

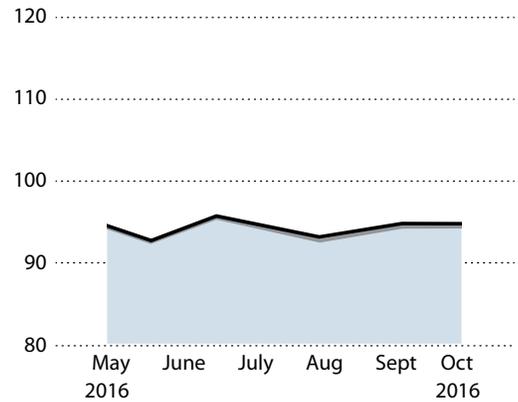
# CEO confidence holds steady

Economic confidence among small business firms has meandered sideways in a virtual holding pattern during the past three months. The widely expected revival in economic growth above its 1% pace has apparently been overwhelmed by economic uncertainties generated by the U.S. presidential campaign. The WSJ/Vistage Small Business CEO Confidence Index was 96.7 in the October 2016 survey, just a few tenths lower than the 96.9 in September and a few tenths higher than July's 96.3.

The consensus forecasts had projected that renewed gains in business investment spending would add to robust consumer spending to drive up GDP growth. Small business firms, however, are now less willing to increase the level of fixed investments than any time since the start of 2013. In addition, since just over one-in-four small firms operate in global markets, a stronger dollar has made their products less competitive in international markets. While it would be convenient to assert that any uncertainty associated with the presidential election will soon end, the proposed policies of the new administration will not be immediately known and their implementation will depend on which party controls Congress. Overall, small firms are likely to remain uncertain for some time.

*Analysis by Dr. Richard Curtin, University of Michigan*

## WSJ/Vistage Small Business CEO Confidence Index



Visit [vistageindex.com](http://vistageindex.com) to see the interactive tool and view results from previous months.

Question	Answer	Respondents	
<b>1. Compared with a year ago, have overall economic conditions in the U.S. improved, remained the same, or worsened?</b>	Improved	119	25%
	About the same	277	58%
	Worsened	84	18%
<b>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?</b>	Better	110	23%
	About the same	240	50%
	Worse	107	22%
	Don't know/No opinion	23	5%

Question	Answer	Respondents	
		#	%
<b>3. Are your firm's total fixed investment expenditures likely to increase, remain about the same, or decrease during the next 12 months?</b>	Increase	179	37%
	About the same	235	49%
	Decrease	62	13%
	Don't know/No opinion	4	1%
<b>4. Do you anticipate that your firm's sales revenues will increase, remain about the same, or decrease for the next 12 months?</b>	Increase	330	69%
	About the same	112	23%
	Decrease	34	7%
	Don't know/No opinion	4	1%
<b>5. Do you expect your firm's profitability to improve, remain about the same, or worsen during the next 12 months?</b>	Improve	265	55%
	About the same	151	31%
	Worsen	60	13%
	Don't know/No opinion	4	1%
<b>6. Do you expect your firm's total number of employees will increase, remain about the same, or decrease during the next 12 months?</b>	Increase	250	52%
	About the same	195	41%
	Decrease	33	7%
	Don't know/No opinion	2	0%
<b>7. Do you currently operate your business in global markets outside of the U.S.?</b>	Yes	129	27%
	No	343	71%
	Other	5	1%
	Skipped	3	1%

Question	Answer	Respondents	
		#	%
<b>8. Do you plan to expand your business operations into global markets in the next 5 years?</b>	Yes	134	28%
	No	328	68%
	Other	13	3%
	Skipped	5	1%
<b>9. During your company's last fiscal year, what was its total employment?</b>	1-9 employees	38	8%
	10-19 employees	82	17%
	20-49 employees	162	34%
	50-99 employees	113	24%
	100-499 employees	78	16%
	500-999 employees	5	1%
	1000-4999 employees	1	0%
	10000+ employees	1	0%

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## Small Business CEO Survey

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

Visit [vistageindex.com](http://vistageindex.com) to view an interactive tool with full results from previous months.