Survey Data Findings
Small Business Index
Q2 2024

Ipsos survey on behalf of MetLife – U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Washington, DC, June 26, 2024

These are the findings of an Ipsos poll, conducted on behalf of MetLife and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce between April 19 to May 6, 2024. For this survey, a sample of 750 small business owners and operators age 18+ from the continental U.S. Alaska and Hawaii was interviewed online in English**. The poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 4.4 percentage points for all respondents.

For full results, please refer to the following annotated questionnaire:

Full Annotated Questionnaire

NOTE: All results show percentages among all respondents, unless otherwise labeled.
-- signifies that an option or question was not included in that particular wave

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

	Q4-2020	Q1-2021	Q2-2021	Q3-2021	Q4-2021	Q1-2022	Q2-2022	Q3-2022	Q4-2022	Q1-2023	Q2-2023	Q3-2023	Q4-2023	Q1-2024	Q2-2024
Very good	23	23	23	20	30	28	26	32	31	29	27	31	27	30	30
Somewhat good	27	28	30	35	31	33	40	33	33	35	33	35	37	35	36
About average	30	25	27	25	20	22	24	19	25	29	27	25	26	24	25
Somewhat poor	14	17	15	16	15	15	9	14	10	6	11	7	10	9	7
Very poor	4	7	5	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	3	2	0	2	1
Refused	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Don't know	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

*This study began in 2017. For space purposes, a limited trend of data is shown throughout this topline

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

	Q4-2020	Q1-2021	Q2-2021	Q3-2021	Q4-2021	Q1-2022	Q2-2022	Q3-2022	Q4-2022	Q1-2023	Q2-2023	Q3-2023	Q4-2023	Q1-2024	Q2-2024
Very good	7	8	8	7	9	8	8	13	11	7	9	13	7	10	11
Somewhat good	22	13	19	27	23	21	21	15	16	13	15	20	18	23	25
About average	20	19	26	24	22	22	21	13	18	23	19	23	22	19	16
Somewhat poor	37	42	36	31	33	35	33	35	37	38	37	30	34	33	33
Very poor	13	18	10	10	13	14	16	23	17	18	20	13	19	15	14
Refused	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Don't know	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

**Beginning in Q2 2020, an online approach was used in place of the typical phone methodology.

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

	Q4-2020	Q1-2021	Q2-2021	Q3-2021	Q4-2021	Q1-2022	Q2-2022	Q3-2022	Q4-2022	Q1-2023	Q2-2023	Q3-2023	Q4-2023	Q1-2024	Q2-2024
Very good	8	11	10	14	13	12	10	13	12	8	10	14	10	12	13
Somewhat good	24	17	23	28	27	27	27	18	18	21	20	23	21	26	30
About average	36	29	36	31	32	31	32	27	30	36	35	31	38	32	30
Somewhat poor	25	31	23	22	21	23	21	31	29	23	25	23	22	23	20
Very poor	8	12	6	5	7	6	10	12	10	11	9	8	10	7	7
Refused	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Don't know	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1

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?

	Q4-2020	Q1-2021	Q2-2021	Q3-2021	Q4-2021	Q1-2022	Q2-2022	Q3-2022	Q4-2022	Q1-2023	Q2-2023	Q3-2023	Q4-2023	Q1-2024	Q2-2024
More competition	26	24	26	26	30	30	39	32	29	27	36	34	27	30	35
Less competition	22	24	20	17	18	18	15	18	19	15	16	18	14	14	14
Stayed about the same	49	49	51	55	49	50	45	49	50	57	47	48	56	55	50
Refused	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Don't know	3	2	4	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	1

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

	Q4-2020	Q1-2021	Q2-2021	Q3-2021	Q4-2021	Q1-2022	Q2-2022	Q3-2022	Q4-2022	Q1-2023	Q2-2023	Q3-2023	Q4-2023	Q1-2024	Q2-2024
Very comfortable	17	23	19	20	26	22	17	23	22	19	19	26	21	21	26
Somewhat comfortable	42	38	45	46	41	47	56	43	45	45	44	46	46	46	47
Not very comfortable	26	23	24	25	22	22	20	25	25	28	27	21	26	26	22
Not at all comfortable	14	14	11	9	11	8	6	8	7	8	8	7	5	7	4
Refused	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Don't know	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1

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

	Q4-2020	Q1-2021	Q2-2021	Q3-2021	Q4-2021	Q1-2022	Q2-2022	Q3-2022	Q4-2022	Q1-2023	Q2-2023	Q3-2023	Q4-2023	Q1-2024	Q2-2024
Increase investment	31	35	33	29	42	40	43	42	47	38	42	42	42	36	46
Invest about as much in the business as you did last year	38	37	42	48	35	40	40	37	36	41	41	44	43	44	41
Reduce investment	20	18	16	15	14	10	8	12	9	10	9	7	8	11	6
Refused	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Don't know	12	9	10	8	9	9	9	9	8	10	8	7	7	9	7

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?

	Q4-2020	Q1-2021	Q2-2021	Q3-2021	Q4-2021	Q1-2022	Q2-2022	Q3-2022	Q4-2022	Q1-2023	Q2-2023	Q3-2023	Q4-2023	Q1-2024	Q2-2024
Increased	28	28	27	30	32	29	37	37	35	28	37	38	34	29	35
Decreased	18	14	14	10	11	9	8	9	9	9	10	10	9	8	6
Stayed the same	51	54	57	58	55	60	53	51	54	60	51	51	57	60	56
Refused	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Don't know	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	1	1	3	2

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

	Q4-2020	Q1-2021	Q2-2021	Q3-2021	Q4-2021	Q1-2022	Q2-2022	Q3-2022	Q4-2022	Q1-2023	Q2-2023	Q3-2023	Q4-2023	Q1-2024	Q2-2024
Increased staff	16	17	18	13	18	19	22	20	19	19	23	23	17	16	22
Retained the same size staff	64	55	57	68	64	65	62	63	65	69	64	68	72	72	68
Reduced staff	18	27	23	17	17	15	14	16	15	12	13	9	11	12	9
Refused	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Don't know	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

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

	Q4-2020	Q1-2021	Q2-2021	Q3-2021	Q4-2021	Q1-2022	Q2-2022	Q3-2022	Q4-2022	Q1-2023	Q2-2023	Q3-2023	Q4-2023	Q1-2024	Q2-2024
Increasing staff	27	32	32	28	38	37	43	38	40	37	47	40	40	34	41
Retaining the same size staff	52	49	52	62	48	52	48	52	50	53	46	51	54	57	52
Reducing staff	14	14	11	6	9	6	3	6	5	6	3	4	3	4	4
Refused	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Don't know	7	5	4	4	5	4	6	4	5	5	4	5	3	5	3

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

	Q4-2020	Q1-2021	Q2-2021	Q3-2021	Q4-2021	Q1-2022	Q2-2022	Q3-2022	Q4-2022	Q1-2023	Q2-2023	Q3-2023	Q4-2023	Q1-2024	Q2-2024
Increase	52	47	57	58	59	63	66	61	63	64	71	71	65	67	73
Decrease	14	14	9	8	10	7	6	9	10	8	8	6	5	8	6
Stay the same	27	32	30	31	28	26	23	24	23	24	19	20	27	21	18
Refused	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Don't know	7	7	5	3	3	5	6	5	4	3	3	3	4	5	4

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Q2 – 2024 Storyline Questions

11. Which of the following are the biggest challenges facing small business owners right now? You may select up to two.*

	Q3-2021	Q4-2021	Q1-2022	Q2-2022	Q3-2022	Q4 2022	Q1-2023	Q2-2023	Q3-2023	Q4-2023	Q1-2024	Q2-2024
Inflation costs	19	23	33	44	50	53	54	54	52	53	52	55
Revenue	34	26	21	22	22	22	22	20	22	22	29	26
Interest rates rising	--	--	7	15	14	16	16	23	17	19	20	18
Affording employee benefits or healthcare**	--	--	--	--	--	--	10	13	14	17	17	18
Supply chain issues	19	18	26	28	26	20	21	23	23	17	16	14
Employee retention	7	11	11	9	10	11	11	12	15	12	12	13
Access to credit or a loan	8	8	6	7	11	13	8	12	10	11	10	12
Employee well-being/morale	8	11	14	10	5	7	7	9	11	12	8	11
Lack of applicants for job openings	11	12	13	7	6	8	6	9	8	9	9	9
Caring for family	10	10	8	8	6	7	7	5	7	6	6	5
Something else	6	6	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Don't know	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	0	1	0	1	1

Prior to Q3 2022, this question was worded, "Which of the following are the biggest challenges facing small business owners coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic? You may select up to two."
**This option was first asked in Q1 2023.*
*** In Q2 2023, the following responses were removed: "COVID-19 safety protocols/compliance" & "Low quality of applicants who applied for job openings"*

12. In a few words, please explain why you selected the previous as the biggest challenge(s) facing small business owners right now.*

Open-ended responses provided separately

Prior to Q3 2022, this question was worded, "In a few words, please explain why you selected the previous as the biggest challenge(s) facing small business owners coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic."

13. How familiar are you with artificial intelligence (AI)?

	Q2-2024
Very familiar	38
Somewhat familiar	49
Have heard of it, but that's it	13
I have never heard of it	0
Familiar (Net)	*87*
Unfamiliar (Net)	*13*

14. Has your company currently done any of the following to prepare for AI in the workplace, or not?

	Q2-2024
Tried out different AI tools to see which one(s) best fit our business needs	40
Employee training about how to use AI	23
Requested experience with AI in job posting(s)	16
Established or updated a company AI conduct policy	15
Created/Maintained a team or taskforce dedicated to AI	13
Other	3
None of the above	37

15. In the next year, does your business look to do any of the following to prepare for AI in the workplace, or not?

	Q2-2024
Try out different AI tools to see which one(s) best fit our business needs	49
Employee training about how to use AI	25
Establish or update a company AI conduct policy	24
Create/Maintain a team or taskforce dedicated to AI	19
Request experience with AI in job posting(s)	17
Other	1
None of the above	26

16. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following?

Total Agree Summary

	Q2-2024
Having employees who know how to use AI tools could give my business an edge against competitors	74
Hiring employees with AI skills could save my business <u>time</u> in the long run	71
Hiring employees with AI skills could save my business <u>money</u> in the long run	67
I expect AI to change the types of roles we have on staff in the future	65
I expect AI proficiency to be a skill listed in future job postings at my company	64
My business needs to do more to train employees to use AI at work	63
I worry about the <u>time</u> it would take to bring my employees up to speed on how to implement AI	52
I worry about the <u>money</u> it would take to bring my employees up to speed on how to implement AI	49

    a. Hiring employees with AI skills could save my business <u>time</u> in the long run

	Q2-2024
Strongly agree	29
Somewhat agree	42
Somewhat disagree	13
Strongly disagree	10
Don't know	6
Agree (Net)	*71*
Disagree (Net)	*23*

    b. Hiring employees with AI skills could save my business <u>money</u> in the long run

	Q2-2024
Strongly agree	28
Somewhat agree	40
Somewhat disagree	16
Strongly disagree	9
Don't know	8
Agree (Net)	*67*
Disagree (Net)	*25*

16. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following? *(Continued)*

c. I worry about the <u>time</u> it would take to bring my employees up to speed on how to implement AI tools at my business

	Q2-2024
Strongly agree	17
Somewhat agree	35
Somewhat disagree	28
Strongly disagree	18
Don't know	2
Agree (Net)	*52*
Disagree (Net)	*46*

d. I worry about the <u>money</u> it would take to bring my employees up to speed on how to implement AI tools at my business

	Q2-2024
Strongly agree	17
Somewhat agree	32
Somewhat disagree	30
Strongly disagree	18
Don't know	3
Agree (Net)	*49*
Disagree (Net)	*48*

e. Having employees who know how to use AI tools could give my business an edge against competitors

	Q2-2024
Strongly agree	28
Somewhat agree	47
Somewhat disagree	12
Strongly disagree	8
Don't know	5
Agree (Net)	*74*
Disagree (Net)	*20*

f. My business needs to do more to train employees to use AI at work

	Q2-2024
Strongly agree	20
Somewhat agree	42
Somewhat disagree	18
Strongly disagree	12
Don't know	7
Agree (Net)	*63*
Disagree (Net)	*31*

16. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following? *(Continued)*

g. I expect AI proficiency to be a skill listed in future job postings at my company

	Q2-2024
Strongly agree	22
Somewhat agree	42
Somewhat disagree	17
Strongly disagree	13
Don't know	5
Agree (Net)	*64*
Disagree (Net)	*30*

h. I expect AI to change the types of roles we have on staff in the future

	Q2-2024
Strongly agree	25
Somewhat agree	41
Somewhat disagree	18
Strongly disagree	12
Don't know	5
Agree (Net)	*65*
Disagree (Net)	*30*

17. As a small business owner or decision maker, how likely are you to use AI tools for the following administrative tasks?

Total Likely Summary

	Q2-2024
Help develop standard operating procedures for the organization	70
Develop learning resource documents for staff on their tasks and duties	70
Write a job description for job bulletin	70
Develop an organizational chart for the business	70
Help write a business plan	68
Help write an employment contract	68

a. Write a job description for job bulletin

	Q2-2024
Very likely	29
Somewhat likely	41
Not very likely	16
Not at all likely	12
Don't know	2
Likely (Net)	*70*
Unlikely (Net)	*28*

17. As a small business owner or decision maker, how likely are you to use AI tools for the following administrative tasks? *(Continued)*

  b. Develop learning resource documents for staff on their tasks and duties

	Q2-2024
Very likely	26
Somewhat likely	44
Not very likely	16
Not at all likely	11
Don't know	2
Likely (Net)	*70*
Unlikely (Net)	*28*

  c. Develop an organizational chart for the business

	Q2-2024
Very likely	26
Somewhat likely	43
Not very likely	17
Not at all likely	12
Don't know	2
Likely (Net)	*70*
Unlikely (Net)	*29*

  d. Help write a business plan

	Q2-2024
Very likely	27
Somewhat likely	41
Not very likely	20
Not at all likely	9
Don't know	2
Likely (Net)	*68*
Unlikely (Net)	*30*

  e. Help develop standard operating procedures for the organization

	Q2-2024
Very likely	29
Somewhat likely	41
Not very likely	17
Not at all likely	11
Don't know	1
Likely (Net)	*70*
Unlikely (Net)	*28*

17. As a small business owner or decision maker, how likely are you to use AI tools for the following administrative tasks? *(Continued)*

   f.   Help write an employment contract

	Q2-2024
Very likely	26
Somewhat likely	42
Not very likely	18
Not at all likely	11
Don't know	3
Likely (Net)	*68*
Unlikely (Net)	*29*

18. How likely, if at all, are you to seek out information about how to use AI in the workplace from each of the following sources?

   Total Likely Summary

	Q2-2024
General Google search	82
Other business owners	72
AI expert(s)	71
Social media	62
Mentor(s)	62
Small Business Administration (SBA)	61
Family or friends	59
Local college(s)	48
State/local Chamber of Commerce	43
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	42

   a.   Small Business Administration (SBA)

	Q2-2024
Very likely	24
Somewhat likely	37
Not very likely	22
Not at all likely	12
Don't know	4
Likely (Net)	*61*
Unlikely (Net)	*35*

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18. How likely, if at all, are you to seek out information about how to use AI in the workplace from each of the following sources? *(Continued)*

   b. State/local Chamber of Commerce

	Q2-2024
Very likely	16
Somewhat likely	27
Not very likely	35
Not at all likely	18
Don't know	4
Likely (Net)	*43*
Unlikely (Net)	*53*

   c. U.S. Chamber of Commerce

	Q2-2024
Very likely	15
Somewhat likely	26
Not very likely	34
Not at all likely	21
Don't know	4
Likely (Net)	*42*
Unlikely (Net)	*55*

   d. General Google search

	Q2-2024
Very likely	38
Somewhat likely	44
Not very likely	12
Not at all likely	5
Don't know	1
Likely (Net)	*82*
Unlikely (Net)	*17*

   e. Mentor(s)

	Q2-2024
Very likely	21
Somewhat likely	40
Not very likely	21
Not at all likely	13
Don't know	4
Likely (Net)	*62*
Unlikely (Net)	*34*

18. How likely, if at all, are you to seek out information about how to use AI in the workplace from each of the following sources? *(Continued)*

f. Other business owners

	Q2-2024
Very likely	26
Somewhat likely	46
Not very likely	17
Not at all likely	8
Don't know	3
Likely (Net)	*72*
Unlikely (Net)	*25*

g. Social media

	Q2-2024
Very likely	25
Somewhat likely	37
Not very likely	22
Not at all likely	14
Don't know	3
Likely (Net)	*62*
Unlikely (Net)	*35*

h. Family or friends

	Q2-2024
Very likely	22
Somewhat likely	37
Not very likely	26
Not at all likely	13
Don't know	2
Likely (Net)	*59*
Unlikely (Net)	*39*

i. Local college(s)

	Q2-2024
Very likely	15
Somewhat likely	33
Not very likely	33
Not at all likely	16
Don't know	3
Likely (Net)	*48*
Unlikely (Net)	*49*

18. How likely, if at all, are you to seek out information about how to use AI in the workplace from each of the following sources? *(Continued)*

   j.   AI expert(s)

	Q2-2024
Very likely	32
Somewhat likely	39
Not very likely	16
Not at all likely	9
Don't know	4
Likely (Net)	*71*
Unlikely (Net)	*25*

About the Study

These are the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between April 19th to May 6th, 2024. For this survey, a sample of 750 small business owners and operators age 18+ from the continental U.S. Alaska and Hawaii was interviewed online in English.

The sample was randomly drawn from partner online panel sources that specialize in B2B sample and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to the study, in drawing sample. Small businesses are defined in this study as companies with 500 or fewer employees that are not sole proprietorships. 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 2020 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. Additional post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on the gender of the business's owner and whether the business is minority-owned or not. The source of these two weight variables is the Small Business Administration's 2022 Small Business Profiles.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online non-probability polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 4.4 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 credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following (n=750, DEFF=1.5, adjusted Confidence Interval=+/-5.9 percentage points).

Starting with the March 2020 survey, small business decision makers are reached via an online survey, in place of the typical phone-based approach. This methodological shift is in response to lower anticipated response rates in dialing owners at their businesses as a result of mandated closures related to the COVID-19 outbreak. While significant changes in data points can largely be attributed to the recent economic environment, switching from a phone to online approach may have also generated a mode effect.

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