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employee wages also improved, while the potential for layoffs receded, according to the report.

Feb. 18, 2021



Corporate leaders are more upbeat about the U.S. economy than at any time in the past 17 years, according to a survey released Thursday.

The Conference Board measure of CEO confidence, in collaboration with the Business Council, jumped to 73 in the first quarter. That's up from 34 a year ago during the height of the pandemic and business closures. A reading above 50 reflects more positive than negative responses.

“CEOs across industries are planning for life after Covid-19,” Roger Ferguson, vice

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the report.

“CEOs entered 2021 historically upbeat,” Dana Peterson, chief economist of the Conference Board, said in a statement.

CEO Positivity

With the vaccine rollout underway CEO Confidence rebounds

Source: The Conference Board

More than a third of chief executives surveyed said they expect that wages will rise by more than 3% over the next year, up from 22% who said so in the previous survey. Nearly half said they expect to add jobs, while just 12% anticipated job reductions.

Forty-five percent expect to boost their capital spending budgets over the next year. CEO confidence tends to be a leading indicator of the willingness to make deals, so the increase in optimism could fuel mergers and acquisitions activity.

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