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next six months, according to the Grant Thornton LLP 2014 Spring CFO Survey. This also marks the highest percentage in the survey's history, which reflects the insights of more than 1,000 CFOs and other senior financial executives across the United States.

**Isaac M. O'Bannon** • Jun. 18, 2014



For the first time since 2006, more CFOs believe the state of the U.S. economy will

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“While optimism slipped a bit in the fall — likely due to gridlock in Washington at the time — the results of our spring survey and recent improvements in key economic indicators seem to signal that the slow increase in confidence in the U.S. economy might be back on track,” said Stephen Chipman, chief executive officer of Grant Thornton. “However, in order for businesses to feel confident in long-term growth, hiring and investment, our country’s leaders must pave a path to progress and a sustained economic recovery by ensuring stability in fiscal, public and tax policies.”

Increased optimism among CFOs is prevalent throughout the survey results, with 51 percent of those surveyed predicting that industry financial prospects will improve or significantly improve during the next six months, compared to 44 percent in the fall.

The manufacturing industry’s optimism trended even higher, with 56 percent of respondents from that sector expecting an improvement in financial prospects during the next six months. This marks an increase among manufacturers from 51 percent in the fall survey. The number of CFOs who believe the pricing or fees charged by their industry will improve or significantly improve increased to 41 percent, up from 37 percent in the fall. For manufacturing executives, this number increased to 44 percent, up from 39 percent in the fall.

According to the survey findings, 46 percent say their company’s headcount will increase or significantly increase during the next year, up from 40 percent in spring 2013. In addition, 68 percent of CFOs expect the average cost of an employee’s salary to increase during the next 12 months, revealing no change from the fall, but up from 65 percent one year ago.

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