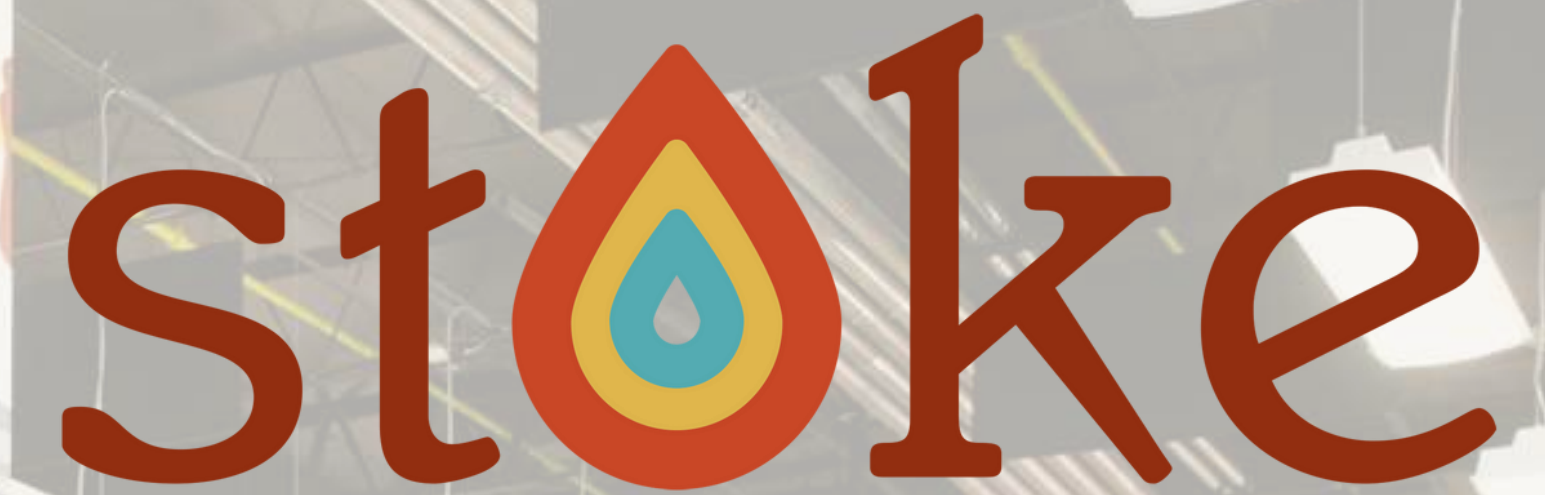


October 8, 2025

STOKE PARTNERSHIP

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Brittany Sotelo
Economic Development Director

The Stoke logo features the word "Stoke" in a brown, serif font. The letter "o" is replaced by a stylized flame or drop shape with concentric layers of orange, yellow, and blue.

Stoke

Cultivating Community +
Empowering Entrepreneurs

PRESENTED BY :
HEATHER GREGORY

www.stokedenton.com

HISTORY OF STOKE

July 2016

- City of Denton 5 year lease at 608 E Hickory St Suite 128 begins

December 2017

- Hickory & Rail Ventures, LLC and City of Denton enter into public/private partnership to operate Stoke. City pays rent and handles maintenance and repairs.

June 2021

- City's lease at 608 E Hickory St Suite 128 expires.

July 2021

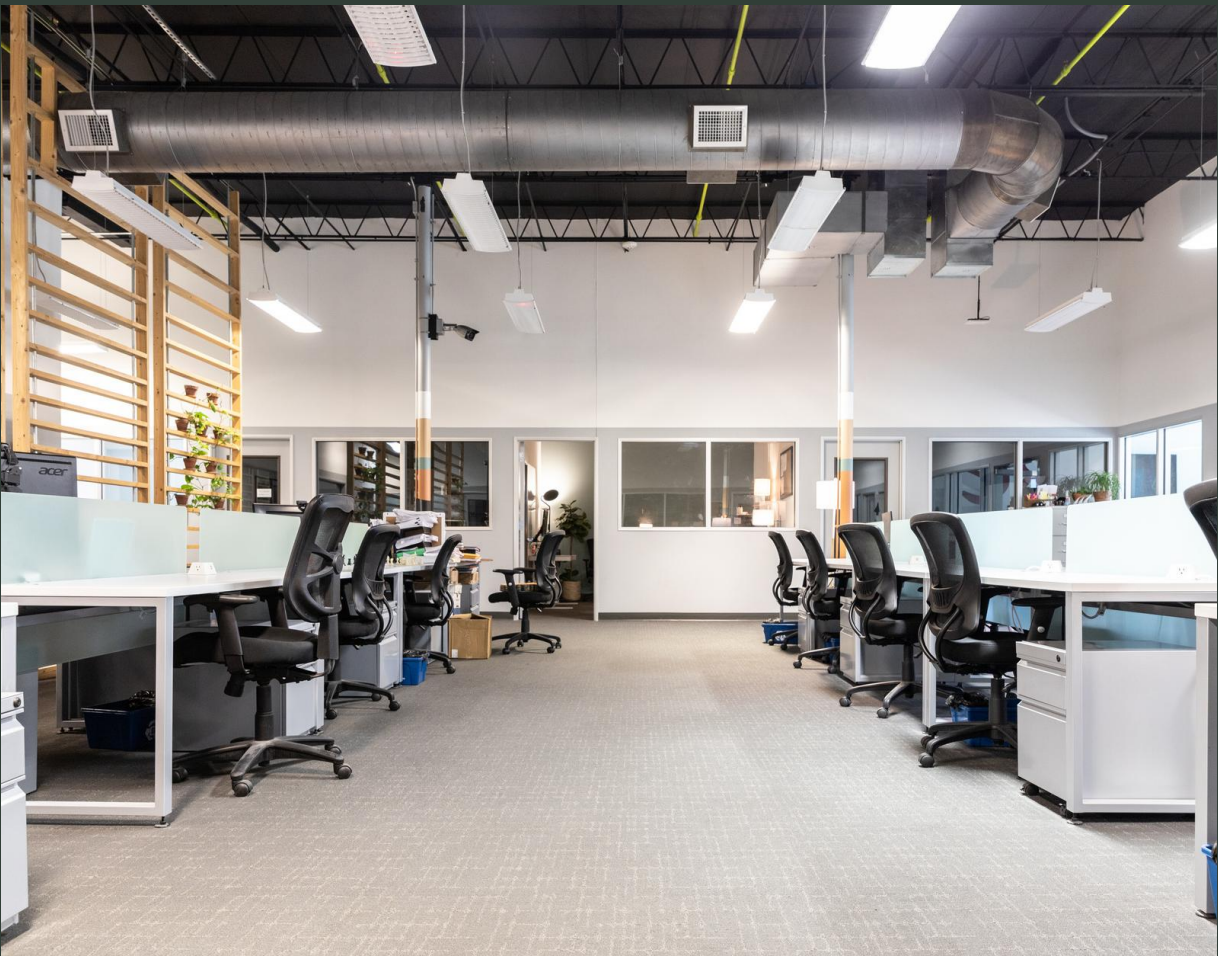
- H&RV signs lease with Martino Group, adds 12 new private offices
- City/H&RV partnership shifts to focus on entrepreneurship program support.

2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

- Unanimously approved by EDPB and City Council to continue support entrepreneurship program via our public/private partnership.

2025

- H&RV renewed lease on Suite 128 with expansion into an additional 2,725 sq ft
- H&RV adds 8 private offices, 2 unisex restrooms, and a large multiuse community room



MEMBER EVENTS

by **Varsity Sports Massage**

STOKE PRESENTS

BYOC: ULTIMATE CHEESE PARTY



**FEB 14
12PM**

THE SEQUEL

**BRING A CHEESE OR
ACCOUTREMENT WE'LL BRING
THE BEVS.**

Stoke's Annual

Festivals & White Elephant

Wednesday, 18th December 2024
4pm-5pm at the Community Table.
\$20 and under white elephant gift.

MEMBERSHIP IMPACTS

- 100 monthly member companies on average
- 72% of member survey respondents over the last 24 months say their business has experienced growth
 - Sales growth
 - Job growth
 - New clients
 - Raising funds
 - Service/product expansion
- 8.9/10 Member Satisfaction Rate
- 7.5/10 Net Promoter Score

I think the staff at Stoke do a tremendous job of creating community among the people using the space!

Stoke Member

[since becoming a member at Stoke] I've increased my number of clients from 3 to 50; I have 3 part-time employees with one more soon to join; I have 4 volunteers; and won the community award for the Pitch Competition.

Stoke Member

PROGRAMS + EVENTS



DENTON
PITCH
COMPETITION



GLOBAL
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
WEEK
NORTH TEXAS



DENTON, TX

GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK



LUNCH + LEARN
SKY MCCLURE
Improve Google Ads
NOV 18
12PM-1PM



COFFEE + CONVO
ANITA O'NEAL CPA, CFA
Business Finances
NOV 19
9AM-10AM



**BIG IDEAS
CREATIVE MIXER**
NOV 20
6PM-8PM



**DENTON PITCH
COMPETITION**
NOV 21
4:30PM-7:30PM



**FREEBIE FRIDAY
FREE COWORKING**
NOV 22
9AM-5PM



stoke



BIG IDEAS

creative mixer

November 20 6pm - 8pm
Denton County Brewing Company

stoke



GLOBAL
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
WEEK
NORTH TEXAS



- Hosted 5 events with over 175 attendees throughout the week
- Showcased 9 Big Ideas at the Creative Mixer including the forthcoming Art-O-Mat machine
- Showcased 15 businesses through the Pitch Competition + Entrepreneur Expo

EDP25- 029; October 8, 2025

stoke

DENTON



DENTON PITCH
COMPETITION

+ ENTREPRENEUR EXPO

COME OUT AND SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR DENTON'S
ENTREPRENEURS AND SMALL BUSINESSES AS TEN
INNOVATIVE DENTON-BASED COMPANIES PITCH FOR
THEIR CHANCE TO WIN CASH FOR THEIR BUSINESS
GOALS.

AT THE ENTREPRENEUR EXPO - LEARN ABOUT DENTON'S
ENTREPRENEURS AS THEY COME TOGETHER TO
SHOWCASE THEIR BUSINESSES AND IDEAS.

NOV
21

SUNAGO BELL
101 S LOCUST ST
8TH FLOOR
DENTON, TX 76201

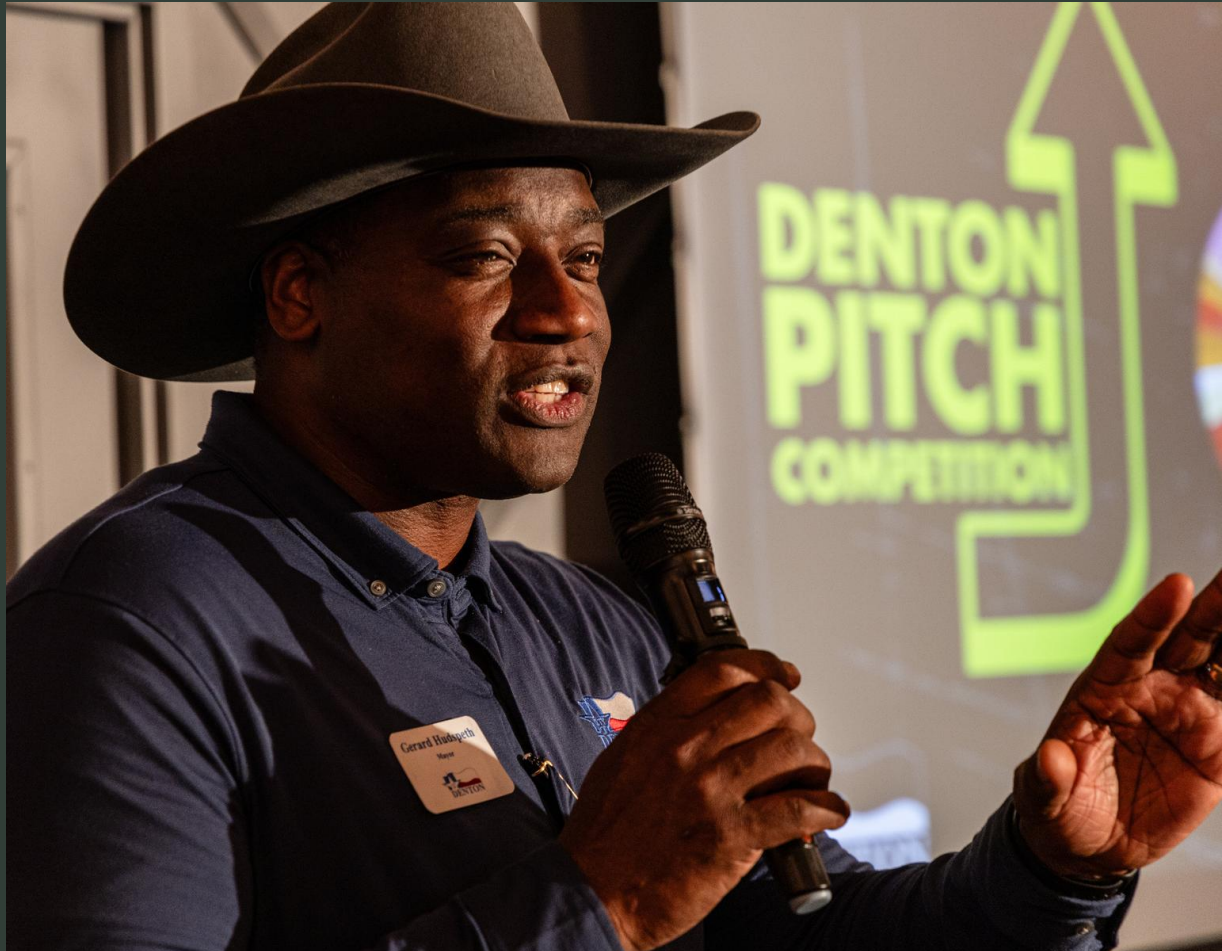
4:30-
7:30 PM

DOORS: 4:30 PM
PITCHES: 5:00 PM
NETWORKING HAPPY HOUR & EXPO: 6:30 PM

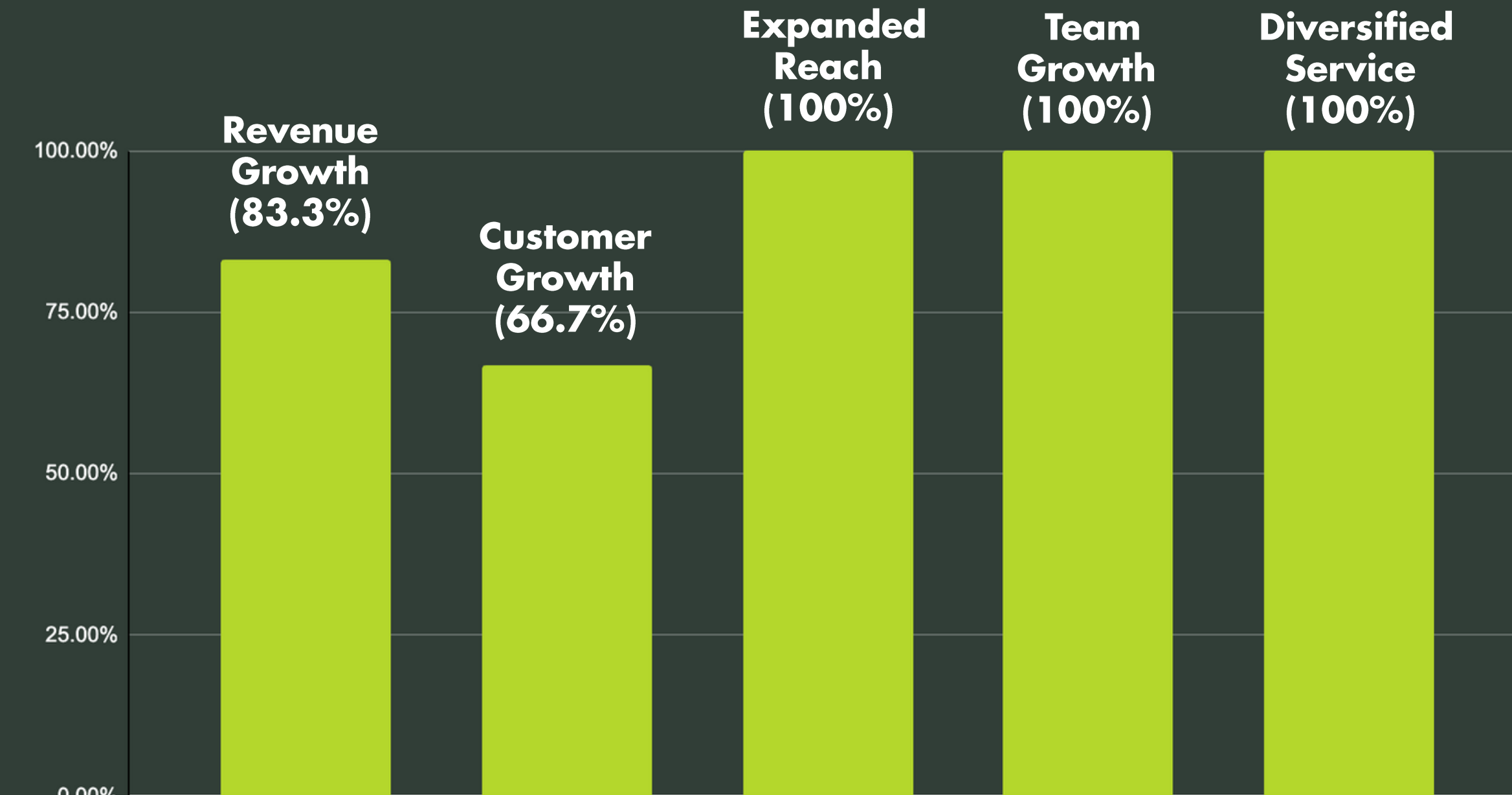
FREE TO ATTEND, RSVP:





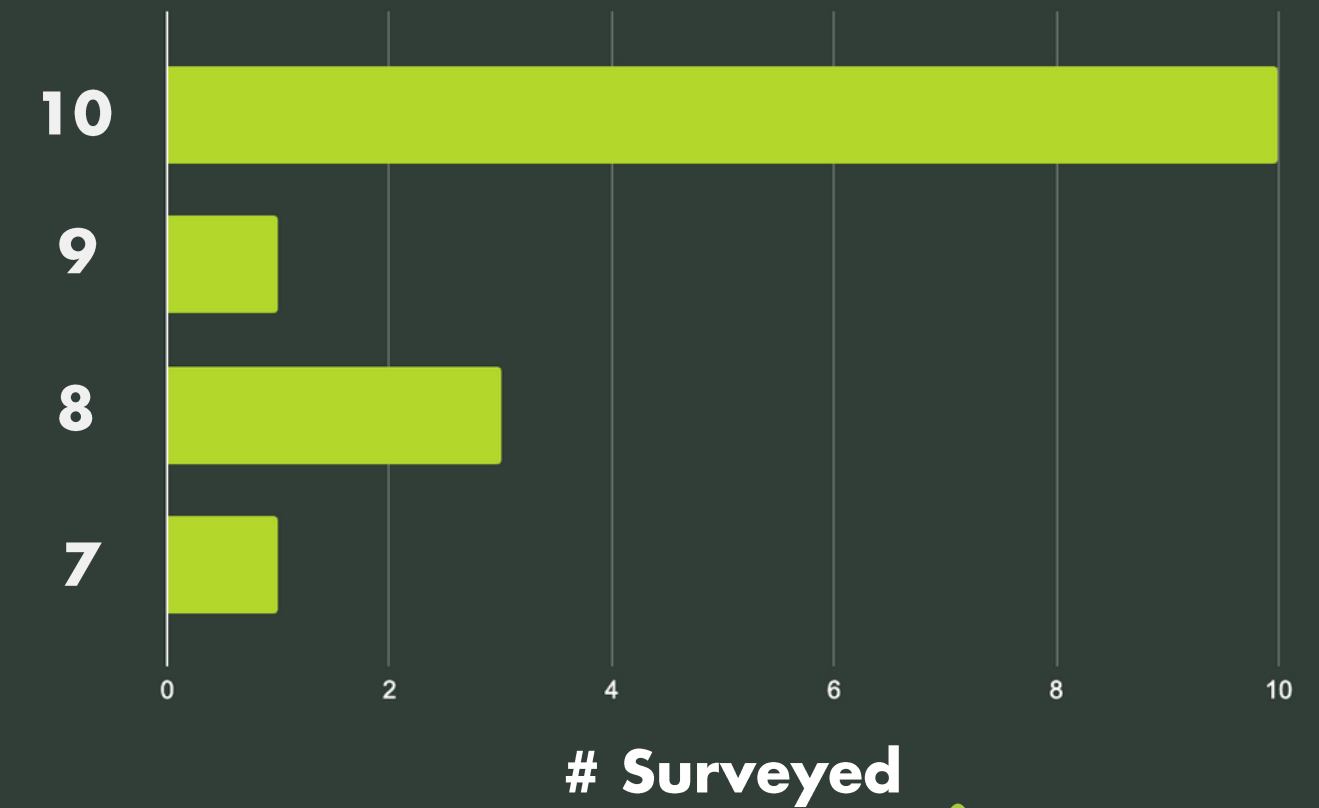


- Coached over 40 entrepreneurs
- \$30,000+ awarded to Denton businesses
- 80% of winners have been women
- 40% of winners have been BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+



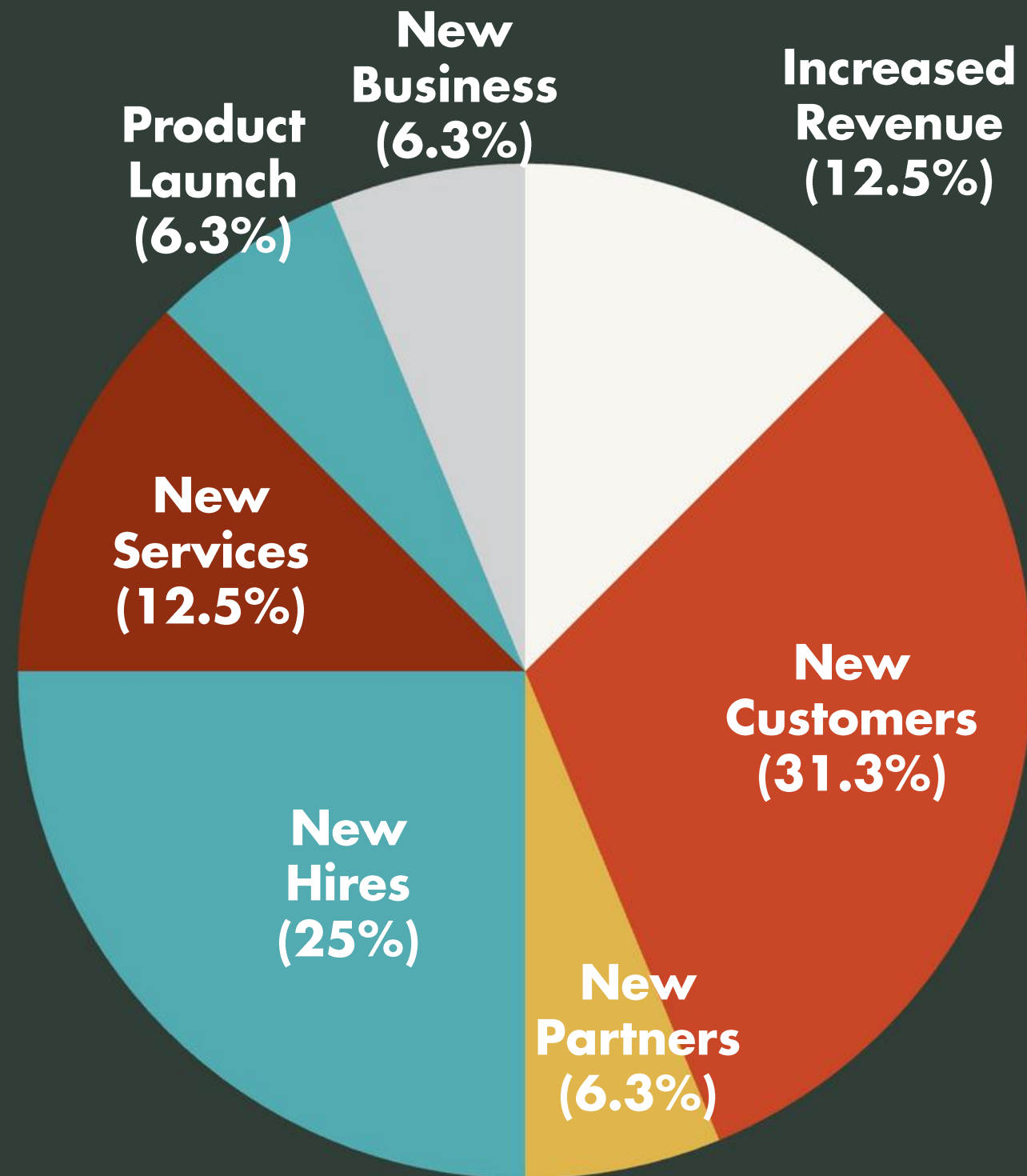
EDP25- 029; October 8, 2025

Effectiveness



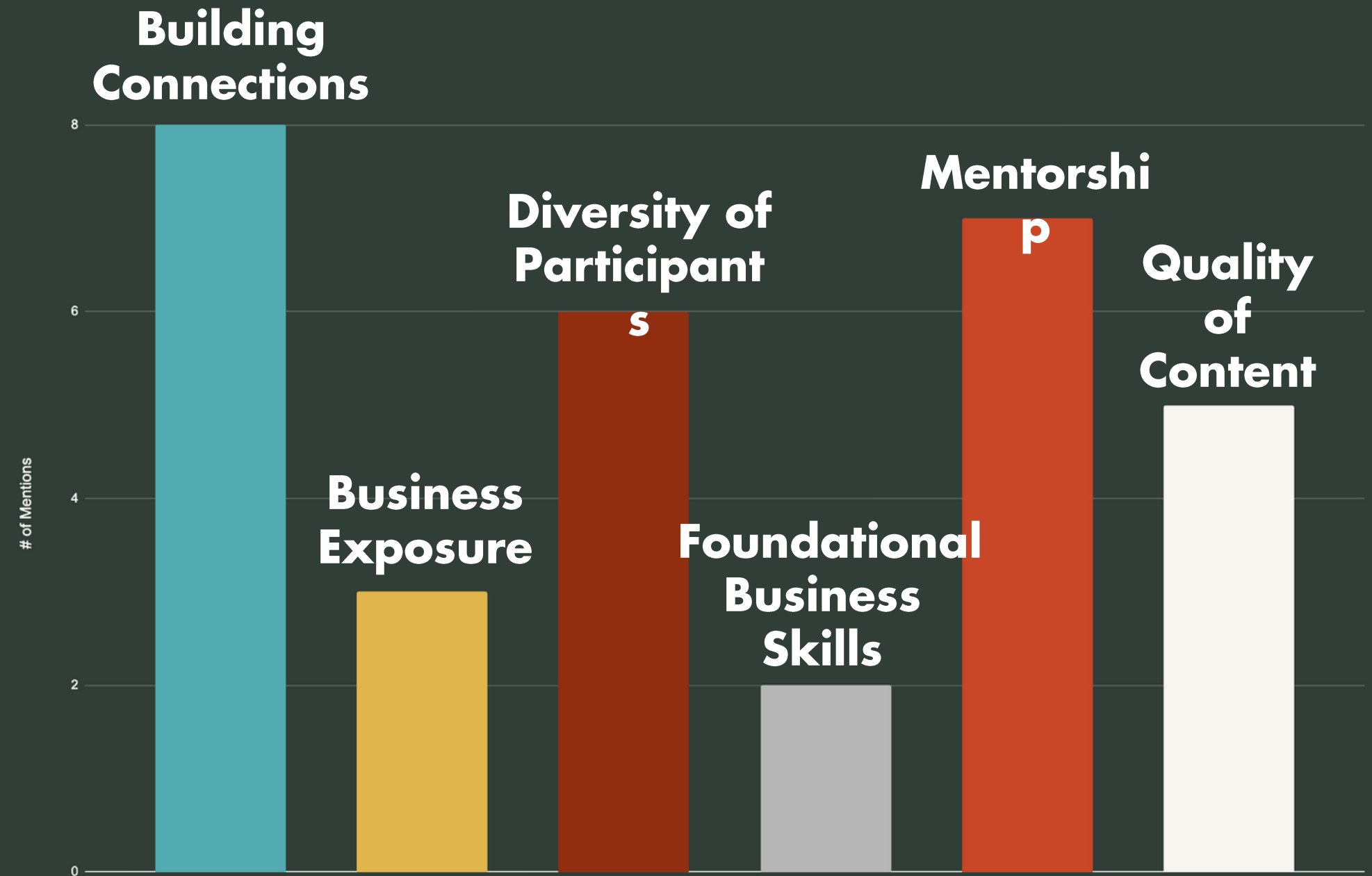
**DENTON
PITCH
COMPETITION**

DPC + ENTREPRENEUR EXPO IMPACTS



Reported Business Growth

EDP25- 029; October 8, 2025



Most Beneficial
Aspects

2022 WINNER UPDATES



- Used funds to purchase improved equipment to enhance offerings
- Launched new branch of business, creating an entirely new customer base and acquiring 19 new customers to date
- Revenue Growth: Projected 26% revenue growth (YoY) for 2025
- Client Growth: 21% increase in customers over last year (with 4 months left in the year)
- Job Growth: Hired first full time staff in March 2025. Over 20 independent contractors engaged annually
- Expanded Service Offerings: Added video content packages and social media management services to meet evolving client needs

2023 WINNER UPDATES

- Used funds to go from private pay only to accepting insurance.
- Currently accepts 6 insurance carriers with more in the works
- Revenue Growth: 400% revenue growth since 2023
- Customer Growth: 350% increase in patient visits per week
- Job Growth: 300% increase in staff
- Improved Efficacy: 92% of patients that are discharged are discharged for having met goals vs attrition for moving
- Expanded Service Reach: Between 150–200% growth in school screening services
- Customer Validation: Best of Denton in 2024. Nominated for 3 Best of Denton categories in 2025



2024 WINNER UPDATES

- Used funds to furnish second therapy office in order to hire a second therapist for the practice
- Revenue Growth: Projected 68% revenue growth (YoY for 2025)
- Customer Growth: 45% increase in clients
- Job Growth: 100% increase in staff
- Expanded Service Reach & Service Diversification: Pursuing EMDR training, providing more services and expanding clientele
- Enhanced Community Impact: Newfound ability to regularly donate to community causes, pay for sponsorships, and attend more tabling events



AccelerateHER

2025 Cohort



Monique Segovia
The Brown Thumb



Alex Murray
Unleash You Coaching



Julie Pavelek
Denton Classic Pilates



Cat Colonna
Varsity Sports Massage



Katina Butler
Hood Sensory



Angela Brewer
Plot Your Path Travel



Gisella Glasgow
Events GK

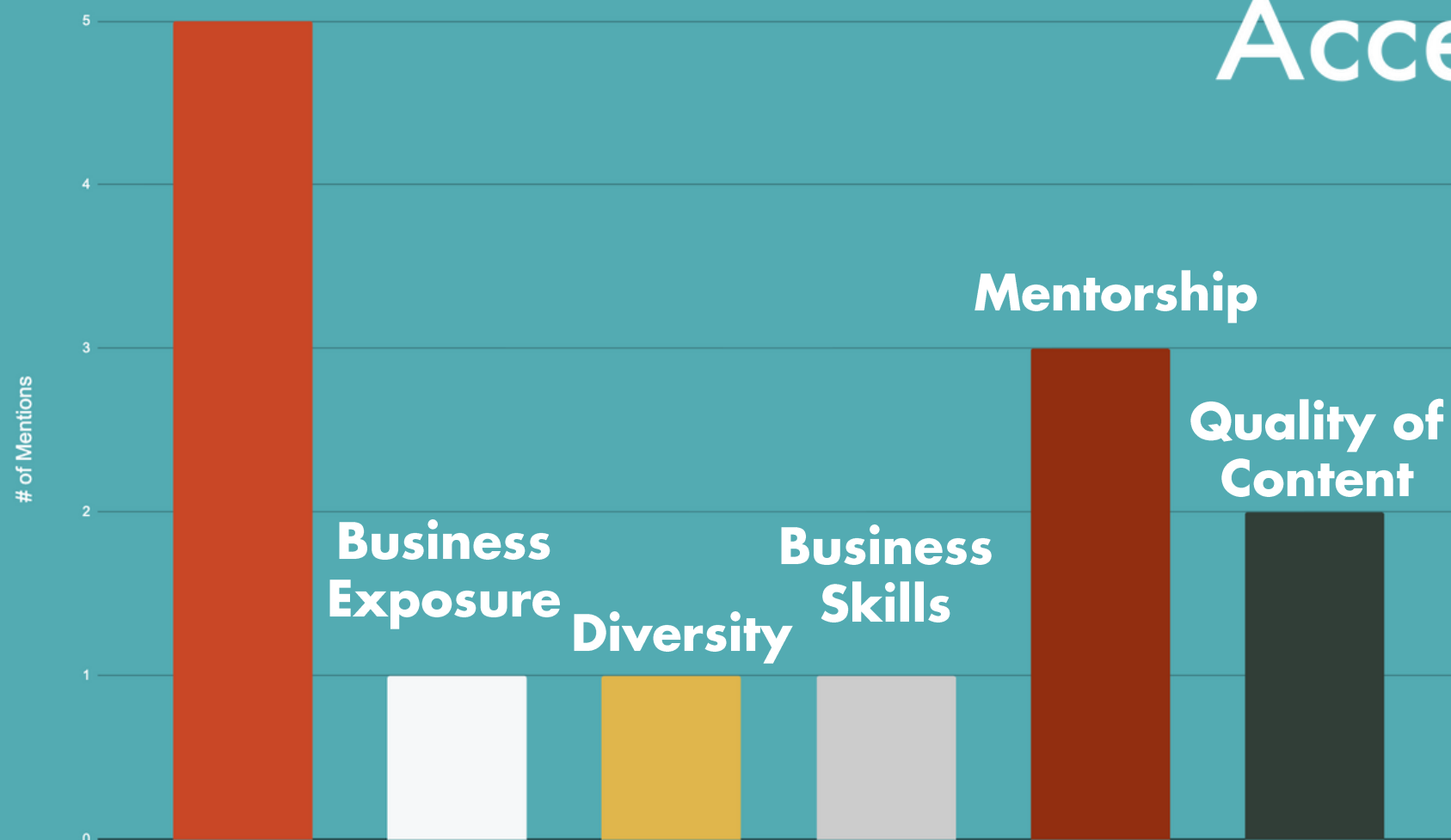


stoke



- 5 cohorts completed since 2020
- 34 female founders in total have completed the 5 month program
- Began hosting Alumni meetups on a quarterly basis
- 2025/2026 cohort of 7 begins in September

Building Connections



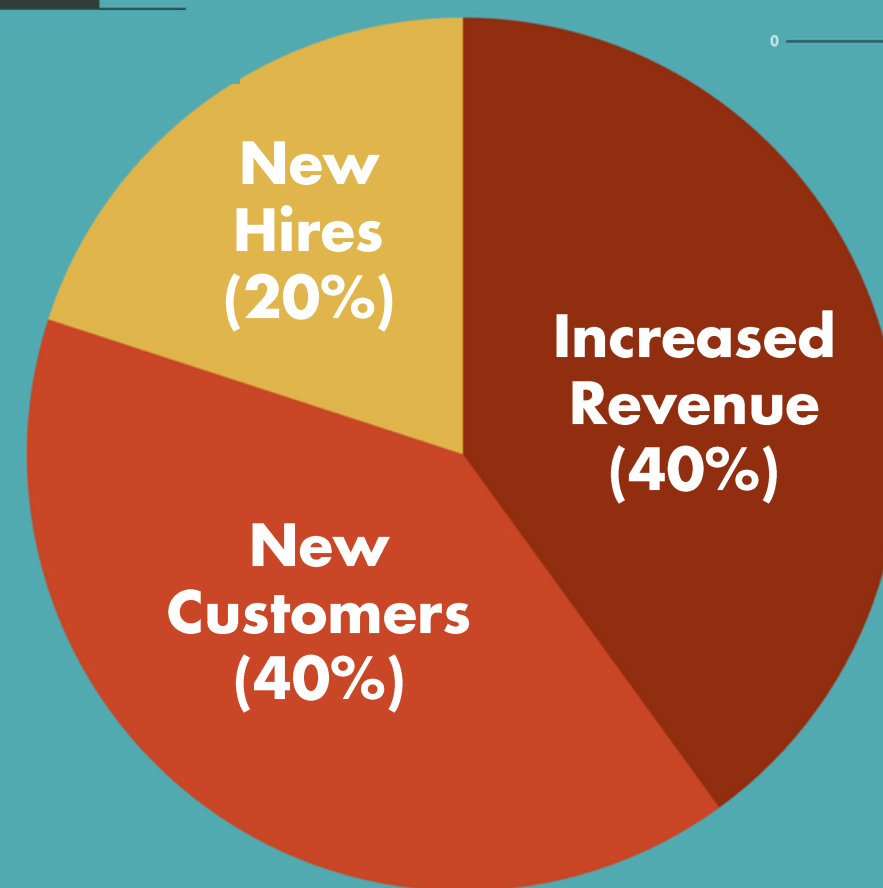
Most Beneficial Aspects



Business Financial Literacy

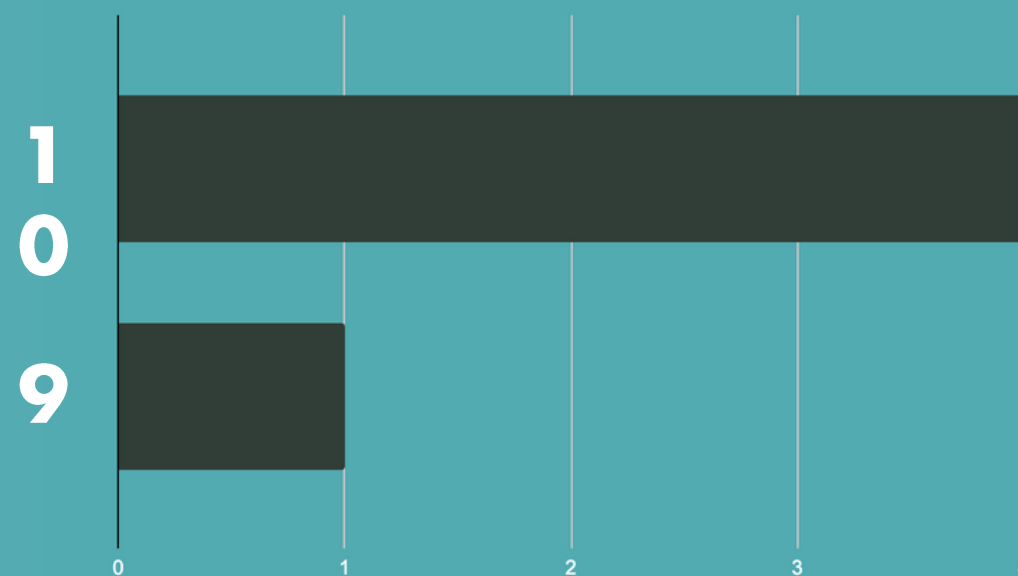


Business Outcomes



Reported Business Growth

Effectiveness



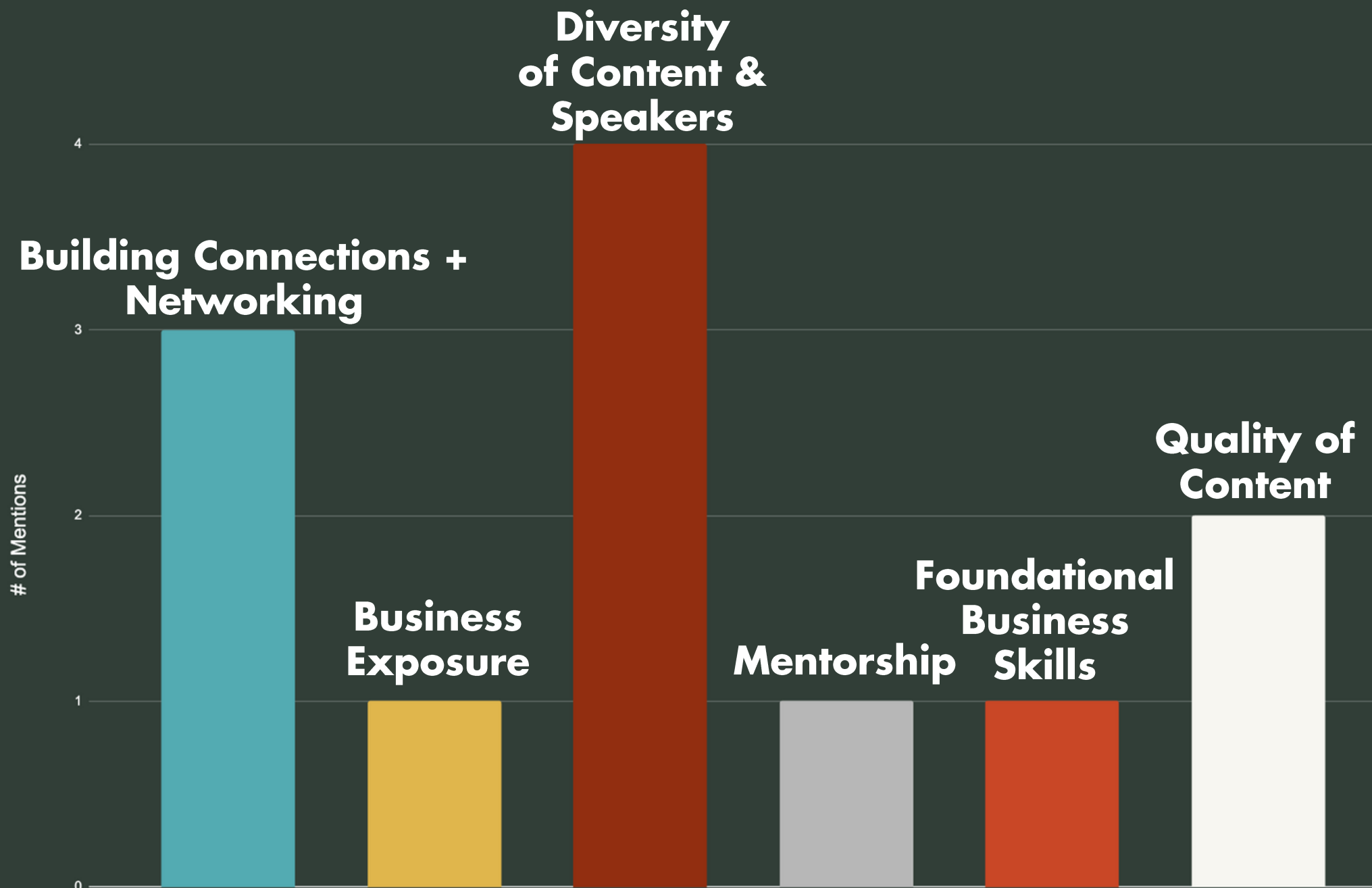


- Focus is networking + education for creative entrepreneurs
- 5 events since launching in March 2024
- 109 participants
- Attendees have included designers, musicians, videographers, writers, makers, artists, photographers, retail business owners and more

COFFEE + CONVO

morning meetup with **stoke**

Most Beneficial Aspects



EDP25- 029; October 8, 2025

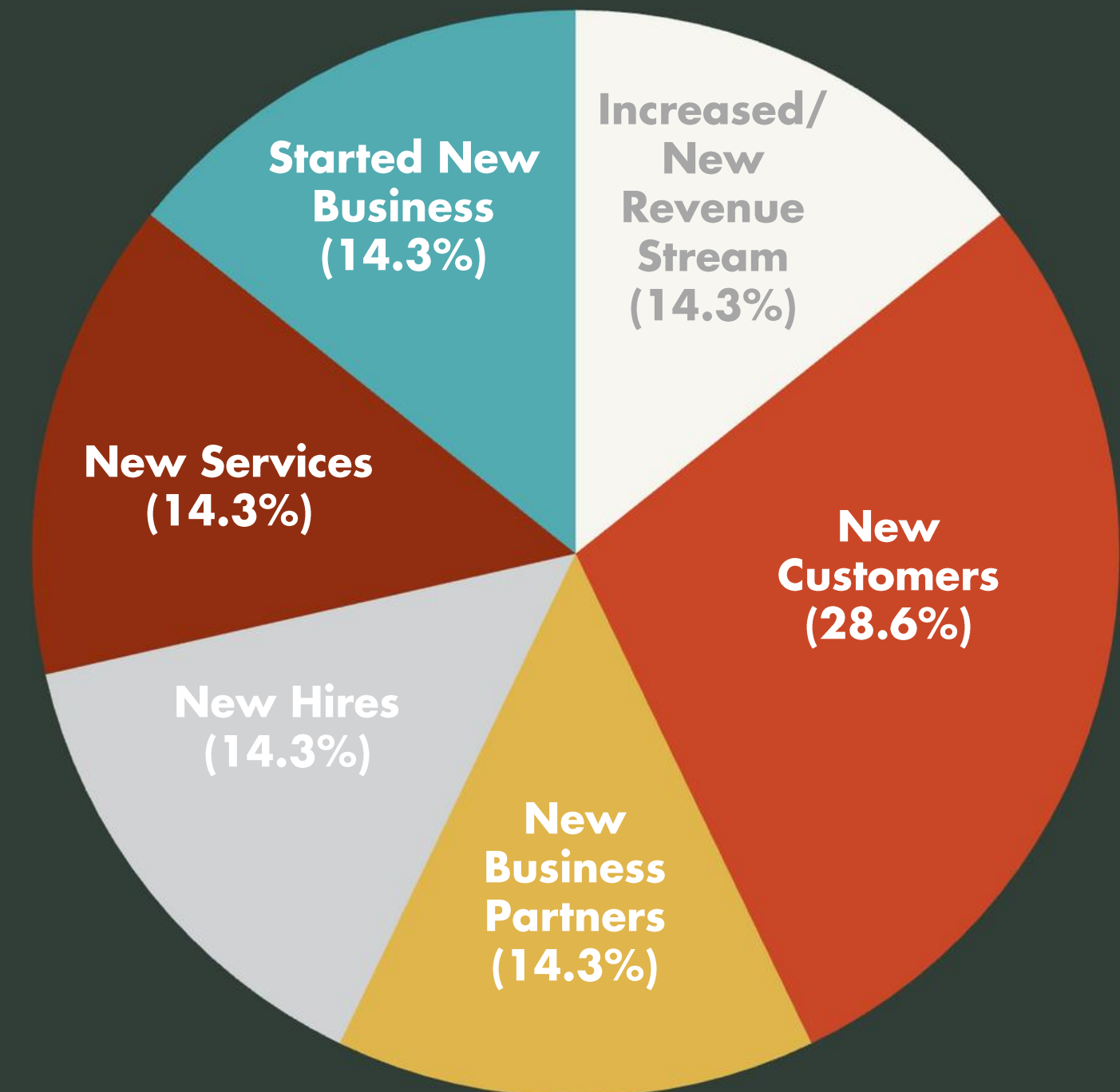
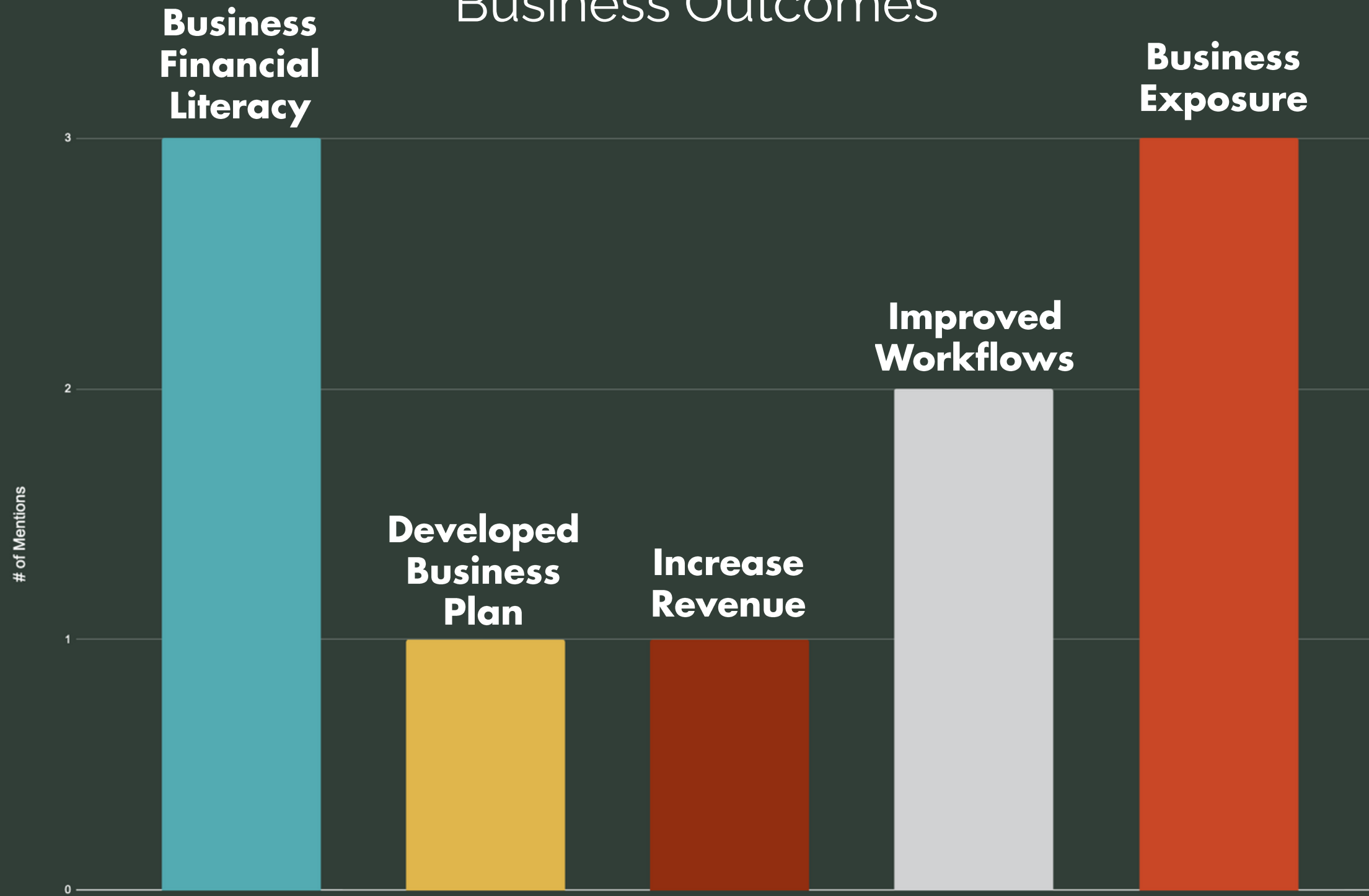




morning meetup with **stoke**

Business Outcomes

Reported Business Growth



stoke presents **MAY 8**

flint conf

DENTON'S CONFERENCE FOR
CREATIVES AND ENTREPRENEURS

CONTENT: 8:30AM - 4 PM HAPPY HOUR: 4 PM	MAY 8, 2025	PATTERSON-APPLETON ARTS CENTER 400 E HICKORY ST. DENTON TX, 76201
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 **Headshots**

 **Networking**

 **Speaker Sessions**

 **Breakfast + Coffee + Lunch**

 **Hands-on Workshop**

 **Breakout Sessions**

LEARN. CONNECT. GROW YOUR BUSINESS.

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT:
STOKEDENTON.COM/FLINT

   
@STOKEDENTON
LEARN MORE AND GET
YOUR TICKETS TODAY!







Elle Hall
(Girlfriend's, Budget LLC.)



Juli James
(EqALL)



Monique Segovia
(The Brown Thumb)



Janette Orona
(Azul Therapies LLC.)



Briana Wucinski
(SUNSEV Creative)



Jacqueline Hayes
(Empowered Living Group)



Lillia Whittington
(Denton Sewing School)



Neil Foote
(emcee)



stokedenton.com/flint

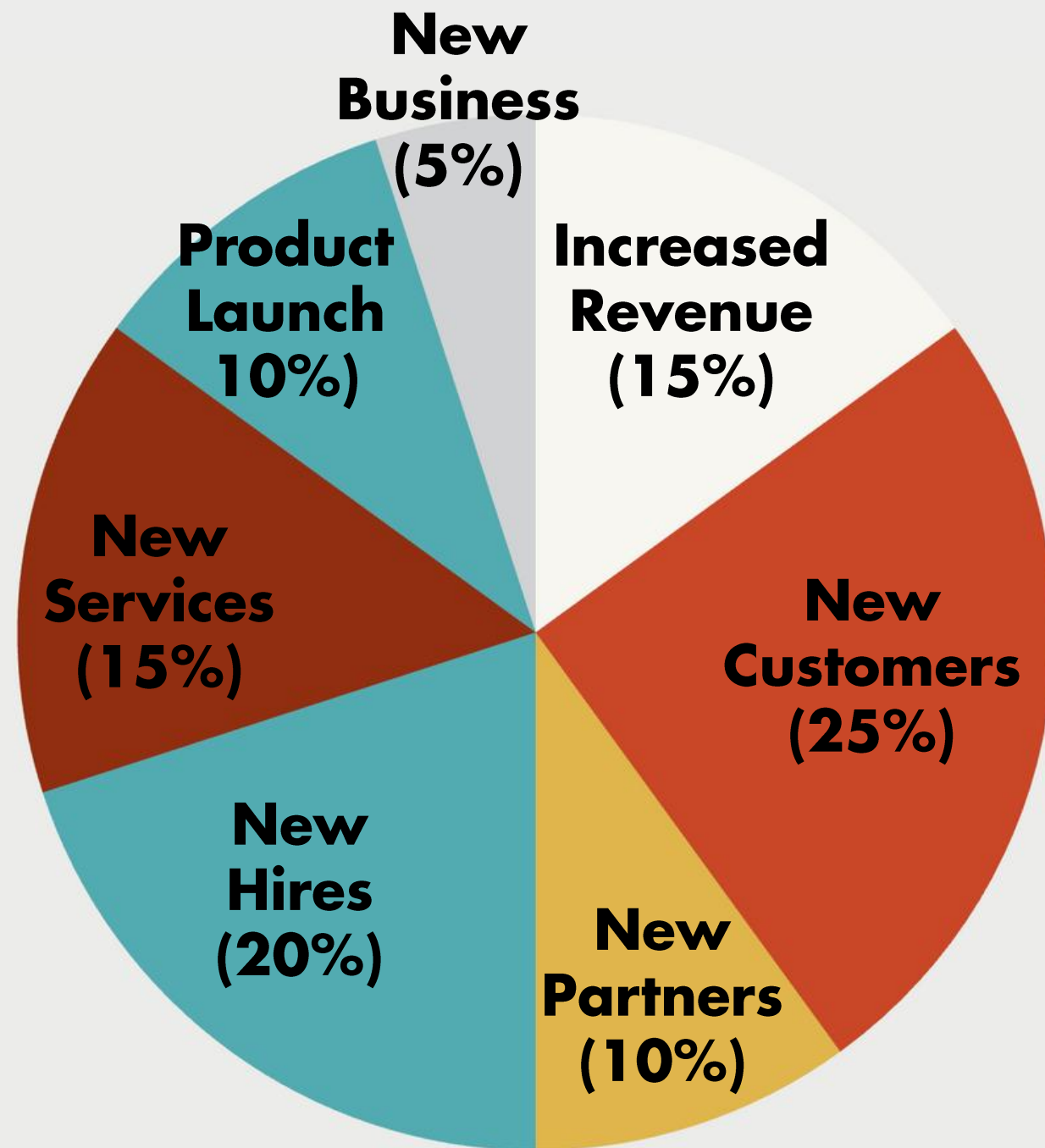


Emily Roden
(ReadyRosie, Frankly)

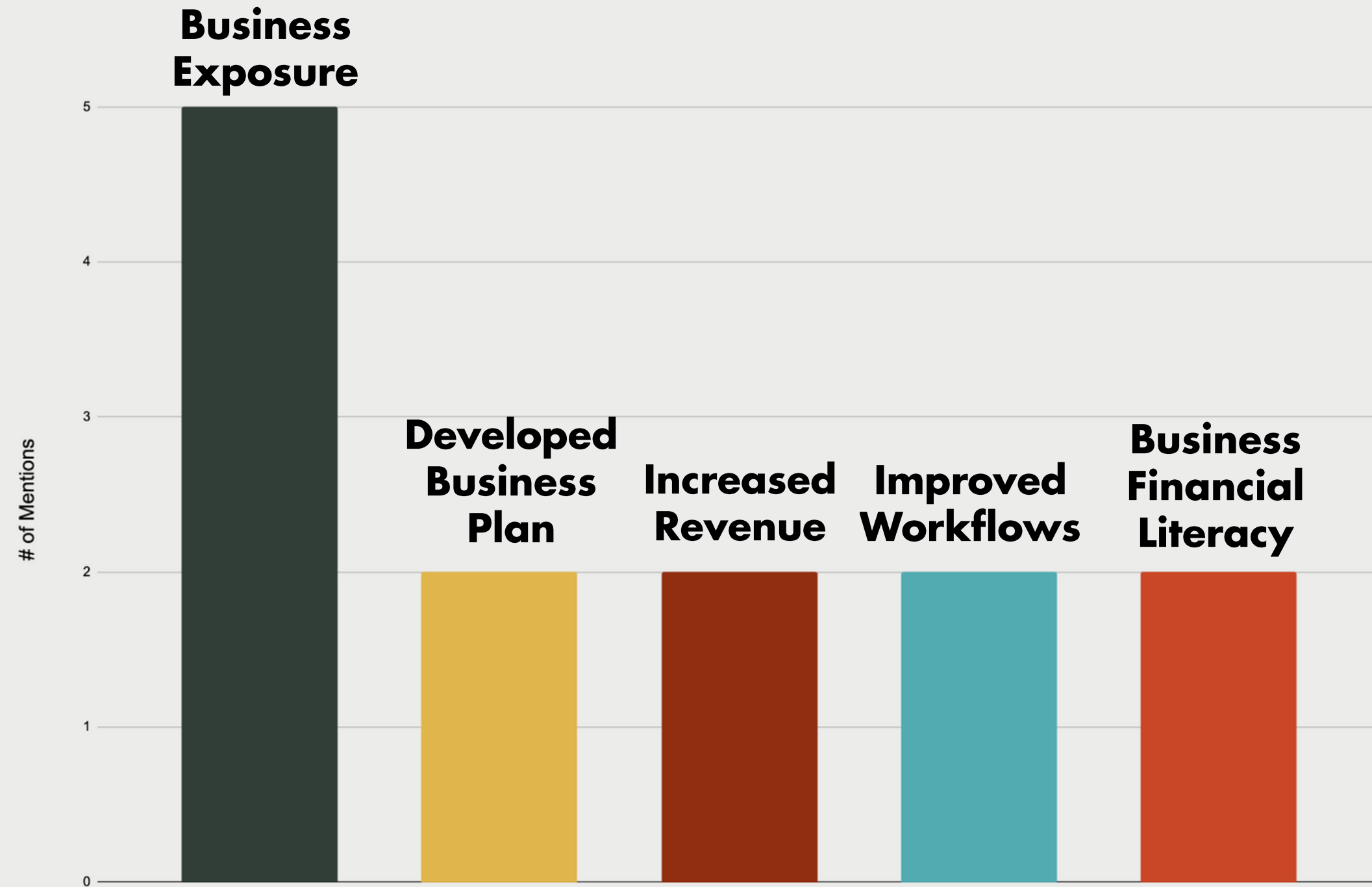
- 85 attendees
- Lineup included 6 speaker sessions, 1 workshop, 2 networking opportunities, and First Strike kickoff event
- Free headshots for attendees
- Playbook provided for attendees including worksheets, resources, and networking prompts

flintconf

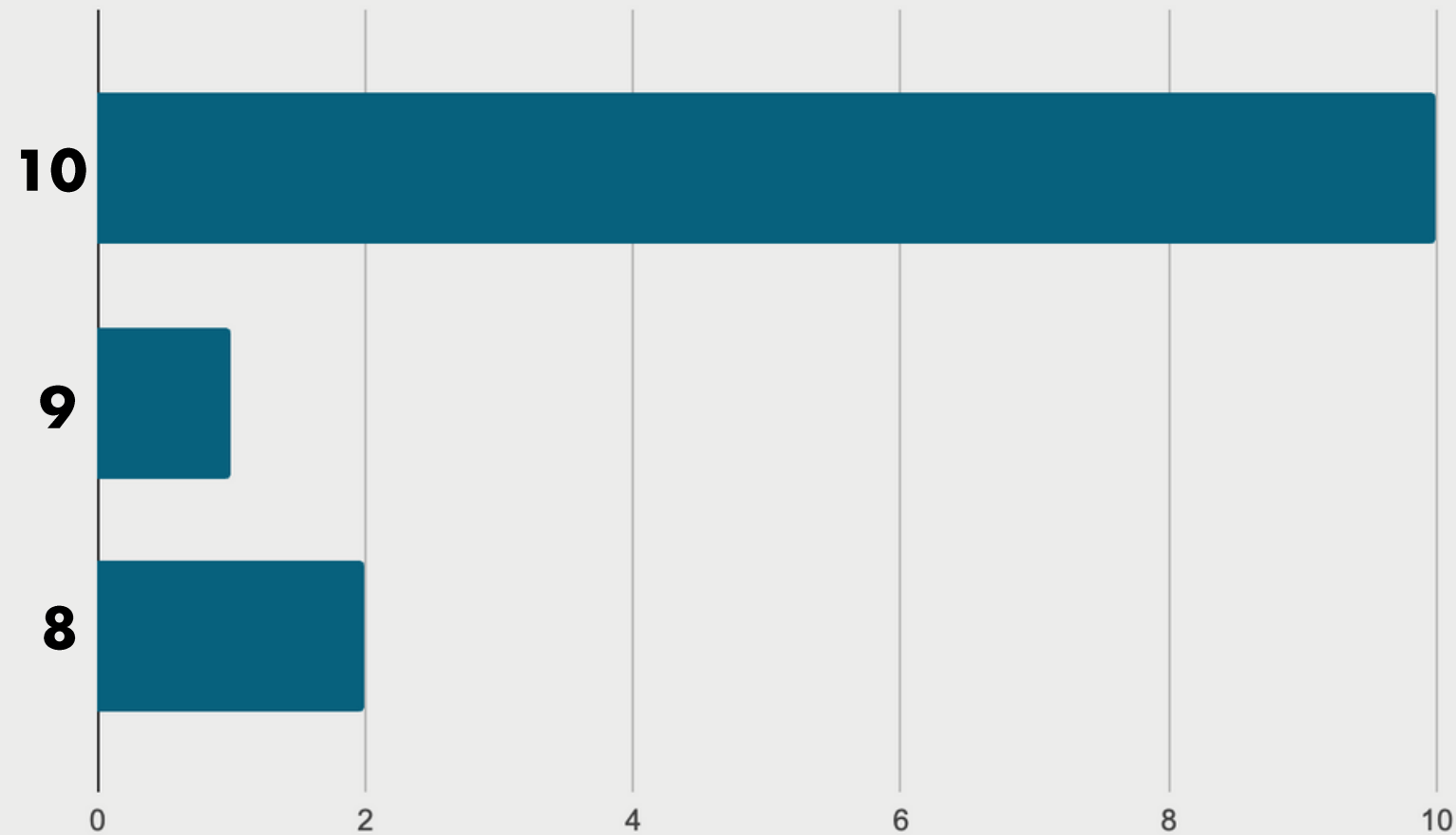




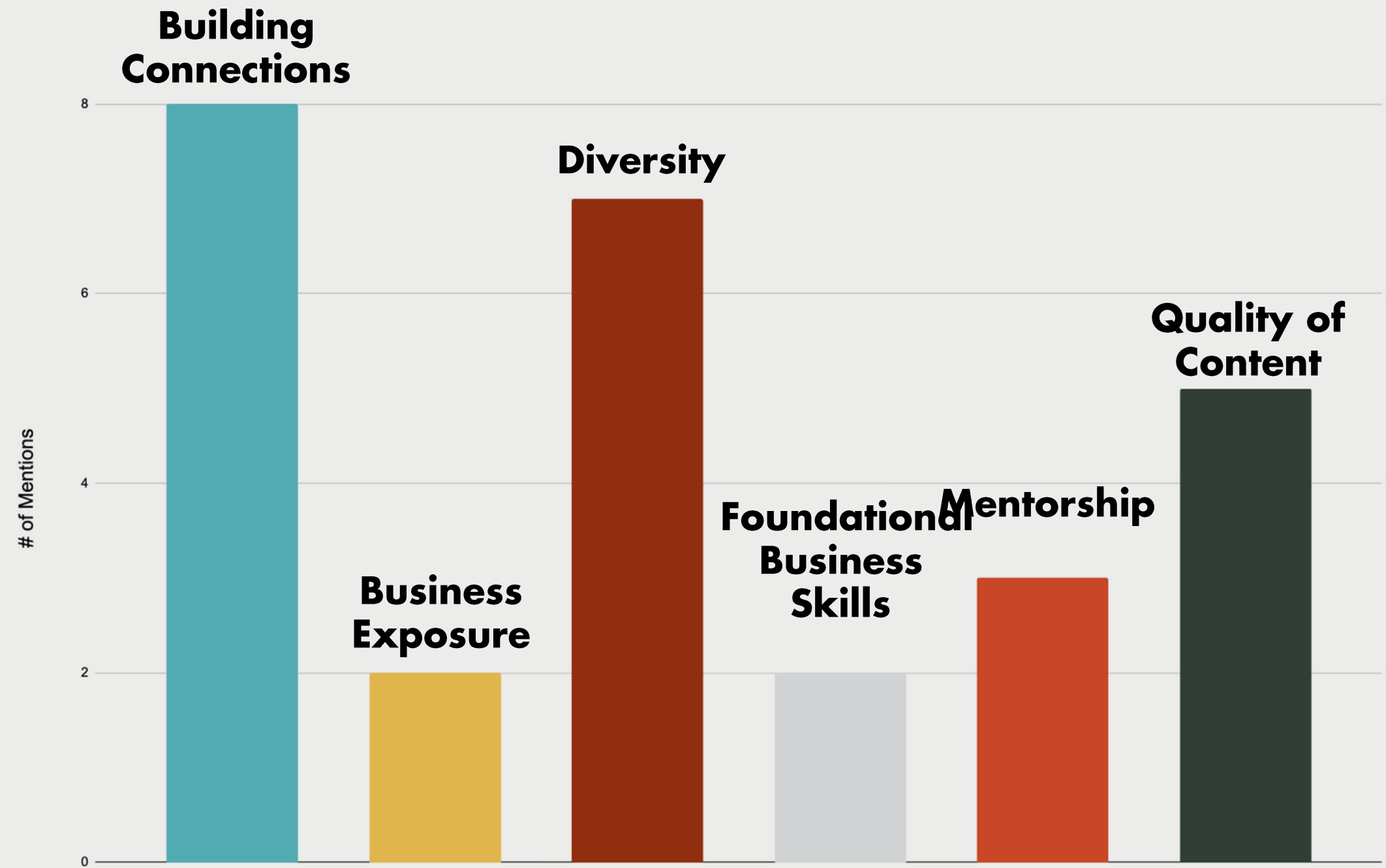
Reported Business Growth



Business Outcomes



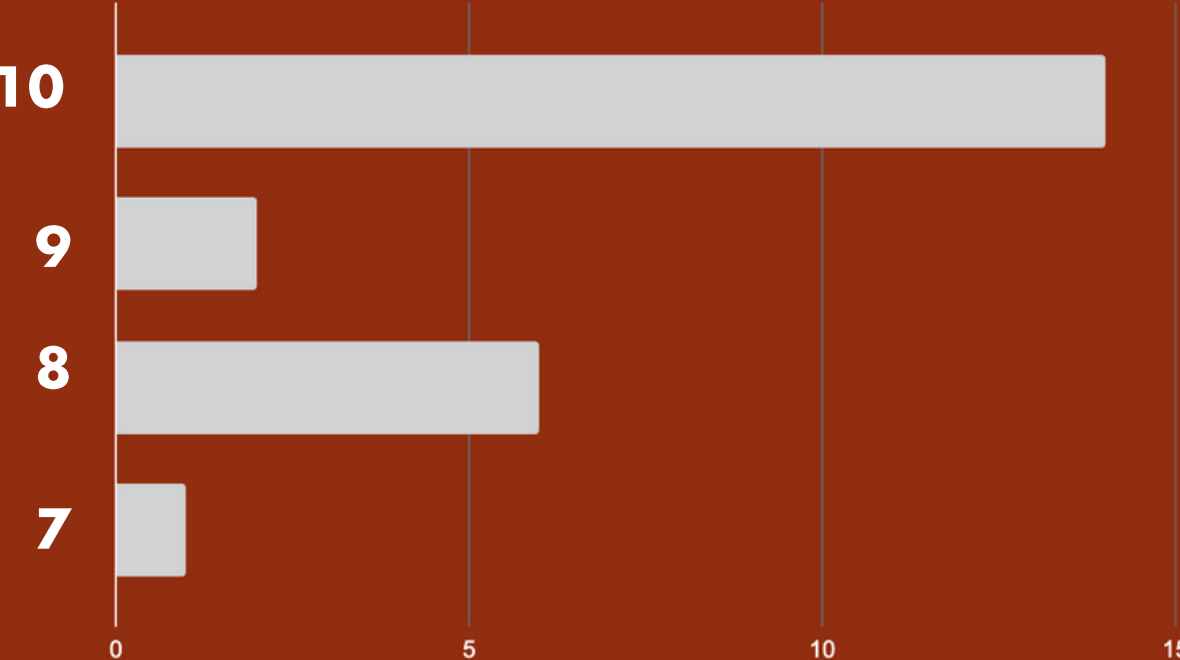
Effectiveness



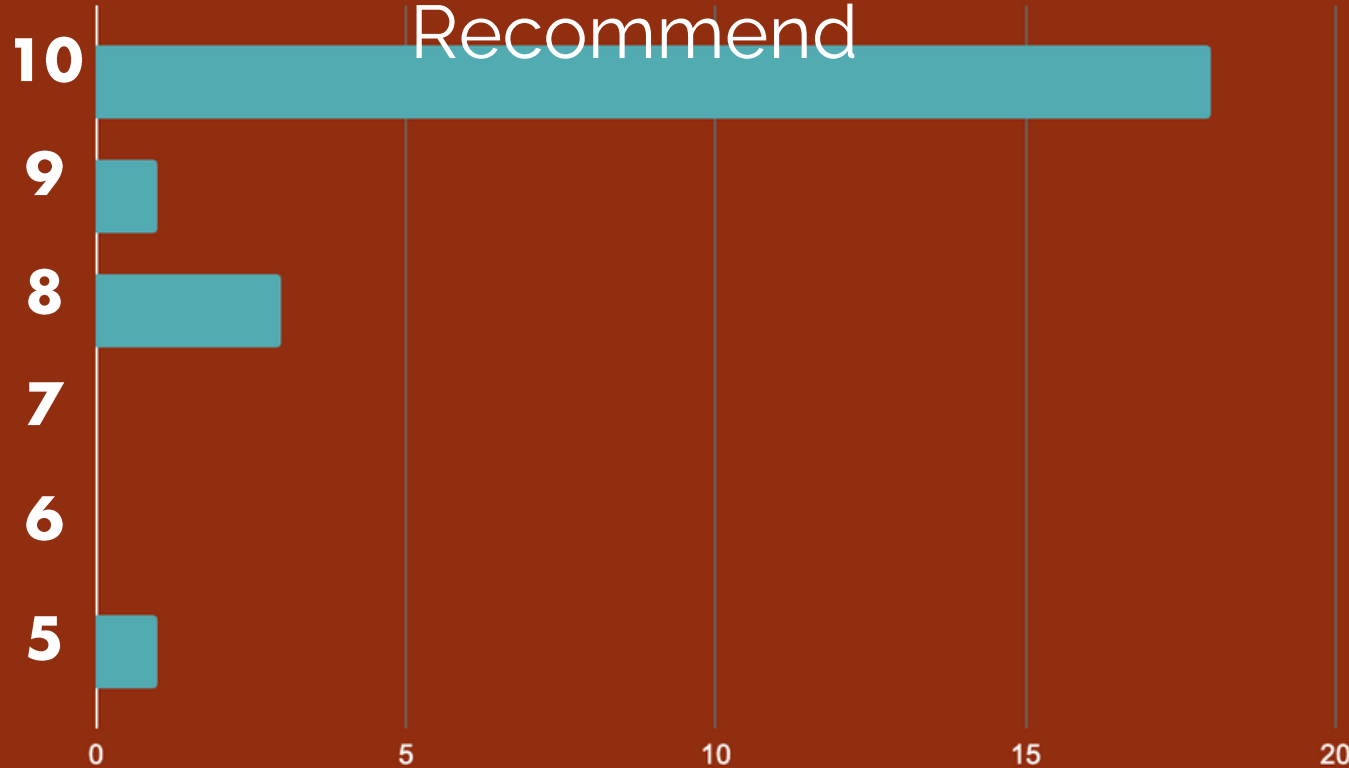
Most Beneficial Aspects

PROGRAM IMPACTS + OUTCOMES

Overall Program Effectiveness

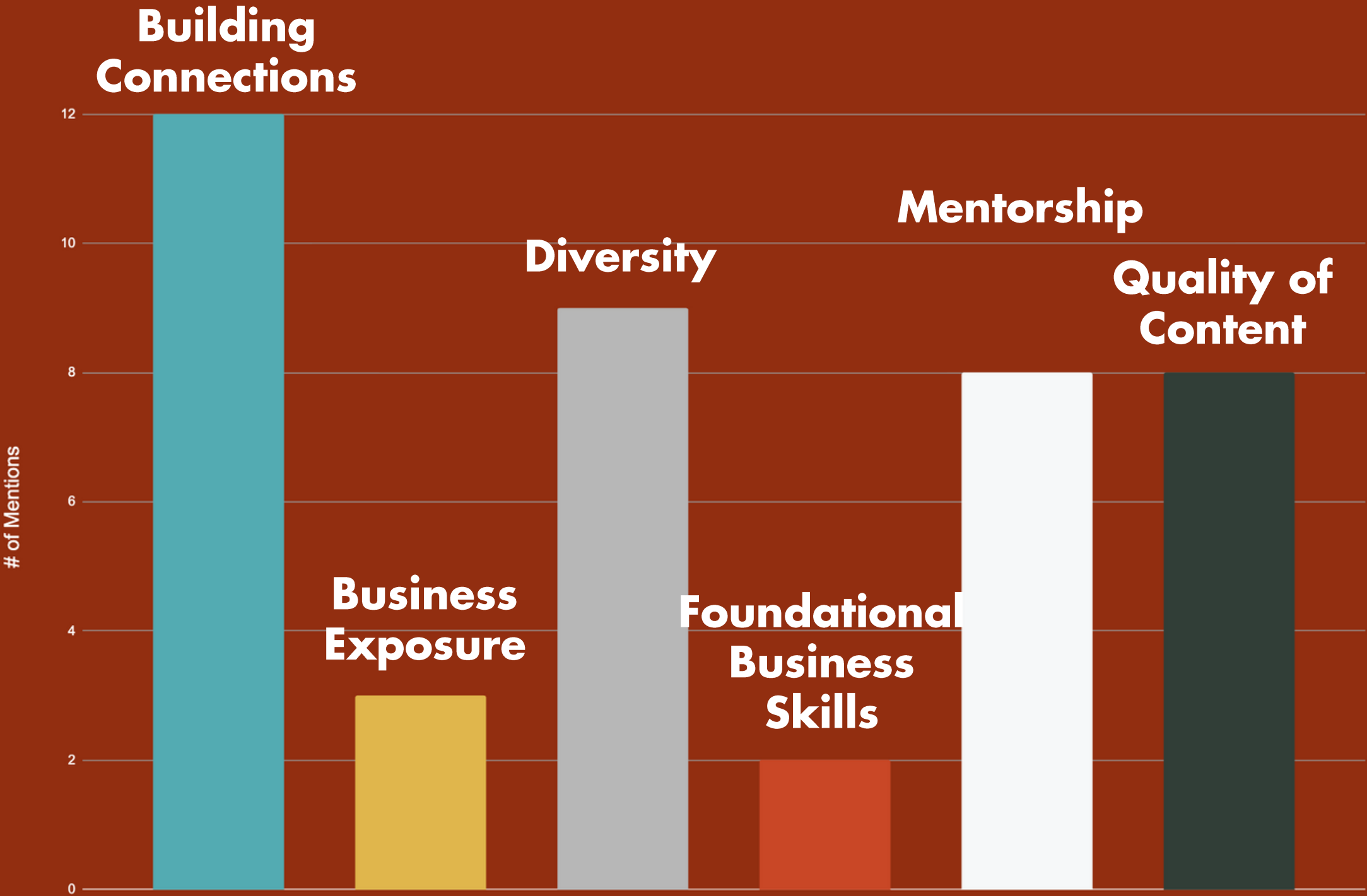


of Surveyors
Likelihood to Recommend



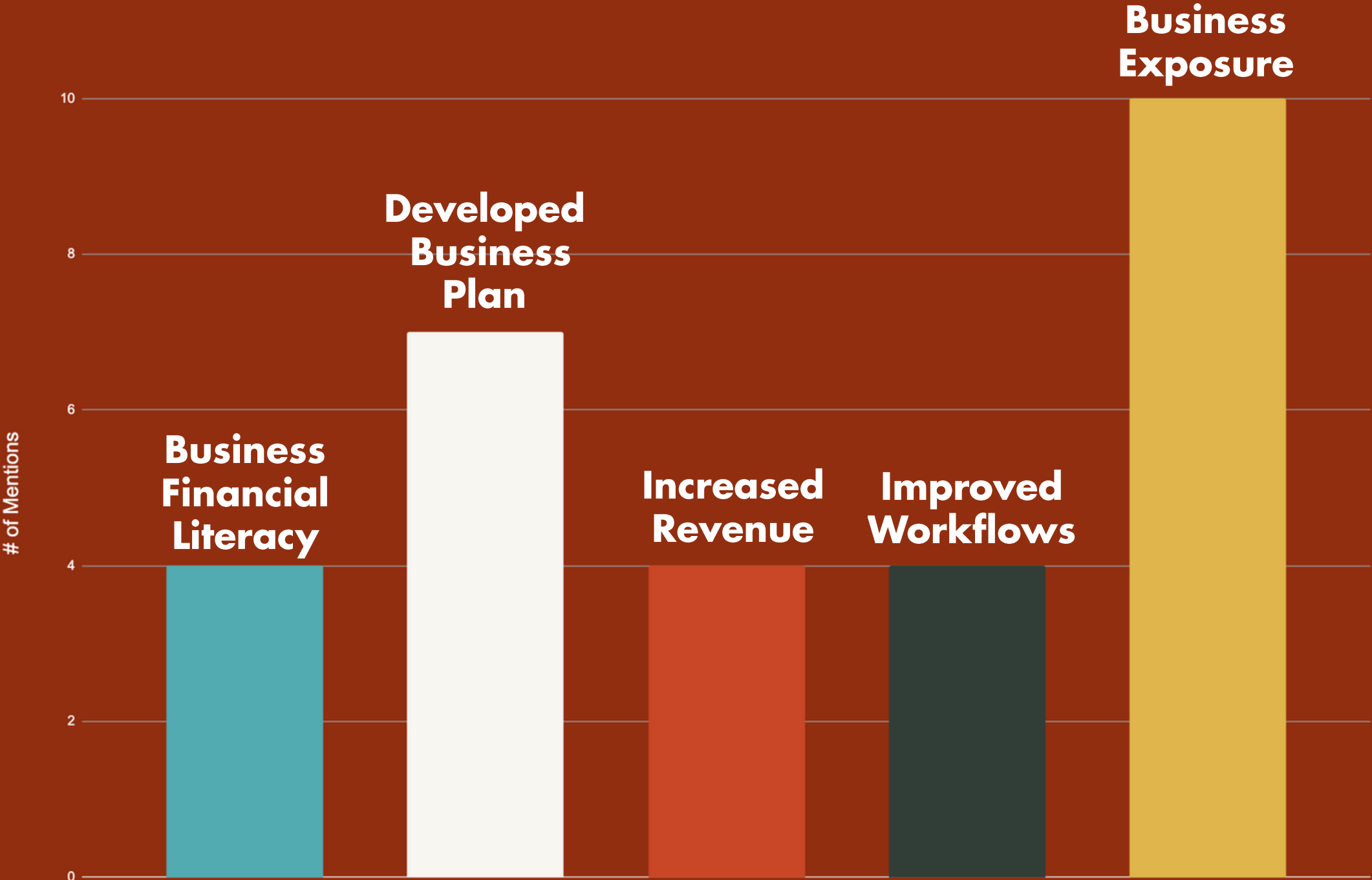
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Most Beneficial Aspects of Stoke Programs

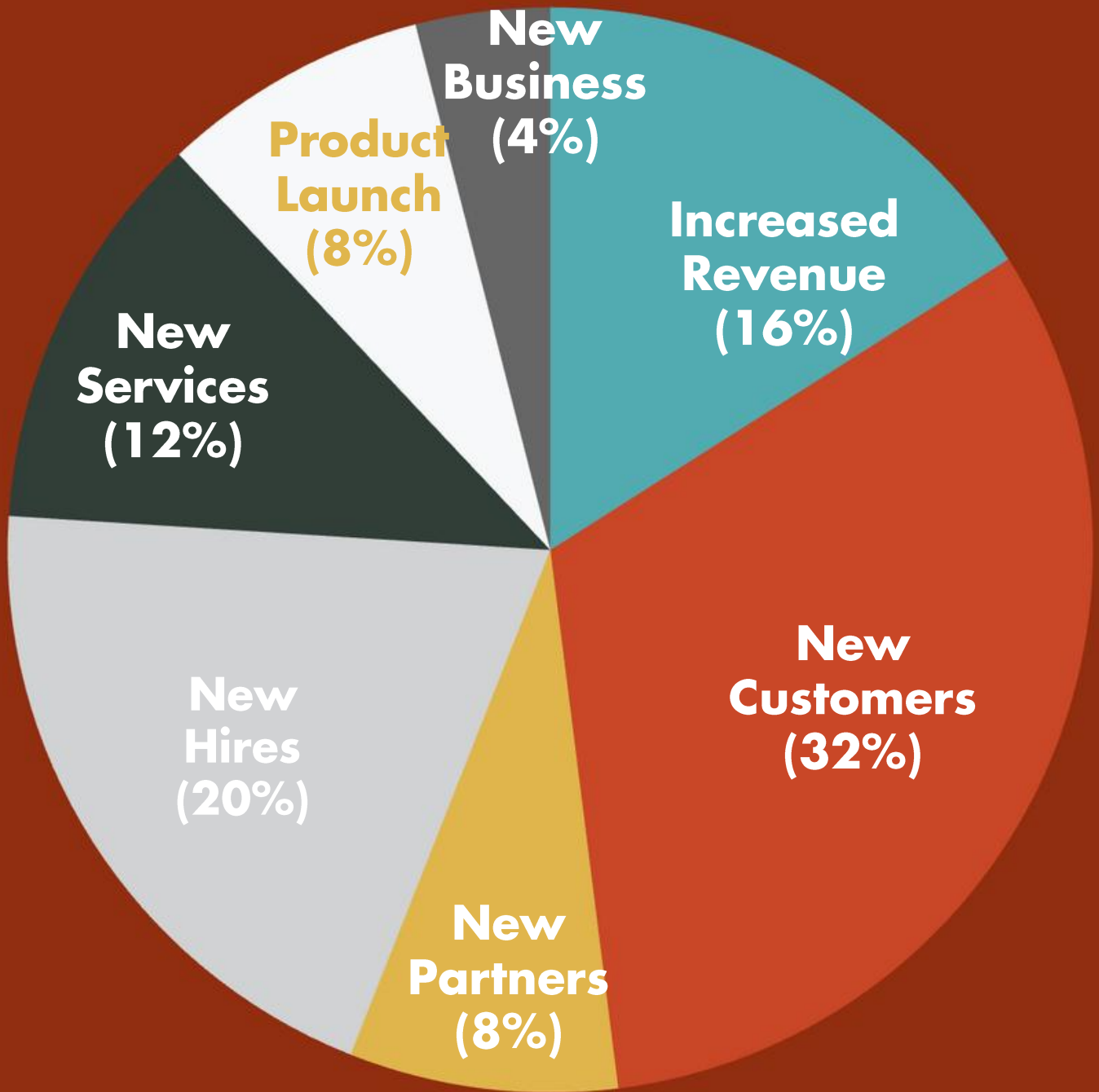


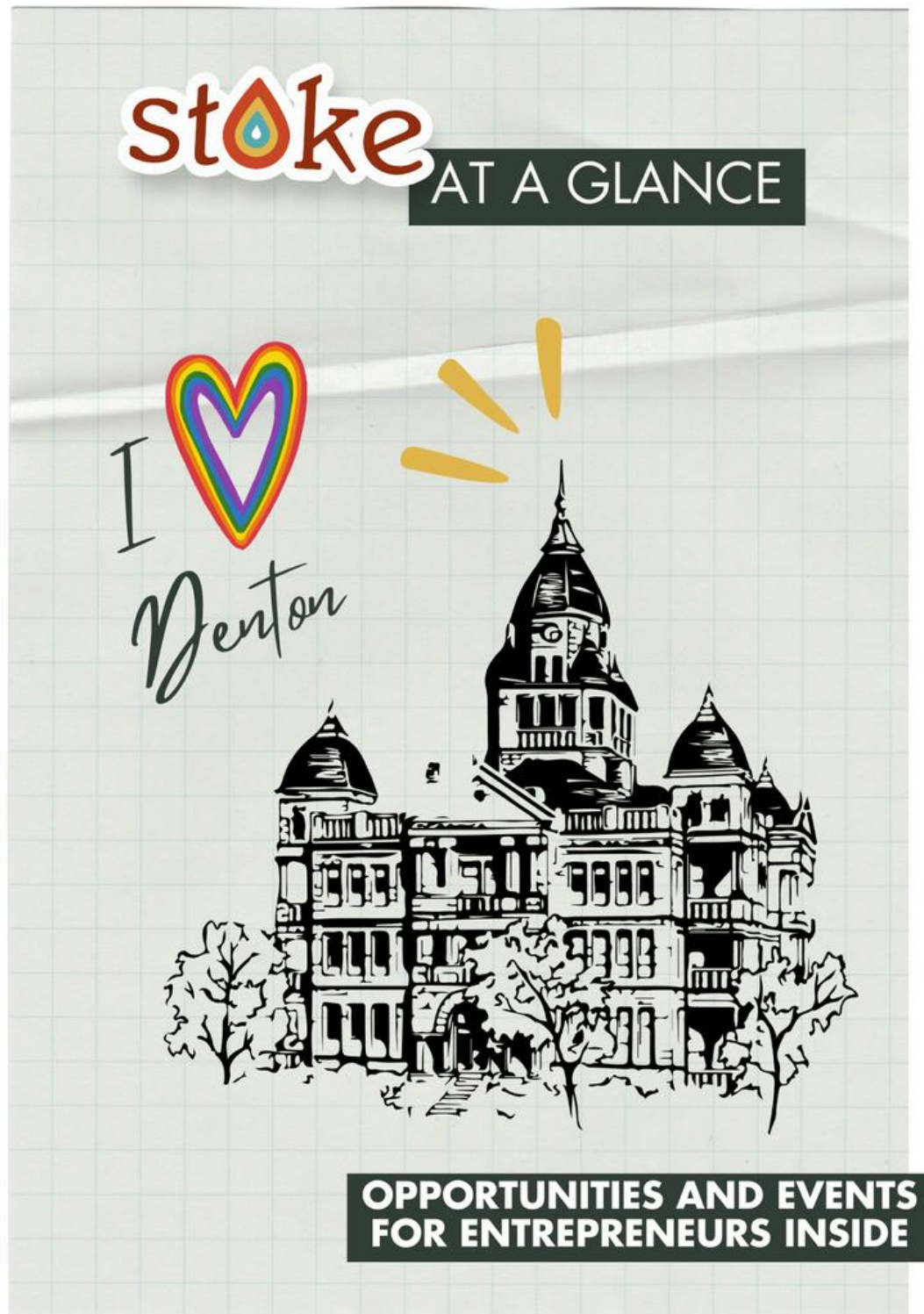
PROGRAM IMPACTS + OUTCOMES

Business Outcomes for Stoke Programs



Reported Business Growth from Stoke Programs





THANK YOU! QUESTIONS?

EDP25- 029; October 8, 2025

CONTRACT BACKGROUND

- The City seeks to support, encourage, and promote the public purpose of driving new business creation and job growth by fostering a sustainable startup community for entrepreneurs primarily in early-stage tech and tech-enabled businesses.
- In 2016 the City created a co-working space (Stoke) with access to resources to support entrepreneurship, small business development, and the development of tech and tech-enabled businesses and workers.
- In 2017 the City contracted with Hickory Rail Ventures for the management and operation of Stoke.
- The proposed contract is for one year with a not-to-exceed amount of \$158,170

PROPOSED CONTRACT UPDATES FY25-26

- Added:
 - “Generate earned media” – Item was included in the work plan, but not the agreement.
 - Tracking economic impact (sales tax, property tax, etc.) of the businesses Stoke serves including competition awards recipients and member companies.
 - Additional reporting metrics
- Changes in FY 25–26 contract include removal of completed items and items no longer relevant.
 - “Revise the funding requirements for the EDP Investment Fund to be more inclusive of innovative startups that might not meet current thresholds for employment and capital investment .”
 - Investment Fund was updated in 2022.
 - “Launch maintain accelerator program that focuses on women entrepreneurs in partnership with Texas Woman’s University.”

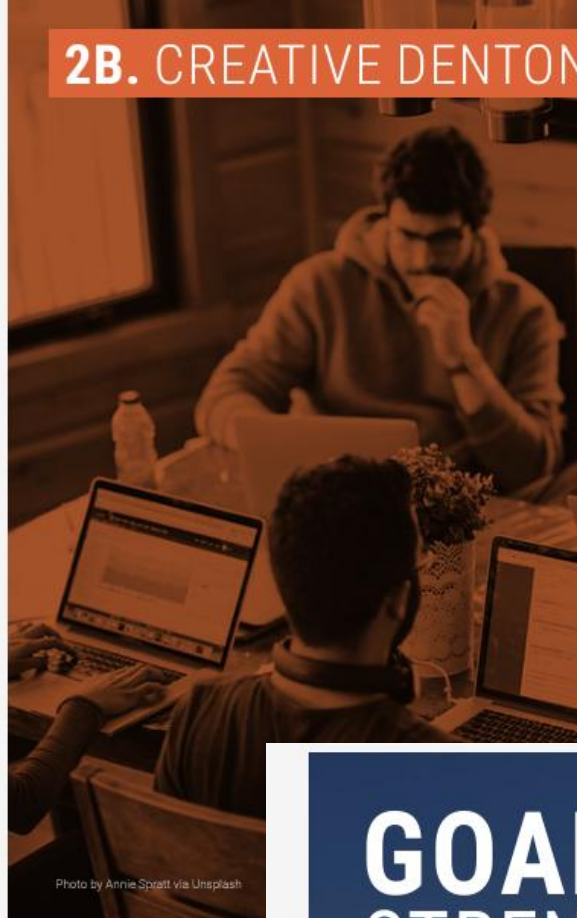
STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

- 2B: Creative Denton
- Goal 3: Strengthen Community Inclusion

NEXT STEPS

- City Council – October 21

2B. CREATIVE DENTON



THE VALUE

Denton's reputation for arts and culture makes it a standout destination within the DFW Metroplex. Its cultural assets not only foster quality of place but also create an economic advantage. Over the past decade, a budding creative economy has attracted entrepreneurs to Denton, making the City a hub for big ideas and innovation. Denton has a vibe unlike any other community in the region. By continuing to nourish this creative ecosystem, the City can flourish and become a vibrant destination for talent and investment.

THE ANCHORS

From higher education to coworking spaces, Denton's creative economy is anchored by diverse and thriving institutions. TWU and UNT are catalysts for innovation and drivers of the City's talent pipeline. Stoke is the heartbeat of Denton's startup scene, providing a hub for entrepreneurs near downtown amenities. Embracing and strengthening these anchor institutions will not only attract growth but also ensure that the creative elements at the heart of Denton's culture will continue to thrive.

THE ECOSYSTEM

In recent years, a strong cluster of education technology companies has emerged in Denton. The presence of two universities along with strong support for entrepreneurs has made Denton an ideal location for edtech startups. Events such as the Denton Black Film Festival have also drawn tourists to Denton and strengthened community ties. However, Denton's creative economy requires additional support, including stronger connections to the DFW tech scene and venture capital. The City can nurture Creative Denton by cultivating relationships with DFW capital sources and raising public awareness of Denton artists and entrepreneurs.

Photo by Annie Spratt via Unsplash

GOAL 3 STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY INCLUSION



Align economic, workforce, and community development efforts to meet critical community needs and to strengthen community inclusion.

Many in the economic development field are beginning to recognize the importance of inclusive economic growth to provide opportunity for all residents, particularly those with lower incomes or levels of educational attainment. An economic development strategic plan that does not address how to deliver broader prosperity to all constituents would be shortsighted. This is especially imperative for Denton, which has a larger share of low-income residents than its peers. The median household income in Denton is \$56,500, falling below the overall median household income in Denton County of \$83,400 (American Community Survey, 2018 5-year sample).

Efforts to grow Denton's existing industries and attract new business investment will not guarantee that Denton's vulnerable communities will be able to share in this prosperity. Denton cannot afford to leave existing residents behind. Addressing the challenges and barriers that low- and moderate-income residents face will be crucial to creating a more economically vibrant and resilient community.

The City's Economic Development Department and Community Development Department teams already recognize this reality and are collaborating on efforts to expand affordable housing in Denton. This collaboration should be expanded on and integrated with workforce development priorities. Expanding affordable housing options and building career pathways in high-demand industries are two central ways that the City can align its economic, workforce, and community development efforts to benefit Denton's most vulnerable residents.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

3.1. WORKFORCE COLLABORATIVE. Successful communities across the US are focused on aligning the needs of businesses and creating workforce pathways for residents. Denton should convene businesses, training providers, and nonprofits to work together in creating meaningful career pathways in critical sectors.

3.1.1. Build off the workforce collaborative, detailed in Strategy 1.4, to focus on workforce needs during the period of economic recovery.

- Convening a workforce collaborative should be an ongoing task of the City's Economic Development Department team.
- Connect any efforts of a Denton-specific workforce collaborative to the work of the DCWSLT focused on the ALICE population.

3.1.2. Continue to convene regular meetings with major employers, Workforce Solutions, NCTC, and other providers to identify business needs and connect unemployed residents to jobs.

THANK YOU