



# Survey Data Findings

## Small Business Index Q4 2017

### Ipsos Survey on behalf of MetLife – U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Washington, DC, November 15, 2017

These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted September 18 – October 16, 2017 via telephone in English. For the survey, a sample of 1,000 small business owners and operators was sourced from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii.

Small businesses are defined in this study as companies with fewer than 500 employees that are not sole proprietorships. The sample for this study is a listed business directory of all U.S. businesses obtained through Dun and Bradstreet. Ipsos used fixed sample targets, unique to this study, in drawing sample. This sample calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. small business population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2014 Statistics of U.S. Businesses dataset. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on firmographics. Post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on region, industry sector and size of business.

All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for all respondents. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a confidence interval adjusted for design effect of the following: (n=1,000, DEFF=1.5) adjusted Confidence Interval=+/-5 percentage points. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding.

1. First, how would you rate the overall health of your business?

	<u>Q2-2017</u>	<u>Q3-2017</u>	<u>Q4-2017</u>
Very good	38	35	39
Somewhat good	23	26	22
About average	30	31	28
Somewhat poor	7	6	6
Very poor	2	2	3
Refused	--	--	0
Don't know	--	--	1

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410  
Washington, DC 20006  
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**  
Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs  
Email: [chris.jackson@ipsos.com](mailto:chris.jackson@ipsos.com)  
Tel: +1 202 420-2025



## Survey Data Findings – continued –

2. How would you rate the overall health of the United States economy?

	<u>Q2-2017</u>	<u>Q3-2017</u>	<u>Q4-2017</u>
Very good	5	9	9
Somewhat good	28	32	29
About average	41	33	35
Somewhat poor	22	19	20
Very poor	3	5	5
Refused	--	1	1
Don't know	1	1	2

3. How would you rate the overall health of the economy in your local area?

	<u>Q2-2017</u>	<u>Q3-2017</u>	<u>Q4-2017</u>
Very good	15	18	18
Somewhat good	27	28	30
About average	36	31	29
Somewhat poor	17	17	17
Very poor	5	6	5
Refused	--	--	-
Don't know	--	--	-

4. Compared to six months ago, does your business see more competition, less competition or about the same level of competition from smaller or local companies?

	<u>Q2-2017</u>	<u>Q3-2017</u>	<u>Q4-2017</u>
More competition	15	15	20
Less competition	6	7	7
Stayed about the same	76	77	71
Refused	2	1	1
Don't know	1	1	2

5. How comfortable are you with your company's current cash flow situation?

	<u>Q2-2017</u>	<u>Q3-2017</u>	<u>Q4-2017</u>
Very comfortable	32	30	33
Somewhat comfortable	48	51	47
Not very comfortable	14	12	11
Not at all comfortable	4	5	6
Refused	1	1	1
Don't know	1	1	2



## Survey Data Findings – continued –

6. For the upcoming year, do you plan to...?

	<u>Q2-2017</u>	<u>Q3-2017</u>	<u>Q4-2017</u>
Increase investment	25	23	25
Invest about as much in the business as you did last year	56	58	56
Reduce investment	15	14	11
Refused	1	1	2
Don't know	3	4	5

7. Compared to six months ago, has the time or resources you spend completing licensing, compliance or other government requirements increased, decreased or stayed the same?

	<u>Q2-2017</u>	<u>Q3-2017</u>	<u>Q4-2017</u>
Increased	25	23	24
Decreased	1	4	3
Stayed the same	70	71	70
Refused	1	1	1
Don't know	3	2	2

8. Over the past year, would you say you have...?

	<u>Q2-2017</u>	<u>Q3-2017</u>	<u>Q4-2017</u>
Increased staff	15	18	16
Retained the same size staff	72	69	67
Reduced staff	13	13	16
Refused	1	1	-
Don't know	--	--	1

9. In the next year, do you anticipate...?

	<u>Q2-2017</u>	<u>Q3-2017</u>	<u>Q4-2017</u>
Increasing staff	29	24	27
Retaining the same size staff	64	68	68
Reducing staff	6	5	3
Refused	--	1	-
Don't know	1	2	2



## Survey Data Findings – continued –

10. Looking forward one year, do you expect next year’s revenues to increase, decrease or stay the same?

	<u>Q2-2017</u>	<u>Q3-2017</u>	<u>Q4-2017</u>
Increase	60	56	57
Decrease	9	8	6
Stay the same	29	33	33
Refused	--	1	1
Don’t know	1	2	3

### Q4 Story Questions – Asked of All Respondents

11. How is your business typically impacted by the holiday season?

	<u>Q4-2017</u>
Increase in quarterly revenue	23
Revenue remains about the same compared to other quarters	50
Decrease in quarterly revenue	24
Refused	2
Don’t know	1

12. How important is the holiday season for your overall profit for the year?

	<u>Q4-2017</u>
Very important	13
Somewhat important	18
Not very important	24
Not at all important	44
Refused	1
Don’t know	1

### Q4 Story Questions – Split Sample; n=329

13. Are most of your customers...?

	<u>Q4-2017</u>
Young (18-34 years)	6
Middle age (35-54 years)	28
Older (55+ years)	16
A mix of all three	27

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410  
Washington, DC 20006  
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**  
*Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs*  
Email: [chris.jackson@ipsos.com](mailto:chris.jackson@ipsos.com)  
Tel: +1 202 420-2025



## Survey Data Findings – continued –

Mostly younger and middle age	2
Mostly middle age and older	13
Refused	3
Don't know	4

### Q4 Story Questions – Split Sample; n=329

14. Have you made a formalized plan for how to deal with any of the following impacting your business? How about...

	<u>Q4-2017</u>
Intruder or theft in your business	50
Computer hacking or other cyber crime	47
Inclement weather	35
Natural disaster	35
Unexpectedly short-staffed for a long period of time	32
No plan in place for these	23
An act of terrorism	13
Refused	-
Don't know	-

15. What prompted you to develop a plan? (asked of those who said 'yes' to any in Q14, open-ended with coded responses, n=265)

	<u>Q4-2017</u>
I have always had a plan	29
To protect business longevity or assets	20
Something bad happened to me or someone I know	14
Because of other natural disasters	10
Other	10
It's mandatory to have plan	5
Spoke to advice from someone else	4
Because of Hurricane Harvey or Irma	2



## Survey Data Findings – continued –

Spoke to or had advice from insurance agent or broker	2
Spoke to or had advice from another business owner	1
Refused	-
Don't know	2

16. Sometimes, unexpected events take place that may force a business to close temporarily. Have you ever had to close unexpectedly, and if so, why? (Open-ended question with coded responses)

	<u>Q4-2017</u>
No, I have never had to close my business unexpectedly	68
Yes - inclement weather, such as a blizzard	10
Yes – natural disaster, such an earthquake, hurricane, flood, wildfire, or tornado	5
Yes- unexpectedly short-staffed	5
Yes - power outage	4
Yes - infrastructure failure	1
Yes - fire	2
Other	4
Refused	-
Don't know	-

### Q4 Story Questions – Split Sample; n=342

17. What type of online presence does your business have? Is it...?

	<u>Q4-2017</u>
Website but not a store	53
Facebook	41
Social media account like Twitter, Snapchat or Instagram	26
We do not have an online presence	19
Mobile app	11
Online branded retail	9
We have an online presence but are not active	7

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410  
Washington, DC 20006  
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**  
*Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs*  
Email: [chris.jackson@ipsos.com](mailto:chris.jackson@ipsos.com)  
Tel: +1 202 420-2025



## Survey Data Findings – continued –

Online retail market (like Amazon or Etsy)	6
Online ads	2
Refused	-
Don't know	-

18. Which type of online presence is most valuable to your business? (asked only of those who reported multiple online platforms in Q17, n=142)

	<u>Q4-2017</u>
Website but not a store	48
Facebook	31
Social media account like Twitter, Snapchat or Instagram	6
Online branded retail	4
Mobile app	3
Online retail market (like Amazon or Etsy)	2
Refused	1
Don't know	6

19. What is the biggest challenge to keep up your business' online presence? (asked only of those who reported having an online presence in Q17, open-ended question with coded responses, n=288)

	<u>Q4-2017</u>
There are no challenges to keeping up our online presence	26
I don't have time to keep it up	19
Can't maintain/update the page	17
Staffing constraints	9
Keeping up with competition and changing markets	7
It's a lot of work	5
It's hard to create growth	5
It's too expensive	4
Lack of expertise	3
It's not relevant for us	2
It doesn't work for our business model	1

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410  
Washington, DC 20006  
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**  
*Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs*  
Email: [chris.jackson@ipsos.com](mailto:chris.jackson@ipsos.com)  
Tel: +1 202 420-2025



## Survey Data Findings – continued –

I don't know how to get started	1
Refused	-
Don't know	8

20. In your own words what, if any, are the advantages you see to operating online? (asked only of those who reported having an online presence in Q17, open-ended question with coded responses, n=288)

	<u>Q4-2017</u>
Reach more people	41
Visibility	22
There are no advantages	14
Marketing	11
More revenue	7
Opportunity to build a reputation	7
Improved communication	3
Cut costs	3
Improved time efficiency	3
Being able to connect to other businesses	1
Refused	4
Don't know	8

21. In your own words, why does your business not have an online presence? (DO NOT READ LIST; ACCEPT ALL RESPONSES; DO NOT PROBE)? (asked only of those who reported not having an online presence in Q17, open-ended question with coded responses, n=54)

	<u>Q4-2017</u>
It doesn't work for our business model	37
It's not relevant for us	32
I don't see the value	15
It's too expensive	8
Staffing constraints	6
I don't want an online presence	6
I don't know how to get started	3
Haven't had time to develop one	2
Can't maintain/Update the page	1
Refused	1
Don't know	3

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410  
Washington, DC 20006  
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**  
*Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs*  
Email: [chris.jackson@ipsos.com](mailto:chris.jackson@ipsos.com)  
Tel: +1 202 420-2025



## Survey Data Findings – continued –

### About Ipsos Public Affairs

Ipsos Public Affairs is a non-partisan, objective, survey-based research practice made up of seasoned professionals. We conduct strategic research initiatives for a diverse number of American and international organizations, based not only on public opinion research, but elite stakeholder, corporate, and media opinion research.

Ipsos has media partnerships with the most prestigious news organizations around the world. In Canada, the U.S., UK, and internationally, Ipsos Public Affairs is the media polling supplier to Reuters News, the world's leading source of intelligent information for businesses and professionals. Ipsos Public Affairs is a member of the Ipsos Group, a leading global survey-based market research company. We provide boutique-style customer service and work closely with our clients, while also undertaking global research.

### About Ipsos

Ipsos is an independent market research company controlled and managed by research professionals. Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos has grown into a worldwide research group with a strong presence in all key markets. Ipsos ranks fourth in the global research industry.

With offices in 88 countries, Ipsos delivers insightful expertise across five research specializations: brand, advertising and media; customer loyalty; marketing; public affairs research; and survey management.

Ipsos researchers assess market potential and interpret market trends. They develop and build brands. They help clients build long-term relationships with their customers. They test advertising and study audience responses to various media and they measure public opinion around the globe.

Ipsos has been listed on the Paris Stock Exchange since 1999 and generated global revenues of €1,782.7 million in 2016.

#### GAME CHANGERS

« Game Changers » is the Ipsos signature.

At Ipsos we are passionately curious about people, markets, brands and society.  
We make our changing world easier and faster to navigate and inspire clients to make smarter decisions.  
We deliver with security, speed, simplicity and substance. We are Game Changers.

Ipsos is listed on Eurolist – NYSE-Euronext.  
The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index  
and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

*ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP*  
[www.ipsos.com](http://www.ipsos.com)

Address: 2020 K Street NW, Suite 410  
Washington, DC 20006  
Tel: +1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**  
*Vice President, U.S., Ipsos Public Affairs*  
Email: [chris.jackson@ipsos.com](mailto:chris.jackson@ipsos.com)  
Tel: +1 202 420-2025