

Iowa's Largest Employers Expect Continued Growth for the 2018 Economy

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(DES MOINES) - The Iowa Business Council (IBC) released its quarterly Economic Outlook Survey today, with 80 percent of its members anticipating higher sales in the next six months. To support this projected sales growth, half of the IBC members report plans to increase capital spending. Employment rates appear steady, as 45 percent of IBC members expect to hire more people in the next six months. Overall, the economy remains strong, with a slight increase in the index number from last quarter (*up from 63 to 64.5*).

Despite the continued growth prompted by the strong economy, 65 percent of IBC businesses report concern in regards to attracting, developing and retaining a quality workforce. In response to this challenge, the IBC has launched a [Business Education Alliance](#), which brings all of the stakeholders – business, secondary education, and K-12 – to the same table to create and implement strategies that better align business and education to meet current and future workforce needs.

“Our members recognize the importance of working with all stakeholders to tackle current workforce challenges, while also preparing for the workforce needs of the future,” explained IBC Executive Director, Georgia Van Gundy. “Maintaining a growing and resilient state economy will require the creation and implementation of long-term education and workforce strategies that cultivate a diverse, highly-skilled population. We believe that by working together on the Business Education Alliance we can achieve just that and prepare Iowa for continued economic growth.”

IBC member companies also reported that the cost of healthcare is another primary concern for their organizations. Additionally, 40 percent of IBC members consider an unfavorable business climate – including infrastructure, regulations, and taxes – a challenge.

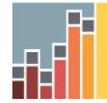
The Economic Outlook Survey is completed by the council members on a quarterly basis, since its inception in 2006. The survey provides insight regarding the projected trends for the state of Iowa, which can be used for business and economic planning. The reported trends have a state-wide impact, especially when considering that one in six jobs in Iowa are tied to an IBC company.

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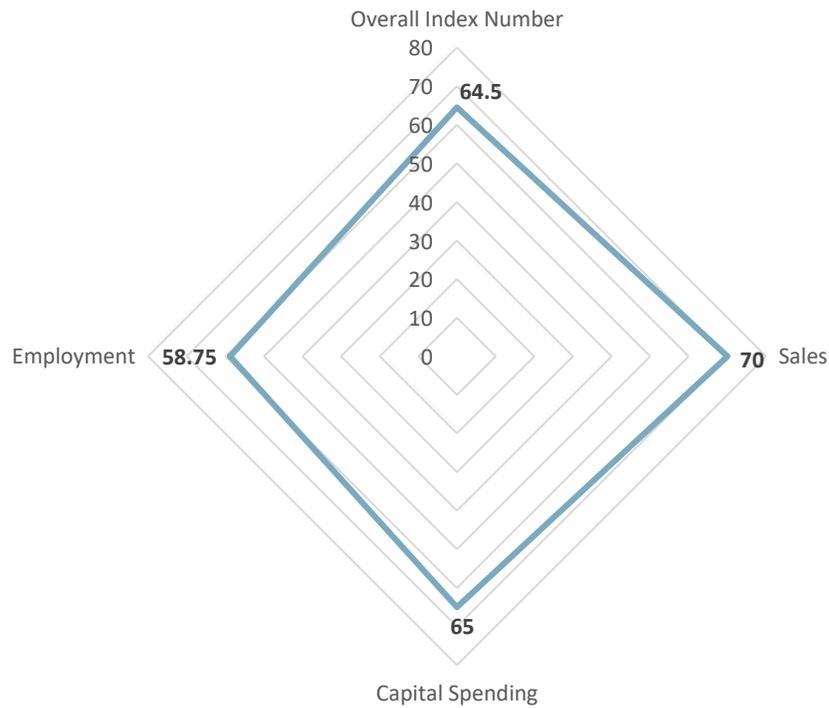
About the Iowa Business Council

The Iowa Business Council (IBC) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose members are the chief decision makers of major Iowa employers. One in six jobs in Iowa are tied to an IBC company. IBC member companies have invested billions of dollars of capital in Iowa's commercial infrastructure; lead the way in technology innovation, R&D, and grants procured; and are often the driving financial and volunteer forces behind philanthropic efforts all over the state.

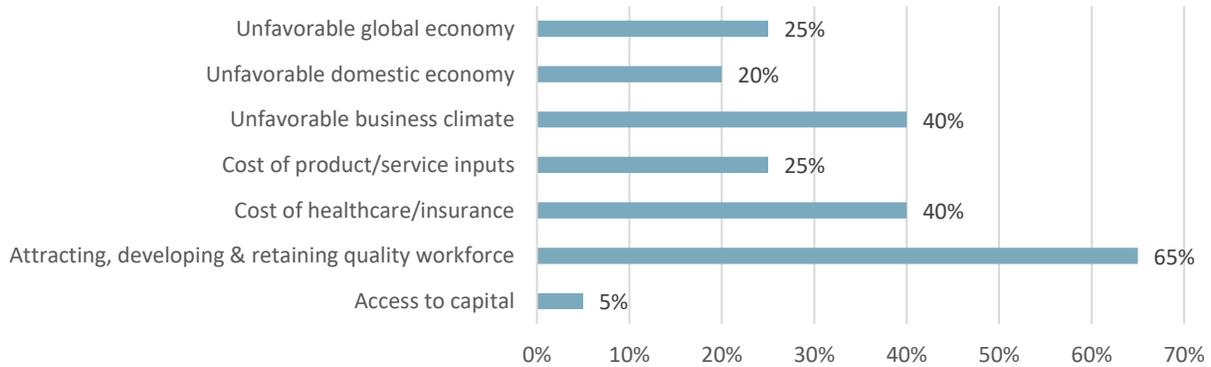
IBC member companies include: Ruan Transportation Management Systems, Vermeer Corporation, Iowa Bankers Association, HNI Corporation, Farm Bureau Financial Services, Fareway, Hy-Vee, Inc., Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Iowa, Casey's General Stores, Inc., Principal, Kent Corporation, Alliant Energy, The Weitz Company, Rockwell Collins, Wells Fargo, Deere & Company, Meredith Corporation, The University of Iowa Health Care, DowDupont Pioneer, Mercy Health Network, UnityPoint Health, Wells Enterprises, Inc., and Pella Corporation.

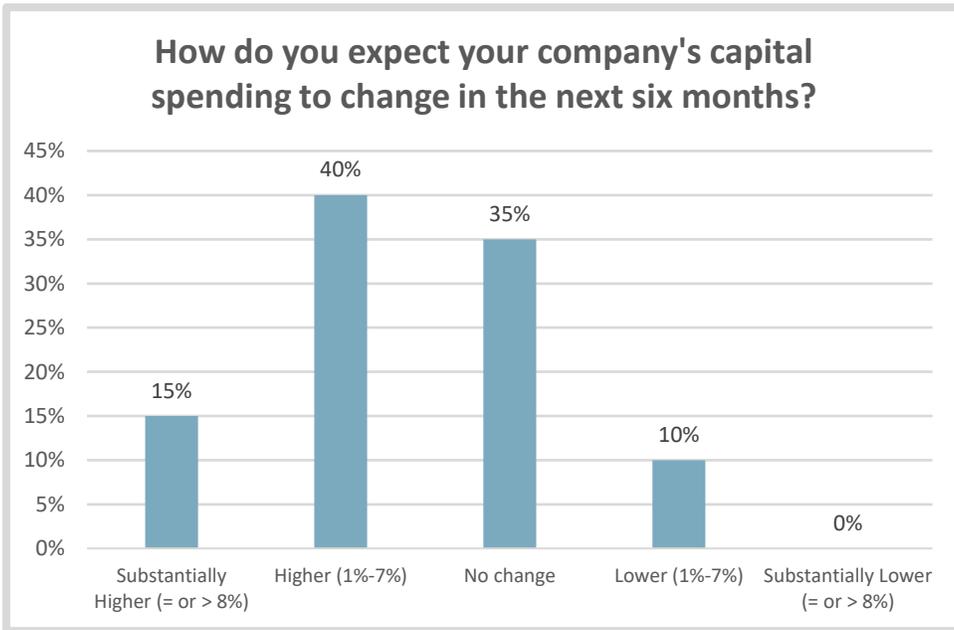
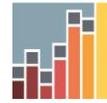


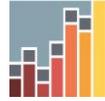
2018 Q1 Economic Outlook Survey Index Numbers



What are your current primary business challenges?







How do you expect your company's employment to change in the next six months?

