



BACKGROUND ON BUSINESS

Small Businesses Optimistic About The Future

(NAPSA)—There's encouraging news for America's entrepreneurs: Despite anxiety about the economy, 75 percent of small-business owners are confident they will be open for business at this time next year, and almost half say they would be willing to open another small business today if they had the proper financial backing.

In addition, the second annual FedEx Office Signs of the Times national small-business survey found that a greater number of those polled plan to invest in themselves, with nearly half (47 percent) planning to increase their marketing and advertising spending this year as a result of the economy, compared to 38 percent who considered the change last year.

Signs Mean Business

When budgets are tight, many small businesses turn to the basics of marketing, and the use of signs and banners to grab customer attention is a time-tested technique. In fact, 74 percent of small businesses polled believe signs, banners and posters help drive customers to businesses. Another 55 percent indicated they use them regularly in their current strategy, and 79 percent said they agreed or strongly agreed that they are cost-effective marketing and advertising tools.

For small businesses looking to maximize sales with new signage, FedEx Office has specialists ready to help. The company's network of centers provides access to an

Are small businesses confident they will be open this time next year?



Despite anxiety about the economy, many small-business owners have a positive outlook for the future.

extensive range of professional sign and banner services, including full-color indoor and outdoor banners, durable cut-vinyl banners, prints, posters, plastic and metal signs, ready-to-apply lettering and decals, promotional/vehicle magnets and more.

"Given the continued contraction of the marketplace, it's not surprising the small-business outlook has worsened over the past year," said Brian Philips, president and CEO of FedEx Office. "Yet, despite increased concerns, many small businesses are cautiously optimistic, and that is a positive sign that Main Street can emerge from this downturn."

The Signs of the Times survey polled 500 small-business owners who employ five to 100 employees and own firms that generate over \$100,000 in annual revenue. To learn more about the survey, visit news.fedex.com.