

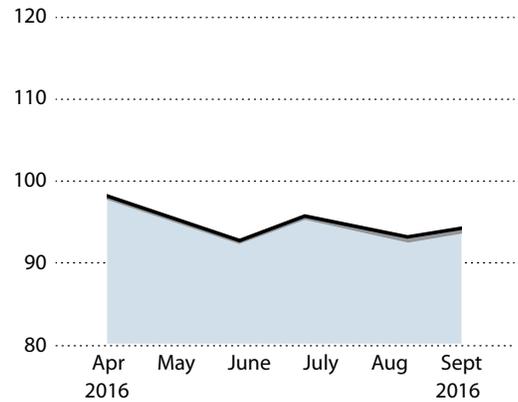
CEO Confidence Inches Upward

The WSJ/Vistage Small Business CEO Confidence Index was 96.9 in the September 2016 survey, just ahead of the 95.9 in August, but remained below last September's 103.7. The small September gain in confidence among small business firms reflects the continued strength in consumer spending, partially offset by persistent uncertainty about future prospects for the national economy. Small firms expressed mildly conflicting opinions about the economy: uncertainty about economic prospects meant that CEOs remain cautious about expanding investments in new plant and equipment, but the persistent strength in consumer spending has encouraged CEOs to add to their workforce. Economic uncertainty thus had a greater impact on irreversible fixed investments than on more flexible hiring plans.

Revenue and profit expectations have also benefitted from more robust consumer spending. Uncertainty, whether due to economic or political factors, has had a greater impact on business than on consumers, as indicated by both their behavior and levels of optimism. CEOs remain skeptical about the vitality of the domestic economy, anticipating only a very slow pace of growth in the year ahead.

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 U.S. improved, remained the same, or worsened?	Improved	183	24%
	About the same	458	60%
	Worsened	118	16%
	Don't know/No opinion	2	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	164	22%
	About the same	395	52%
	Worse	170	22%
	Don't know/No opinion	32	4%

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	289	38%
	About the same	361	47%
	Decrease	102	13%
	Don't know/No opinion	9	1%
4. Do you anticipate that your firm's sales revenues will increase, remain about the same, or decrease for the next 12 months?	Increase	525	69%
	About the same	175	23%
	Decrease	60	8%
	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	403	53%
	About the same	269	35%
	Worsen	88	12%
	Don't know/No opinion	1	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	422	55%
	About the same	280	37%
	Decrease	57	7%
	Don't know/No opinion	2	0%

Question	Answer	Respondents	
		#	%
7. Would an increase in interest rates impact your business?	Yes, it would hurt my business.	345	45%
	Yes, it would help my business.	37	5%
	No, it would have no impact.	357	47%
	Other	19	2%
	Skipped	3	0%
8. During your company's last fiscal year, what was its total employment?	1-9 employees	65	9%
	10-19 employees	141	19%
	20-49 employees	298	39%
	50-99 employees	167	22%
	100-499 employees	88	12%
	500-999 employees	2	0%
	10000+ employees	2	0%
9. During your company's last fiscal year, what were its total revenues?	1-4 Million	244	32%
	5-9 Million	248	33%
	10-20 Million	269	35%

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.