

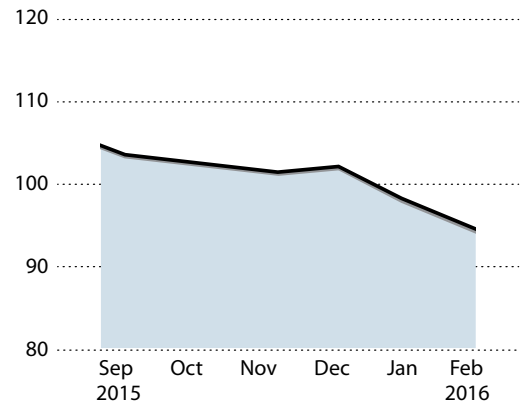
Confidence falls to lowest level in three years

The WSJ/Vistage Small Business CEO Confidence Index fell to 94.3 in the February 2016 survey, down 18% during the past year to its lowest level since January 2013. The growing weakness has been driven by quite negative assessments of the overall economy, with more modest declines in expected revenues and profits.

In contrast, evaluations of expected revenue growth declined by 7% and profits fell by 8%. Uncertainty about the global economy, weak commodity prices, and the strong dollar have made firms more cautious about domestic economic growth, with hiring plans down 6% and planned investments down 15% from last year's levels.

Analysis by Dr. Richard Curtin, University of Michigan

WSJ/Vistage Small Business CEO Confidence Index



Visit vistageindex.com to see the interactive tool and view results from previous months.

Question	Answer	Respondents	
1. Compared with a year ago, have overall economic conditions in the United States improved, remained the same, or worsened?	Improved	172	23%
	Remained about the same	339	46%
	Worsened	229	31%
	Don't know/No opinion	1	0%
2. During the next 12 months, do you expect the overall economic conditions in the U.S. will be better, about the same, or worse than now?	Better	138	19%
	About the same	406	55%
	Worse	187	25%
	Don't know/No opinion	10	1%

Question	Answer	Respondents	
		#	%
3. Are your firm's total fixed investment expenditures likely to increase, remain about the same, or decrease during the next 12 months?	Increase	288	39%
	Remain the same	326	44%
	Decrease	122	16%
	Don't know/No opinion	5	1%
4. Do you anticipate that your firm's sales revenues will increase, remain about the same, or decrease during the next 12 months?	Increase	517	70%
	Remain the same	157	21%
	Decrease	66	9%
	Don't know/No opinion	1	0%
5. Do you expect your firm's profitability to improve, remain about the same, or worsen during the next 12 months?	Improve	405	55%
	Remain the same	238	32%
	Worsen	96	13%
	Don't know/No opinion	2	0%
6. Do you expect your firm's total number of employees will increase, remain about the same, or decrease during the next 12 months?	Increase	424	57%
	Remain the same	264	36%
	Decrease	51	7%
	Don't know/No opinion	2	0%

Question	Answer	Respondents	
		#	%
7. Has the current economic climate led you to adjust your plans for hiring and/or capital investment in 2016?	Have increased planned hiring and/or capital investment	169	23%
	Have reduced planned hiring and/or capital investment	86	12%
	Have delayed planned hiring and/or capital investment	141	19%
	No, it has had no impact	333	45%
	Other	8	1%
	Skipped	4	1%
8. During your company's last fiscal year, what was its total employment?	1-9 employees	60	8%
	10-19 employees	133	18%
	20-49 employees	264	36%
	50-99 employees	182	25%
	100-499 employees	94	13%
	500-999 employees	8	1%

WSJ | VISTAGE

Small Business CEO Survey

A monthly survey measuring the sentiment of U.S. small business CEOs and owners about the economy.

Visit vistageindex.com to view an interactive tool with full results from previous months.