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**Impact of COVID-19 on businesses  
majority-owned by women, May 2020**

by Jessica Bossé, Shivani Sood, and Chris Johnston

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# Impact of COVID-19 on businesses majority-owned by women, May 2020

by **Jessica Bossé**, **Shivani Sood**, and **Chris Johnston**

This article provides disaggregated data to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on specific groups. Visit the [Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics Hub](#) for more analysis, including disaggregated data on labour, public safety, health and more.



The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the Canadian economy and the ability of businesses to operate. The gross domestic product (GDP) data by industry for April 2020 shows that real GDP dropped 11.6% in April, following a 7.5% decline in March. All 20 major industrial sectors of the Canadian economy were down, contributing to the largest monthly decline since the series started in 1961. The economy was 18.2% below its February level, the month before COVID-19 measures began.<sup>1</sup>

Using data from the Canadian Survey on Business Conditions, a comparison was made to assess the impact of COVID-19 on businesses majority-owned by women. The proportion of businesses majority-owned by women is usually higher among businesses with fewer than 20 employees and in service industries, such as retail trade, accommodation and food services, and tourism.<sup>2</sup>

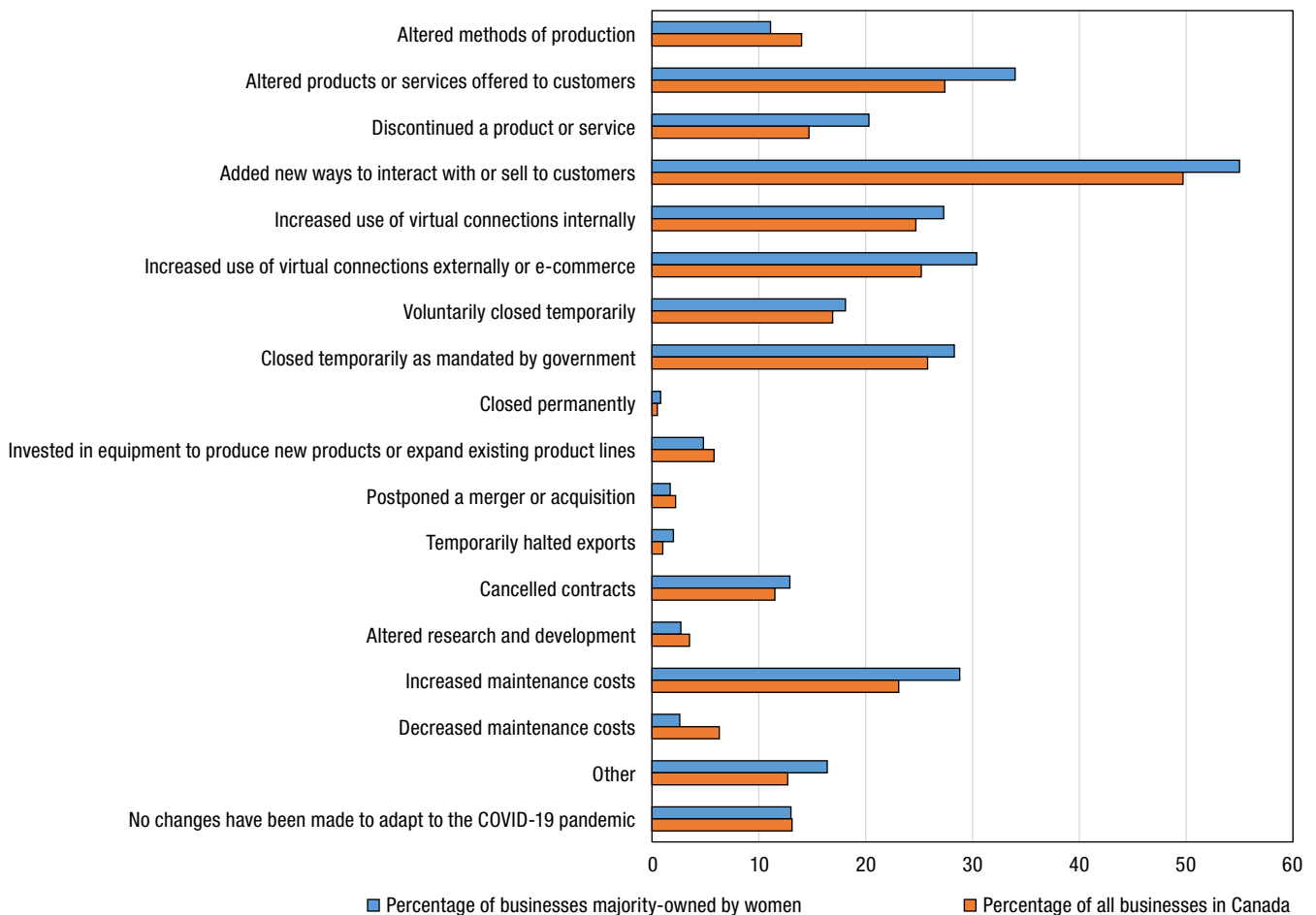
Overall, no significant differences were found between the impact of COVID-19 on businesses majority-owned by women and the broader Canadian business environment. However, some small differences were noted in certain areas. Since this iteration focused on the beginning of the recovery period, results may change over time once physical distancing measures are lifted.

## Business adaptations: Businesses majority-owned by women were more likely than all businesses in Canada to have adopted some changes to adapt to the pandemic

In general, the results illustrate that businesses majority-owned by women were more likely than all businesses in Canada to have adopted some changes to adapt to the pandemic. In fact, over half (55.0%) of businesses majority-owned by women and nearly half (49.7%) of all businesses introduced new ways to interact with or sell to customers to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, over one-third (34.0%) of businesses majority-owned by women reported that they modified their products or customer services to adapt to the pandemic, compared with over one-quarter (27.4%) of all businesses in Canada. In addition, 28.8% of businesses majority-owned by women reported that they increased their maintenance costs, compared with 23.1% of all businesses in Canada.

1. Statistics Canada. 2020. [Gross domestic product by industry](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200630/dq200630a-eng.htm), April 2020. Online: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200630/dq200630a-eng.htm>.  
2. Couture, L., Houle, S., Grekou, D., Li J., Liu H., Industry Canada, Rosa, J. and Sylla, D. 2019. [Research Blog: Women-owned businesses in Canada](https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/blog/cs/wob). Online: <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/blog/cs/wob>.

**Chart 1**  
**Percentage of businesses that adopted some changes to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic**



**Note:** Majority-owner owns 51% or more of the business. Respondents indicated which changes they have adopted (from a list of options) to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic.  
**Source:** Canadian Survey on Business Conditions: Impact of COVID-19 on businesses in Canada, May 2020 (Table 33-10-0250-01).

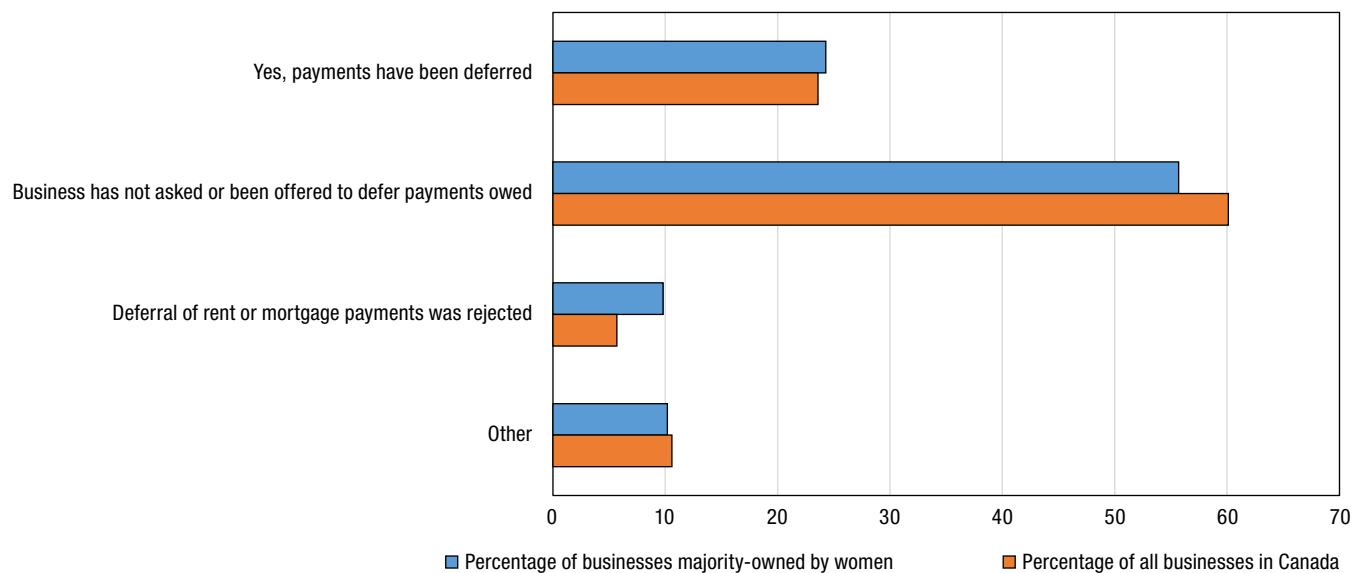
## Revenue: Businesses majority-owned by women were slightly more likely than all businesses to report a decline in revenue of 50% or more in April 2020 compared with April 2019

Businesses were asked how their revenues changed in April 2020 compared with April 2019. Close to two-thirds (67.2%) of businesses majority-owned by women and 70.2% of all businesses reported a decline in revenue in April 2020 compared with April 2019. Two-fifths (40.8%) of businesses majority-owned by women reported a decline in revenue of 50% or more from April 2019 to April 2020. Among all businesses in Canada, the percentage of those that reported a decline in revenue of 50% or more in April 2020 compared with a year earlier was slightly lower at just over one-third (35.3%).

## Deferring rent or mortgage payments: The percentage of businesses majority-owned by women that had their request for payment deferral due to the pandemic denied is almost double the percentage for all businesses

Overall, over two-thirds (68.1%) of all businesses reported making rent or mortgage payments. Over three-quarters of all businesses (76.4%) and those majority-owned by women (75.7%) reported not having their rent or mortgage payments deferred. However, 9.8% of businesses majority-owned by women reported that their request for a deferral of payments was denied, almost double the percentage for all businesses (5.7%) who reported the same. Furthermore, among these businesses that did not have their payments deferred, more than half (55.7%) of businesses majority-owned by women reported that they did not ask or were not offered to defer their payments, compared with three-fifths (60.1%) of all businesses.

**Chart 2**  
**Of businesses that make rent or mortgage payments, percentage of businesses reporting deferrals and non-deferrals of payments owed**



**Note:** Majority-owner owns 51% or more of the business. Respondents indicated if rent and mortgage payments were deferred because of COVID-19.

**Source:** Canadian Survey on Business Conditions: Impact of COVID-19 on businesses in Canada, May 2020 (Table 33-10-0257-01).

## Methodology

From May 29<sup>th</sup> to July 3<sup>rd</sup>, representatives from businesses across Canada visited Statistics Canada's website and took part in the online questionnaire about how COVID-19 is affecting their business. This iteration of the Canadian Survey on Business Conditions used a stratified random sample of business establishments with employees classified by geography, industry sector, and size. Estimation of proportions is done using calibrated weights to calculate the population totals in the domains of interest.

## References

Statistics Canada - Canadian Survey on Business Conditions: Impact of COVID-19 on businesses in Canada, May 2020.