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index.

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Optimism among American workers declined in the month of February, decreasing 2.7 points to 54.0, according to the most recent [Randstad](#) U.S. Employee Confidence Index.

The Index, which measures sentiment around employers, job prospects and the economy at large, decreased from last month's five-month high, but remains .5 points higher than this time last year. In addition, more workers indicated they are likely to conduct a job search over the next 12 months.

“Recent, positive economic reports seem to conflict with the dip in employee confidence,” said Jim Link, Chief HR Officer, Randstad North America. “However, examination of the numbers helps explain the disparity. For example, recent data shows expanded manufacturing activity, improved construction investment and a simultaneous rise in consumer spending. At the same time, increased energy costs from recent cold weather significantly impacted the higher-than-expected consumer outlay, and discretionary spending actually slowed. Despite improved economic reports, employees remain cautious as hiring shows steady improvement.”

Link notes that many economists predict consumer spending to continue to grow over the next few months and 2014 economic growth could reach its strongest levels since the recession ended nearly five years ago. “Only time will tell, but I certainly would not classify this decline in employee confidence as a growing trend.”

The Randstad research was conducted online by Harris Poll between Feb. 3 and 5 on behalf of Randstad and included 1,019 employed U.S. adults ages 18 and older. Randstad, the second largest staffing and HR services firm in the world, has been

tracking workforce trends and publishing the U.S. Employee Confidence Index since

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