

2019 First Citizens Bank SMB Survey Results

I. Research Objective

The study had the following objectives: 1) uncover small business pain points and challenges that small to mid-size business (SMB) owners are currently facing, 2) generate data to support First Citizens Bank's marketing objectives 3) fuel media relations and potential sales conversations and 4) provide year-over-year trend analysis.

II. Methodology

To achieve these objectives, Airfoil conducted an online survey in February 2019 among 330 SMB owners with businesses located in North Carolina, South Carolina, California, Florida or Wisconsin. To qualify for the survey, the SMB owners had to employ fewer than 500 people.

III. Sample Profile

Three hundred and thirty businesses were surveyed and 25% of respondents were in North Carolina, 17% of respondents were in South Carolina. Respondents whose businesses were in California and Florida accounted for 25% and 24% respectively. 9% of the total businesses were in Wisconsin.

The majority (59%) of respondents had fewer than 10 employees. The remaining respondents' employee base ranged from 11 to 50 employees (22%), 51 to 250 employees (14%), or 251 to 500 employees (5%).

Annual business revenue:

- Less than \$1 million (65%)
- \$1 million - \$5 million (15%)
- \$5 million - \$10 million (12%)
- \$10 million - \$20 million (5%)
- \$20 million - \$35 million (2%)
- More than \$35 million (<1%)

The respondents were from a variety of industries:

- Skilled-trade (18%)
- Retail (12%)
- Technology (8%)
- Financial service (6%)
- Healthcare (6%)
- Restaurant & food (5%)
- Real estate (5%)
- Marketing services (2%)
- Transportation (5%)

- Manufacturing (4%)
- Agriculture (4%)
- Hospitality & tourism (3%)
- Veterinary care (0.6%)

Other industries include consulting, beauty, landscaping, wedding planning, photography, pet accessories, daycare, consulting, cleaning, legal services, etc.

Finally, 40% of respondents reported they had been in business less than five years, 27% between six and 10 years, 13% between 11 and 15 years, 7% between 15 and 20 years, and 13% for more than 20 years.

Sample breakdown by gender:

- 53% of respondents were male
- 47% of respondents were female

Sample breakdown by age:

- 6% of between 18 and 24 years old
- 14% between 25 and 29 years old
- 17% between 30 and 34 years old
- 8% between 35 and 39 years old
- 11% between 40 and 44 years old
- 9% between 45 and 49 years old
- 13% between 50 and 54 years old
- 9% between 55 and 59 years old
- 10% between 60 and 64 years old
- 2% between 65 and 69 years old
- 0.3% between 70 and 74 years old
- 0.3% older than 75 years old

Sample breakdown by generation group:

- 41% of respondents identified themselves as a Millennial
- 33% of respondents identified themselves as part of Generation X (Gen-X)
- 25% of respondents identified themselves as a Baby Boomer

The rest of the respondents, which accounted for less than 1% of the entire sample size, reported they do not belong to any of the aforementioned generation groups. The definitions of Millennial, Gen-X, and Baby Boomers are adopted from Pew Research Center (Fry, 2015)¹.

According to Pew Research Center, the Millennial generation includes people who were born between 1981 and 1997, namely adults who are 22 to 38 years old in 2019. Gen-X are people who

¹ Fry, R. (January 6, 2015). This year, Millennials will overtake Baby Boomers. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/01/16/this-year-millennials-will-overtake-baby-boomers/>

were born between 1965 and 1980, namely adults who are 39 to 54 years old in 2019. The Baby Boomer generation includes people who were born between 1946 and 1964 and are 55 to 73 years old in 2019.

IV. Survey Findings

- The top 3 motivators for starting a business are the same as in 2018 with changes in ranking. The top motivators are: starting my own business gave me an opportunity to realize my dream (57%), starting my own business provided me with more flexibility (37%), and I wanted the ability to control my work-life balance (29%). It is worth noting that last year there was only a small percentage difference among the top three motivators. In 2019, starting my own business gave me an opportunity to realize my dream is a much stronger motivator among respondents. There is a noticeable percentage decrease in starting my own business provided me more flexibility (down 24% in 2019) and I wanted the ability to control my work-life balance (down 27% in 2019).

Demographic highlights:

- Millennials (71%) have a much higher percentage of respondents who started their business to realize their dream.
- While it is not a strong motivator, Millennials have a noticeably higher percentage of respondents who started their business because they lacked relevant experience. In addition, the percentage of Millennials who were having a hard time finding a job and decided to start their own business is higher compared to other generations.

Motivators for Starting a Small Business												
	All	NC	SC	CA	FL	WI	Male	Female	Skilled Trades	Millennials	Gen-Xers	Boomers
Starting my own business gave me an opportunity to realize my dream	57%	54%	45%	62%	60%	63%	57%	57%	45%	71%	50%	42%
Starting my own business provided me more flexibility	37%	40%	44%	29%	33%	50%	37%	37%	47%	31%	31%	55%
I wanted the ability to control my work-life balance	29%	40%	22%	20%	33%	33%	30%	28%	36%	25%	33%	33%
I was having a hard time finding a job and decided to start my own business	20%	22%	20%	18%	23%	10%	21%	18%	22%	23%	21%	12%
I did not feel I had advancement opportunities when I was employed	15%	13%	13%	17%	19%	10%	17%	13%	16%	13%	19%	14%
It is a family business	15%	18%	16%	13%	13%	17%	13%	18%	19%	19%	16%	8%
My business helps me generate extra income	15%	20%	22%	13%	8%	10%	11%	19%	9%	14%	14%	18%
I felt I could do a better job in my own business than working for someone else	13%	13%	15%	11%	10%	20%	16%	7%	14%	12%	10%	18%
I wanted the challenge of seeing if I could build a successful company	8%	8%	9%	6%	6%	17%	9%	7%	3%	5%	7%	14%
Working for an employer felt impersonal/I didn't like corporate culture	8%	13%	5%	6%	4%	13%	10%	5%	7%	7%	8%	8%
It was hard for me to work in my current field because I didn't have relevant experience	7%	8%	5%	11%	1%	7%	8%	5%	3%	13%	3%	2%
I wanted to be part of the startup trend	2%	2%	2%	2%	0%	0%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	4%
Other	3%	1%	9%	2%	1%	3%	2%	4%	2%	2%	4%	4%

- 76% of respondents considered their business successful in the previous year, including 25% who said their business was very successful. This percentage is the same as in the 2018 survey.

Q: How successful was the previous year for your business? (Percentage of very successful or successful)												
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	WI	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade
Very successful	24.9%	25.3%	16.4%	23.3%	30.0%	30.0%	21.7%	28.3%	27.4%	20.0%	27.7%	24.1%
Successful	51.5%	43.4%	58.2%	52.4%	52.5%	56.7%	53.7%	49.0%	46.7%	59.1%	48.2%	55.2%
Very successful + Successful	76%	69%	75%	76%	83%	87%	75%	77%	74%	79%	76%	79%
Very successful + Successful (2018)	76%	77%	67%	78%	80%	--	82%	72%	74%	77%	79%	86%
% change	+0%	-8%	+8%	-2%	+3%	--	-7%	+5%	+0%	+2%	-3%	-7%

- South Carolina and Florida experienced a percentage increase while there was a decrease in percentage of North Carolina and California respondents who think their business was successful.
 - Wisconsin has the most small business owners who think their business was successful in 2018 (87%), including nearly a third who consider their business to be very successful in the previous year.
- Respondents who believe their business will grow or expand this year increased by 2% in 2019. Millennials (84%) feel more confident than other generations, which is 4% higher than last year. Across five markets, South Carolina is the only market in which the percentage is lower than last year (by 7%). North Carolina, California, and Florida all had a slight increase. Confidence among skilled trade respondents dropped in 2019 by 12%.

Q: How confident are you that your business will grow or expand in 2019? (Percentage of very confident or somewhat confident)												
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	WI	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade
Very confident	34.2%	37.4%	18.2%	32.9%	42.5%	36.7%	31.4%	37.4%	43.0%	30.9%	22.9%	25.9%
Somewhat confident	42.4%	41.0%	47.3%	48.8%	37.5%	33.3%	45.7%	38.7%	40.7%	41.8%	47.0%	50.0%
Very + Somewhat confident	77%	78%	66%	82%	80%	70%	77%	76%	84%	73%	70%	76%
Very + Somewhat confident (2018)	75%	77%	73%	78%	73%	--	74%	76%	80%	76%	69%	88%
% change	+2%	+1%	-7%	+4%	+7%	--	+3%	+0%	+4%	-3%	+1%	-12%

- 68% of respondents are confident about the overall economic conditions in the U.S. in 2019. The percentage is higher than in 2018 by 6%. All segments increased in 2019 except North Carolina (-6%) and male small business owners (-3%). California, Florida, and female small business owners feel much more confident about the U.S. economic conditions compared to how they felt last year as all three segments experienced a double-digit percentage increase in 2019.

Q: How confident are you in the overall U.S. economic conditions in 2019? (Percentage of very confident or somewhat confident)												
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	WI	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade
Very confident	31.2%	32.5%	25.5%	35.4%	31.3%	26.7%	30.9%	31.6%	36.3%	34.6%	18.1%	27.6%
Somewhat confident	37.0%	31.3%	40.0%	37.8%	41.3%	33.3%	38.9%	34.8%	32.6%	31.8%	51.8%	34.5%
Very + Somewhat confident	68%	64%	66%	73%	73%	60%	70%	66%	69%	65%	70%	62%
Very + Somewhat confident (2018)	62%	70%	60%	59%	60%	--	73%	54%	62%	61%	64%	58%

% change	+6%	-6%	+6%	+14%	+13%	--	-3%	+12%	+7%	+4%	+6%	+4%
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5. 68% of respondents are optimistic about the U.S. economy in the next two to three years. The percentage is 8% higher than in 2018.

Q: How optimistic are you about economic conditions in the next 2 to 3 years?												
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	WI	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade
Very optimistic	27.0%	30.1%	14.6%	30.5%	31.3%	20.0%	31.4%	21.9%	31.8%	27.3%	18.1%	25.9%
Optimistic	40.9%	37.4%	49.1%	42.7%	40.0%	33.3%	41.7%	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%	43.4%	39.7%
Very optimistic + Optimistic	68%	68%	64%	73%	71%	53%	73%	62%	72%	67%	62%	66%
2018	60%	65%	60%	56%	60%	--	71%	53%	60%	61%	59%	64%
% change	+8%	+3%	+4%	17%	+11%	--	+2%	+9%	+12%	+6%	+3%	+2%

6. Increasing current customer satisfaction and loyalty is the growth strategy for the majority of small business owners in 2019, followed by identifying new customers. Interestingly, as influencer marketing becomes more important, 1 in 5 surveyed small business owners said they plan to work with social influencers on product promotions in 2019.

Q: What are your growth strategies for 2019? Please select all that apply.												
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	WI	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade
Increase current customer satisfaction and loyalty	51%	47%	47%	56%	50%	53%	50%	51%	54%	47%	49%	40%
Identify new customer segments where the need for your products/services is still not met	45%	49%	40%	48%	41%	47%	45%	46%	46%	49%	39%	52%
Create new products or services	29%	41%	25%	23%	26%	27%	26%	32%	38%	28%	17%	28%
Expand geographic locations	25%	25%	18%	28%	28%	17%	24%	25%	27%	25%	19%	17%
Attend more networking events to generate leads	23%	24%	25%	20%	26%	20%	23%	23%	24%	25%	22%	17%
Work with social influencers on product promotions	20%	22%	24%	21%	21%	7%	22%	19%	24%	20%	14%	17%
Explore partnership opportunities with other businesses or professional associations	19%	20%	13%	21%	20%	17%	19%	18%	22%	16%	17%	19%
Add new or more digital retail channels	18%	20%	13%	22%	13%	20%	21%	14%	24%	15%	11%	12%
Acquisitions	4%	6%	5%	4%	1%	3%	5%	3%	6%	4%	1%	3%
Other	4%	4%	5%	1%	3%	10%	5%	3%	1%	3%	8%	7%

7. 74% of respondents plan to grow their business in the next six to 12 months, which is 12% higher from 2018. Among all markets surveyed, California has the most small business owners planning to grow or expand their business in the near future while Wisconsin has the fewest.

Q: Do you plan to grow or expand your business in the next 6-12 months?												
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	WI	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade
Yes 2019	74%	71%	62%	89%	81%	47%	78%	70%	81%	71%	66%	67%
Yes 2018	62%	59%	53%	73%	59%	--	64%	60%	72%	62%	44%	66%
% change	+12%	+12%	+9%	+16%	+22%	--	+14%	+10%	+9%	+9%	+22%	+1%

8. Increasing advertising or marketing budget jumped to the top area for growth in 2019. This area increased its ranking from 3rd in 2018 to 1st 2019 and saw a percentage increase of 4% in 2019.

Q: In what ways do you plan to grow? Please select all that apply. (Respondents who plan to grow their business in the next 6-12 mons only) -2019													
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	WI	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade	
Increase advertising or marketing budget	46%	42%	53%	45%	46%	50%	45%	47%	50%	46%	36%	46%	
Hire more employees	35%	37%	29%	37%	31%	50%	42%	27%	43%	33%	20%	36%	
Add new products/services	34%	47%	44%	26%	28%	29%	35%	33%	35%	32%	36%	38%	
Increase or upgrade current facilities/equipment	29%	39%	18%	22%	32%	36%	29%	29%	31%	32%	20%	38%	
Employee retention (e.g., salary or benefit increase, training program)	21%	12%	12%	37%	18%	14%	23%	19%	19%	28%	16%	26%	
Open new location(s)	21%	20%	0%	21%	34%	14%	22%	19%	24%	17%	20%	18%	
Improve/invest in a customer relationship management (CRM) system	15%	12%	6%	23%	15%	7%	15%	16%	11%	24%	11%	18%	
Increase product development budget	15%	19%	9%	14%	18%	7%	12%	19%	15%	18%	9%	18%	
Technology investments	15%	15%	21%	15%	12%	14%	18%	12%	15%	13%	18%	13%	
Improve/Invest an online or mobile payment system	14%	17%	6%	15%	15%	7%	15%	12%	16%	17%	5%	8%	
Improve/invest data security	9%	17%	6%	10%	5%	0%	9%	8%	11%	6%	9%	3%	
Other	2%	2%	3%	0%	3%	14%	2%	3%	0%	3%	7%	3%	

Q: In what ways do you plan to grow or expand? Please select all that apply. (Respondents who plan to grow their business in the next 6-12 mons only) -2018												
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade	
Add new products/services	49%	57%	59%	42%	45%	45%	53%	48%	57%	35%	30%	
Hire more employees	44%	39%	45%	48%	45%	53%	37%	49%	38%	42%	58%	
Increase advertising or marketing budget	42%	45%	38%	35%	49%	40%	43%	49%	43%	16%	33%	
Increase or upgrade current facilities/equipment	32%	37%	38%	32%	26%	43%	24%	34%	32%	26%	42%	
Open new location(s)	25%	18%	34%	28%	21%	20%	28%	33%	22%	6%	33%	
Employee retention (e.g., salary or benefit increase, training program)	21%	16%	14%	30%	19%	28%	16%	28%	15%	10%	15%	
Technology investments	18%	14%	17%	21%	17%	19%	17%	23%	12%	13%	18%	
Improve/Invest an online or mobile payment system	18%	16%	14%	21%	21%	22%	15%	30%	5%	10%	21%	
Improve/invest in a customer relationship management (CRM) system	17%	12%	21%	10%	23%	17%	17%	20%	12%	13%	15%	
Increase product development budget	12%	8%	7%	17%	15%	12%	13%	16%	11%	3%	9%	
Improve/invest data security	12%	6%	10%	18%	13%	11%	14%	14%	11%	10%	3%	
Other	4%	4%	7%	3%	4%	4%	5%	2%	2%	16%	6%	

9. Finding different avenues for reaching new leads/prospects is the top sales initiative for 2019, followed by growing the sales pipeline. Investing in technology or software to streamline the sales process ranks third this year with the same percentage as 2018.

Q: What are your sales initiatives for 2019? Please select all that apply.												
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	WI	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade
Finding different avenues for reaching new leads/prospects	44%	43%	45%	43%	43%	50%	42%	46%	45%	43%	43%	43%
Growing the sales pipeline	33%	41%	27%	33%	29%	30%	35%	30%	40%	35%	18%	34%
Investing in technology or software to streamline the sales process	22%	20%	13%	26%	28%	13%	22%	21%	24%	22%	17%	17%
Improving your closing rate	19%	13%	9%	28%	23%	17%	22%	15%	16%	22%	19%	26%
Creating a dedicated sales team	15%	12%	7%	24%	16%	10%	18%	12%	19%	14%	11%	14%
Training your sales team	12%	14%	7%	13%	13%	13%	14%	11%	16%	13%	7%	7%
Ensuring better communication between sales and the rest of the organization	12%	16%	15%	11%	8%	13%	13%	12%	10%	15%	13%	17%
Creating a formal sales process for your team	10%	10%	7%	13%	11%	7%	10%	10%	14%	10%	5%	10%
Other	6%	7%	9%	5%	4%	7%	6%	6%	2%	5%	14%	7%

10. 53% of respondents' business benefited from the tax reform in 2018. The result is close to their anticipation (55%) when the question was asked in 2018.

Q: Did your business benefit from the tax reform in 2018?												
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	WI	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade
Yes	53%	46%	53%	60%	56%	50%	58%	48%	56%	54%	47%	52%

11. While 53% of respondents benefited from the tax reform in 2018, the sentiment around whether the tax reform really benefits small business owners is more conservative. 47% think tax reform benefits small business owners in general. The percentage is lower than that in the 2018 study (55%) when respondents were asked to predict if the tax reform would benefit small business owners in general.

Q: In your opinion, do you think the tax reform benefits small business owners in general?												
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	WI	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade
Strongly agree	21.2%	22.9%	16.4%	20.7%	26.3%	13.3%	22.9%	19.4%	22.2%	21.8%	16.9%	15.5%
Somewhat agree	27.0%	22.9%	20.0%	31.7%	30.0%	30.0%	29.1%	24.5%	31.9%	20.0%	28.9%	29.3%
Strongly + somewhat agree	47%	46%	36%	52%	56%	43%	52%	44%	54%	42%	46%	45%
Percentage of respondents who think the tax reform will benefit small business owners in general (in 2018)	55%	61%	60%	51%	48%	--	67%	45%	56%	52%	57%	54%

12. 43% of respondents are planning to secure funding to expand their business in the next six to 12 months, which is 15% higher from last year.

Q: Are you planning to secure funding, in the form of a loan, grant or other method, to expand your business in the next 6-12 months?												
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	WI	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade
Yes – 2019	43%	37%	27%	59%	49%	27%	27%	38%	50%	48%	22%	43%
Yes - 2018	28%	18%	20%	39%	31%	--	29%	27%	41%	21%	14%	30%
% change	+15%	+19%	+7%	+20%	+18%	--	-2%	+11%	+9%	+27%	+8%	+11%

Top three methods to secure funding across generations:

- **All respondents**
 - Bank loans: 48%
 - Personal savings: 41%
 - Friends/family: 33%
 - While not listed as top 3, 21% of respondents plan to get funding through business credit cards.
- **Millennial:**
 - Bank loans/ Personal savings: 46% each (tied)
 - Family and friends: 40%
 - Percentage of Millennial small business owners who plan to secure funding through business credit cards dropped significantly, from 40% in 2018 to 18% in 2019.
- **Gen-X:**
 - Bank loans: 45%
 - Personal savings: 38%
 - Family and friends :28%
- **Baby Boomer:**
 - Bank loans: 56%
 - Personal savings: 28%
 - Business credit cards: 28%

13. Generally, more respondents do not have concern when working with banks on financing. There is, however, a noticeable increase in the percentage of people who feel concerned and very concerned among all respondents. Two of the top three concerns remain the same and complicated preparation for application becomes the second largest concern in 2019.

By generation, Millennials show stronger concerns than other generations. Complicated preparation for application makes up about half of the total concerns Millennials feel when working with banks on financing.

Among the five select markets, North Carolina has nearly 2 in 5 respondents (39%) indicating that they are not familiar with which bank to use when they have a financial need for their business. The sentiment is especially strong among Millennial small business owners in North Carolina, where 50% said they are not sure which banks to use. When considering other demographic criteria among this segment, those whose business is in its early stage (less than 10 years) show stronger uncertainty about which banks to work with on financing.

Q: When working with banks on financing, how concerned are you with the following factors?										
	Not at all concerned (1)	Not concerned (2)	Neither concerned or not concerned (3)	Concerned (4)	Very concerned (5)	N/A (0)	Weighted average score 2019	Weighted average score 2018	Top 2 Boxes % 2019	Top 2 Boxes % 2018
It's a time-consuming process	7.6%	12.7%	25.8%	29.7%	15.2%	9.1%	3.35	2.93	44.9%	29.7%
Complicated preparation for application	7.0%	15.2%	23.6%	29.7%	14.9%	9.7%	3.34	2.88	44.6%	28.0%
Unfavorable lending conditions	8.5%	15.8%	27.0%	24.2%	13.9%	10.6%	3.22	3.01	38.1%	33.4%
Length of time required to get financing approved	7.9%	14.2%	31.2%	22.7%	13.0%	10.9%	3.21	2.80	35.7%	27.6%
Size of your business	8.2%	20.0%	27.9%	23.0%	12.4%	8.5%	3.13	2.85	35.4%	26.0%
Unfriendly attitude from staff	10.3%	18.5%	27.9%	18.8%	13.0%	11.5%	3.07	2.95	31.8%	32.7%
Unfamiliarity with which bank to use	13.3%	19.7%	27.9%	18.5%	11.2%	9.4%	2.94	2.69	29.7%	23.0%
Prefer to work primarily with online/mobile financial institutions	10.3%	19.1%	36.1%	15.2%	7.3%	12.1%	2.89	2.75	22.5%	21.0%
Entering a bank can be intimidating	20.3%	19.7%	22.4%	17.9%	10.9%	8.8%	2.77	2.48	28.8%	18.3%

Percentage of respondents who selected "concerned" or "very concerned" in each area by segments - 2019												
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	WI	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade
It's a time-consuming process	44.9%	44.6%	47.3%	50.0%	37.5%	46.7%	41.4%	49.0%	45.9%	49.1%	37.4%	46.6%
Complicated preparation for application	44.6%	42.2%	41.8%	48.8%	45.0%	43.3%	42.3%	47.1%	49.6%	48.2%	31.3%	43.1%
Unfavorable lending conditions	38.1%	30.1%	38.2%	41.5%	43.8%	36.7%	35.4%	41.3%	43.0%	42.7%	25.3%	31.0%
Length of time required to get financing approved	35.7%	37.4%	34.6%	35.4%	35.0%	36.7%	34.3%	37.4%	39.3%	41.8%	22.9%	34.5%
Size of your business	35.4%	33.7%	29.1%	42.7%	36.3%	30.0%	34.9%	36.1%	37.8%	44.6%	20.5%	32.8%
Unfriendly attitude from staff	31.8%	33.7%	27.3%	30.5%	33.8%	33.3%	30.9%	32.9%	35.6%	31.8%	25.3%	29.3%
Unfamiliarity with which bank to use	29.7%	38.6%	23.6%	24.4%	30.0%	30.0%	29.1%	30.3%	37.8%	30.0%	15.7%	29.3%
Prefer to work primarily with online/mobile financial institutions	22.5%	20.5%	16.4%	34.2%	18.8%	16.7%	21.4%	23.9%	27.4%	23.6%	13.3%	19.0%
Entering a bank can be intimidating	28.8%	26.5%	21.8%	34.2%	32.5%	23.3%	26.3%	31.6%	33.3%	30.9%	18.1%	25.9%

Percentage of respondents who selected "concerned" or "very concerned" in each area by segments – 2018												
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	WI	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade
Unfavorable lending conditions	33.4%	27.7%	29.1%	36.6%	38.8%	--	34.9%	32.2%	44.3%	29.5%	20.0%	34.0%
Unfriendly attitude from staff	32.7%	27.7%	32.7%	31.7%	38.8%	--	32.6%	32.8%	43.4%	29.5%	18.6%	34.0%
It's a time-consuming process	29.7%	26.5%	27.3%	30.5%	33.8%	--	30.2%	29.2%	31.2%	28.6%	28.6%	28.0%
Complicated preparation for application	28.0%	21.7%	20.0%	40.2%	27.5%	--	29.5%	26.9%	37.7%	25.7%	15.7%	26.0%
Size of your business	26.0%	24.1%	20.0%	26.8%	31.3%	--	26.4%	25.7%	31.2%	23.8%	21.4%	28.0%
Length of time required to get financing approved	27.6%	26.5%	14.6%	36.6%	28.8%	--	28.7%	26.9%	39.3%	22.9%	14.3%	22.0%
Prefer to work primarily with online/mobile financial institutions	21.0%	16.9%	20.0%	19.5%	27.5%	--	22.5%	19.9%	31.2%	19.1%	5.7%	14.0%
Unfamiliarity with which bank to use	23.0%	16.9%	12.7%	34.2%	25.0%	--	24.8%	21.6%	36.1%	15.2%	12.9%	24.0%
Entering a bank can be intimidating	18.3%	14.5%	16.4%	18.3%	23.8%	--	17.1%	19.3%	27.9%	13.3%	8.6%	18.0%

North Carolina SMB Owners on "unfamiliarity with which bank to use"							
	ALL	Millennial	Gen-X	Boomer	Male	Female	Skilled trade
Concerned + Very Concerned	38.6%	50.0%	37.5%	15.8%	38.6%	38.5%	30.8%

North Carolina Millennial SMB Owners on "unfamiliarity with which bank to use"						
	ALL	Male	Female	Years in Business	Non-Skilled trade	Skilled trade
Concerned + Very Concerned	50.0%	52.4%	47.4%	0-5 years: 45.8% 6-10 years: 84.6% More than 10 years: 0%	48.7%	66.7% (n=3)

14. 62% of respondents in all five markets agree the state where their business is located is a great place to start a small business. This result is 1% lower than in 2018. Among the markets, Florida had the highest percentage of respondents who considered the state to be a great place to start a small business, followed by North Carolina, South Carolina, California, and Wisconsin. The order is the same as the results in 2018 despite Wisconsin not being included in the 2018 study. When comparing the results across generations, Millennials' confidence in their local business environment is rebounding, while the other two generations' confidence in local business environment is either the same or decreasing.

Overall, NC/SC/CA/FL/WI is a great place to start a small business. (Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree)												
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	WI	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade
Yes -2019	62%	67%	58%	54%	73%	53%	65%	60%	68%	63%	53%	66%
Yes -2018	63%	66%	64%	52%	69%	--	69%	58%	65%	63%	59%	64%
% change	-1%	+1%	-6%	+2%	+4%	--	-4%	+2%	+3%	+0%	-6%	+2%

North Carolina							
	ALL	Millennial	Gen-X	Boomer	Male	Female	Skilled trade
Yes -2019	67%	75%	71%	47%	73%	62%	77%
Yes -2018	66%	71%	64%	68%	77%	54%	77%
% change	+1%	+4%	+7%	-21%	-4%	+8%	+0%

South Carolina							
	ALL	Millennial	Gen-X	Boomer	Male	Female	Skilled trade
Yes -2019	58%	56%	62%	56%	59%	58%	80%
Yes -2018	64%	68%	53%	65%	68%	61%	90%
% change	-6%	-12%	+9%	-9%	-9%	-3%	-10%

California							
	ALL	Millennial	Gen-X	Boomer	Male	Female	Skilled trade
Yes -2019	54%	64%	48%	37%	51%	57%	50%
Yes -2018	52%	58%	50%	36%	47%	56%	29%
% change	+2%	+6%	-2%	+1%	+4%	+1%	+21%

Florida							
	ALL	Millennial	Gen-X	Boomer	Male	Female	Skilled trade
Yes -2019	73%	77%	69%	75%	79%	66%	69%
Yes -2018	69%	68%	77%	50%	81%	61%	69%
% change	+4%	+9%	-8%	+25%	-2%	+5%	+0%

Wisconsin							
	ALL	Millennial	Gen-X	Boomer	Male	Female	Skilled trade
Yes -2019	53%	58%	56%	44%	53%	53%	50%
Yes -2018	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
% change	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

15. Social media and word of mouth are the most popular resources to learn about small business trends among all respondents. The ranking for attending conferences improves one place, to third, in the 2019 study.

Q.What ways do you learn about small business trends? Please select all that apply. -2019												
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	WI	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade
Word of Mouth from other SMBs	46%	47%	55%	41%	43%	50%	46%	46%	40%	48%	54%	60%
Social media	46%	51%	33%	52%	41%	47%	43%	48%	49%	50%	33%	40%
Attending conferences	32%	28%	18%	40%	33%	43%	33%	31%	39%	30%	23%	26%
Traditional media	30%	33%	25%	29%	38%	20%	28%	34%	30%	29%	33%	28%
Participating in networking events	30%	25%	24%	37%	33%	27%	31%	28%	31%	29%	28%	29%
Webinars	24%	34%	24%	18%	19%	23%	22%	26%	24%	25%	20%	19%
From a mentor	13%	11%	18%	17%	10%	10%	12%	15%	18%	13%	7%	17%
Local Chamber of commerce	12%	18%	7%	13%	11%	7%	10%	15%	9%	12%	19%	16%
Government or industry-related business organization (e.g., SBA)	10%	11%	15%	9%	11%	3%	11%	10%	7%	14%	11%	10%
Other	4%	2%	7%	2%	4%	7%	6%	2%	1%	4%	8%	7%
Q.What ways do you learn about small business trends? Please select all that apply. -2018												
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	WI	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade
Word of Mouth from other SMBs	48%	49%	64%	43%	43%	--	45%	51%	45%	50%	51%	60%
Traditional media	35%	42%	38%	34%	25%	--	33%	36%	24%	40%	46%	30%
Social media	54%	47%	53%	56%	60%	--	46%	60%	66%	51%	36%	60%
Attending conferences	33%	29%	27%	44%	31%	--	38%	30%	40%	31%	26%	36%
Participating in networking events	30%	28%	27%	32%	33%	--	31%	29%	32%	30%	27%	18%
Webinars	20%	20%	22%	17%	21%	--	16%	23%	29%	19%	7%	20%
From a mentor	17%	14%	24%	16%	18%	--	16%	18%	24%	11%	16%	20%
Local Chamber of commerce	12%	16%	15%	9%	11%	--	12%	13%	10%	11%	19%	10%
Government or industry-related business organization (e.g., SBA)	13%	12%	9%	17%	11%	--	12%	13%	19%	9%	7%	16%
Other	4%	4%	2%	2%	6%	--	5%	2%	2%	3%	9%	4%

16. The total number of mentioned financial institutions was the lowest of the past four years. There were 123 banks and credit unions mentioned in 2019. This is compared to 138 in 2018, 175 in 2017 and 127 in 2016. Similar to years past, the number of banks that received single mentions were mostly small, local banks, or credit unions. These mentions decreased from 2018, from 90 brands in 2018 to 68 in 2019 and is the smallest amount in the past four years (in 2017, 131 brands were mentioned and in 2016, 82 brands were mentioned).

The top 10 rankings were almost the same as last year, with a few banks swapping rankings (Wells Fargo and BOA; PNC and Citibank). Additionally, Wells Fargo had the most mentions, receiving 156 mentions compared to 136 for Bank of America. They were followed by Chase (92 mentions), BB&T (50 mentions), SunTrust (38 mentions), Citibank (25 mentions), and PNC (25 mentions).

While First Citizen Bank decreased in overall mentions (12 in 2019 from 17 in 2018), its rank of 10 overall remained the same.

When looking at 5 select markets, top rankings in North and South Carolina, California and Florida are consistent with the all-up results. However, in Wisconsin, two of the most popular bank names were new to the mix, Associated Bank and BMO Harris. Interestingly, while Wells Fargo and Bank of America were the top two brands mentioned in the overall results, they were barely listed by participants in Wisconsin (Wells Fargo being mentioned 7 times and Bank of America being mentioned 1 time).

Ranking	Number of mentions	Names of the bank
1	156	(1 Brand) Wells Fargo (167 in 2018; 176 in 2017; 171 in 2016)
2	136	(1 Brand) Bank of America (180 in 2018; 182 in 2017; 180 in 2016)
3	92	(1 Brand) Chase (JPMorgan) (92 in 2018; 83 in 2017; 74 in 2016)
4	50	(1 Brand) BB&T (Branch Banking and Trust Company) (67 in 2018; 56 in 2017; 65 in 2016)
5	38	(1 Brand) SunTrust Bank (53 in 2018; 55 in 2017; 44 in 2016)
6	25	(1 Brand) Citibank (25 in 2018; 41 in 2017; 30 in 2016)
7	24	(1 Brand) PNC (27 in 2018; 17 in 2017; 18 in 2016)
8	21	(1 Brand) TD Bank (Toronto-Dominion Bank) (21 in 2018; 27 in 2017; 26 in 2016)
9	17	(1 Brand) US Bank (14 in 2018; 18 in 2017; 14 in 2016)
10	12	(2 Brands) Fifth Third Bank (19 in 2018; 16 in 2017; 21 in 2016); First Citizens Bank (17 in 2018; 20 in 2017; 19 in 2016)
11	11	(1 Brand) Associated Bank (0 in 2018)
12	10	(1 Brand) Regions Bank (15 in 2018; 18 in 2017; 13 in 2016)
13	9	(1 Brand) North Carolina State Employee Credit Union (8 in 2018; 9 in 2017)
14	8	(1 Brand) BMO Harris (0 in 2018),
15	7	(1 Brand) Union Bank (7 in 2018; 5 in 2017)
16	5	(1 Brand) Bank of the West (7 in 2018; 10 in 2017; 10 in 2016);
17	4	(3 Brands) Capital Bank (4 in 2018; 1 in 2017); Synovus (1 in 2018); South State Bank (8 in 2018; 7 in 2017)
18	3	(6 Brands) Capital One (6 in 2018; 1 in 2017); First Bank (4 in 2018; 1 in 2017); First National Bank (3 in 2018; 1 in 2017); Golden One Credit Union (2 in 2018); U.S. Navy Federal Credit Union (4 in 2018; 4 in 2017); United Community Bank (2 in 2018);
19	2	(17 Brands) American Bank; Citizens Bank; Community Credit Union; Community First Credit Union; Deforest-Morrisonville Bank; Entegra; F&M Bank; Fidelity; Founders Federal Credit

		Union; Johnson Bank; North Shore Bank; Partners Federal Credit Union; Pinnacle; Rabobank; Summit Credit Union; TCF Bank; Woodforest National Bank;
20	1	(67 Brands) Achieva Credit Union; Allegacy Federal Credit Union; Alliance Credit Union; AllSouth Federal Credit Union; Ameris Bank; Asheville Savings Bank; Bank Mutual; Bank One; Capital City; Capital Credit Union; Carolina Trust Bank; Carter Bank & Trust; CenterState Bank; Charter Bank; City National; Citizens National; Coastal Bank & Trust; Conway National Bank; Corning Credit Union; Discover; Drummond Bank; Educators Credit Union; Farmers & Merchants Banks; First Bank Financial Centre; First Federal of Florida; First Republic Bank; Fox Communities Credit Union; Glacier Hills Credit Union; HSBC; Huntington Bank; IberiaBank; Landmark Bank; M&T Bank; Marine Bank; McFarland State Bank; Mechanics State Bank; Merrill Lynch; National Commercial Bank; Newbridge Bank; North State Bank; Northern Trust Bank; Old National Bank; Palmetto; Palmetto Bank; Palmetto Citizens Federal Credit Union; Pee Dee Federal Credit Union; Safe; San Diego County Credit Union; Schools Financial Credit Union; Seacoast Bank; Space Coast Credit Union; SRP Federal Credit Union; Standard Chartered; SunCoast Credit Union; TD Ameritrade; The Local Credit Union; The People's Bank; Tri-County Bank; UBS; USE Credit Union; Visa; VyStar Credit Union; Wachovia; Westbury Bank; WoodTrust Bank; Yadkin Bank; Yolo Federal Credit Union

North Carolina

Ranking	Number of mentions	Names of the bank
1	48	(1 Brand) Wells Fargo
2	36	(1 Brand) Bank of America
3	31	(1 Brand) BB&T
4	14	(1 Brand) PNC
5	13	(1 Brand) SunTrust
6	9	(2 Brands) First Citizens Bank (9 in 2018; 14 in 2017); North Carolina State Employee Credit Union
7	5	(1 Brand) Citi Bank
8	4	(4 Brands) Capital Banks; Chase (JP Morgan); Fifth Third Bank; First Bank
9	2	(5 Brands) F&M Bank; Fidelity; First National Bank; Union Bank; Woodforest National Bank
10	1	(20 Brands) Allegacy Federal Credit Union; Alliance Credit Union; Asheville Savings Bank; Bank One; Carter Bank & Trust; Citizens Bank; Corning Credit Union; Entegra; First Federal; M&T Bank; Marine Bank; Newbridge Bank; North State Bank; Pinnacle; Regions Bank; TD Bank; Truiliant Federal Credit Union; United Community Bank; US Bank; Yadkin Bank

South Carolina

Ranking	Number of mentions	Names of the bank
1	26	(1 Brand) Bank of America
2	25	(1 Brand) Wells Fargo
3	12	(1 Brand) BB&T
4	10	(1 Brand) SunTrust; TD Bank
5	4	(2 Brand) Regions Bank; South State Bank
6	3	(2 Brands) First Citizens Bank (8 in 2018; 5 in 2017); PNC
7	2	(6 Brands) Chase (JP Morgan); CitiBank; Founders Federal Credit Union; Synovus; United Community Bank; U.S. Navy Federal Credit Union
8	1	(21 Brands) AllSouth Federal Credit Union; Bank of York; Carolina Trust Bank; Charter Bank; Citizens Bank; Conway National Bank; Entegra; Fifth Third Bank; First National Bank; Merrill Lynch; Palmetto; Palmetto Bank; Palmetto Citizens Federal Credit Union; Pee Dee Federal Credit Union; Pinnacle; Safe; Santander Bank; SRP Federal Credit Union; Standard Chartered; The People's Bank; Wachovia

California

Ranking	Number of mentions	Names of the bank
1	45	(1 Brand) Chase (JP Morgan)
2	43	(1 Brand) Wells Fargo
3	39	(1 Brand) Bank of America
4	13	(1 Brand) Citi Bank
5	7	(1 Brand) Bank of West
6	6	(1 Brand) US Bank
7	5	(1 Brand) Union Bank
8	4	(1 Brand) Golden One Credit Union
9	2	(4 Brands) Capital One; San Diego County Credit Union; Schools Financial Credit Union; RaboBank
10	1	(14 Brands) American AgCredit; Bank of Stockton; City National; Community Credit Union; Discover; First Republic Bank; HSBC; Mechanics Bank; Tri-County Bank; UBS; USE Credit Union; Valley First Credit Union; Visa; Yolo Federal Credit Union

Florida

Ranking	Number of mentions	Names of the bank
1	35	(1 Brand) Chase
2	34	(1 Brand) Bank of America
3	33	(1 Brand) Wells Fargo
4	14	(1 Brand) SunTrust
5	10	(1 Brand) TD Bank
6	7	(1 Brand) BB&T
7	6	(1 Brand) Fifth Third Bank
8	5	(2 Brands) Citi Bank; Regions
9	4	(1 Brand) PNC
10	2	(3 Brands) Capital One; Partners Federal Credit Union; Synovus
11	1	(23 Brands) Acheiva Credit Union; American Bank; Ameris Bank; Capital City; CenterState Bank; Coastal Bank & Trust; Community Credit Union; Community First Credit Union; Drummond Bank; First Federal of Florida; First National Bank of South Miami; IberiaBank; MidFlorida Credit Union; Northern Trust Bank; RBTT; Seacoast Bank; Space Coast Credit Union; SunCoast Credit Union; TD Ameritrade; The Local Credit Union; U.S. Navy Federal Credit Union; US Bank; VyStar Credit Union

Wisconsin

Ranking	Number of mentions	Names of the bank
1	11	(1 Brand) Associated Bank
2	9	(1 Brand) US Bank
3	8	(1 Brand) BMO Harris
4	7	(2 Brands) Chase (JP Morgan); Wells Fargo
5	3	(1 Brand) PNC
6	2	(5 Brands) Deforest-Morrisonville Bank; Johnson Bank; North Shore Bank; Summit Credit Union; TCF Bank
7	1	(20 Brands) American Bank; Bank Mutual; Bank of America; Capital Credit Union; Community First Credit Union; Educators Credit Union; Farmers & Merchants Bank; Fifth Third Bank; First Bank Financial Centre; Fox Communities Credit Union; Glacier Hills Credit Union; Huntington Bank; Landmark Bank; Marine Credit Union; McFarland State Bank; National Commercial Bank; Old National Bank; SunTrust; Tri-County Bank; Westbury Bank; WoodTrust Bank

17. The ranking for the first 13 places in the 2019 results are same as the results in the 2018 study. First Citizens Bank ranked 8th out of total surveyed banks. Similar to last year's results, the awareness in North Carolina and South Carolina is stronger than the rest of the markets.

Q. Which of the following banks have you heard of? Please select all that apply – 2019											
	ALL	NC	SC	CA	FL	Male	Female	Millennial	Gen-x	Boomers	Skilled trade
Bank of America	85%	89%	85%	85%	81%	87%	82%	87%	81%	86%	88%
Wells Fargo	81%	90%	85%	74%	75%	83%	79%	80%	79%	86%	90%
Chase	73%	77%	71%	68%	70%	67%	79%	69%	74%	78%	79%
SunTrust	50%	69%	62%	17%	65%	49%	52%	40%	52%	66%	53%
BB&T	50%	80%	80%	7%	56%	50%	50%	47%	50%	55%	48%
PNC	45%	69%	53%	15%	44%	42%	48%	39%	51%	48%	50%
US Bank	41%	36%	29%	48%	34%	43%	37%	35%	41%	49%	48%
First Citizens Bank	32%	52%	53%	13%	23%	29%	36%	31%	35%	31%	33%
Regions Bank	26%	30%	42%	5%	41%	26%	26%	21%	34%	25%	29%
Fifth Third	26%	36%	22%	7%	35%	27%	24%	22%	30%	27%	24%
Union Bank	20%	13%	9%	41%	16%	22%	17%	20%	15%	24%	19%
City National Bank	19%	13%	18%	30%	16%	21%	17%	22%	15%	19%	33%
Bank of The West	19%	8%	4%	49%	11%	20%	17%	17%	17%	23%	22%
First Republic Bank	13%	13%	15%	15%	13%	13%	13%	11%	14%	14%	16%
BBV Compass Bank	11%	7%	7%	13%	19%	12%	10%	12%	13%	7%	12%
South State Bank	10%	6%	40%	4%	3%	7%	12%	7%	12%	11%	10%
National Bank of South Carolina	9%	7%	36%	4%	3%	7%	12%	8%	10%	11%	12%
Comerica	8%	6%	4%	13%	11%	11%	6%	5%	8%	13%	9%
California Bank & Trust	8%	6%	0%	20%	5%	8%	8%	8%	7%	8%	9%
None of the above	2%	0%	2%	0%	5%	2%	2%	0%	4%	2%	3%

Q. Which of the following banks have you heard of? Please select all that apply – 2019	
	WI
BMO Harris	70%
Wells Fargo	70%
Bank of America	60%
Chase	60%
US Bank	60%
Associated Bank	50%
PNC	30%
Fifth Third	25%
SunTrust	20%
First Citizens Bank	15%
Bank of The West	10%
BB&T	10%
Regions Bank	10%
California Bank & Trust	5%
City National Bank	5%
Town Bank	5%
BBV Compass	0%
Comerica	0%
First Republic Bank	0%
National Bank of South Carolina	0%
South State Bank	0%
Union Bank	0%
None of the above	10%