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## Business Innovation Group (BIG) News

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# Business confidence is strong, but headwinds are present

March 15, 2019



Georgia business leaders have confidence that business is improving, but also have growing concerns over hiring and employment, according to the 2018 fourth-quarter (Q4) survey results by Georgia CEO, a news source that shares the state's most important features, videos and newswires with Georgia's top business leaders.

The purpose of the survey is to get the pulse of Georgia CEO subscribers on a quarterly basis in order to better understand how general business conditions are affecting Georgia markets and companies. The survey asks participants to reflect on and analyze the conditions of the current quarter while looking forward to and anticipating challenges in the next quarter. The news outlet partners with Georgia Southern University Center for Business Analytics and Economic Research (CBAER) to prepare and analyze the survey.

Looking toward Q1 of 2019, 51 percent of survey respondents believed the volume of business will increase but anticipate that sales will remain stable over this same time frame. At the same time, only 26 percent of respondents believed hiring conditions would improve, while 34 percent noted that the financial health of companies is improving. Hiring and keeping the right employees will be the key to many of these companies making the most of their opportunities.

"If we look at the overall impression of the current environment, we see that respondents are confident about the growth of business moving forward," said Ben McKay, CBAER assistant director. "At the same time, we did see a drop in confidence between Q4 2018 and Q1 2019. This could be related to the news about the partial government shutdown because our data was collected in January during this event.

When asked about the factors influencing the responses and decisions by survey participants, 28.5 percent said an increase in business demand had the biggest influence, while government policy was close behind at 25.8 percent, followed by concerns over competition for supplies at 11.8 percent. These answers point to favorable sentiment toward business conditions for the upcoming quarter.

A convenience sampling technique was used for this study, and the questionnaires were emailed to subscribers of each of the 12 Georgia CEO daily newsletters. Georgia CEO publishes newsletters in Albany, Athens, Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, Gainesville, Middle Georgia, Newnan, Rome, Savannah, Tifton and Valdosta. The survey was open from January 8-28, with 208 valid responses recorded.