

Iowa's Major Employers Report Optimistic Economic Outlook Following Second Quarter

Iowa Business Council members anticipate increases in sales, employment, and capital spending, but workforce concerns may present challenges to anticipated growth.

(DES MOINES) – Iowa Business Council (IBC) members express continued economic optimism in the IBC's quarterly economic outlook survey released today, with 90 percent of IBC members anticipating higher sales in the next six months. To support this projected sales growth, two thirds of IBC members expect to add to their workforce, and 60 percent project an increase in capital spending.

This confident outlook points to the strength of the current economy, which is reflected in the rather significant increase in the survey's overall index number from last quarter (*up from 64.5 to 69.5*). The overall index number is a numeric measure that gauges business sentiment with any number over 50 indicating a positive perspective of the economy.

Despite the continued growth prompted by the strong economy, over 80 percent of the IBC businesses cite attracting, developing and retaining a quality workforce as their primary business challenge. This figure is up 15 percent from the IBC's first quarter survey, meaning workforce concerns are mounting.

As part of a comprehensive effort to address this problem, the IBC launched a new series of events titled "[Vision to Vitality](#)" to provide a forum for communities – large and small – to discuss barriers and best practices for workforce and economic growth. The first forum will be in Boone on July 17, 2018 from 4:00 – 5:30 p.m. at the DMAACC Boone Campus Theatre. The event is free to attend and open to both the public and media.

"Iowa's economy is strong – and that's something to celebrate – but we need the state's workforce to continue to expand to support this economic growth," shares IBC Executive Director, Georgia Van Gundy. "Our members continue to name attracting and retaining workers as a major challenge for their organizations, which is why the Iowa Business Council is excited to continue identifying solutions to address this worker shortage through open discussions with community members from all around Iowa during our Vision to Vitality forums."

Over one third of IBC members reported that the cost of healthcare and an unfavorable business climate – including infrastructure, regulations, and taxes – were also major business challenges for their organizations.

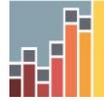
The Economic Outlook Survey has been completed by the council members on a quarterly basis since 2004. The survey provides insight regarding the projected trends for the state of Iowa, which can be used for business and economic planning. The reported trends have a state-wide impact, especially when considering that IBC companies have a presence in all 99 counties.

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IBC Economic Outlook Survey

Quarter 2 – 2018

Expanded Results



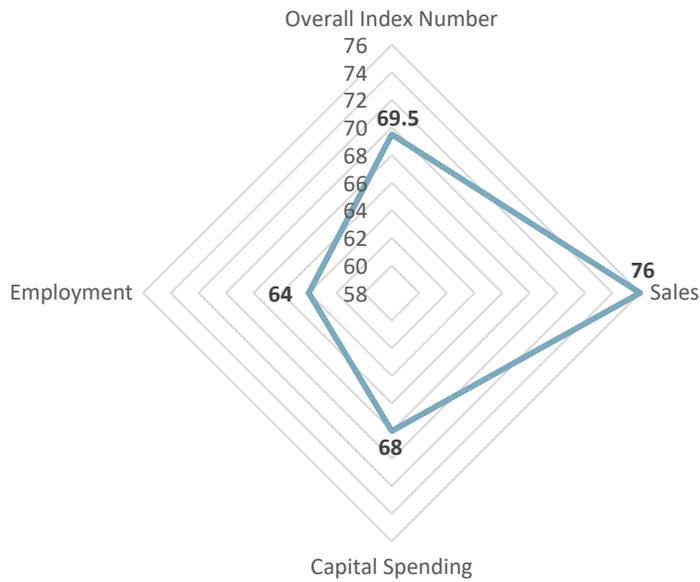
About the Iowa Business Council

The Iowa Business Council (IBC) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose 22 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.

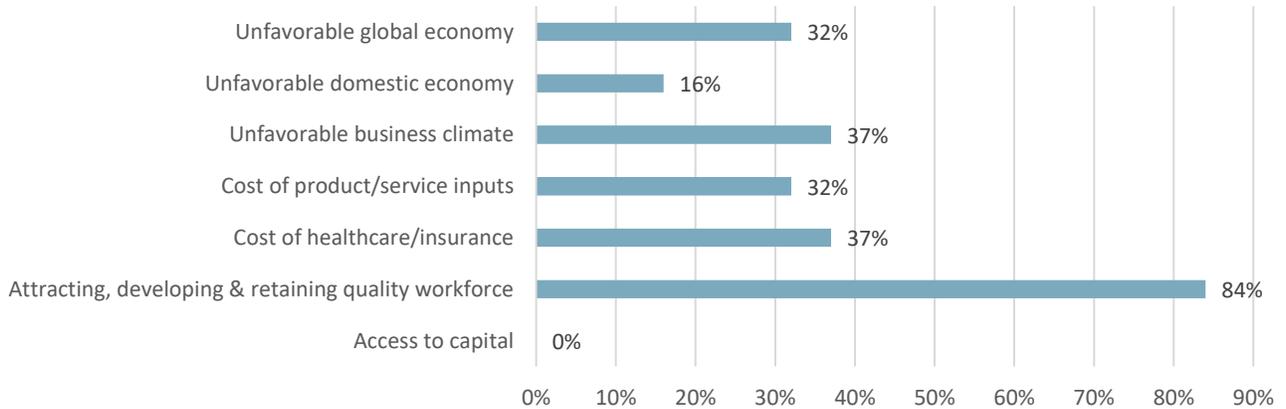
IBC member companies include: Ruan Transportation Management Systems; Vermeer Corporation; Iowa Bankers Association; Alliant Energy; Casey's General Stores, Inc.; Corteva Agriscience; Deere & Company; Fareway; FBL Financial Group, Inc.; HNI Corporation; Hy-Vee, Inc., Kent Corporation; Mercy Health Network;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

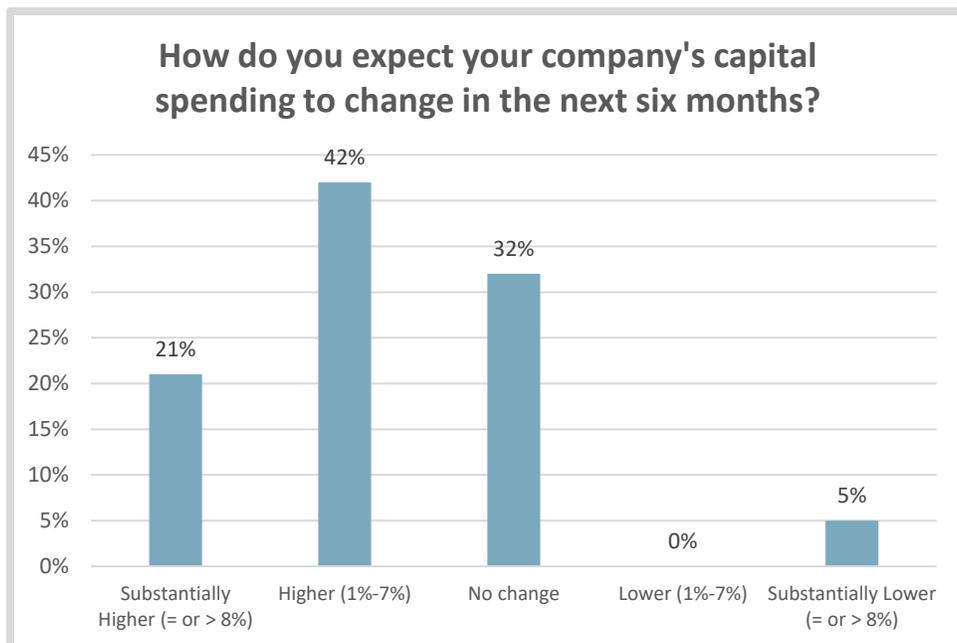
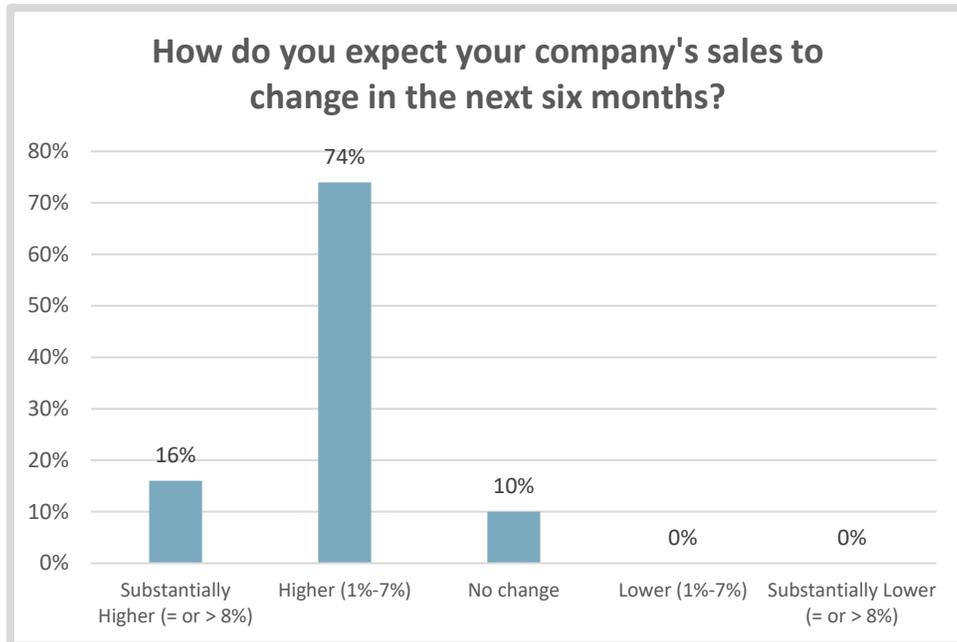
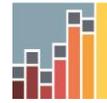


2018 Q2 Economic Outlook Survey Index Numbers



What are your current primary business challenges?







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

