

Optimism in economy slips, but self-confidence remains strong

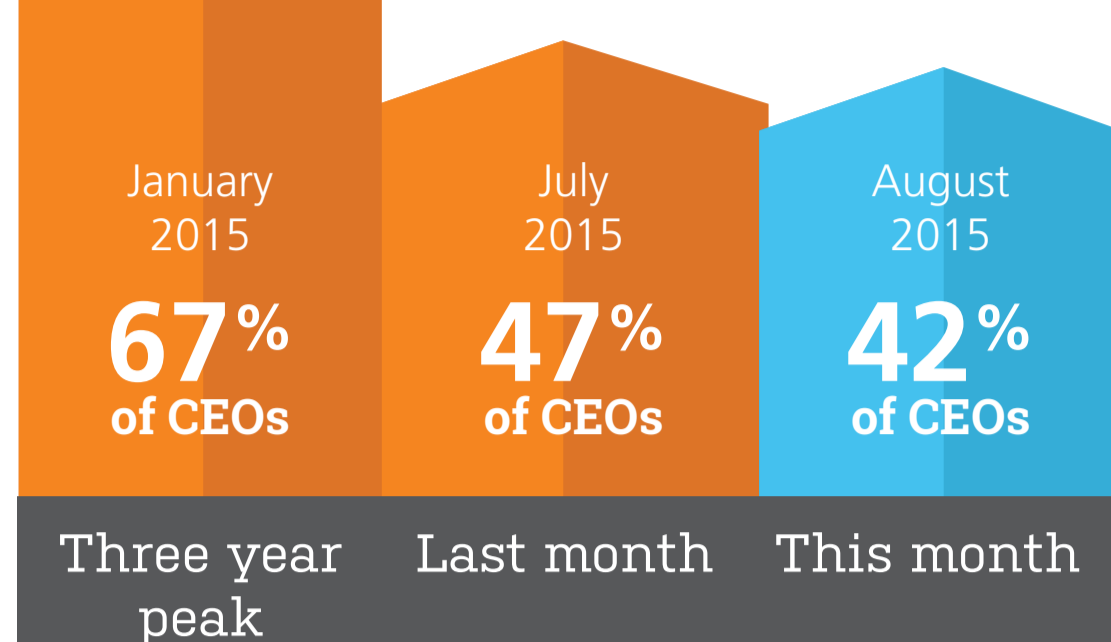
AUGUST 2015

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

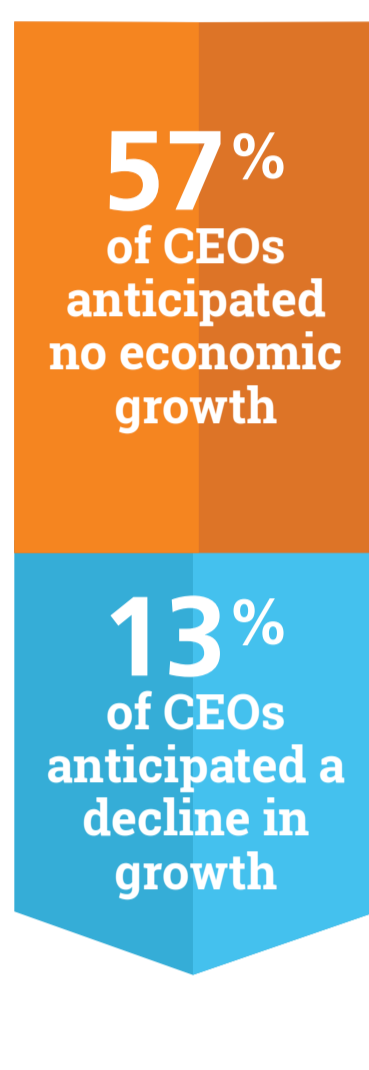
"Fewer small firms thought the economy had recently improved in the August 2015 survey than any other time since the government shutdown in late 2013."

- Dr. Richard Curtin, University of Michigan



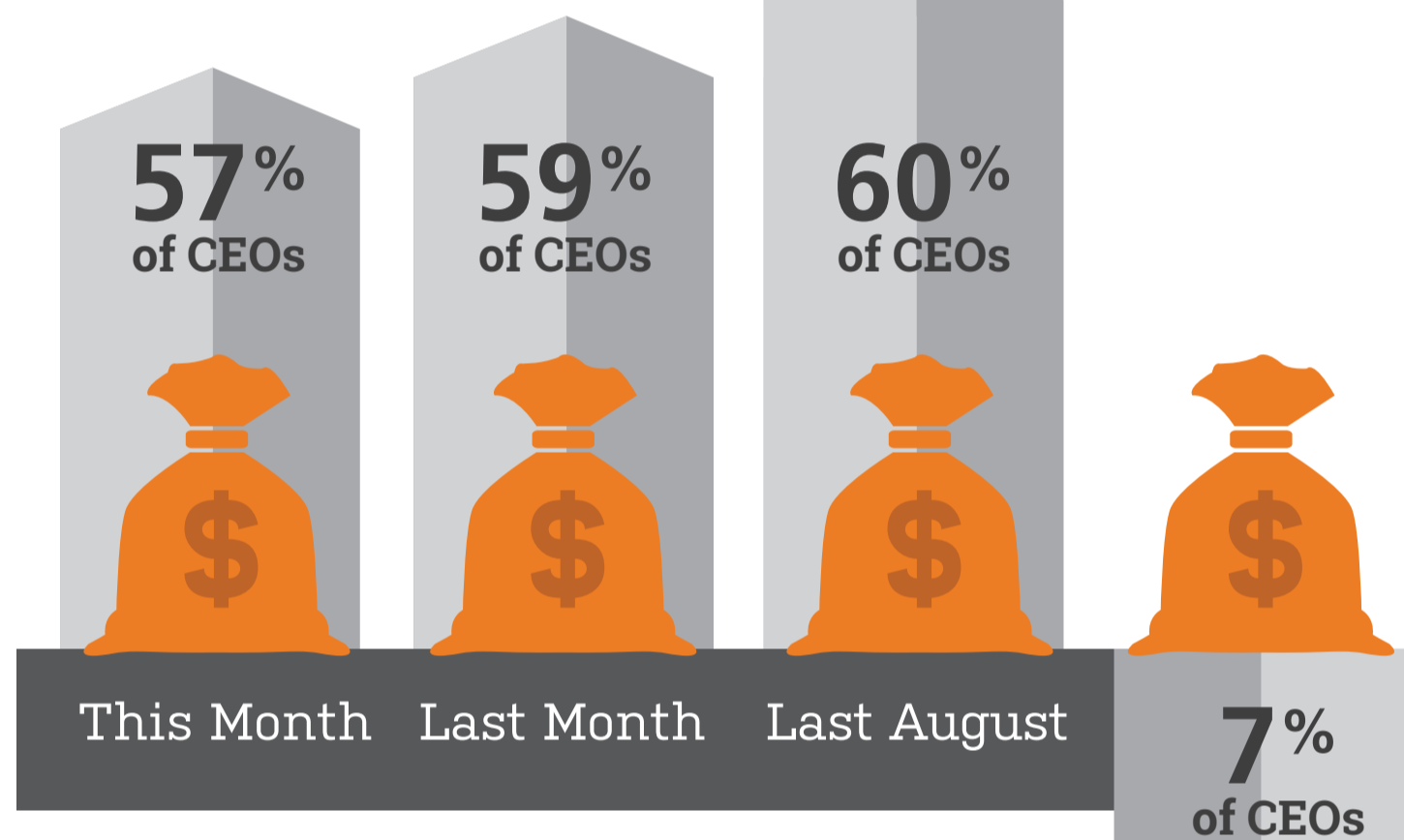
42% of all CEOs reported that economic conditions had improved in August, down from 47% in July and the peak of 67% in January.

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

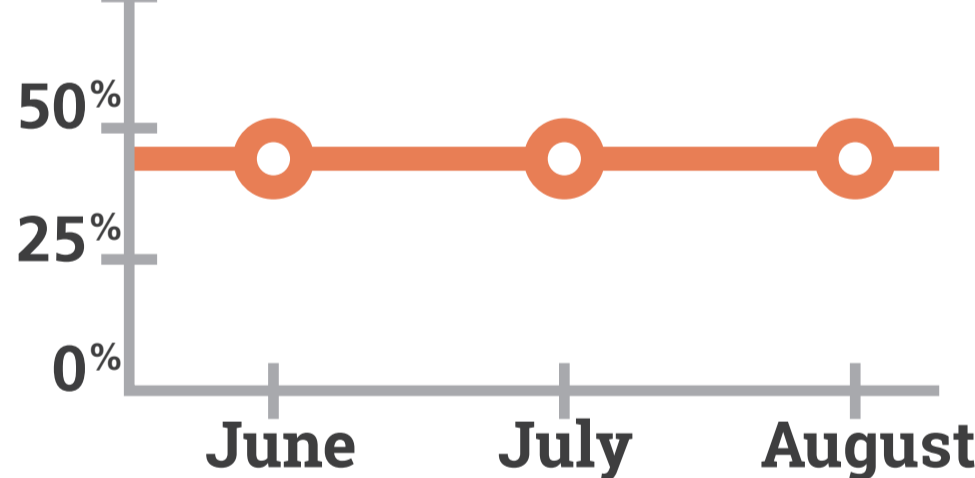
57% of CEOs anticipate increases in total payrolls, marginally below the 59% in July or the 60% last August.



Just 7% anticipated staff reductions in August.

Investments still strong

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



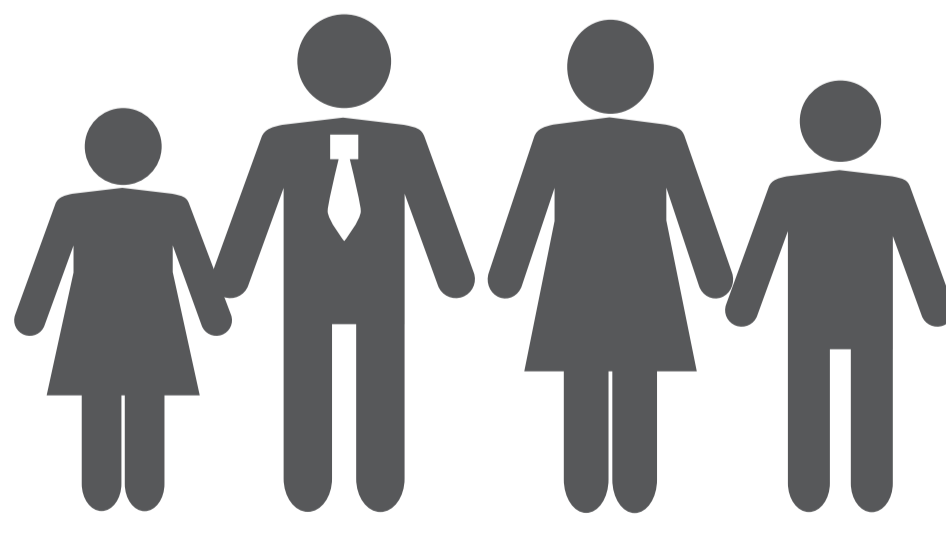
46% of CEOs planned to increase their investment spending during the year ahead, the same as in the June and July surveys. Reductions in planned investments were cited by just 10%.

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.



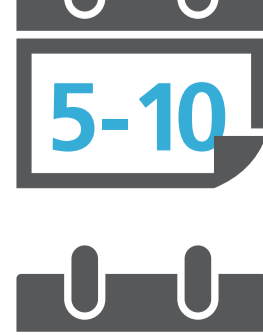
Of those who intend to keep their business within the family:



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