

Half Of Americans Prefer Opening A Small Business To Retirement, According To The UPS Store Survey

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New data from the second annual The UPS Store® “Inside Small Business Survey” reveals that the entrepreneurial spirit remains strong. Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of Americans dream of opening a small business, almost identical to the 2018 survey (66 percent). What’s more is that the survey found that age is no indicator of entrepreneurial dreams: 54 percent of Americans say that they would rather open a small business than retire, if money or health were not a factor later in life. Dr. Luke Pittaway, Ohio University College of Business O’Bleness Professor of Entrepreneurship, says this could be attributed to people living longer, healthier lives.

“People are living longer and remain healthier as they come up to retirement age, and many are choosing to start a small business as a way to stay active. In fact, the proportion of people starting businesses in the age range of 55 to 65 has increased in recent years, and at one point even surpassed the typical entrepreneur age group of 25 to 35-year-olds,” Pittaway said. “Older people tend to bring more financial wealth, experience and personal networks to their start-up efforts and therefore have the potential to be very competent entrepreneurs.”

The survey also revealed that there is considerable encouragement for entrepreneurialism from one generation to the next, with 62 percent of survey respondents saying they have hoped their child or a child they know would grow up and start their own business. Among survey respondents who are also small business owners, this jumped to 81 percent.

“The high percentage of respondents who want small business ownership for future generations is fascinating and demonstrates the high regard that Americans hold for entrepreneurial activity,” Pittaway said.

What Fuels the Dream: Freedom, Pride and Community Support

The idea of “being your own boss” continues to excite Americans the most about owning a small business (57 percent), compared to 53 percent who said the same last year. Most respondents (54 percent) also believe that the prospect of succeeding and taking pride in what they build excites them, compared to 47 percent in the 2018 survey.

In addition, community support for small business is strong. The survey revealed that 70 percent of Americans make plans to support a small business when it opens in their community. Among respondents that are also small business owners, that increases to 83 percent. According to the survey, convenience (46 percent) and the quality of goods and services (45 percent) are the top factors in determining whether respondents would rather shop at a small business than a bigger store.

“At The UPS Store, Inc., we recognize that U.S. small business owners are some of the hardest-working, most passionate people around,” said Tim Davis, president of The UPS

Store, Inc. “This survey reveals that the majority of small business owners, like our franchisee network, really want to help new business owners in their communities succeed. And with 4,800 locations across the U.S., The UPS Store network is ready to help every step of the way.”

How’s the Economy? It Depends on Who You Ask

The survey showed that small business owners are much more optimistic about the economy compared to the general population. In fact, 72 percent of small business owners believe the current economy is a positive factor for the small business climate, compared to just 42 percent of non-small business owners.

The Biggest Obstacle: Fear

For the second year in a row, fear seems to be the biggest obstacle to pursuing a small business. Americans continue to identify their own financial security (40 percent), financial commitment to operate the business (35 percent) and fear of failure (35 percent) as the major barriers to starting a small business. This is slightly improved from the 2018 survey at 45 percent, 39 percent and 37 percent, respectively. In addition, survey participants say the top expenses that would worry them if they owned a small business are basic operating costs such as utilities (54 percent) and supplies and equipment (50

percent). Almost a quarter of respondents say shipping expenses would worry them if they had a small business.

Bring on the Technology

Interestingly, one thing survey respondents do not fear is technology. A new insight from this year’s survey reveals that Americans are optimistic about the use of technology in small business. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of respondents believe artificial intelligence, such as autonomous machines and 24/7 automated customer support, will be helpful for small businesses competing in the future. And more than two-thirds (69 percent) of Americans believe automation is beneficial for small businesses.

“Surprisingly, Americans are far from fearing automation and artificial intelligence when used in small business settings,” said Pittaway. “They see technology as a helping hand, providing tools and apps that make their day-to-day activities more efficient and seamless.”

Current small business owners feel even stronger about the positive impact of technology. Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of small business owners surveyed believe artificial intelligence will be helpful for small businesses competing in the future, and 78 percent think automation is beneficial to their own business.

Source: [UPS](#)