



Florida Small Business Index

2018 Quarter 1 Survey Results

Presented by the Florida Chamber of Commerce Small Business Council

January 2018

About the Florida Chamber's Small Business Council

Florida's small businesses are essential to the continuing recovery of the Florida economy. The Florida Chamber's Small Business Council works directly with state and national leaders to pass important legislation such as reducing the business rent tax and reducing the cost of healthcare.

The Florida Chamber's Small Business Council provides a unified voice for all small businesses in our mission to secure Florida's future. Participants meet with legislators, contact media, and testify before both Florida's House and Senate on issues important to small businesses.

Survey Overview

Many in Florida's small business community are experiencing both challenges and successes as our economy grows. As we work to secure Florida's future, it is crucial that the Florida Chamber of Commerce understands what issues are most important to small businesses. The purpose of the Small Business Index Survey is to track trends and issues affecting small businesses in Florida. Small business owners are surveyed in order to monitor small business trends and identify emerging issues that may be addressed by the Florida Chamber's Small Business Council. The Council's previous surveys were performed in May 2010, September 2010, February 2011, July 2011, March 2012, June 2012, September 2012, December 2012, April 2013, July 2013, September 2013, January 2014, May 2014 and August/September 2014, May 2015, September 2015, December 2015/January 2016, March 2016, June 2016, August/September 2016, December 2016, March/April 2017, June/July 2017, and September/October 2017.

This survey is a nonscientific, random sampling of small business owners in Florida. It was conducted December 13, 2017 through January 12, 2018 and received 126 responses. The electronic survey was e-mailed to small businesses in Florida; and distributed by local chambers of commerce throughout the state; and posted on social media including Facebook and Twitter.

Of those responding:

- 30% of respondents employ less than 5 employees;
- 41% employ 5 to 49 employees;
- 12% employ 50 to 99 employees; and
- 17% employ 100 to 500 employees.

Additionally:

- 69% of respondents employ less than 5 part-time employees;
- 18% employ 5 to 49 part-time employees;
- 8% employ 50 to 99 part-time employees; and
- 5% employ 100 or more part-time employees.

Survey Analysis

The Florida Chamber Foundation's 1st Quarter survey of 2018 shows that Florida's small businesses are increasingly concerned about workforce quality. In fact, 27 percent of this survey's respondents indicated "Workforce Quality" was their top issue, more than double the second-place answer. "Government Regulations" was in second place in this survey with 13 percent of respondents indicating it was their top issue.

In third place is "Healthcare Costs" with 11 percent, followed by "Lawsuit Abuse" with 9 percent. "Access to Capital" was the top issue for 8 percent of Florida's small businesses. Notable in this survey is the drop of "Economic Uncertainty" from the top 5 responses given by participants.

The top six issues - "Workforce Quality," "Government Regulations," "Healthcare Costs," "Lawsuit Abuse" and "Access to Capital" - cover the top concerns of 68 percent of small businesses taking the survey during the first quarter of 2018.

According to respondents, business demand appears to be steady, with 46 percent indicating sales were higher compared the same period last year. This is the same as last quarter's survey, and higher than last year at the same time by 7 percentage points.

An indicator of the future path of Florida's economy is the percentage of respondents who expect the economy to improve over the next year – 71 percent, up from the 63 percent reported in our last survey.

Small Business Employment Outlook:

- 52 percent of respondents expect to hire in the next six months – this is up slightly from the 48 percent planning to hire in our Q4 2017 survey.
- An indicator of small business expansion in Florida – 53 percent of businesses have plans to make investments in plants or equipment, with 46 percent of businesses planning to make those investments within one year. Half of those companies plan to make their expansion investments within the next 6 months.

In this survey there was a substantial increase in respondents who indicated that their business is better off than it was 6 months ago. This survey indicates 51 percent of Florida's small businesses were better off, compared to 40 percent in last quarter's survey.

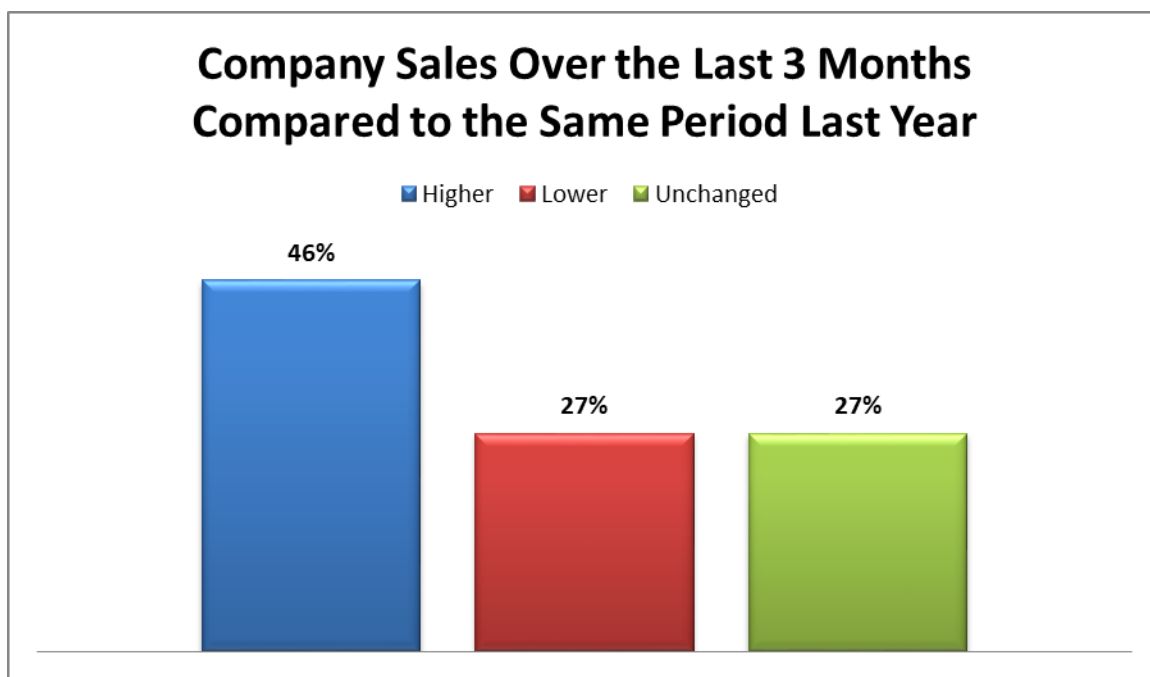
Survey Results

Comparisons

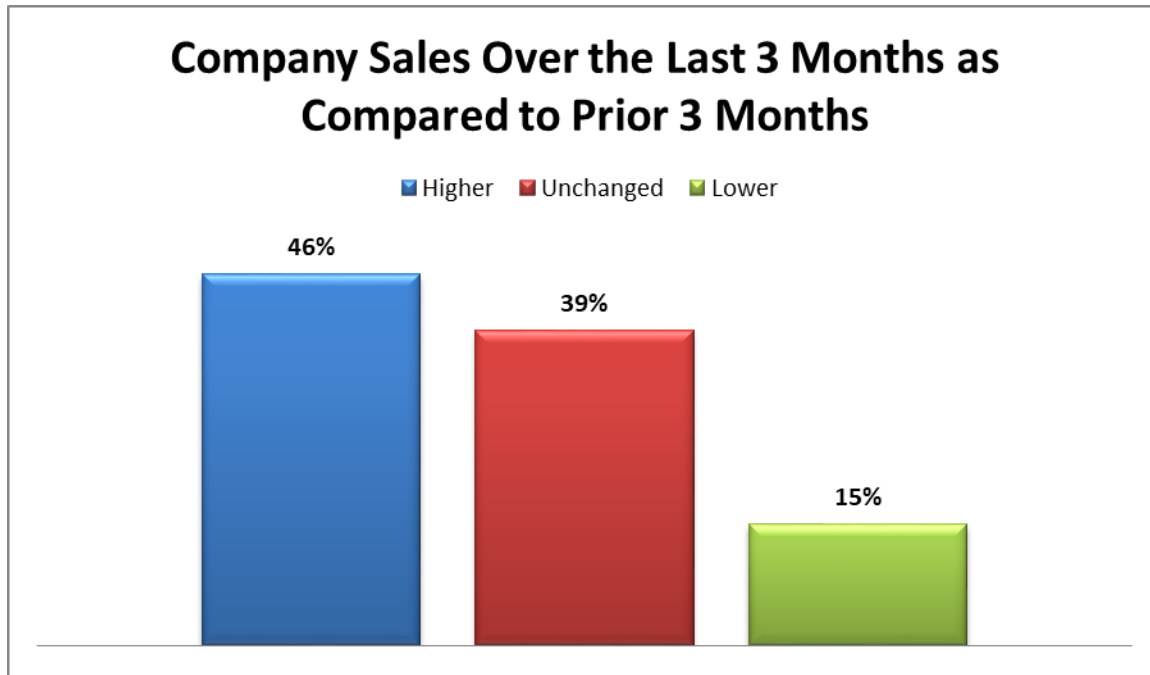
Q1: Top issues facing Florida small businesses today:

1. Workforce Quality – 27%
2. Government Regulations – 13%
3. Healthcare Costs – 11%
4. Lawsuit Abuse – 9%
5. Access to Capital – 8%

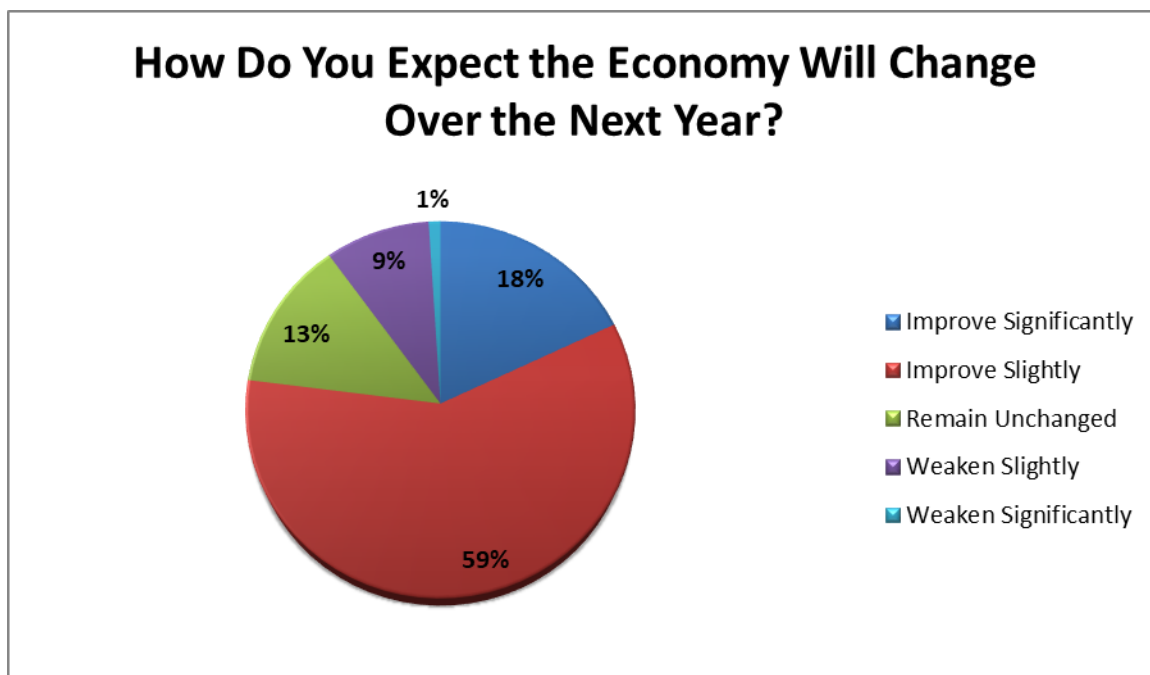
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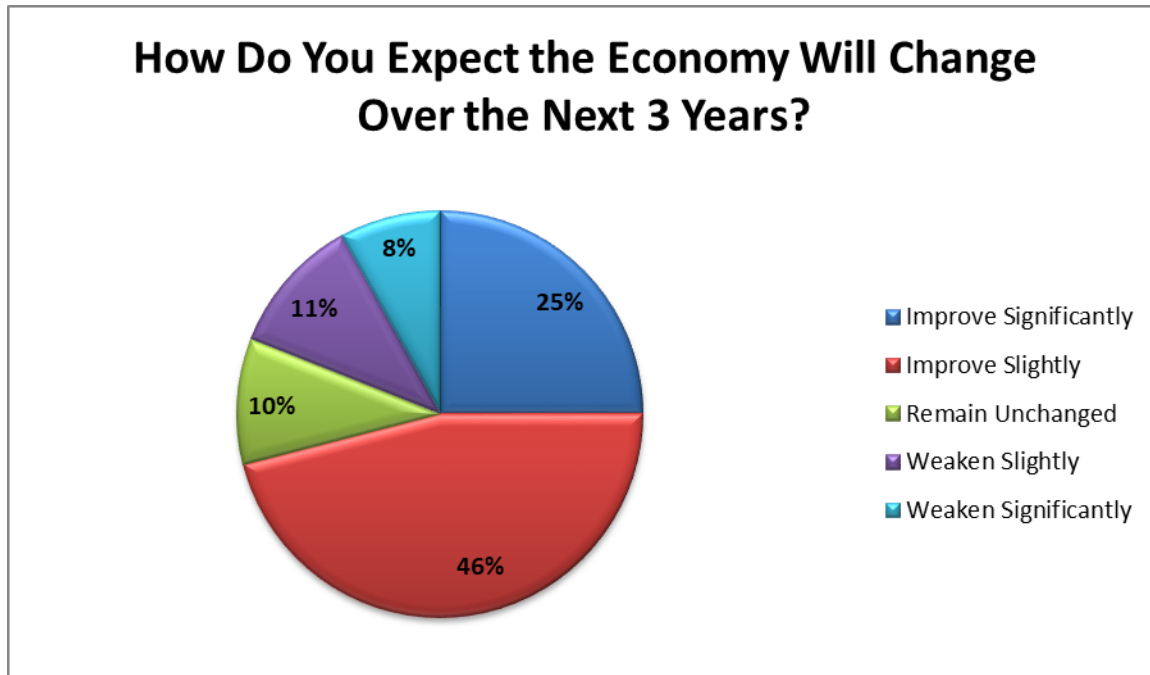
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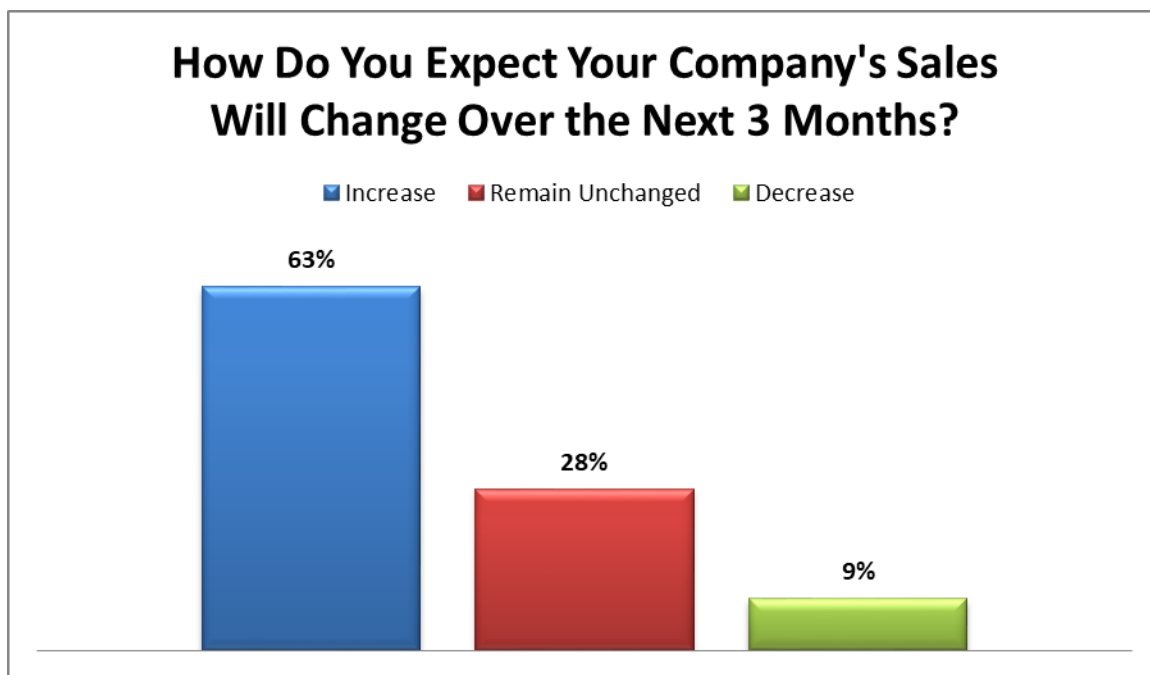
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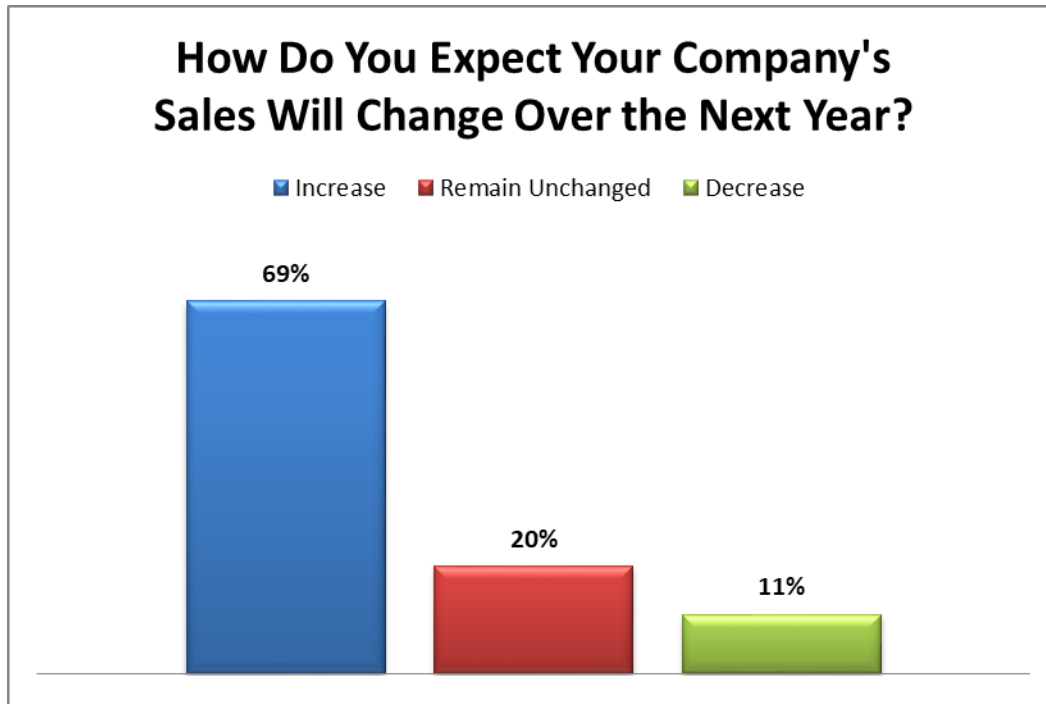
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Q8:



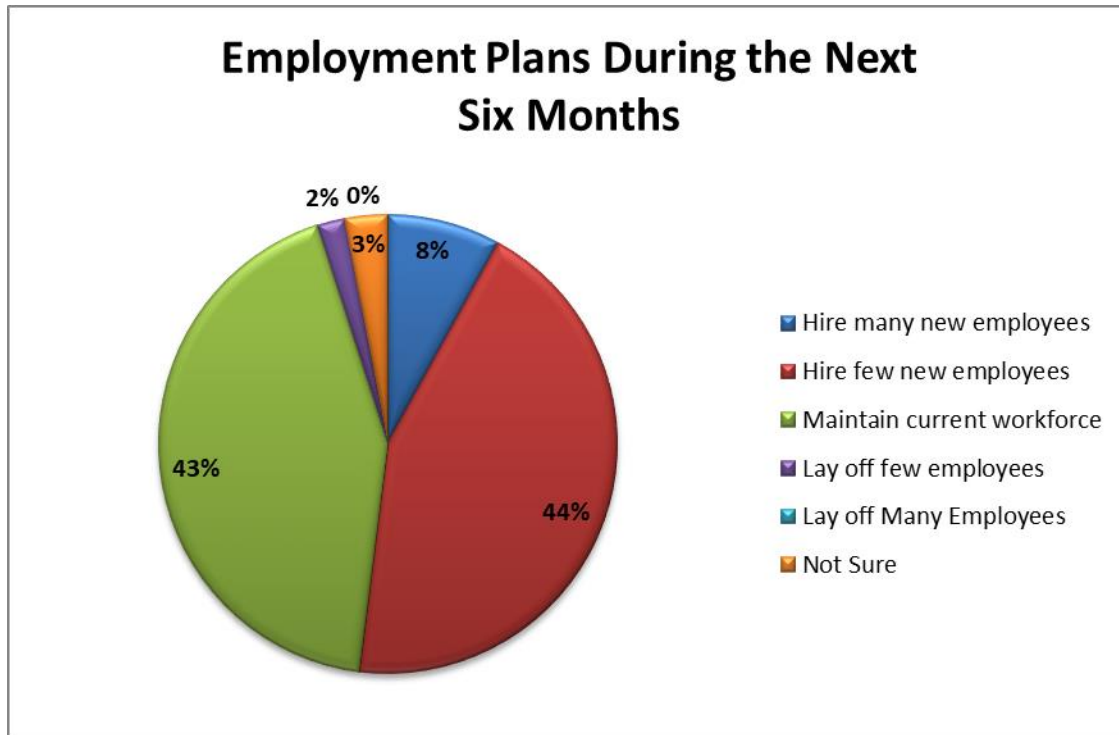
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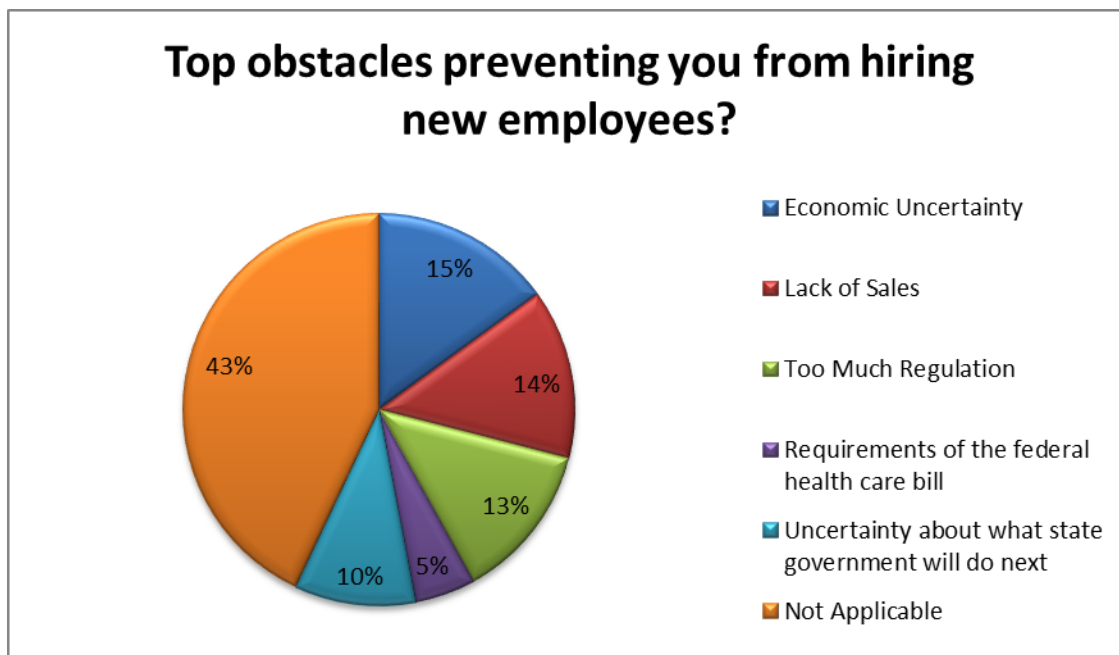
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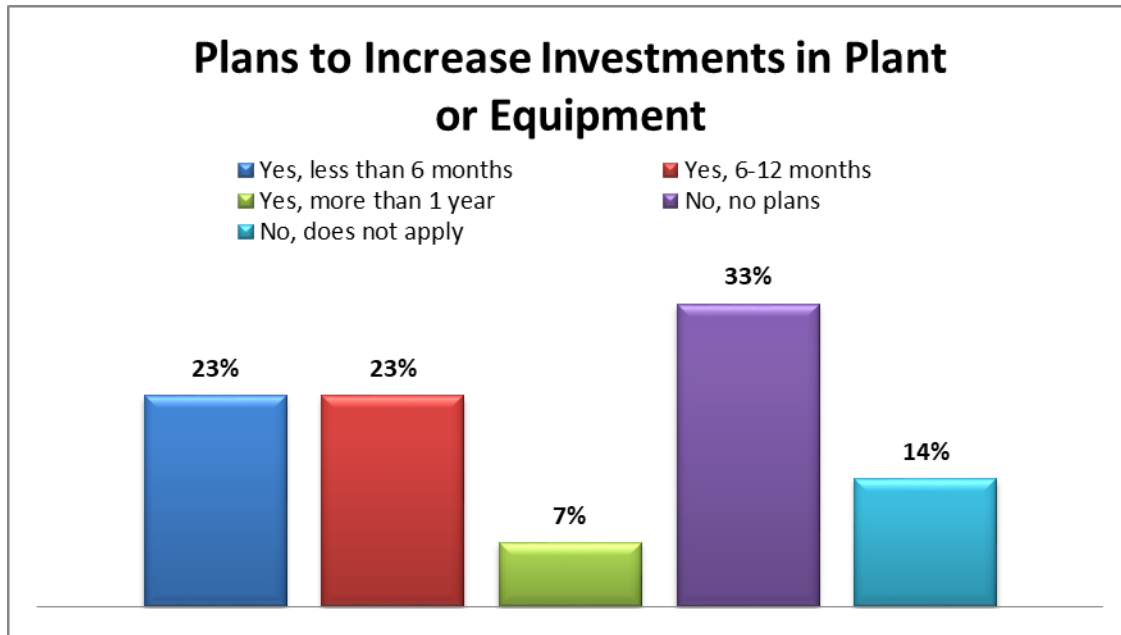
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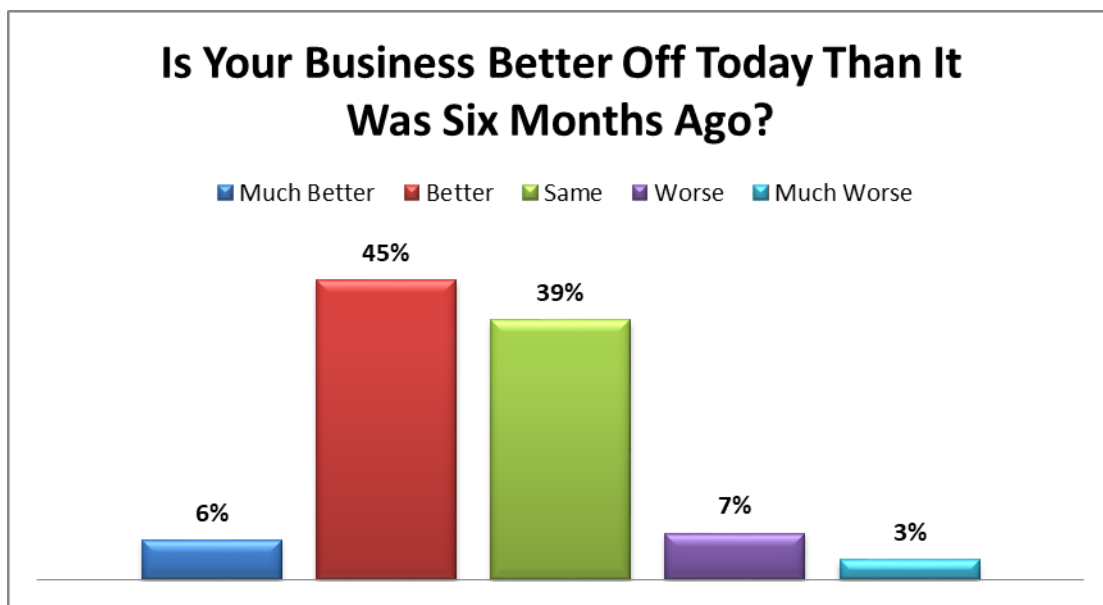
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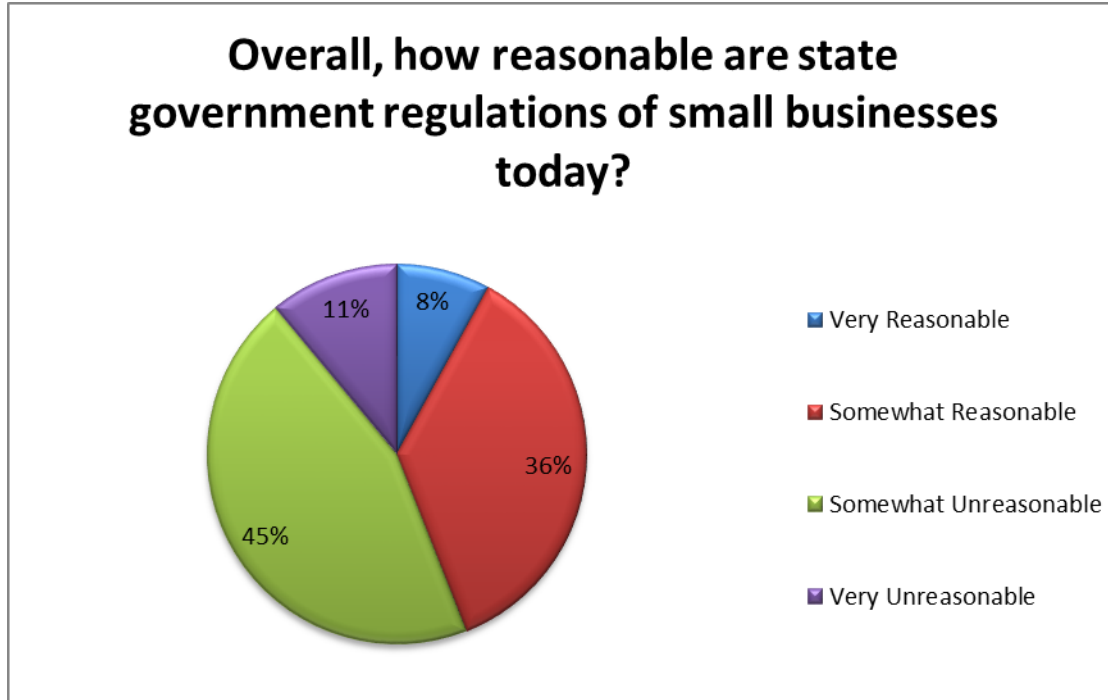
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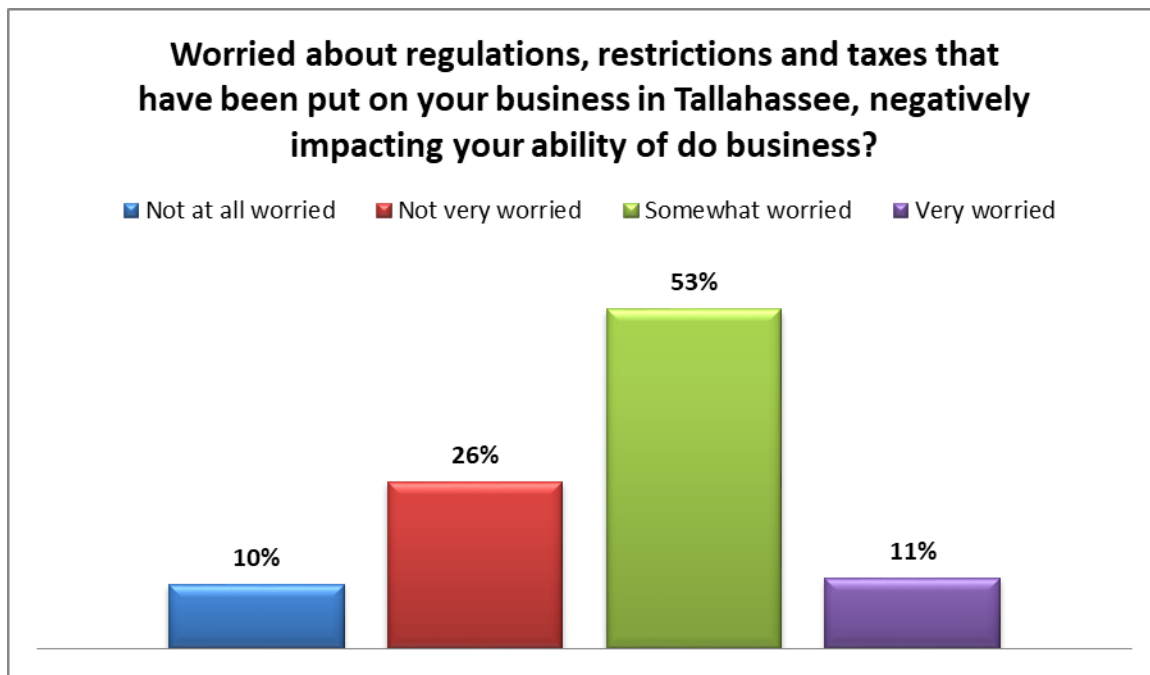
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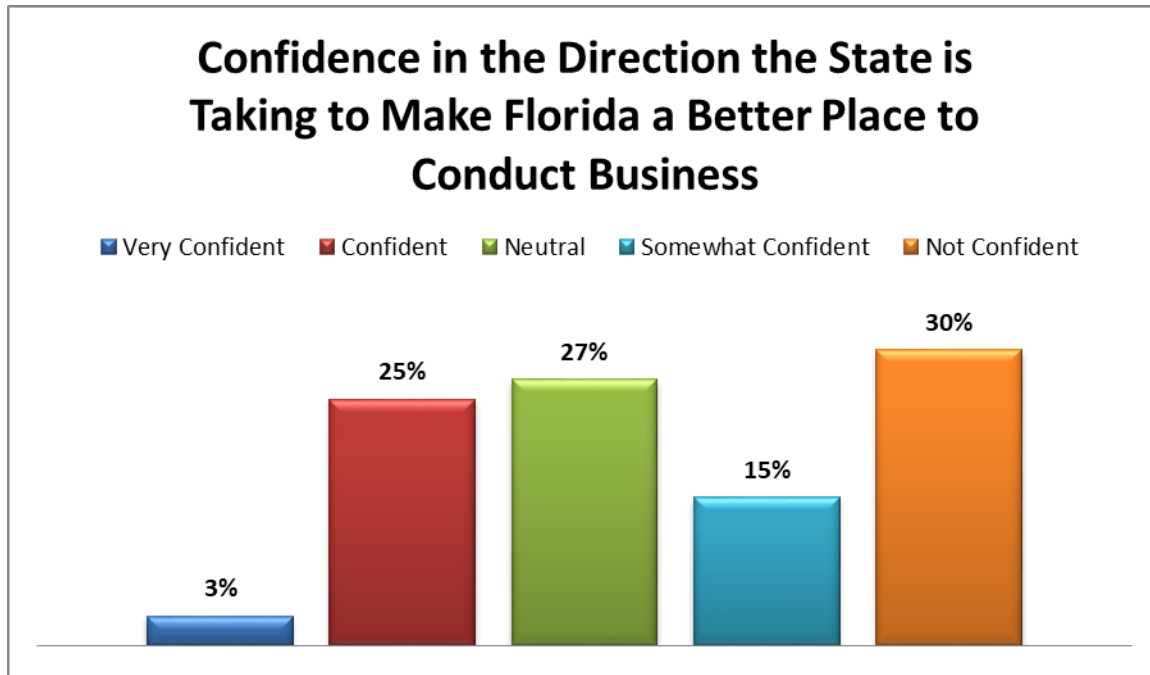
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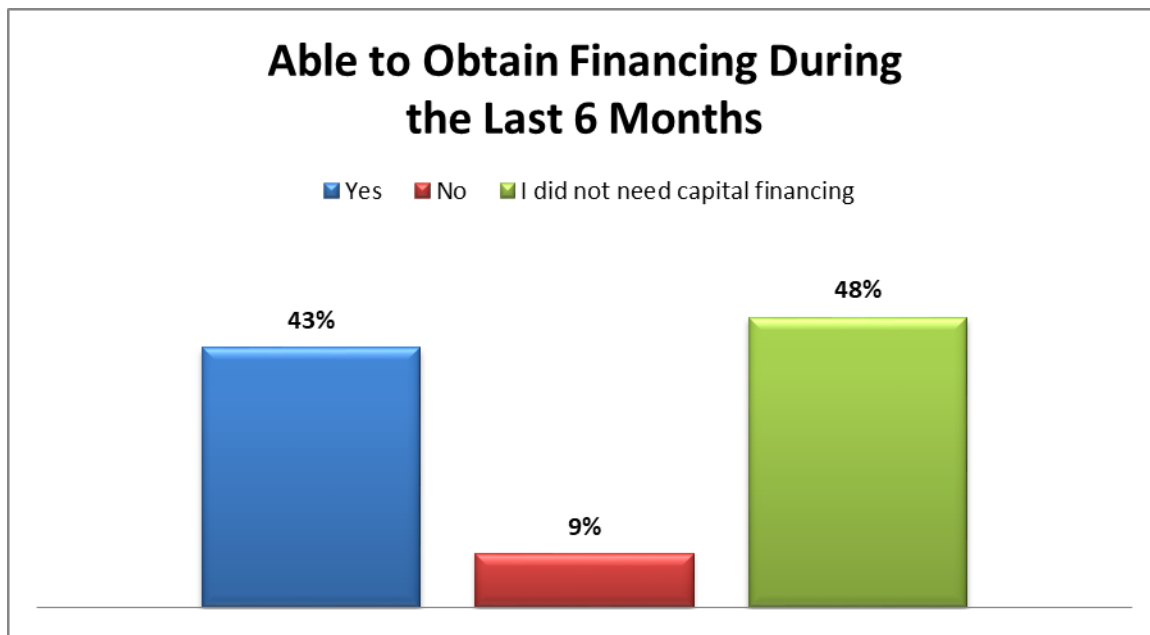
Q17:



Q19:



Q21:



Q22:

