



## Global Business Optimism Continues to Decline Given Trade Policy Uncertainties and Elevated Interest Rates, Dun & Bradstreet Survey of 10,000 Business Leaders Shows

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*Businesses face increased risks amid geopolitical tensions and economic challenges, impacting investment outlook*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Apr. 9, 2025-- Dun & Bradstreet (NYSE:DNB), a leading global provider of business data and analytics, today released its quarterly 2025 Global Business Optimism Insights report, revealing a 1.3% quarter-over-quarter decline in business optimism, following a sharp 12.9% drop seen in the prior quarter. Persistent global economic uncertainty and rising trade protectionism continue to dampen global business sentiment.

While financial confidence dropped 8.6% amid challenging business conditions, optimism levels for supply chain continuity were flat. Further, investment optimism declined reflecting continued uncertainty over the pace of rate cuts in 2025.

"In the face of macroeconomic uncertainty, rising capital costs, and a weakening growth forecast, businesses remain apprehensive about the global economic landscape and cautious about investment," said Neeraj Sahai, President of Dun & Bradstreet International. "The reshaping of trade relationships and tariff uncertainty contributed to over 90% of the economies surveyed reporting a decline in their financial confidence index, in both emerging and advanced economies. Cost expectations remain elevated, especially in the economies most exposed to tariff hikes."

Export-driven sectors such as automotives, electricals, and metals saw sharp declines in business optimism, particularly in the U.S., Mexico, South Korea, and Japan, where rising tariffs and shifting trade policies have resulted in cost pressures and demand volatility. Financial risk perceptions remain elevated as businesses continue to deal with high borrowing costs amid tightening liquidity conditions and persistent inflation expectations. Globally, the perception of financial risk on business balance sheets has increased, with optimism levels falling 6% quarter-over-quarter.

### Key findings from the Q2 2025 report:

- **The Global Business Optimism Index further declined 1.3%, following a sharp 12.9% decline in the prior quarter.** Sentiment across emerging economies held steady, with the decline driven by advanced economies where optimism fell 1.7%. However, a resurgence of inflation is viewed as being disruptive, with 86% reporting it would significantly affect operations.
  - Tighter domestic monetary policy is seen as a significant risk by businesses globally, with 70% considering it highly probable and 83% expecting a material impact.
- **The Global Supply Chain Continuity Index remained flat following a sharp decline of 10.7% last quarter.** The overall stagnant optimism is attributable to the persistent supply chain disruptions, labor shortages, the ongoing challenges of adjusting to evolving global trade dynamics, and heightened tensions surrounding U.S. tariffs.
  - Globally, there is a noticeable drop in optimism about delivery lead time, which declined 7.8% quarter-over-quarter with the fall slightly larger at 9.5% for advanced economies.
- **The Global Business Financial Confidence Index declined 8.6%, reflecting a business landscape clouded by macroeconomic uncertainty, the ongoing high cost of capital, a softening growth outlook, and the reshaping of trade relationships.**
  - Confidence declined across all business sizes, with large businesses being the most impacted. U.S. businesses particularly cite the potential impact of an inflation resurgence and tighter domestic monetary policy as top risks.
- **The Global Business Investment Confidence Index fell by 0.6%, reflecting increased uncertainty around the pace of interest rate cuts in 2025.**
  - 69% of businesses reported optimism for capital expenditures, a fall from 77% in last quarter and 84% in Q4 2024. This drop off in confidence is largest for the metals and mining manufacturing sectors, which are the most exposed to the U.S. aluminum and steel tariffs.
- **The Global Business ESG Index declined 3.3%, marking the first drop after three consecutive quarters of growth, a result of declining engagement in social and governance initiatives.**
  - While 77% view climate change and environmental risks as significant, only 58% believe they are highly probable.

"The prospect of a resurgence of inflation given higher import tariffs has tempered expectations for the scale of interest rate cuts,

which will likely restrict business investment and can have broader effects on upcoming economic cycles,” said Arun Singh, Global Chief Economist at Dun & Bradstreet. “The challenges global businesses are facing continue to hinder recoveries and weaken financial resilience, particularly within large businesses – which reported a greater decline in financial confidence. While economic conditions are expected to improve slightly, the impact on businesses will be delayed, increasing the strain on their balance sheets this year.”

Descriptions and information about the indices can be found on page 28 of the report.

#### **About the Global Business Optimism Insights Report**

The Global Business Optimism Insights report is a synthesis of data from a comprehensive survey encompassing 32 economies, covering approximately 10,000 businesses and 17 sectors, alongside insights from Dun & Bradstreet, leveraging the firm’s proprietary data and economic expertise. The report is an amalgamation of five indices which reflect overall business optimism and expectations about supply chain continuity, financial and investment conditions and ESG initiatives. An index reading above 100 indicates an improvement in optimism relative to the base year, while an index reading below 100 signifies a deterioration in optimism.

View the full report [here](#).

#### **About Dun & Bradstreet**

Dun & Bradstreet, a leading global provider of business decisioning data and analytics, enables companies around the world to improve their business performance. Dun & Bradstreet’s Data Cloud fuels solutions and delivers insights that empower customers to accelerate revenue, lower cost, mitigate risk, and transform their businesses. Since 1841, companies of every size have relied on Dun & Bradstreet to help them manage risk and reveal opportunity. For more information on Dun & Bradstreet, please visit [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com).

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