

# Optimism in economy slips, but self-confidence remains strong

AUGUST 2015

The Wall Street Journal/Vistage Small Business CEO Confidence Index was 105.1 in the August 2015 survey, down from June's 107.8 and the peak of 115.5 in February.

## Slower economic growth

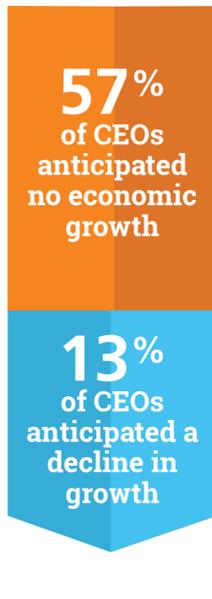
"Fewer small firms thought the economy had recently improved in the August 2015 survey than any other time since the government shutdown in late 2013."

- Dr. Richard Curtin, University of Michigan



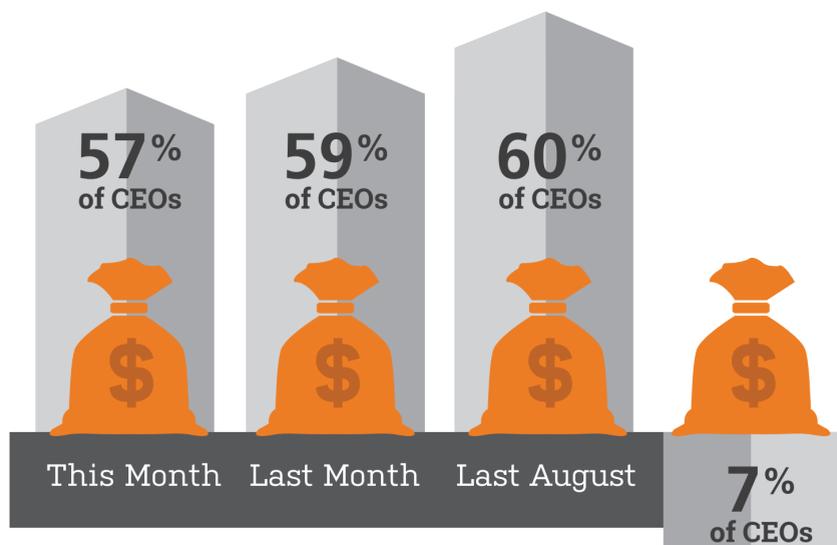
**42% of all CEOs reported that economic conditions had improved in August**, down from 47% in July and the peak of 67% in January.

**57% of CEOs anticipated no change in the pace of economic growth during the year ahead**, with just 13% who expect worsening national economic conditions.



## Stable job growth

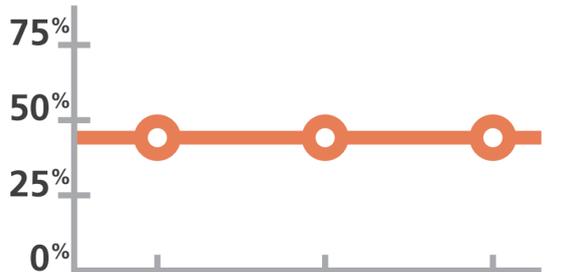
**57% of CEOs anticipate increases in total payrolls**, marginally below the 59% in July or the 60% last August.



**Just 7% anticipated staff reductions in August.**

## Investments still strong

**Investment plans among small firms were unchanged in the past three months.**



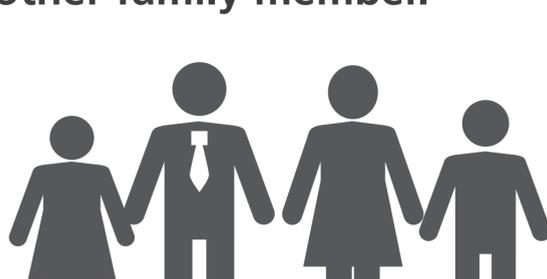
**46% of CEOs planned to increase their investment spending during the year ahead**, the same as in the June and July surveys. Reductions in planned investments were cited by just 10%.

## Succession planning

**Four-in-ten CEOs reported that they had already established a succession plan for their business.**



**Half of those with succession plans, or 21% of all CEOs surveyed, intend to transition their firm to a son, daughter or other family member.**



**Of those who intend to keep their business within the family:**



**3% expect the transition to happen this year or next year**



**20% anticipate the transition will occur within two to five years**



**33% expect that to happen in five to ten years**



**41% expect to transition their business at least 10 years from now**