicable	23%

Q12-B: Without 'Not applicable'

Have you experienced or do you anticipate experiencing a reluctance from your remote staff to return to work at your business's physical location?

Yes	23%
No	38%
Not sure	8%
I did not/do not have any staff working remotely	27%
I do not intend to have remote staff return to work at business's physical location	4%

Q13-A: With 'Not applicable'

Will you allow any of your workforce to work remotely once COVID-19 related restrictions (e.g., capacity limits and social distancing) are lifted?

Yes	25%
No	21%
Not sure/Undecided	15%
Not applicable	39%

Q13-B: Without 'Not applicable'

Will you allow any of your workforce to work remotely once COVID-19 related restrictions (e.g., capacity limits and social distancing) are lifted?

Yes	41%
No	35%
Not sure/Undecided	24%

Q14-A: With 'Not applicable'

Do you have concerns about employee turnover if you do not allow remote work post-pandemic?

Yes	13%
No	41%
Not sure/Undecided	9%

Not applicable	38%
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Q14-B: Without 'Not applicable'

Do you have concerns about employee turnover if you do not allow remote work post-pandemic?

Yes	20%
No	66%
Not sure/Undecided	14%

Q15

Including physical location and remote work, my business is:

Operating but experiencing productivity losses	57%
Operating and performing as well as it did pre-COVID	31%
Operating and performing better than it did pre-COVID	6%
Temporarily closed because of COVID-19 with plans to reopen	4%
Permanently closed because of COVID-19 with no plans to reopen	2%

Q16

Compared to 2020, my business is financially experiencing:

A decrease in revenue	55%
The same amount of revenue	26%
An increase in revenue	15%
No revenue	4%

Q17

How long do you anticipate it will take for your business to break even on the revenues lost in 2020?

3 months or less	1%
4 – 6 months	3%
7 – 9 months	6%
10 – 12 months	17%
13 – 24 months	26%
More than two years	16%
My business will never make up the revenue lost in 2020	26%
My business did not lose money in 2020	4%
My business has already generated the lost revenues from 2020	1%

Q18	
Are you actively encouraging your staff to receive a COVID-19 vaccine?	
Yes	66%
No	20%
Not sure/Undecided	14%

Q19	
If the law allows, will you mandate your employees to get a COVID-19 vaccine?	
Yes	25%
No	40%
Not sure/Undecided	30%
Not applicable	5%

Q20					
As your business prepares to enter the new normal, how burdensome do you anticipate the following to be?					
	No Burden	Some Burden	Neutral	Burdensome	Very Burdensome
Meeting payroll costs and/or paying payroll taxes	24%	25%	19%	20%	13%
Paying expenses such as rent, income/property taxes, loans & utilities	25%	25%	18%	19%	14%
Transitioning employees away from remote work back to your business's physical location	52%	12%	26%	6%	4%
Complying with CDC guidelines	36%	24%	20%	13%	6%
Understanding and communicating CDC guidance with staff	41%	21%	21%	12%	5%
Complying with state government COVID-19 Executive Orders & labor mandates	33%	22%	15%	17%	12%
Understanding and communicating state government COVID-19 guidance with staff	37%	20%	17%	16%	9%
Cost of making physical changes to your business	24%	30%	16%	19%	11%
Cost of purchasing new technologies and/or software	26%	26%	21%	17%	10%
Cost of sanitation	23%	32%	17%	19%	8%

Q21

If your business is not operating primarily from its physical location(s), have you begun making plans for your staff to return to that/those physical location(s)?

Yes	11%
No	12%
Not sure	4%
We are already operating primarily from our physical location	73%

Q22

When do you plan to begin bringing your workforce back to your physical location(s)?

Spring 2021	29%
Summer 2021	32%
Fall 2021	22%
Winter 2021	-
Sometime in 2022	2%
Unsure/Undecided	15%

Q23-A: With 'Not applicable'

Are you currently utilizing a hybrid schedule when bringing your staff back to your physical location(s) (e.g., alternating staff days or weeks in the office)?

Yes	13%
No	42%
Not applicable	45%

Q23-B: Without 'Not applicable'

Are you currently utilizing a hybrid schedule when bringing your staff back to your physical location(s) (e.g., alternating staff days or weeks in the office)?

Yes	24%
No	76%

Do you plan to utilize a hybrid schedule to bring your staff back to work (e.g., alternating staff days or weeks in the office) in the future?

Q24

Yes, we are currently utilizing and plan to continue utilizing a hybrid schedule	6%
Yes, we plan to utilize a hybrid schedule	3%
No	78%
Unsure/Undecided	13%

Q26	
Do you currently or do you plan to incorporate staggered employee start/end times to bring your staff back to work?	
Yes, by 1 hour	2%
Yes, by 2 hours	1%
Yes, by 3 hours	1%
Yes, by more than 3 hours	1%
Yes, but not sure about timing	4%
No	80%
Not sure/Undecided	12%

Q27	
Since the onset of the pandemic, have you invested in new technologies and/or software to aid in your business' productivity?	
Yes	39%
No	61%

Q28	
Do you plan to invest in new technologies and/or software to aid in your business' productivity?	
Yes, we invested and plan to continue to invest in new technology and/or software	20%
Yes, we plan to invest in new technology and/or software	8%
No	43%
Unsure/Undecided	29%

Q30	
How much did you/do you plan to invest in total?	
\$1,000 or less	3%
\$1,001 – \$5,000	26%
\$5,001 – \$10,000	22%
\$10,001 – \$20,000	17%
More than \$20,000	32%
Mean	\$33,862
Median	\$9,849

Q31

Since the onset of the pandemic, has your business invested in cybersecurity to better secure your employees' devices that are used to work from home (i.e., to protect WFH devices from hackers)?

Yes	19%
No, never thought about it	15%
No, our devices are secure	25%
No, my employees do not work from home	34%
Not sure/Undecided	6%

Q32

Do you think your organization needs to consider investing in the security of its document management products and technology due to the increased prevalence of remote work?

Definitely	11%
Possibly	22%
No	56%
Not sure/Undecided	10%

Q33

Post-pandemic, do you think your company would utilize a subscription-based business model for your IT needs?

Yes	6%
No	53%
Not sure/Undecided	28%
Already do use a subscription-based model for IT needs	14%

Q34

How has your physical office space been impacted?

Spaced out seating/collaboration spaces	28%
Installed plexiglass/barriers	24%
We did not space out seating, but we restricted seating	8%
Made structural changes including removing and/or building walls	5%
We moved or are moving to a smaller space	2%
We moved or are moving to a larger space	1%
Other	6%
Have not done any of the above but plan to	3%
None apply to my business	50%

Q35	
Do you anticipate these changes to be temporary or permanent?	
Permanent	39%
Temporary	29%
Unsure/Undecided	32%

Q36	
How much did you/will you spend, in total, on modifying your workplace since the onset of the pandemic?	
\$0	31%
\$1 – \$1,000	23%
\$1,001 – \$5,000	17%
\$5,001 – \$10,000	11%
\$10,001 – \$20,000	8%
\$20,001 – \$50,000	6%
More than \$50,000	3%
Mean	\$7,108