Alan Newman Research Methodology Report:

Women Entrepreneurs: Starting a Business During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Introduction
In June 2022, AARP engaged ANR Market Research Consultants to conduct a quantitative research study among U.S. women age 40+ who started a business during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this research is to explore why women started their business, understand barriers encountered during the process, and identify training opportunities utilized. For more information about the content of this study, including the questionnaire and results, please either visit the project page located here: www.aarp.org/womenssmallbiz or contact the project lead: Lona Choi-Allum at lallum@aarp.org.

Sampling
For this study, a total of 608 women entrepreneurs ages 40-plus were surveyed.

Respondents were screened to meet the following criteria:

- Identify their gender as a woman
- Age 40+
- Started their business in 2020 or later
- Their business was never solely a franchise (i.e., they qualified if their business was a stand-alone entity prior to becoming a franchise)
- Their business has 100 employees or less

Survey length averaged 21.6 minutes by telephone and 15.1 minutes online.

Sample Source(s)
Lucid is a marketplace for panel suppliers and buyers, offering nonprobability online sample from a wide variety of panel suppliers. All nonprobability online completes for this study were obtained directly from Lucid’s marketplace of suppliers.

A variety of sample sources were used for this survey to maximize the number of completes obtained:

- Nonprobability online panel sample, provided by Fulcrum (n=338)
- B2B listed telephone sample, purchased from Data Axle (n=259)

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<th>Survey Statistics in Brief</th>
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➢ Unidos US – Workforce Development, with the online survey link distributed by this organization via email (n=8)
➢ The DC Small Business Development Center Network, with the online survey link distributed by this organization via email (n=3)
➢ Targeted recruitment via LinkedIn, which did not result in any completed surveys (though several individuals started the survey but did not qualify)

**Fielding**

The study was fielded from June 6, 2022 to July 19, 2022.

Telephone interviewing was active between 9:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., with some additional calling done between 5:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. as needed. If necessary, up to 8 call attempts per telephone number were made to reach an eligible respondent. All numbers were called at multiple times of the day as well as days of the week to maximize each respondent’s opportunity for inclusion in the study.

**Data Processing and Procedures Ensuring Data Quality**

Braun Research, Inc. hosted this study and ran its customary series of quality checks on the data collected. Specifically, checks included:

- Seeking flatliners/looking for any completes exhibiting what we think reflect respondent fatigue (i.e., selecting the first answer choice option for many questions in a row)
- Monitoring digital fingerprinting
- Checking for speeders who took the survey in an unreasonably short amount of time to have provided thoughtful responses
- Identifying duplicates (pinpointed with IP checks)
- Designing surveys with some thoughts in mind to minimize respondent fatigue and speeders, e.g., question choices should be mixed; grid questions can let respondents slip into a mode of similar or patterned answers, so breaking up grids up with an open-ended question, etc.

A total of 56 respondents who did not meet the above criteria were removed and replaced for QC purposes.

**Weighting**

All data are unweighted. While Scarborough does offer statistics for small business owners, there is no variable for year the business was started, and we hypothesize that statistics would be substantially different when comparing pre-pandemic to mid-pandemic start-up dates. Thus, we have chosen to leave the dataset unweighted.
Margin of Error and Design Effect

The total sample of 608 respondents yields a maximum statistical error of ±4.0% at the 95% level of confidence. (This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size, the results obtained in the sample would be within ±4.0 percentage points of the results obtained had everyone in the population been interviewed.)

It should be noted that the MOE is not technically appropriate for this study or other nonprobability surveys because a frame does not exist for all persons in the population from which the sample was selected; not every person in the population has a positive probability of selection; and the probability of selection can’t be computed for each person selected for the study.¹ No design effect was calculated or included in the estimates of standard error.

Sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error in this study. There may be other unmeasured error (e.g., measurement error or nonresponse bias) in this or any other public opinion poll.