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Isaac M. O'Bannon • Aug. 22, 2012

A new survey of small business owners show that many are planning to hire new employees before the end of the year, but most are still concerned about the economy, the 2012 election and various legal issues. Still, the potential for hiring is good news as large corporations continue to cut jobs in the U.S. and unemployment is hovering at 8.3%.

The survey, conducted by Rocket Lawyer, shows that more than one in three small businesses plan to hire in the next six months. This comes despite recent large layoffs by Google, RIM and HP. The month of May saw the highest number of layoffs since July 2010, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

While these small businesses are still hiring, the survey showed that their degree of optimism has dipped. About 56 percent of those surveyed believe the second half of 2012 will be better than the first. At the beginning of 2012, in contrast, about 86 percent believed that this year would be better than 2011. Nearly half of those surveyed (45 percent) consider the economy to be their first concern. But, it's not the only risk small businesses face.

"Small businesses are the key drivers of economic recovery and they continue to fuel job growth," said Charley Moore, Rocket Lawyer founder and executive chairman. "However, it is clear that the high costs of labor, benefits like health care and legal compliance have made some business owners uneasy. It's important for small businesses to stay on top of potential legal issues to avert possible pitfalls and to

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presidential candidates is sufficiently addressing small business issues in their campaigns.

The survey was conducted between June 1- 25, 2012, among 436 nationwide small business owners.

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