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American Dream Is Thriving – U.S. Small Business Owners Optimistic About Growth

*Aspire to be Ben & Jerry's, not Uber
Honesty and respect top the charts for business values*

SAN FRANCISCO – February 19, 2015 – [Xero](#), the global leader in online accounting software for small business, today released the findings of a national survey of entrepreneurs. The survey revealed that almost three-quarters (74 percent) of U.S. small business owners are optimistic about growth in 2015. Adding to the positive outlook, 62 percent of entrepreneurs are prioritizing customer growth, and 33 percent plan to invest in technology.

Infographic: [The American dream is thriving](#)

The combination of this optimism, and the [strong employment growth](#) in the U.S. overall, indicates that 2015 will be a year of continued economic recovery. Despite their hope for growth, however, 80 percent of entrepreneurs feel they have little need for new staff this year. According to Xero's research, a gap exists between entrepreneurs' aspirations and their execution plans – a discrepancy that could impact the macro economy.

“We uncovered conflicting data regarding small business owners' lack of intention to hire and their desire for growth,” said Jamie Sutherland, Xero U.S. President. “We believe this points to an absence of business performance insights, which decreases confidence when it comes to hiring and making investment decisions. This, coupled with the fact that over 53 percent of respondents say they don't work with an accountant at all, is creating a double-whammy for entrepreneurs.”

While there has been an explosion of cloud software for big business, it's clear that small businesses need access to enterprise-grade technology tailored for their needs. “Access to the right business analysis empowers entrepreneurs to start to execute on their growth plans with confidence,” said Sutherland.

Business Values Matter

As hacking scandals and ethics controversies rock big businesses, small business owners are placing the highest importance on honesty and respect as guiding business values. It's no surprise then, that close to 20 percent of respondents aspire to be more like Ben & Jerry's than tech giants such as Apple, Microsoft or Google. Only 1.6 percent named Uber as their role model -- the least aspirational of all companies named.

A New Era Is Emerging With Millennial Entrepreneurs

With the American Dream alive and well and optimism running high, there are interesting differences across age groups. For example, millennials demonstrated a new attitude and approach to running their businesses. These attitudes include heightened optimism, comfort with cloud and social media, and a strong desire for ongoing work/life balance as opposed to taking long vacations.

- An overwhelming 90 percent of millennials are optimistic about growth in the coming year, compared to 74 percent of total respondents
- 55 percent of millennials say that at least a quarter of their business is run in the cloud, compared to just 23.5 percent of all respondents
- 45 percent of millennials are seeking better work-life balance, compared to 31.5 percent of total respondents
- And the majority of millennials (80 percent) use Facebook for their business, with only 40.4 percent of total respondents claiming to lean on the social media giant
- 30 percent of millennials responded that they take no vacation in a year, compared to 17.1 percent of all who participated

“As a small business owner and accountant of over 20 years, the one issue that remains a constant challenge is scaling, no matter a business owner’s age or the state of the economy,” said Amy Vetter, yoga studio owner and global vice president of Education & Enablement for Xero. “By 2020, 80 percent* of business owners will embrace the cloud to save time and resources, with millennials spearheading that adoption. At Xero, we are seeing the same trends in our customer base, and our platform is helping entrepreneurs to thrive and grow their businesses through a variety of innovative financial tools,” said Vetter.

With Many Months To Go, Election Worries Are Beginning

While the U.S. presidential election is still 18 months away, nearly half of small business owners polled (47 percent) are concerned about how the 2016 political outcome would affect their business. With over half of the U.S. economy comprising of small business owners, politicians may want to consider targeting and supporting this community as the election draws nearer.

Methodology

The survey was conducted by Zogby Analytics, and polled small businesses across the U.S.** to uncover attitudes and opinions around business priorities, overall challenges, the use of technology to support the business, and concerns over next year’s political outcomes.

To learn how to build your small business, visit [Xero’s Small Business Guides](#) for more information.

About Xero

[Xero](#) is beautiful, easy-to-use, online accounting software for small businesses and their advisors. The company has over [400,000 paying customers](#) in more than 180 countries. Xero

seamlessly integrates with over 350 third party tools, and was recently ranked No. 1 by Forbes as the [World's Most Innovative Growth Company](#).

*Data from [Inc.](#), Emergent Research.

**Zogby Methodology: Zogby Analytics was commissioned by Xero Limited to conduct an online survey of 500 small businesses in the US. All interviews were completed between December 10, 2014 and December 14, 2014.

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