

NEWS

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Mid-Year SMB Report Card: 76 Percent of Small Business Owners Remain Optimistic about Their Company's Growth in 2012

Age and industry are key drivers of optimism as well as adoption of mobile technologies and social media as business tools

LOS ANGELES, CA – June 26, 2012 –While economists may be arguing about double-dip recessions and the negative effects of unstable foreign governments, small business owners in the United States remain positive about their own economic prospects in 2012. The j2 Global@Small Business Survey, conducted by j2 Global, Inc. (NASDAQ: JCOM), reports that 76 percent of respondents are optimistic about their company's growth for the remainder of 2012. Less than 7 percent say they are not optimistic, while 17 percent say they feel unsure until after the November election.

The survey provides additional insight into how small business owners are embracing mobile technology and social media to run their businesses. Here are three key themes the data uncovered:

With Youth Comes Optimism

While more than three quarters of all respondents in the j2 Global survey say they are optimistic for the rest of 2012, younger business owners are most likely to expect growth. More than 85 percent of Millennials (32 years old and younger) say they are bullish. While still optimistic, each subsequent age group becomes less so, with 81 percent of Generation X (ages 33-47), 71 percent of Baby Boomers (ages 48-66), and 64 percent of Seniors (over 67 years old), expecting growth for their business this year. Results varied by industry as well, with real estate, advertising and financial services professionals showing the most optimism (>80 percent).

For the remaining respondents, 17 percent are unsure of their optimism for growth pending the November election. Concerns about election outcomes varied by industry, with consultants, lawyers, and doctors taking the strongest “wait and see” positions with 25 percent saying that clarity won’t come until November.

SMBs Are the New Social Butterflies

While established promotional tools—such as email and search—are still the most popular, social media is emerging as the great equalizer, often giving small businesses a louder mouthpiece and more of an opportunity to efficiently engage with customers. In fact, more than one in three businesses surveyed by j2 Global (39 percent) say a quarter of their marketing strategy now focuses on social media, while 26 percent say it is half or more of their marketing strategy. Other key findings included:

- 37 percent of respondents claim that Facebook is the most important social media platform for their business. The number two and three slots were filled by LinkedIn at 24 percent and Google+ at 18 percent.
- The popularity of social media networks varied widely by industry. Facebook is most popular with restaurants, LinkedIn is used most by consultants, and Google+ has been embraced by medical professionals. In addition, eCommerce businesses rely on Twitter and YouTube is the top choice of technology firms.
- Despite the growth of the social sharing site Pinterest, it was rated the least valuable business platform in the survey, coming in at 1 percent.

Mobile Is On the Move

According to the j2 Global survey, small business owners are embracing mobile technology to reach new markets while operating more efficiently. These findings parallel those of a [study from the Small Business and Entrepreneur Council](#) showing that small business owners are saving 370 million hours of their own time and 725 million hours of their employees’ time per year by using mobile apps and a [Business Journals study](#) that the iPad is the fastest growing technology among SMBs.

The j2 Global survey focused on SMB use of mobile apps and the iPad and found:

- 38 percent of users currently leverage five or more mobile apps to run their business.
- Popular business uses of the iPad include email, the most often reported at 76 percent, to web browsing, document management, product demonstrations and sales, phone and video communications, and online fax.

- Restaurants and other food service companies are driving particularly high adoption of point-of-sale and fax applications, likely due to taking and processing pick-up and on-site orders.

“Small businesses have always been a driver of economic growth. Seeing their continued optimism, as well as their adoption of mobile technologies and social media, is a promising sign,” said Mike Pugh, vice president, marketing of j2 Global. “SMBs keep pushing forward, finding new, more efficient ways of doing business in the cloud and on the move.”

Complete results of the j2 Global Small Business Opinion Survey are available on [this page](#). An infographic of the survey results can be viewed [here](#), along with an animated version on [YouTube](#).

About the j2 Global Small Business Opinion Survey

[J2 Global](#) surveyed 1,067 small business owners, who are [eVoice](#), [eFax](#) or [Campaigner](#) customers, via an online survey about hot topics such as the use of iPads and apps, social networks, optimism in company’s growth, access to loans, and summer vacation plans between April 19 and April 26, 2012. The margin of error is +/- 2.98 percentage points.

About j2 Global

j2 Global (NASDAQ:JCOM) provides cloud services for business, offering Internet fax, virtual phone, hosted email, email marketing, online backup, unified communications, and CRM solutions. Founded in 1995, the company’s messaging network spans more than 49 countries on six continents. j2 Global markets its services principally under the brand names eFax[®], eVoice[®], FuseMail[®], Campaigner[®], KeepItSafe[®], and Onebox[®]. As of December 31, 2011, j2 Global had achieved 16 consecutive fiscal years of revenue growth. For more information about j2 Global, please visit www.j2global.com.

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