



Container Traders and Self-Storage Operators *COVID-19 Business Survey*

**Results of the Survey of Container Traders
and Container Self-Storage Operators into
the Impact of the COVID-19 on their Business**

Survey Conducted 27 April – 4 May 2020

Introduction

The COVID-19 Pandemic is, of course, having a massive and unprecedented impact on every aspect of personal and business life – with huge changes to working patterns taking place, which will be felt for many years to come.

In response to requests from our Members, the Container Self-Storage and Traders Association (CSTA) has undertaken a survey of companies involved in container trading and container self-storage, to obtain an overview of the impact of the pandemic on these industries.

Reflecting the nature of the CSTA's Membership, the Survey was divided into 2 parts – one for Container Traders; and one for Container Self-Storage Operators. There were 5 questions in each section.

Questions were sent out by email, using "SurveyMonkey", to the CSTA database on Monday 27 April 2020. The Survey closed on Monday 4 May 2020.

About 10% of companies responded to the Survey, which we believe is sufficient to give an indication of overall industry trends. Each question also offered the chance for respondents to make some general comments, which were also valuable.

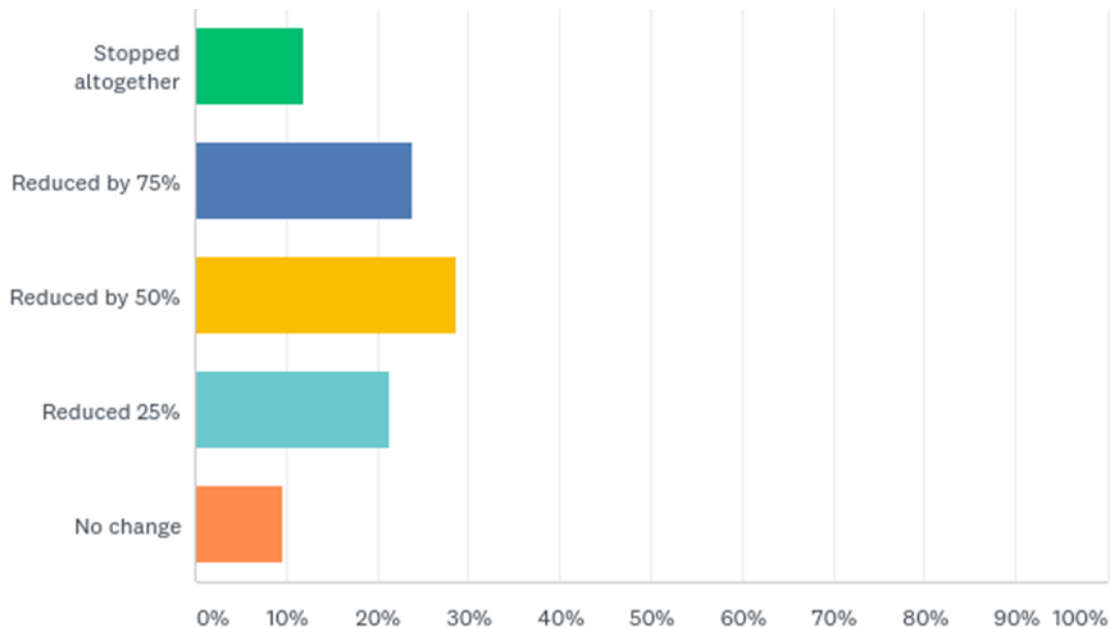
The Survey was undertaken completely anonymously, CSTA has no record of respondents. However, the survey was mailed to the CSTA database which is predominantly companies located in the UK and Europe.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who answered the questions and gave their comments. The results are published below, together with a selection of the comments that we received.

Patrick Hicks
CSTA
6 May 2020

Section A: Container Traders

Question 1: How is your container trading business being affected by COVID-19?



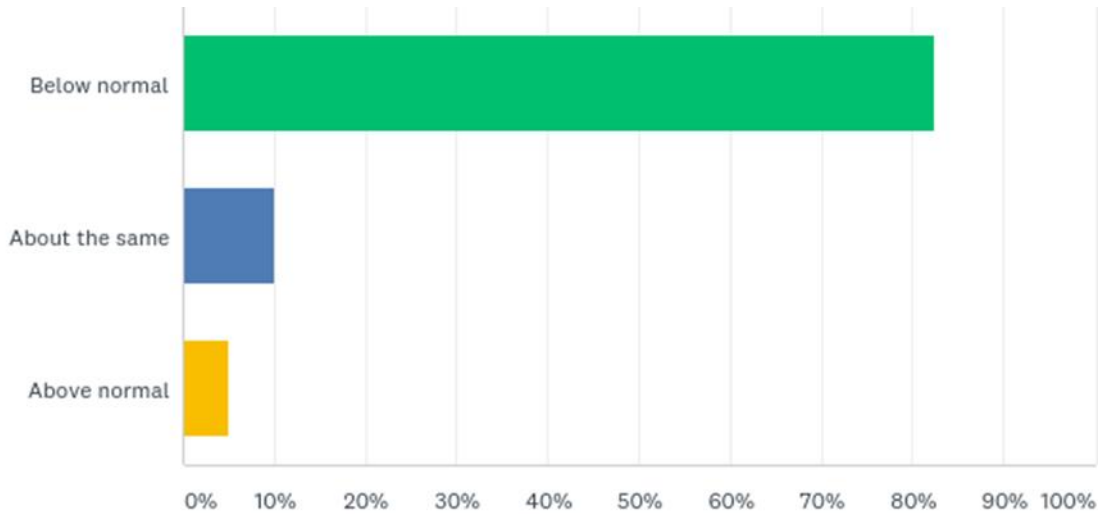
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Stopped altogether	11.90%	5
Reduced by 75%	23.81%	10
Reduced by 50%	28.57%	12
Reduced 25%	21.43%	9
No change	9.52%	4
TOTAL		42

General Comments

- Selling outright has reduced substantially, with hiring reduced somewhat
- Existing customers “staying put”, very few new enquiries with none coming to fruition.
- Customers are delaying orders due to uncertainty
- Still too early to say: Asia is holding up a bit; Europe is still getting to grips with “Working From Home”; USA is in trouble.
- There is a shortage of containers in the Southern Hemisphere, due to the fact that many ships have not returned from China and India – this is increasing buying prices.
- We stopped our trading business for two reasons - when the PM announced 'stay at home' and said non-essential business had to close. Also, because no-one is buying so it's not viable to be open.
- The business has reduced - as I believe most of our customers are concentrating on "survival"
- Limited pool of trading containers available Restrictive market that is short of liquidity

Section A: Container Traders

Question 2: Compared with 2019, how is the demand for traded containers (or containers for secondary use)?



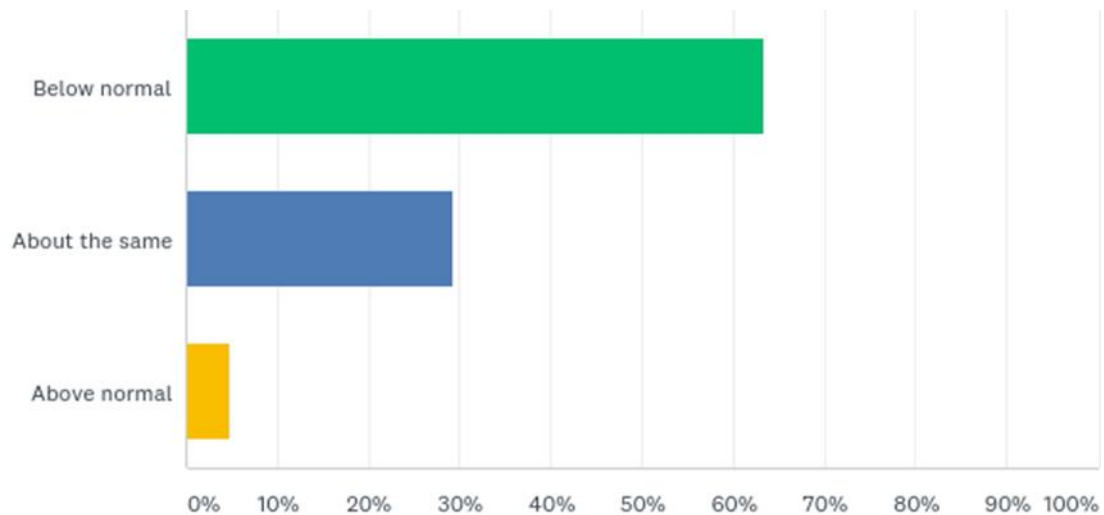
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Below normal	82.50%	33
About the same	10.00%	4
Above normal	5.00%	2
TOTAL		40

General Comments

- The year started well - but for obvious reasons declined rapidly in late March
- Everyone is “frozen” - waiting for things to change
- The USA ran out of boxes in Q1 and went deficit, impacting 2nd hand availability.
- When the price of containers increased, the demand for buying diminished; but demand for rental improved
- Before the coronavirus, it appeared to be picking up normally.
- Imports are slowly getting in
- At the beginning of the year, 2020 seemed to have high promises - until the COVID situation arrived. And now the market has begun to shrink.

Section A: Container Traders

Question 3: Compared with 2019, how available are supplies of new or one-trip containers from manufacturers?



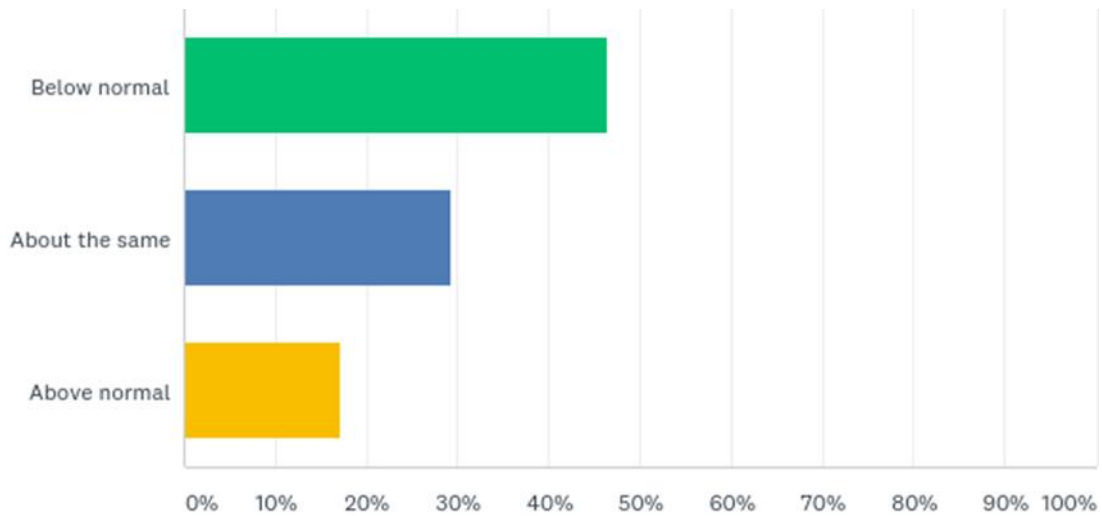
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Below normal	63.41%	26
About the same	29.27%	12
Above normal	4.88%	2
TOTAL		41

General Comments

- Available but you have to search around
- Not tried to buy any
- We started building Q3 2019, therefore cannot compare
- Lower cargo volume ex China due to European purchasers of consumer goods are holding off with new orders.
- Major shortages and disruption to new container arrivals, looking likely it will get better from June onwards.
- Getting boxes out of China has been difficult.
- New one-way trips below normal. Price is higher
- Badly affected by coronavirus and also change in production and price from China.
- Price increase on existing stock
- As a final destination city, usually having more imports than export - there are less new trade containers available

Section A: Container Traders

Question 4: Compared with 2019, how are supplies of used containers from shipping lines and lessors?



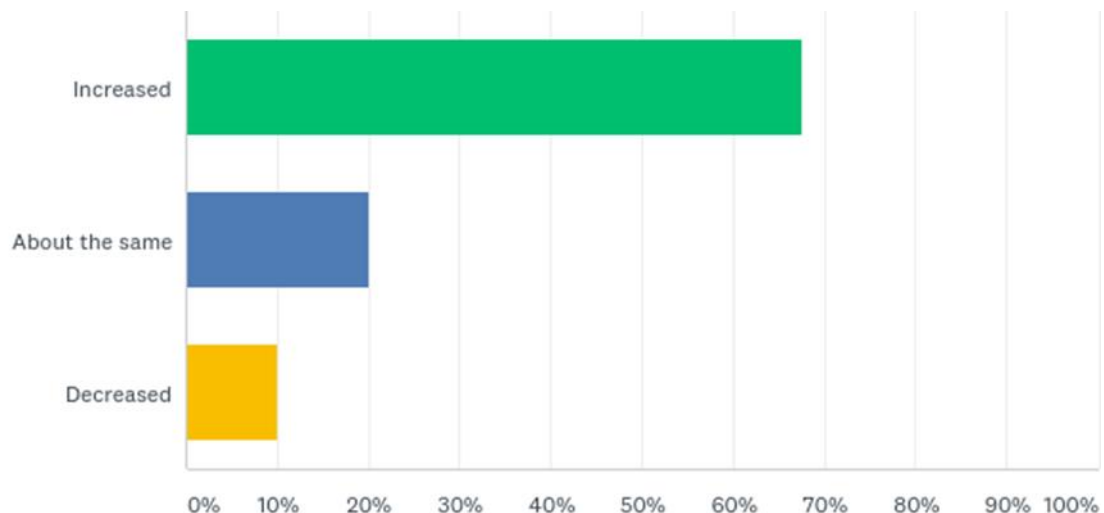
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Below normal	46.34%	19
About the same	29.27%	12
Above normal	17.07%	7
TOTAL		41

General Comments

- We rarely deal in 2nd hand boxes
- No used trading in Europe
- Below normal for now, because of confusion, lack of clarity about where things are headed. Medium to longer term, I expect supply to increase as the ratio between box supply and export demand falls away.
- Hard to say - if coronavirus hadn't happened I think it would have been the same in first half of the year and below 2019 in 2nd half of the year. Now I think supply will be well down in 2nd half of year as lines hold on to equipment.
- We only buy new.
- Short in certain locations, Glasgow, Leeds, Birmingham
- Less container traffic, seeing less available trading stock - Prices may fall as some agents and other traders seek to free up cash / liquidity and seek to release container stock in certain parts of the world - rather than hold and wait for demand to raise prices.

Section A: Container Traders

Question 5: Compared with 2019, how has the price of containers changed?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Increased	67.50% 27
About the same	20.00% 8
Decreased	10.00% 4
TOTAL	40

General Comments

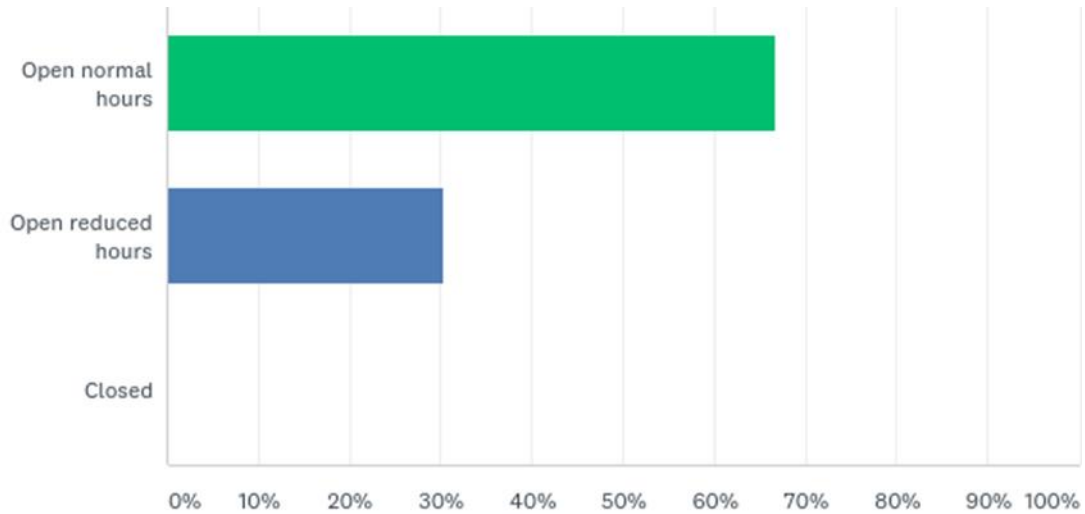
- Marginally increased but this is partly to do with a weak £ against \$ and partly tightening supply
- Price is going up - due to factories' reduced working times
- Container price is going up - due to all manufacturers reducing their working times to 4 working days per week and running 10 hours per day.
- Prices have increased but some of this is related to Rand exchange rate and Rand depreciation against US\$
- Increased in USA.
- Prices rising every couple of weeks
- Slight increase due to scarcity. However, the price will eventually be dictated by the market - in the sense that although stock may be short and push prices up, the market struggles to operate and liquidity grows increasingly scarce. Ultimately, traders will drop prices in certain regions in order to also free up cash, rather than having it held in assets

Other General Traders Comments

- Cash collection is - and will remain - the main challenge over the next 6 months onwards
- Expecting / planning for disruptions to new and used stock availability for the rest of 2020

Section B: Container Self-Storage Operators

Question 1: How has your Container Self-Storage Facility been operating during since the COVID-19 lockdown?



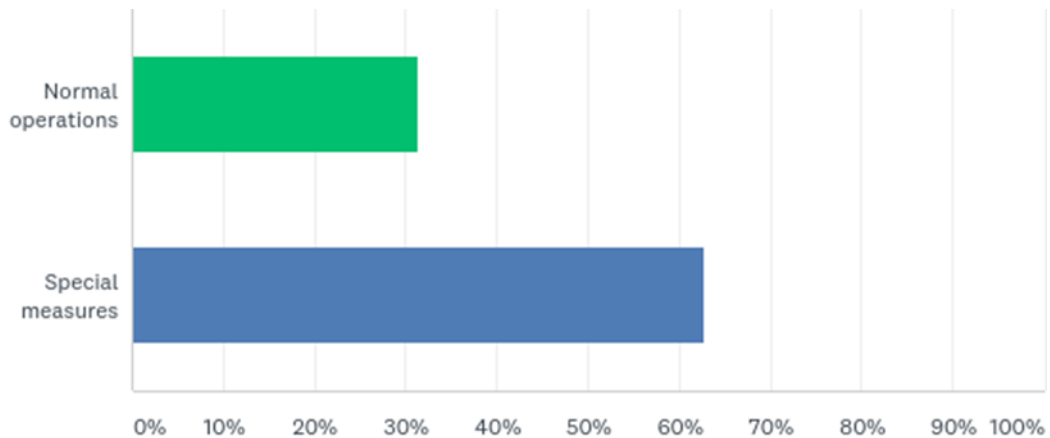
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Open normal hours	66.67%	22
Open reduced hours	30.30%	10
Closed	0.00%	0
TOTAL		33

General Comments

- We remain open 24/7 365 days of the year
- We have closed the office and attended by appointment / call out only. We do storage agreements and ID checks via email and give initial access via remote gate operation and CCTV etc.
- Open but with restrictions to office and common areas.
- Site closed but phone forwarded to mobiles and working from home. Appointment only on site

Section B: Container Self-Storage Operators

Question 2: Have you changed the operations of your facility during this period?



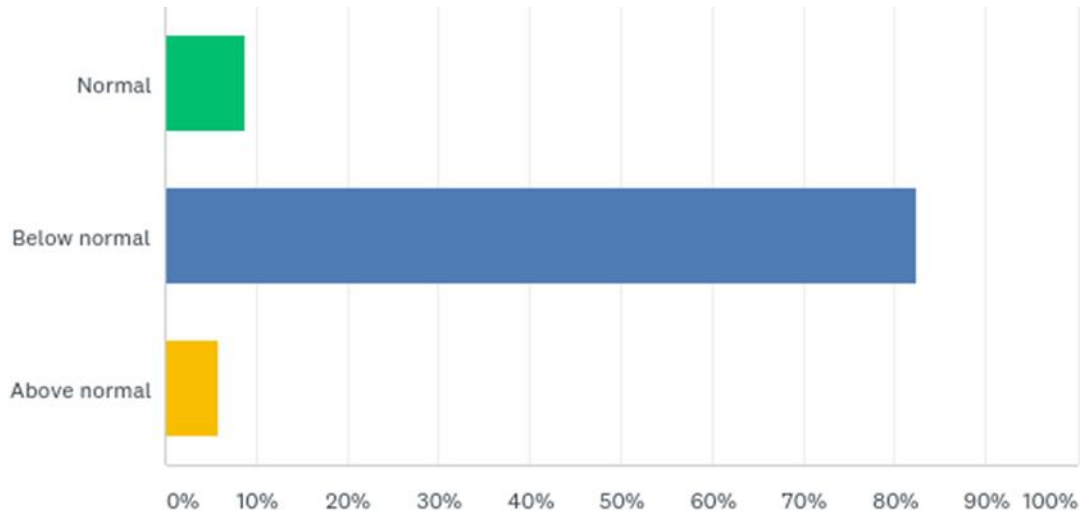
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Normal operations	31.43%	11
Special measures	62.86%	22
TOTAL		35

General Comments

- We've made sure any dealings with customers are done observing the government guidelines.
- It is "human-less" contact in our yard
- We have closed the office and attend by appointment / call out only. We do storage agreements and ID checks via email and give initial access via remote gate operation and CCTV etc.
- Restrictions to office and common areas.
- Social distancing
- We've had to survive remotely, clean keypads, pre-empt issues and plan for worst-case scenarios. The main change is limiting physical interaction to almost zero.
- Staff working from home.
- Contact only via e-mail. Reduced quantity of clients able to enter premises
- We developed non-contact systems for renting stores.
- Appointment only in site
- We have been open to hire new units only in emergency situations existing customers can use storage site as required.
- Separate drop off and key collection, limited hours

Section B: Container Self-Storage Operators

Question 3: Compared to previous years, how are new bookings for storage space?



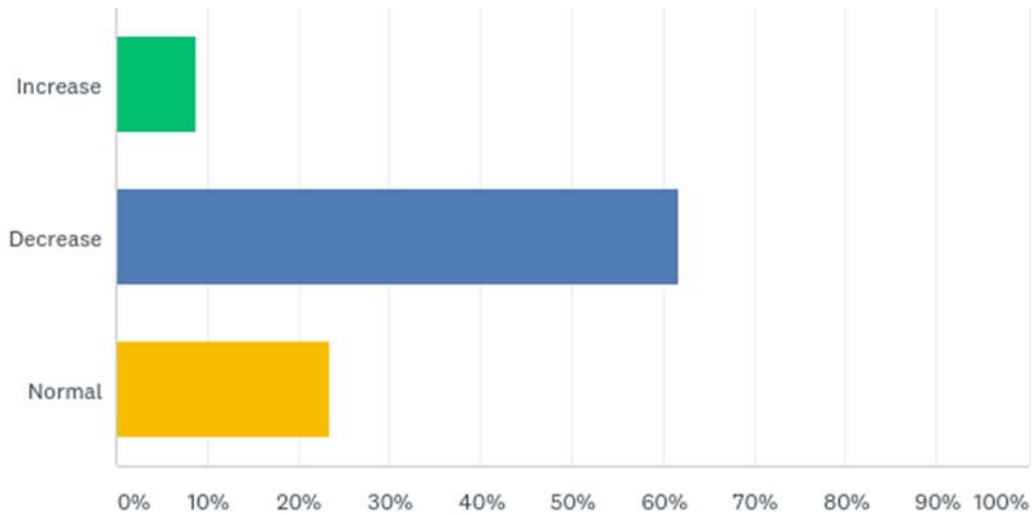
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Normal	8.82% 3
Below normal	82.35% 28
Above normal	5.88% 2
TOTAL	34

General Comments

- Nothing! Phone completely stopped ringing
- Slower than normal for April.
- Bookings are limited - which is to be expected in a lockdown
- We are always full
- Down - due to the shut-down...but still happening.
- Some have moved out due to crisis

Section B: Container Self-Storage Operators

Question 4: With many members of the public re-organising and decluttering during the lockdown, how is the demand for space?



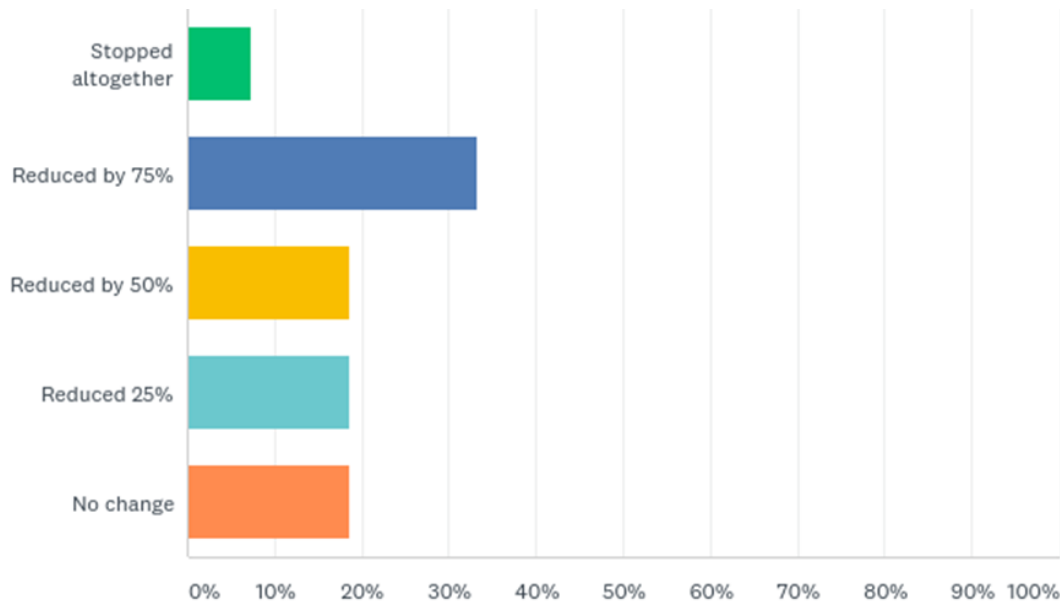
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Increase	8.82% 3
Decrease	61.76% 21
Normal	23.53% 8
TOTAL	34

General Comments

- Demand from hospitals and retail logistics
- Same advertising - and not one enquiry in 6 weeks
- Slightly decrease, but still some new customers coming in due to the circumstances. More domestic rather than business.
- It's been emergencies only. House sales falling through, business premises changing, etc
- Still getting bookings - but overall number of new bookings is down. However occupancy levels are steady.

Section B: Container Self-Storage Operators

Question 5: How has your business been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Stopped altogether	7.41% 2
Reduced by 75%	33.33% 9
Reduced by 50%	18.52% 5
Reduced 25%	18.52% 5
No change	18.52% 5
TOTAL	27

General Comments

- The level of support requests we are receiving has not really changed, however it has impacted the new business inquiries and future planning by potential customers

Other General Comments

- Customers still paying which is a nice surprise, though if lock-down continues, that may not be sustained. Most move-ins/move-outs on hold. A few customers still visiting.
- We are losing customers who are stopping building / moving projects or who are worried about money. But gaining customers who are emptying shops, giving up premises and moving offices to home etc.
- Very few new customers