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Taija Sparkman • Jan. 07, 2013

THE SMALL BUSINESS Optimism Outlook



As 2012 came to a close, small business owners held less optimism about the economy and month-over-month hiring was down, according to the SurePayroll Small Business Scorecard. [SurePayroll Inc.](#), provider of online payroll services to

small business, releases the data on national hiring and paycheck trends each

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“Small businesses had been asked to play a game where they didn’t know the rules in 2012,” said SurePayroll CEO and President Michael Alter, referring to uncertainty over government action. “That being the case, they’d rather just not play. That’s likely why we’ve seen a drag on hiring throughout the year. On the bright side, they’ve been innovative and creative. Our customers tell us they’ve been using new services to outsource nonessential work and technology to increase productivity, as well as focusing on their most profitable customers.”

That innovation and creativity is expected to carry over into 2013 as businesses continue to look for ways to become more productive and efficient. Alter expects the outlook for 2013 to contain a slight growth in revenue and flat hiring, similar to the overall trend for 2012. He also expects small business optimism to rebound to around 65 percent as uncertainty surrounding business matters fades and owners tap into available tools and resources.

“Even though the tax holiday has been lifted, 2013 is not Doom’s Day. The 2 percent increase in taxes shouldn’t result in a huge change in consumer demand or small business revenue,” said Alter. “Businesses will need to continue to take advantage of global and technology tools to become more productive.”

As business owners prepare for the year ahead, they should continue to observe trends in tools and technology and pay attention to economic issues. Potential spending cuts, the federal deficit and global economy could all potentially affect the way small businesses do business. Likewise, as mobile technology continues to move to the forefront, many opportunities will emerge for businesses to become more productive. SMB owners will want to continue to pay attention to the various cloud-based products and services available to them.

“There will be lots of opportunities to grow without significant capital spending.

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