

August 8, 2011



Women Business Owners Forecast Long-Term Growth, Won't Abandon Ship Despite Stormy Economy

- Most Intend to Grow Not Sell Over Next Two Years; They Agree on Benefits of Networking, Views Split on Value of Social Media, PNC Survey Finds -

PITTSBURGH, Aug. 8, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- The long-term view among U.S. women business owners is positive as eight out of 10 foresee growth over the next two years compared to 7 percent who want to sell, a sign that rising costs and economic uncertainty will not deter one of the fastest growing segments of the nation's small business sector.

(Photo: <https://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20110808/NE48292>)

The first-ever PNC Women Business Owners Outlook findings show these owners are managing through the current economy, holding the line on prices and employing new ideas and creative tactics to help endure the slow recovery.

"Creativity is paramount for a business to navigate through a down period," said Beth Marcello, director of women's business development at PNC Bank. "Our findings validate the value that women business owners place on creativity and innovation. Their willingness to try new ideas can result in new products or services, social media marketing tactics or even expansion into international markets."

In July, PNC reported findings that showed women business owners feel squeezed by the economy: only 15 percent plan to hire new employees in the next six months while nearly three-quarters (72 percent) expect to reduce expenses. The second phase of findings focuses on business philosophy, and shows a quiet confidence about long-term prospects. PNC found that 80 percent aspire to grow their business substantially or moderately over the next two years. Besides the few who want to sell their businesses, only 1 percent plan to scale back and 3 percent expect to close.

Other Findings: Risky Business?

The survey, which seeks to gauge the outlook and philosophy of women business owners across the nation, found the majority are looking to avoid risk. Only four in 10 (39 percent) are willing to accept moderate risk to grow their businesses, compared to 60 percent who prefer a conservative or balanced approach.

Other survey findings include:

- **Try this:** More than half (56 percent) of women business owners rely on trying new ways of doing things to make business decisions, compared to 44 percent who prefer to stick with what has worked in the past. Similarly, six out of 10 (62 percent) prefer to rely on their own ideas as opposed to others'.
- **Analyze this:** When making decisions, they are split between analysis and intuition. Fifty-five percent say they opt to analyze the situation while 45 percent go with their own intuitions.
- **Who's online?** Views are mixed regarding social media, with only half (51 percent) of the respondents currently utilizing interactive online channels to promote their businesses. Facebook and related social networking sites are most popular (40 percent), followed by LinkedIn and related business networking sites (27 percent) then Twitter (13 percent).
- **It's not about the money:** Nearly half (45 percent) listed "passion for their business" as one of the top reasons they stay in business. Only 22 percent cite "financial success" as a primary motivator.
- **Advice at home:** When looking for professional advice, women owners consult their spouses most often (49 percent). Professional advisors (40 percent) and peers (30 percent) are also seen as valuable sources of information.
- **Who you know:** Nearly seven out of 10 (68 percent) are affiliated with at least one industry group or business organization. Chambers of commerce and national industry groups are the most popular.

PNC provides education and certification curriculum to help its bankers to understand the challenges and opportunities for women in business. As a result, the bank has more than 500 PNC-Certified Women's Business Advocates throughout its retail banking regions.

An online media kit containing national and regional survey results is available on PNC's website at <http://www.pnc.com/go/presskits>.

The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. (NYSE: PNC) (www.pnc.com) is one of the nation's largest diversified financial services organizations providing retail and business banking; residential mortgage banking; specialized services for corporations and government entities, including corporate banking, real estate finance and asset-based lending; wealth management and asset management. Follow @PNCNews on Twitter for breaking news and announcements from PNC.

Methodology

The PNC Women Business Owners Outlook survey was conducted between March 30 and May 11, 2011, by telephone within the United States among 1,300 women owners or senior decision-makers of small and mid-sized businesses with annual revenues under \$10 million. The results given in this release are based on interviews with 543 businesses nationally, while the remaining interviews were conducted among businesses within the states of Florida, Maryland, Illinois, New Jersey, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Sampling error for the national results is +/- 4.3 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. The survey was conducted by Artemis Strategy Group (www.ArtemisSG.com), a communications strategy research firm specializing in brand positioning and policy issues. The firm, headquartered in Washington D.C., provides communications research and consulting to a range of public and private sector clients.

This report has been prepared for general informational purposes only and is not intended as specific advice or recommendations. Information has been gathered from third party sources and has not been independently verified or accepted by The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. PNC makes no representations or warranties as to the accuracy or completeness of the information, assumptions, analyses or conclusions presented in the report. PNC cannot be held responsible for any errors or misrepresentations contained in the report or in the information gathered from third party sources. Any reliance upon the information provided in the report is solely and exclusively at your own risk.

CONTACT:

Tim Rice

(412) 762-8033

timothy.rice@pnc.com

SOURCE The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.