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STRATEGIC INSIGHTS:
SMALL BUSINESSES PRIORITIES ACROSS MID-AMERICA

Successful small business owners balance customer service and growth with a long list of operational improvements and innovations. We asked entrepreneurs across our 18-state service area where they are focusing their efforts, what challenges they are working to resolve, and how technology can help them in this quest. What we found reinforces our core value of supporting small businesses with reliable connectivity services.

PUTTING THE CUSTOMER FIRST

Small businesses are focused on improving customer satisfaction in order to grow the business. Despite a large number of operational priorities, the top two imperatives involved delivering a better customer experience, whether that be better products or simply a superior service to customers.

TOP SMALL BUSINESS PRIORITIES

Category	Priority	Percentage
Customer Experience	Improving products or services	43%
Customer Experience	Delivering better customer service	39%
Growth	Attracting new customers	33%
Operations	Reducing expenses	29%
Operations	Improving productivity	29%

> "TO MAINTAIN AND GET NEW CLIENTS, THAT WOULD BE THE TOP PRIORITY IN ORDER TO STAY IN BUSINESS."
> – *Small Business Owner,* Minnesota

NAVIGATING OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

Running a small business requires a strong focus on addressing operational challenges. In fact, four of the five top responses relate to challenges associated with running and operating the business, with the biggest one being the growing cost of running a business.

TOP SMALL BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Category	Challenge	Percentage
Operations	Rising cost of doing business	47%
Operations	Hiring/retaining talent	28%
Growth	Getting new customers	27%
Operations	Limited staff	26%
Operations	Limited funds	24%

> "I WANT TO FIGURE OUT WAYS TO REDUCE MY STRESS FROM A TECHNOLOGY STANDPOINT."
> – *Small Business Owner,* Minnesota

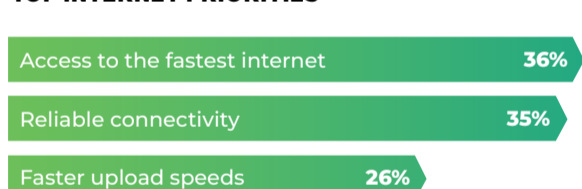## TECHNOLOGY THAT EMPOWERS SMALL BUSINESS

Communications technology is a vital lifeline for small businesses. Reliable Wi-Fi and phone are essential for smooth operations, seamless transactions, and customer communications. Technology that "just works" is key to ensuring these businesses can thrive. Our study asked small owners to identify the top priorities and challenges with their internet and phone service. The responses shed a light on how technology is helping small businesses get ahead.

SMALL BUSINESS INTERNET

FAST, RELIABLE AND SECURE

Small business owners want speedy internet connections that just work. Powering front and back of house operations with better application performance, timely point-of-sale (POS) transactions, great guest Wi-Fi and faster uploads and downloads for file sharing.
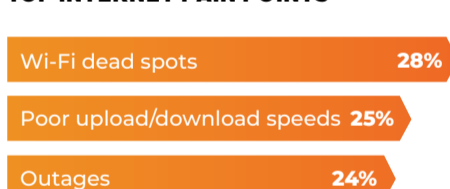
OVERCOMING PERFORMANCE LIMITATIONS

Inconsistent coverage, speed and internet performance disrupt small business operations. This can frustrate employees, upset customers, and waste time with troubleshooting and repairs that can take hours.

TOP INTERNET PRIORITIES

Priority	Percentage
Access to the fastest internet	36%
Reliable connectivity	35%
Faster upload speeds	26%

TOP INTERNET PAIN POINTS

Pain Point	Percentage
Wi-Fi dead spots	28%
Poor upload/download speeds	25%
Outages	24%

> "RELIABILITY. RELIABILITY. RELIABILITY. IF IT'S NOT ON, IF IT'S NOT WORKING, YOU HAVE NOTHING."
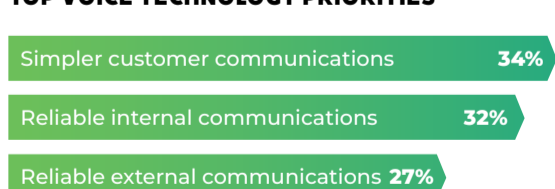> – *Small Business Owner,* New York

SMALL BUSINESS VOICE TECHNOLOGY

SIMPLE AND RELIABLE COMMUNICATIONS

Phone service is a lifeline to customers. Small businesses are looking for easy to use features to enhance the customer experience and a reliable service for internal and external communications.
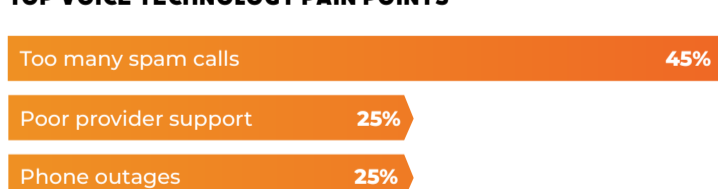
SPAM AND SERVICE CONCERNS

Spam remains a large pain point with nearly half of small businesses listing it as a top concern. They also want their phone service to be always available and repaired quickly when it isn't.

TOP VOICE TECHNOLOGY PRIORITIES

Priority	Percentage
Simpler customer communications	34%
Reliable internal communications	32%
Reliable external communications	27%

TOP VOICE TECHNOLOGY PAIN POINTS

Pain Point	Percentage
Too many spam calls	45%
Poor provider support	25%
Phone outages	25%

> "MAKE SURE IT'S ENCRYPTED, MAKING SURE IT'S INTEGRATED WITH YOUR ACTUAL PHONE NUMBER IN A VERY SMOOTH WAY."
> – *Small Business Owner,* Kentucky

KINETIC BUSINESS: BUILT FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Technology is intertwined with the way small business is conducted. It is clear from the participants' responses that owners have enough to think about and want solutions that just work. That's why Kinetic Business offers worry-free internet and voice solutions designed to help small businesses satisfy their customers and keep their teams productive – at a great value.

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SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
The findings in the Kinetic Small Business Connectivity Report are based on a survey of 251 small business respondents across 11 industries in the 18 states in which Kinetic Business offers its services.

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