



Contact: M Booth & Associates
 Christina Friedkin/Kurt Rossler
 212-481-7000
Christinaf@mbooth.com
Kurtr@mbooth.com

American Express
 Channing Barringer
 212-640-0512
Channing.K.Barringer@aexp.com

**Outlook of Women Small Business Owners in Dallas
 OPEN Small Business Network 2005 Semi-Annual Monitor from American Express**

More than three-quarters, 79%, of women small business owners in Dallas have a positive outlook on the economy and expect their businesses to grow over the next six months.

	Women Business Owners (Dallas)	Women Business Owners (National)	Male Business Owners (National)
Have Positive Outlook on Economy and Business Growth	79%	83%	86%
Expect Revenue to Increase or be Equal to Last Year's	90%	88%	93%
Feel That Low Credit Score is Biggest Barrier to Accessing Financing	11%	7%	11%
Feel It's Important to Join a Women's Networking Organization	35%	49%	N/A
Have Hiring Plans During Next Six Months	38%	42%	45%
Offer Healthcare Coverage	65%	62%	56%

Capital Investments

Fifty-eight percent of women small business owners in Dallas expect to make capital investments in the next six months. Technology leads the list, 42%; followed by office equipment, 21%; manufacturing and production equipment, 13%; office furnishings, 12%; and real estate investments, 11%.

Business Management

The vast majority of women business owners surveyed in Dallas (84%) say they plan to manage their business better by placing a heightened focus on improving customer service. Other management improvement or change areas include cutting expenses, 53%; increasing investments in the business, 52%; cutting back on personal spending, 48%; adding staff, 37%; raising prices, 28%; taking out loans or lines of credit, 13%; and reducing staff or salaries, 8%.

Business Skills

Customer service ranks as the number one business skill that women business owners in Dallas would like to develop further, 71%. Other skills include marketing/sales, 67%; financial management, 50%; negotiating, 44%; decision making, 38%; and human resources, 26%.

Priorities

Forty-three percent of women business owners in Dallas report that growing their business is their single most important priority over the next six months. Other areas of focus include keeping/maintaining their current business and sources of revenue, 30%; managing cash flow, 10%; making the company more innovative, 5%; cutting expenses, 5%; employee management, 3%; and addressing government paperwork and regulation, 2%.

Financing

Forty-one percent of women business owners in Dallas report that they face barriers when trying to access financing. Having a low credit score is the top concern reported by 11% of respondents, followed by having overwhelming paperwork requirements, 10%; not knowing where to go for financing, 9%; size of business, 8%; and lacking documentation to support loan application, 5%.

Hiring Plans

Thirty-eight percent of women business owners in Dallas are planning to hire in the next six months. The main reason for hiring is to handle a growing business, 78%. Other reasons include hiring to help increase business volume, 64%; going after new business ventures, 38%; needing seasonal help for the summer, 33%; and finally finding the right candidate for a position that they have been trying to fill, 25%.

Survey Methodology

The OPEN Small Business Network Semi-Annual Monitor, released each spring and fall, is based on a nationally representative sample of 627 small business owners/managers of companies with fewer than 100 employees. The survey was conducted via telephone by International Communications Research (ICR) from February 9- February 22, 2005. The poll has a margin of error of $\pm 3.9\%$.

About OPEN: The Small Business Network from American Express

OPEN: The Small Business Network is a division of American Express that offers small business owners a wide range of tools, services and savings designed to meet their evolving needs, including charge and credit cards, convenient access to working capital and credit information, enhanced online account management capabilities and savings on business services from an enhanced lineup of partners. To obtain more information about the OPEN Network, visit OPEN.americanexpress.com or call 1-800-NOW-OPEN to apply for a card or loan.

American Express Company is a diversified worldwide travel, financial and network services company founded in 1850. It is a world leader in charge and credit cards, Travelers Cheques, travel, financial planning, business services, insurance and international banking.

#

Attention Editors: Press release and additional press materials can be found online at:

http://www.americanexpress.com/corp/pc/2005/osbn_sm1.asp