



MARCUM - HOFSTRA CEO SURVEY

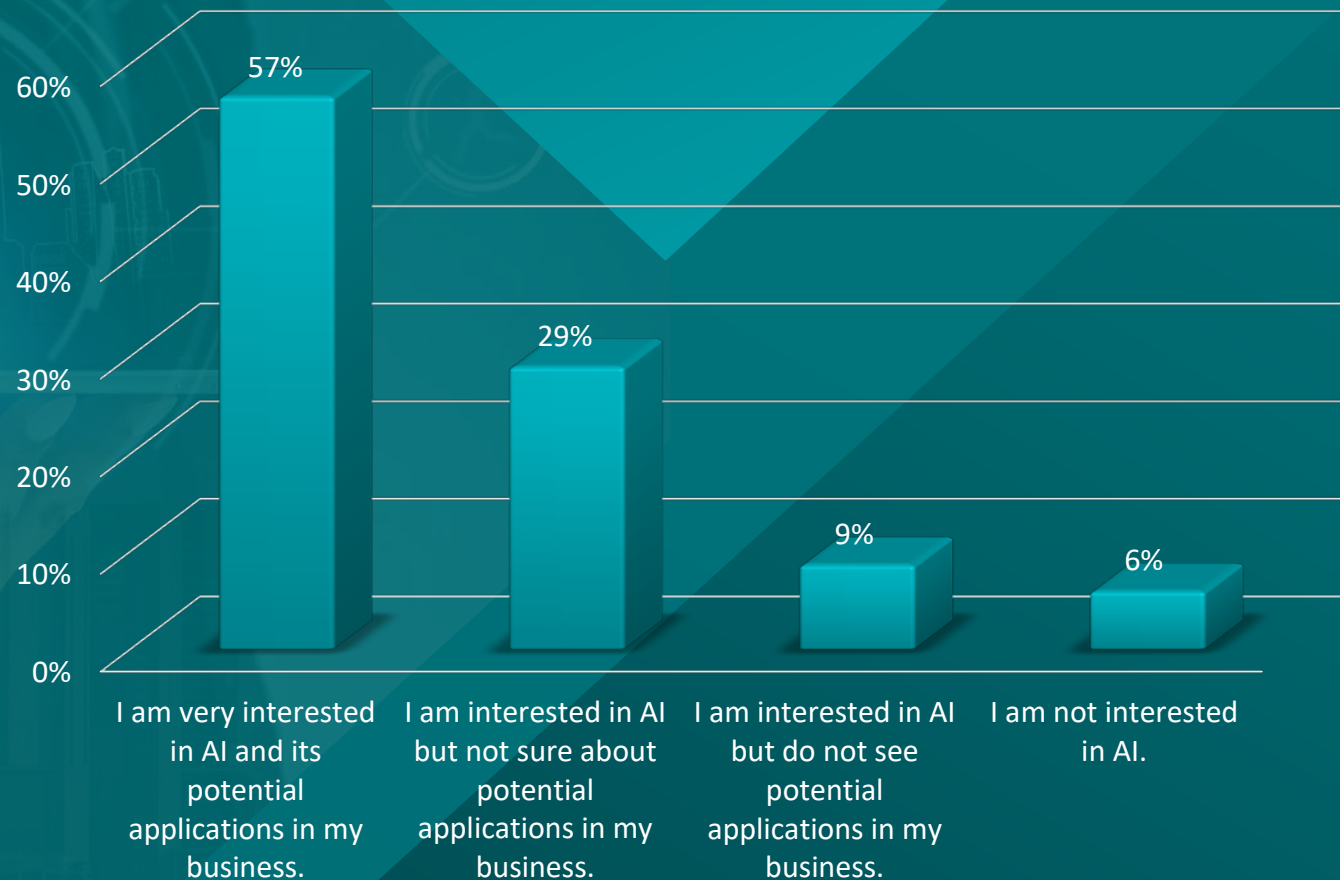
The Marcum LLP-Hofstra University CEO Survey is a periodic gauge of middle-market CEOs' outlook on the current business environment and their priorities and concerns for the next 12 months.

No. 1, 2020

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QUESTION

How would you describe your current interest in AI technology and its business applications?

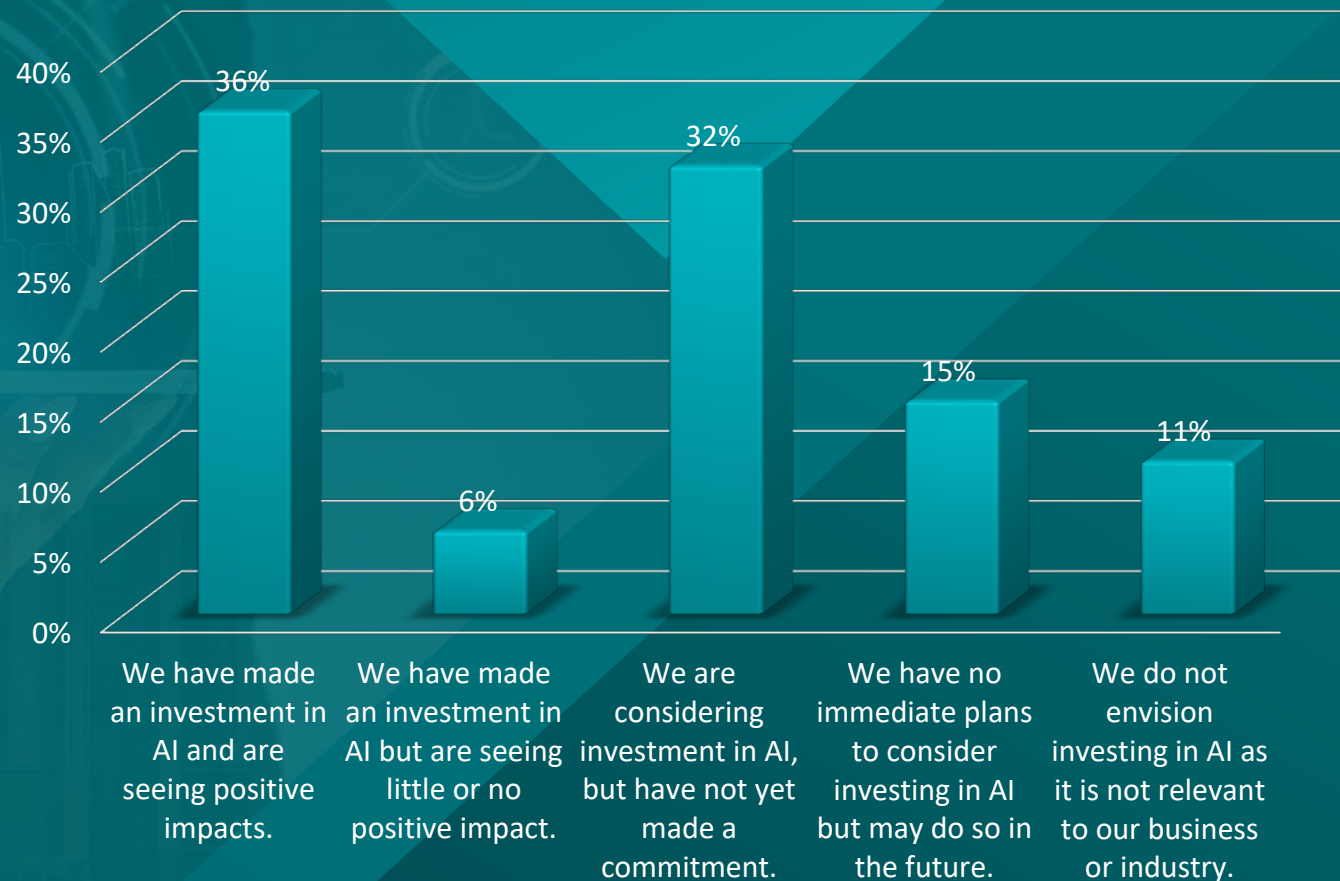


KEY FINDINGS

A large percentage (94.1%) of CEOs expressed an interest in AI and its business applications. More than half (56.6%) described themselves as “very interested” and see potential applications to their businesses. 28.9% are interested but indicated uncertainty regarding AI’s potential uses, with an additional 8.6% expressing an interest in AI, but unable to envision potential applications.

QUESTION

Which of the following best describes the current use of AI technology at your company?



KEY FINDINGS

More than one-third (35.9%) of CEOs reported investing in AI and experiencing positive impacts. Just under 6% reported investing in AI but said they have seen little or no impact on their business. Another 32% are considering an investment in the technology but have yet to make a commitment. 15.2% say they may invest in AI sometime in the future. Just under 11% did not see the relevance of AI for their business and did not envision an investment.

CEOs seeing **positive impacts** on their business cited the following outcomes:

cont'd
Which of the following best describes the current use of AI technology at your company?

"Able to provide better customer experience and retain customers."

"We have migrated mission critical apps to the cloud and it has been very helpful for productivity. AI is also helping increase productivity and reduce the need for labor."

"By deploying the right AI technology, our business has gained the ability to save time and money by automating and optimizing routine processes and tasks. With the help of artificial intelligence services, we collect more and more data, process it and get to know our consumers and their behavior patterns better."

"Increased employee productivity, increased revenue, decreased labor costs."

"Better inventory management, automated business process, better customer experience, etc."

"We have measured 10-17% productivity gains as well as efficiency improvements as reported in employee satisfaction and engagement surveys."

"Less labor costs as AI has cut costs consistently for four months now."

"Using more robotics and software to make quicker, informed decisions."

"We are implementing AI throughout our whole company. It will NOT take ANY jobs away from any of our employees."

"It's going to make us more efficient and productive."

"AI is used in our marketing program. It has identified good advertising media."

"Allows us to provide first-hand training to incorporate new treatment techniques before bringing them directly into patient care. Allows customer service to engage with patients in more accessible ways."

cont'd
Which of the following best describes the current use of AI technology at your company?

"Great analytics for forecasting and AI technology making business decisions easier."

"Enhances connectivity to clients."

"Computers are faster than people...we have reduced payroll because we don't need near as many people."

"We are using robocall feature on our reorders and hoping to use it on our website."

"Use of chatbots to open additional lines of consumer outreach, enhanced training and testing systems."

"We use AI in several processes where there was too much manual labor. It improved process, performance, and also reduced costs. We are really excited and looking for more implementations."

"Anything we can automate that would otherwise interfere with our ability to serve customers is beneficial so we are engaged in exploring and adapting this so we can better serve our clients."

"We are able to see the end product visually that looks almost completely real and so now clients can see it and not try to imagine it in their heads."

QUESTION

Please rank the top three
AI-related benefits you would
find most helpful.

	Greatest Benefit	Second Greatest Benefit	Third Greatest Benefit	Total
Improve customer service operations	26	40	34	100 (41.5%)
Improve data entry, analytics, and reporting	16	28	49	93 (38.9%)
Improvement in decision-making/risk reduction	31	32	22	85 (35.6%)
Efficiency in distribution/logistical operations	27	25	27	79 (33.1%)
Improve labor efficiency	21	33	25	79 (33.1%)
Enhance sales and marketing	21	23	24	68 (28.5%)
Development of “smart” products for customers	33	23	10	66 (27.6%)
Streamline the manufacturing process	31	12	12	55 (23.0%)
Improve efficiency in administrative functions	12	10	23	45 (18.8%)
Other	2	2	4	8 (3.3%)

KEY FINDINGS

CEOs’ wish list for AI-related benefits they would find most helpful topped out with customer service operations (41.5%). This was closely followed by improvement in data entry, analytics, and reporting (38.9%); improvement in decision-making/risk reduction (35.6%); and improved efficiency in distribution/logistical operations and labor (33.1%).

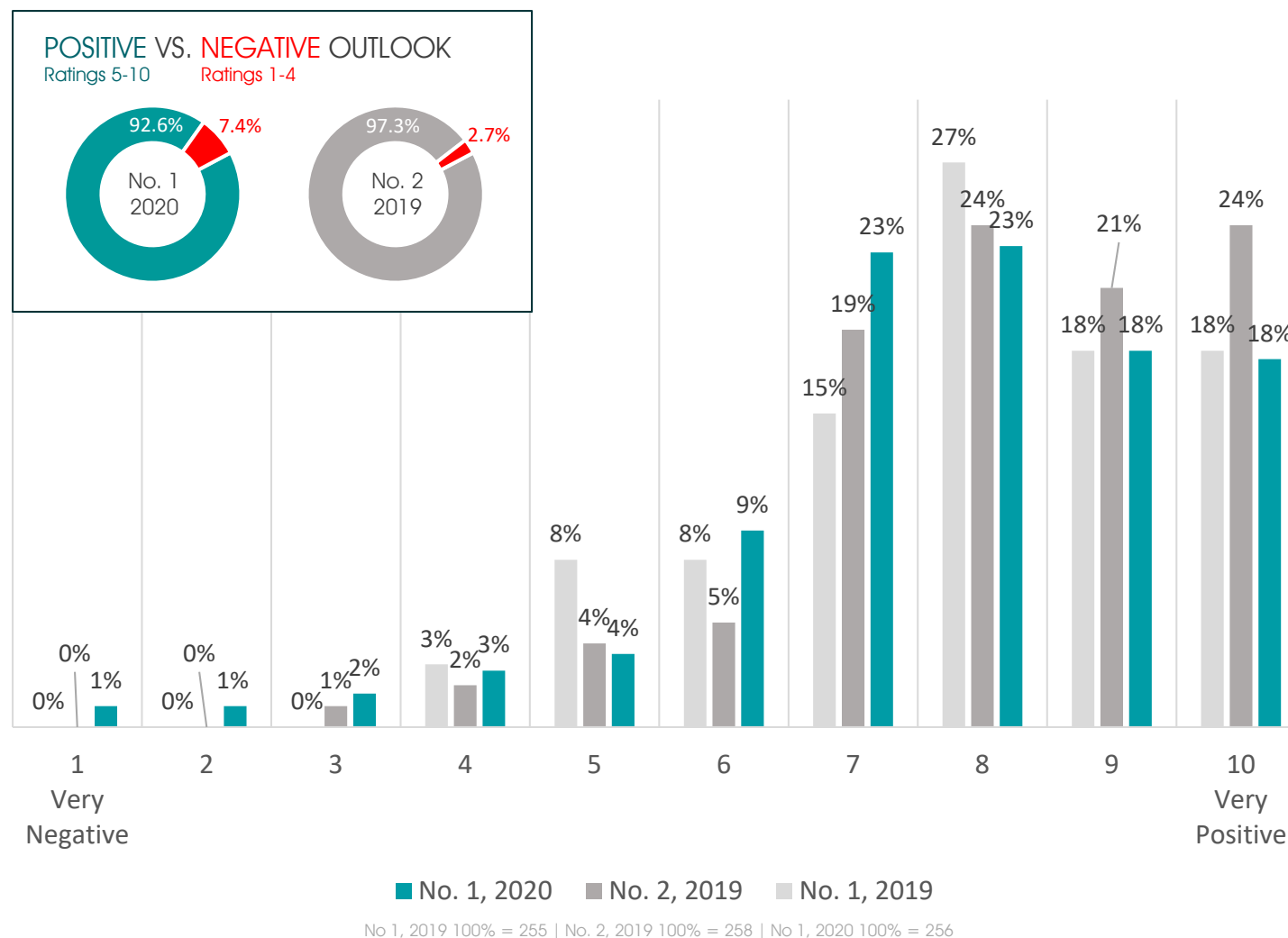


QUESTION

What is your view of the
current business environment?



View of the current business environment.



KEY FINDINGS

CEOs across all industry sectors maintained a positive outlook overall regarding the current business environment. However, there was a general decline in the degree of optimism they expressed.

- 17.6% of CEOs rated their outlook for the coming year as “10.” This is a decline from 24.4% in the previous survey.
- 58.6 % of CEOs rated their outlook as “8” or higher. This is a decline from 69.7% previously.
- 94.1% of CEOs assigned a rating of “5” or higher in the current survey, down from 97.3%.

cont'd
What is your
view of the
current
business
environment?

INDEX: A Weighted Average of CEO Responses

7.46

No. 1
2019

8.18

No. 2
2019

7.72

No. 1
2020

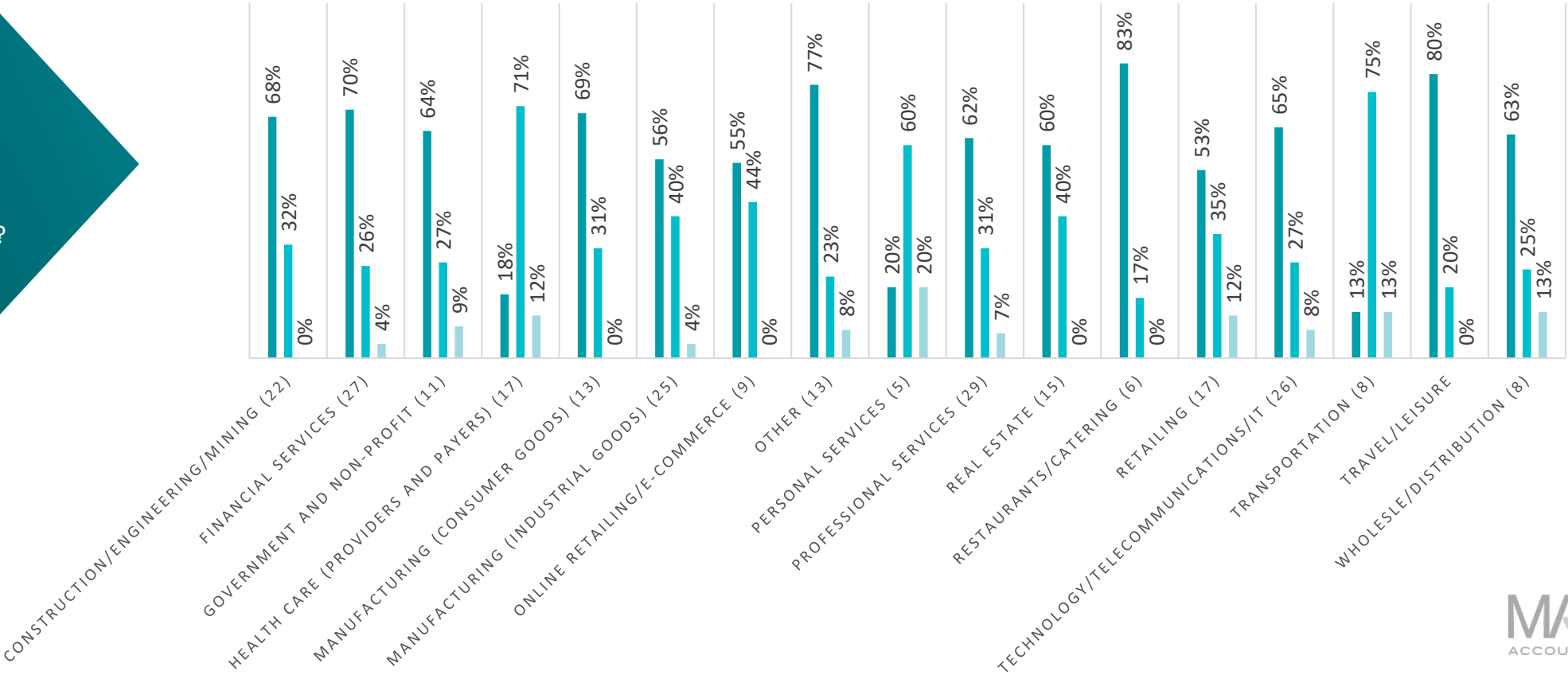
The weighted average of CEO responses was 7.72,
down from 8.18 in previous surveyed period.

RATING OF BUSINESS OUTLOOK

by Industry

CEOs across business sectors were uniformly optimistic. With only two exceptions, 50% or more of the CEOs within each industry sector rated their business outlook an “8” or higher.

■ 8 - 10 ■ 5 - 7 ■ 1 - 4



cont'd
What is your
view of the
current
business
environment?

A hand holding a telescope against a city skyline at sunset. The image is split diagonally, with the top half being a solid teal color and the bottom half showing the hand and telescope. The background of the bottom half is a city skyline at sunset, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a warm orange and yellow glow. The hand is holding the telescope horizontally, and the city skyline is visible in the background.

QUESTION

In which ways do you plan to
invest in your company?



Top 3 investment priorities.



KEY FINDINGS

- When asked about their priorities for capital investment over the next 12 months, technology was the most frequent response, with 68% of CEOs indicating that this was one of their three top priorities. This is virtually unchanged from 67% in the previous survey.
- Equipment (26% of CEOs) and technology (25% of CEOs) were most commonly cited as the No. 1 investment priority.

No 1, 2019 100% = 255 | No. 2, 2019 100% = 258 | No 1, 2020 100% = 256

cont'd
In which way do you plan
to invest in your company?

CEO Investment Priorities — by Industry

Upper figure: highest priority

Lower figure: one of three highest priorities

	Equipment	Geographic Expansion	Mergers & Acquisitions	Physical Plant Expansion	Research & Development	Talent Recruitment	Technology	Workforce Training
Construction/Engineering/Mining	36.4%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	13.6%	18.2%	4.5%
	68.2%	22.7%	18.2%	18.2%	13.6%	50.0%	59.0%	22.7%
Financial Services	7.4%	14.8%	11.1%	3.7%	11.1%	7.4%	37.0%	0.0%
	14.8%	26.0%	33.3%	11.1%	22.2%	66.7%	66.7%	33.3%
Government/Non-profit/Education	36.4%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	27.3%	0.0%
	54.5%	27.3%	9.1%	9.1%	18.2%	45.5%	63.6%	18.2%
Healthcare (Providers and Payers)	29.4%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	17.6%	41.2%	0.0%
	52.9%	17.6%	11.8%	11.8%	35.3%	58.8%	76.5%	29.4%
Manufacturing (Consumer)	15.4%	7.7%	23.1%	23.1%	15.4%	0.0%	15.4%	0.0%
	46.2%	15.4%	30.8%	38.5%	38.5%	15.4%	76.9%	30.8%
Manufacturing (Industrial)	28.0%	4.0%	16.0%	8.0%	4.0%	12.0%	24.0%	4.0%
	68.0%	16.0%	36.0%	44.0%	36.0%	20.0%	64.0%	16.0%
Personal Services	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%
	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%
Professional Services	20.7%	3.4%	13.4%	0.0%	6.9%	13.8%	27.6%	0.0%
	37.9%	24.1%	31.0%	3.4%	34.5%	44.8%	65.5%	10.3%
Real Estate	33.3%	20.0%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%	13.3%	0.0%
	53.3%	46.7%	33.3%	0.0%	5.9%	46.7%	60.0%	20.0%
Restaurants/Catering	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	16.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
	33.3%	0/0%	0.0%	50.0%	16.7%	66.7%	33.3%	50.0%
Retailing	29.4%	17.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	29.4%	11.8%
	52.9%	29.4%	11.8%	5.9%	5.9%	47.1%	88.2%	35.3%
Technology/Telecommunication/IT	26.9%	7.7%	0.0%	3.8%	3.8%	7.7%	38.5%	7.7%
	50.0%	26.9%	11.5%	19.2%	34.6%	42.3%	75.0%	23.1%
Transportation	62.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	12.5%
	75.0%	50.0%	0.0%	12.5%	12.5%	37.5%	75.0%	37.5%
Wholesale/Distribution	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	12.5%	12.5%
	62.5%	12.5%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	62.5%	62.5%	50.0%

CEO Investment Priorities — By Investment

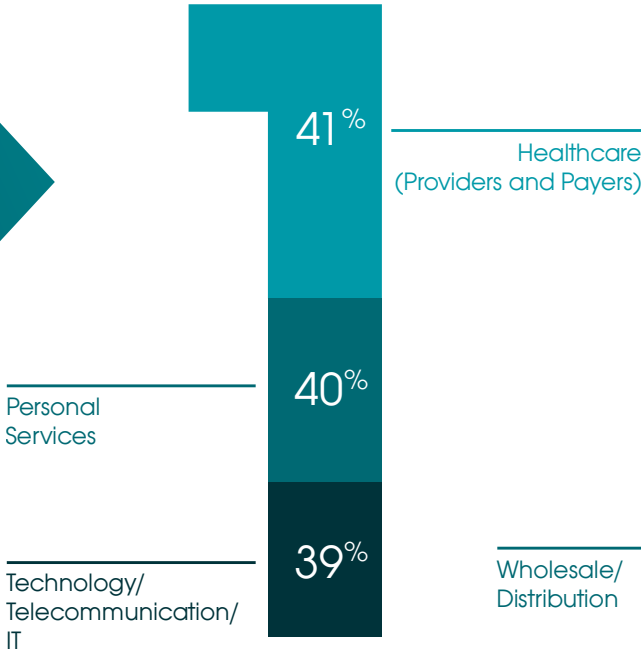
	Highest Priority	Second Highest Priority	Third Highest Priority	Total
Technology	65 (25.4%)	63 (24.6%)	45 (17.6%)	173 (67.6%)
Equipment	67 (26.2%)	25 (9.8%)	34 (13.3%)	126 (49.2%)
Talent Recruitment	32 (12.5%)	44 (17.2%)	39 (15.2%)	115 (44.9%)
Workforce Training	10 (3.9%)	20 (7.8%)	37 (14.5%)	67 (26.2%)
Geographic expansion	21 (8.2%)	20 (7.8%)	18 (7.0%)	59 (23.4%)
Research and Development	14 (5.5%)	26 (10.2%)	19 (7.4%)	59 (23.4%)
Mergers and Acquisitions	17 (6.6%)	16 (6.3%)	22 (8.6%)	55 (21.5%)
Physical Plant Expansion	9 (3.5%)	20 (7.8%)	15 (5.9%)	44 (17.2%)
Other*	3 (1.2%)	4 (1.6%)	9 (3.5%)	16 (6.3%)

*Other: Advertising/Marketing (4); Customer acquisition/retention (2); Employee benefits (2); Inventory (2); Downsizing (1); New offices (1); None (4)

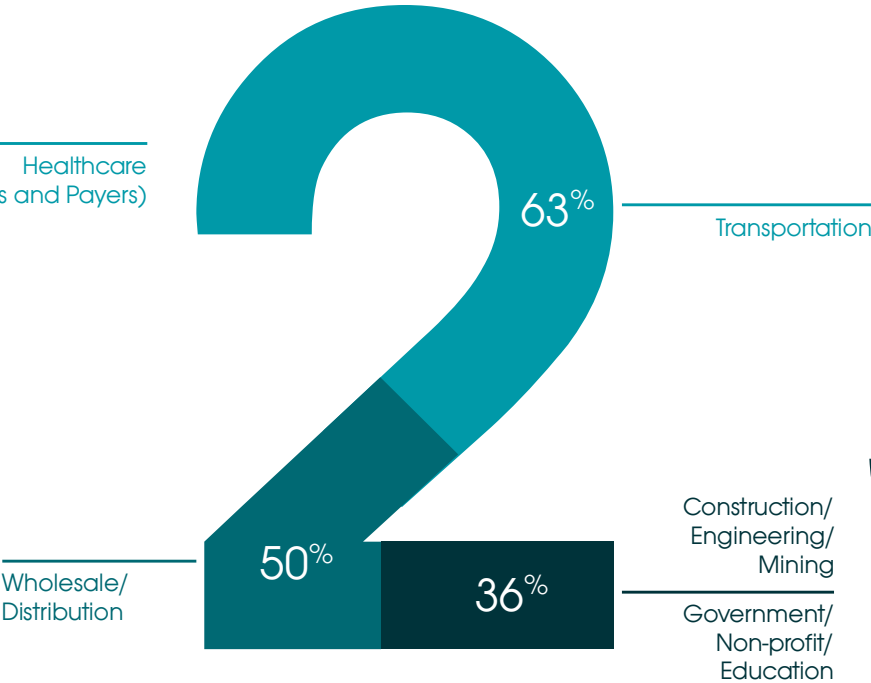
PRIORITY INVESTMENTS
Top 3 industries selecting each answer

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In which way
do you plan to
invest in your
company?

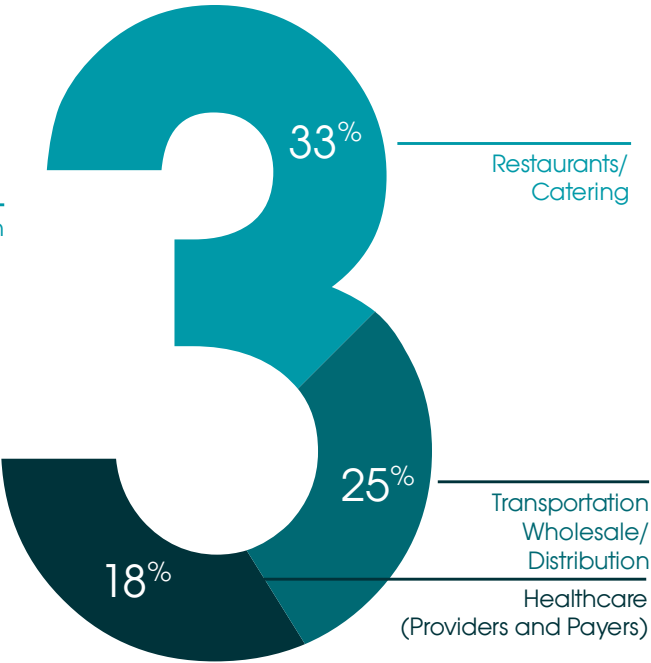
TECHNOLOGY



EQUIPMENT



TALENT RECRUITMENT



QUESTION

What are the most important influences for your business planning in the next 12 months?

Top 3 influences on business planning.



KEY FINDINGS

- Issues related to the economy, the availability of talent, and technology were the most commonly expressed influences on business planning (top 3) for the coming 12 months.
- Broad-based issues related to the economy (“economic concerns” and “access to capital”) were most often cited as having the greatest influence (19.5% each), followed by “availability of talent” (14.5%). These replaced “technology” as the top business planning influence, which was selected by just 5.9% of respondents in the current survey, as compared to 19% previously.

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What are the most important influences for your business planning in the next 12 months?

Influences on Business Planning — by Industry

Upper figure: highest priority
Lower figure: one of three highest priorities

	Access to Capital	Availability of Talent	Economic Concerns	Foreign Competition	Industry Consolidation	Interest Rates	Labor Costs	Regulatory Environment	Rising Mat./Oper Costs	Technology
Construction/Engineering/Mining	18.2% 36.4%	31.8% 54.5%	9.1% 40.9%	4.5% 18.2%	0.0% 9.1%	4.5% 9.1%	0.0% 22.7%	9.1% 40.9%	13.6% 45.5%	9.1% 22.7%
Financial Services	14.8% 22.2%	14.8% 51.9%	18.5% 70.4%	0.0% 3.7%	3.7% 11.1%	0.0% 11.1%	3.7% 7.4%	18.5% 44.4%	3.7% 18.5%	18.5% 51.9%
Government/Non-profit/Education	18.2% 27.3%	18.2% 63.6%	18.2% 36.4%	0.0% 9.1%	0.0% 18.2%	0.0% 0.0%	0.0% 27.3%	9.1% 18.2%	9.1% 36.4%	27.3% 54.5%
Healthcare (Providers and Payers)	0.0% 17.6%	17.6% 52.9%	17.6% 29.4%	5.9% 5.9%	5.9% 11.8%	0.0% 5.9%	5.9% 47.1%	23.5% 52.9%	0.0% 17.5%	23.5% 58.8%
Manufacturing (Consumer)	15.4% 23.1%	15.4% 38.5%	15.4% 30.8%	15.4% 23.1%	7.7% 23.1%	0.0% 0.0%	0.0% 23.1%	0.0% 23.1%	7.7% 61.5%	23.1% 53.8%
Manufacturing (Industrial)	20.0% 28.0%	16.0% 48.0%	16.0% 40.0%	4.0% 12.0%	8.0% 16.0%	0.0% 8.0%	4.0% 20.0%	8.0% 36.0%	4.0% 52.0%	20.0% 40.0%
Personal Services	0.0% 20.0%	0.0% 20.0%	20.0% 80.0%	0.0% 20.0%	0.0% 0.0%	20.0% 40.0%	0.0% 20.0%	0.0% 0.0%	0.0% 20.0%	40.0% 60.0%
Professional Services	17.2% 27.6%	10.3% 44.8%	31.0% 51.7%	0.0% 10.3%	0.0% 17.2%	0.0% 0.0%	3.4% 31.0%	0.0% 10.3%	0.0% 27.6%	27.6% 65.5%
Real Estate	46.7% 60.0%	6.7% 35.3%	20.0% 46.7%	0.0% 6.7%	0.0% 20.0%	6.7% 46.7%	0.0% 13.3%	0.0% 13.3%	0.0% 23.5%	20.0% 26.7%
Restaurants/Catering	0.0% 50.0%	33.3% 66.7%	16.7% 33.3%	0.0% 0.0%	0.0% 16.7%	0.0% 0.0%	33.3% 50.0%	0.0% 33.3%	0.0% 16.7%	0.0% 16.7%
Retailing	35.3% 64.7%	5.9% 41.2%	17.6% 47.1%	0.0% 5.9%	0.0% 5.9%	0.0% 0.0%	0.0% 35.3%	0.0% 5.6%	17.6% 52.9%	23.5% 35.3%
Technology/Telecommunication/IT	11.5% 19.2%	3.8% 34.6%	26.9% 65.4%	3.8% 11.5%	11.5% 19.2%	0.0% 7.7%	7.7% 15.4%	0.0% 3.8%	7.7% 30.8%	23.1% 61.5%
Transportation	25.0% 25.0%	25.0% 37.5%	25.0% 75.0%	0.0% 0.0%	0.0% 12.5%	0.0% 0.0%	0.0% 25.0%	0.0% 25.0%	12.5% 25.0%	12.5% 75.0%
Wholesale/Distribution	12.5% 25.0%	0.0% 37.5%	12.5% 75.0%	12.5% 25.0%	0.0% 0.0%	0.0% 0.0%	12.5% 25.0%	25.0% 37.5%	0.0% 25.0%	25.0% 25.0%

Influences on Business Planning — By Influence

	Greatest Influence	Second Greatest Influence	Third Greatest Influence	Total
Economic Concerns	50 (19.5%)	46 (18.0%)	32 (12.5%)	128 (50.0%)
Regulatory Environment	50 (19.5%)	37 (14.5%)	32 (12.5%)	119 (46.5%)
Availability of Talent	38 (14.8%)	51 (19.9%)	26 (10.2%)	115 (44.9%)
Technology	15 (5.9%)	37 (14.5%)	39 (15.2%)	91 (35.5%)
Access to Capital	50 (19.5%)	11 (4.3%)	22 (8.6%)	83 (32.4%)
Legislation and Reform	19 (7.4%)	20 (7.8%)	30 (11.7%)	69 (27.0%)
Rising Material/Operational Costs	9 (3.5%)	23 (9.0%)	29 (11.3%)	61 (23.8%)
Industry Consolidation	10 (3.9%)	14 (5.5%)	11 (4.3%)	35 (13.7%)
Foreign Competition	7 (2.7%)	11 (4.3%)	14 (5.5%)	32 (12.5%)
Labor Costs	4 (1.6%)	3 (1.2%)	14 (5.5%)	21 (8.2%)
Interest Rates	4 (1.6%)	3 (1.2%)	7 (2.7%)	14 (5.5%)

INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT

CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

The U.S. construction industry, which employs more than 7.5 million workers, comprises more than 680,000 establishments engaged in the construction of buildings and engineering projects. The industry accounted for more than \$1.6 trillion of economic output in 2018, approximately 5% of U.S. private economic activity. Construction workers earn an average of \$31.05 per hour, nearly 10% higher than the average earnings for all private workers. Since the end of the Great Recession, the industry has added more than 2 million jobs and expanded its output by approximately 57%. Construction job growth on a year-over-year basis has been continuous for 103 consecutive months.

INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT: CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

When it comes to artificial intelligence (AI), more construction CEOs describe themselves as “very interested” in AI and its potential applications in their companies than CEOs in general (68.2% v. 56.6%).

36% of construction CEOs have made an investment in AI and are seeing positive impacts—the same as CEOs in general. But a greater share who have not yet made the investment are considering it—41% v. 32%.

How would you describe your current interest in AI technology and its business applications?

	CONSTRUCTION SECTOR
Very interested.	15 (68.2%)
Interested, not sure about potential applications.	4 (18.2%)
Interested, do not see potential applications.	2 (9.1%)
Not interested.	1 (2.4%)

All CEOs:
Very Interested
56.6%

Which of the following best describes the current use of AI technology at your company?

	CONSTRUCTION SECTOR
Made an investment, seeing positive impacts.	8 (36.4%)
Made an investment, seeing little or no positive impact.	1 (4.5%)
Considering investment, have not yet made a commitment.	9 (40.9%)
No immediate plans to consider investing, may do so in the future.	1 (4.5%)
Do not envision investing, not relevant to our business or industry.	3 (13.6%)

All CEOs:
Considering Investment
35.9%

INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT: CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

Construction CEOs say efficiency in distribution/logistical operations is the AI benefit they would find most helpful (55% v. 33% of CEOs overall).

Please rank the top three AI-related benefits you would find most helpful.

	Greatest Benefit	Second Greatest Benefit	Third Greatest Benefit	Total
Efficiency in distribution/logistical operations	4	5	3	12 (54.5%)
Improve customer service operations	1	3	5	9 (40.9%)
Improve labor efficiency	4	3	2	9 (40.9%)
Enhance sales and marketing	1	4	3	8 (36.4%)
Development of "smart" products for customers	6	0	0	6 (27.3%)
Improve data entry, analytics, and reporting	0	1	4	5 (22.7%)
Improvement in decision-making/risk reduction	1	2	0	3 (13.6%)
Streamline the manufacturing process	2	0	1	3 (13.6%)
Improve efficiency in administrative functions	0	1	1	2 (9.1%)

All CEOs:
Distribution/
Logistical
Operations
33.1%

Construction leaders were significantly more optimistic in their business outlook than CEOs, overall. Nearly two-thirds (63.2%) of construction CEOs rated their outlook an 8 or higher. Half selected a rating of "9" or "10," and more than a quarter (27.3%) chose the highest rating of 10. This compares to 59%, 36% and 18% of all CEOs, respectively.

What is your view of the current business environment?



Weighted Average: 8.3%

All CEOs:
8 (23.7%)
Weighted Average:
7.7%

INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT: CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

Not surprisingly, equipment is the No. 1 investment priority for construction CEOs, with 36.4% rating it their top priority and 68.2% saying it is one of their top 3 priorities.

Availability of talent was the most frequently mentioned influence on business planning for construction companies (54.5%), followed by rising materials/operational costs (45.5%).

Over the next 12 months,
in which way do you plan
to invest in your company?
Please rank your top three priorities.

Upper figure: "highest priority"
Lower figure: one of three highest priorities

Equipment	Geographic Expansion	Mergers & Acquisitions	Physical Plant Expansion	Research & Development	Talent Recruitment	Technology	Workforce Training
36.4%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	13.6%	18.2%	4.5%
68.2%	22.7%	18.2%	18.2%	13.6%	50.0%	59.0%	22.7%

All CEOs:
Technology
25% Top Priority
68% Top Three Priority

What are the most
important influences for your
business planning in the next 12 months?
Please rank your top three influences.

Upper figure: "highest priority"
Lower figure: one of three highest priorities

Access to Capital	Availability of Talent	Economic Concerns	Foreign Competition	Industry Consolidation	Interest Rates	Labor Costs	Regulatory Environment	Rising Mat. /Oper Costs	Technology
18.2%	31.8%	9.1%	4.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	13.6%	9.1%
36.3%	54.5%	40.9%	18.2%	9.1%	6.4%	22.7%	40.9%	45.5%	22.7%

All CEOs:
Economic Concerns
20% Top Priority
51% Top Three Priority

DEMOGRAPHICS

Which of the following best describes your company's industry?

Construction/Engineering/Mining	22	8.6%
Financial Services	27	10.5%
Government and Non-profit	11	4.3%
Health Care (Providers and Payers)	17	6.6%
Manufacturing (Consumer Goods)	13	5.1%
Manufacturing (Industrial Goods)	25	9.8%
Online Retailing/E-Commerce	9	3.5%
Personal/Consumer Services	5	2.0%
Professional Services	29	11.3%
Real Estate	15	6.3%
Restaurants/Catering	6	2.3%
Retailing	17	6.6%
Technology Services	26	10.2%
Transportation	8	3.1%
Travel and Leisure	5	2.0%
Wholesale/Distribution	8	3.1%
Other *	13	1.2%
Total	256	100.0%

*Other: Energy/Utilities (4); Advertising/Marketing/PR/Media/Entertainment (3); Pharmaceuticals & Medical Products (3); Apparel Services, Fashion, Self-Publishing (1 each)

What best describes your title?

Owner	51	19.9%
CEO	38	14.8%
Divisional President	36	14.1%
Managing Partner	6	2.3%
President	51	19.9%
Founder	2	0.8%
Chairman	72	28.1%
Total	256	100.0%

What is the total number of permanent employees in your company?

Less than 50	61	23.8%
50 to 99	28	10.9%
100 to 499	49	19.1%
500 to 999	41	16.0%
1,000 to 2,499	37	14.5%
2,500 to 4,999	14	5.5%
5,000 or more	26	10.2%
Total	256	100.0%

In which revenue size range was your company last year?

Less than \$5 million	60	23.4%
\$5 million to \$9.9 million	25	9.8%
\$10 million to \$24.9 million	24	9.4%
\$25 million to \$49.9 million	20	7.8%
\$50 million to \$99.9 million	33	12.9%
\$100 million to \$249.9 million	19	7.4%
\$250 million to \$499.9 million	17	6.6%
\$500 million to \$999.9 million	23	9.0%
\$1 Billion or more	27	10.5%
Not sure/Decline to say	8	3.1%
Total	256	100.0%



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