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Irma's impact to last a year, say many local businesses

By: Nancy Dahlberg



Waves crash over a seawall at the mouth of the Miami River from Biscayne Bay as Hurricane Irma passes by in Miami. AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee

Even though Hurricane Irma spared South Florida from a direct hit, 70 percent of business people responding to a Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce survey said the storm would have a negative financial impact on their businesses over the next three months and 39 percent said Irma's impact would be felt over the next year.

About a third of business leaders are less optimistic about the health of their businesses, compared to before Hurricane Irma, the survey showed. More than four out of 10 said they expected lost revenue and business thanks to Irma; 28 percent said business interruptions and delays would be the most significant impact.

Three-quarters of respondents had a formal disaster preparedness plan in place. Of those, only 1 percent thought the plan was ineffective.

The majority, 64 percent, thought that cell calls and texts were the most effective ways to communicate with their teams and employees during and in the immediate aftermath of Irma.

The chamber partnered with MBAF to conduct the survey. Questionnaires were distributed by email to 5,000 CEOs, top executives or owners of businesses and organizations in Miami-Dade County about a week after the storm; 109 responses were received.