

Do More Business™ Report

More Than a Transaction: What Small Businesses Actually Need From Their Bank in 2026

First Internet Bank fielded two independent surveys to understand how small business owners and the consumers who support them are navigating today's economy. Findings draw on a 200-respondent survey of U.S. small business owners and a nationally representative 1,000-respondent consumer survey. A consistent theme runs through both: Owners are optimistic, and a strong majority report resilience to financial shocks.

Small businesses show resilience but remain sensitive to economic pressures.

Over three-quarters (76%) of owners report being well-positioned to handle financial shocks such as rising costs, slower demand, or delayed payments over the next 12 months. This demonstrates strong resilience, and owners remain optimistic about growth while maintaining prudent financial buffers.

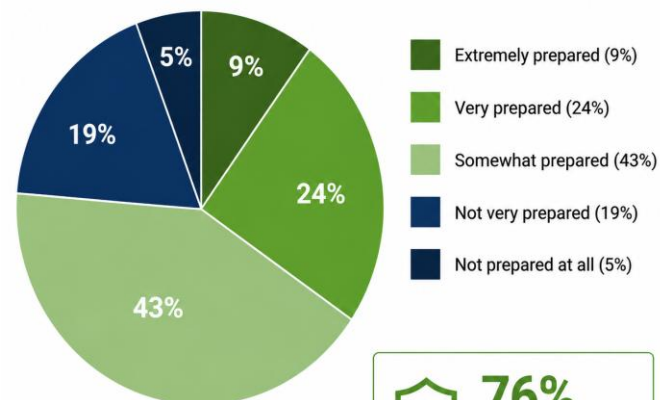
Rising costs are the defining pressure in 2026, and most owners react rather than plan ahead.

Inflation and rising costs are the top financial risk for 45% of owners, outranking customer demand (34%), cash flow volatility (20%) and labor costs (12%). Half have already raised prices. Another 23% are absorbing higher costs and compressing margins.

Supply chain pressure is a factor for a meaningful segment: 35% say trade-related policies have affected their business in the past 12 months, with 29% reporting increased costs for goods and materials and 22% passing those costs to customers.

Prepared to Absorb Financial Shocks

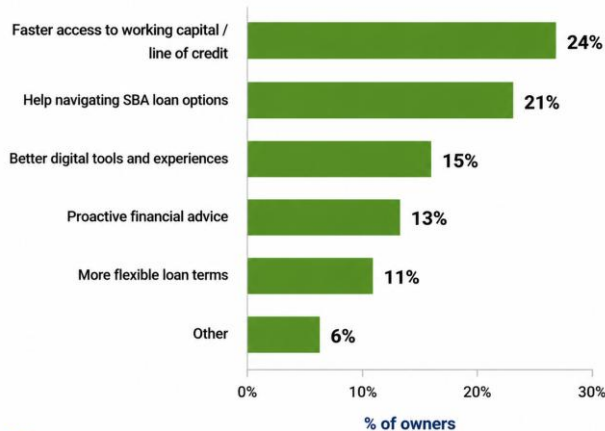
Over three-quarters (76%) of owners are prepared.



 **76%**
of owners are prepared to absorb financial shocks.

Top Ways Banks Can Better Support Your Business

Faster access to capital and guidance are top priorities.



Banks have an opportunity to deepen small-business partnerships.

Small business owners have clear expectations for their banking relationships: faster access to working capital or a line of credit (24%), help navigating SBA options (21%) and better digital tools (15%).

The data suggests many have simply stopped expecting more from their bank, not that they wouldn't welcome it. That's the opening. Owners who feel genuinely supported by their bank are better positioned to plan, borrow and grow, and the 36% who currently turn to online research first represent an audience already looking for more than what they get.

Digital banking meets expectations, and AI-driven financial insights represent the next meaningful differentiator.

Owners are largely satisfied with their primary bank's digital experience: 76% report being very or somewhat satisfied. Essential tools include mobile banking (73%), real-time payment processing (60%), and fraud monitoring alerts (49%).

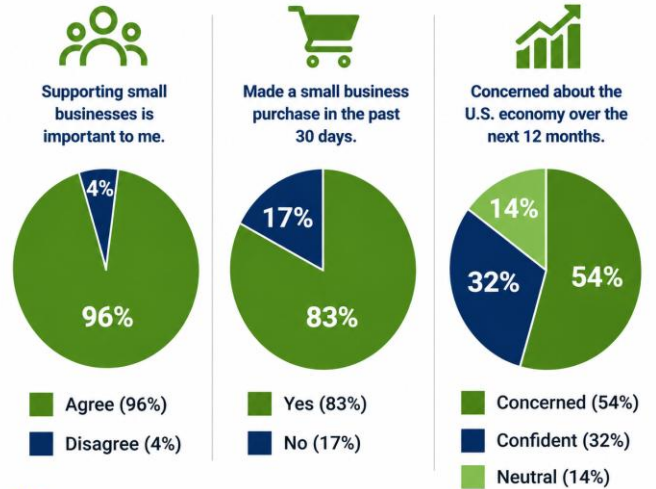
AI is the next frontier. Four in 10 owners are not using AI in any form, yet 40% say they would be interested in banking tools that use AI to deliver personalized financial or borrowing insights.

Consumers remain strong supporters of small businesses, but goodwill has limits when economic anxiety is running high.

96% of consumers say supporting small businesses is personally important to them, and 83% made at least one small business purchase in the past 30 days. When small businesses raise prices due to factors outside their control, 78% are understanding. This goodwill operates inside a cautious economic mood. 54% of consumers are concerned about the U.S. economy over the next 12 months, compared with just 32% who are confident.

Consumer Support for Small Businesses

Consumers remain strong supporters, despite economic concerns.





Appendix

Methodology

First Internet Bank commissioned two independent surveys. The small business survey was conducted by Centiment among 200 U.S. small business owners with annual revenue under \$5 million. The consumer survey was conducted by Dynata among a nationally representative sample of 1,000 U.S. adults. Both surveys were fielded in March 2026.

U.S. Small Business Owner Survey

1. How prepared is your business to absorb financial shocks such as rising costs, slower demand, or delayed payments over the next 12 months?
 - a. Extremely prepared — 9%
 - b. Very prepared — 24%
 - c. Somewhat prepared — 43%
 - d. Not very prepared — 19%
 - e. Not prepared at all — 5%

2. Which financial pressures pose the greatest risk to your business over the next 12 months? (Select up to two)
 - a. Cash flow volatility — 20%
 - b. Inflation/rising costs — 46%
 - c. Access to capital — 7%
 - d. Customer demand — 34%
 - e. Labor costs — 12%
 - f. Supply chain disruptions — 14%
 - g. Debt repayment — 7%
 - h. Regulatory or tax changes — 7%
 - i. None of the above — our financial position is stable and well managed — 10%

3. How well does your primary bank's digital experience meet the needs of your business today? (e.g., online banking, mobile access, loan portals, payment options?)
 - a. Very satisfied — 41%
 - b. Somewhat satisfied — 35%
 - c. Neutral — 19%
 - d. Somewhat dissatisfied — 3%
 - e. Very dissatisfied — 2%

4. Which digital banking or financial tools are essential to running your business today? (Select all that apply)
 - a. Mobile banking — 73%
 - b. Real-time payment processing — 60%



- c. Cash flow forecasting tools — 22%
 - d. Automated invoicing — 21%
 - e. Fraud monitoring alerts — 49%
 - f. AI-driven insights — 12%
5. Where do you feel your bank could better support your business over the next 12–18 months? (Select up to two)
- a. Guidance on improving cash flow and financial planning — 12%
 - b. Faster access to working capital or a line of credit — 24%
 - c. Help navigating SBA loan options — 21%
 - d. Better digital tools for payments, invoicing, or reporting — 15%
 - e. Fraud prevention and security tools — 15%
 - f. Advice on managing rising costs (inflation, tariffs, supplier changes) — 15%
 - g. I don't expect additional support from my bank — 38%
6. What do you see as the biggest advantage of working with a digital-first banking provider?
- a. Convenience — 36%
 - b. Faster funding — 9%
 - c. Lower fees — 21%
 - d. Easier application process — 3%
 - e. Better technology — 7%
 - f. 24/7 access — 24%
7. How, if at all, is your business currently using artificial Intelligence (AI) or automation tools?
- a. AI is integrated into multiple parts of our business — 13%
 - b. We are using AI in limited ways — 28%
 - c. We are not currently live with AI, but we are actively exploring or planning to adopt AI — 11%
 - d. No, we are not currently using AI — 42%
 - e. Not sure what qualifies as AI in our business — 6%
8. How interested would you be in banking tools that use AI to provide personalized financial or borrowing insights?
- a. Very interested — 16%
 - b. Somewhat interested — 24%
 - c. Neutral — 27%
 - d. Not very interested — 12%
 - e. Not interested — 21%
9. When making important financial decisions, which sources do you rely on most for guidance? (Select up to two)
- a. My bank or financial institution — 29%
 - b. My accountant/bookkeeper — 28%
 - c. Other small business owners — 23%
 - d. Online research (articles, videos, forums) — 36%



- e. Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) — 9%
 - f. A business coach or consultant — 11%
 - g. Family or friends — 23%
10. As you look toward 2026, how do you expect your business to change?
- a. Planning to expand significantly — 9%
 - b. Planning moderate growth — 38%
 - c. Maintaining current size — 38%
 - d. Preparing to scale back — 6%
 - e. Unsure — 9%
11. Have tariffs or trade-related policies impacted your business in the past 12 months?
- a. Yes, significantly — 11%
 - b. Yes, somewhat — 24%
 - c. No noticeable impact — 56%
 - d. Not sure — 9%
12. In what ways, if any, have tariffs or trade policies affected your business? (Select up to two)
- a. Increased cost of goods or materials — 29%
 - b. Supply chain delays — 13%
 - c. Reduced profit margins — 21%
 - d. Passed higher costs to customers — 22%
 - e. Sought new suppliers (domestic or international) — 7%
 - f. No impact — 49%
13. How has your business responded to rising input costs such as materials, inventory, or shipping, if applicable?
- a. Increased prices significantly — 11%
 - b. Increased prices slightly — 40%
 - c. Absorbed costs without raising prices/reducing margins — 23%
 - d. Have not experienced rising costs — 26%

U.S. Consumer Survey

14. How important is it to you personally to support small businesses in your community?
- a. Extremely important — 25%
 - b. Very important — 42%
 - c. Somewhat important — 29%
 - d. Not very important — 3%
 - e. Not important at all — 2%
15. In the past 30 days, how often have you made a purchase from a small business (online or in person)?
- a. Multiple times per week — 13%
 - b. About once per week — 24%
 - c. 2-3 times this month — 26%
 - d. Once this month — 19%

- e. Not in the past 30 days — 17%
16. When shopping at a small business, how willing are you to pay slightly more compared to large retailers?
- a. Very willing — I expect to pay more at small businesses — 19%
 - b. Somewhat willing — I'll pay a little more depending on the situation — 49%
 - c. Neutral — price matters about the same — 21%
 - d. Not very willing — price usually drives my decision — 7%
 - e. Not willing at all — I choose the lowest price regardless — 4%
17. If a small business raised prices due to higher costs outside its control, how understanding would you be?
- a. Very understanding — 30%
 - b. Somewhat understanding — 48%
 - c. Neutral — 17%
 - d. Somewhat less understanding — 3%
 - e. Not understanding at all — 2%
18. Have you ever decided not to complete a purchase from a small business because it didn't offer your preferred payment method?
- a. Yes — 19%
 - b. No — 73%
 - c. Not sure — 8%
19. Which payment methods do you expect a small business to offer today? (Select all that apply)
- a. Credit/debit card — 95%
 - b. Tap-to-pay — 48%
 - c. Buy Now, Pay Later (Affirm, Klarna, etc.) — 10%
 - d. Cash — 81%
 - e. Venmo/Zelle — 23%
 - f. Other — 2%
20. How does the availability of modern digital payment options affect your likelihood of shopping at a small business?
- a. Much more likely — 18%
 - b. Somewhat more likely — 27%
 - c. No difference — 53%
 - d. Somewhat less likely — 2%
 - e. Much less likely — 1%
21. Would a small business's use of AI tools (such as faster support or personalized offers) make you more or less likely to shop there?
- a. Much more likely — 10%
 - b. Somewhat more likely — 18%
 - c. No difference — 58%
 - d. Somewhat less likely — 8%



- e. Much less likely — 7%
22. How comfortable are you with small businesses using AI tools that analyze your purchase history or preferences to personalize recommendations or offers?
- a. Very comfortable — 15%
 - b. Somewhat comfortable — 22%
 - c. Neutral — 31%
 - d. Somewhat uncomfortable — 20%
 - e. Very uncomfortable — 12%
23. How confident are you in the overall U.S. economy over the next 12 months?
- a. Very confident — 11%
 - b. Somewhat confident — 21%
 - c. Neutral — 13%
 - d. Somewhat concerned — 23%
 - e. Very concerned — 31%
 - f. Not sure — 1%

