



A Mild March: The CBIZ Small Business Employment Index Inches Up

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- Small Business Owners Are Only Growing Workforces as Necessary -

CLEVELAND--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Apr. 1, 2016-- The [CBIZ](#) Small Business Employment Index (SBEI), a barometer for hiring trends that surveys labor data from over 4,000 companies employing 300 or fewer people, revealed a second consecutive month of mild progress as it printed a positive 0.54 percent advance during the month of March. This follows a 0.09 percent month-over-month rise in employee headcounts [for February](#).

"While positive, this is still a rather mild reading given the historical March readings of the SBEI. In fact, a seasonally adjusted March reading would translate to a negative 0.49 percent tally. As we sift through the country's leading economic indicators, it's a positive that key metrics are finding support levels or growing, but few seem to be recognizing or even anticipating notable levels of growth, at least not yet," says Philip Noftsinger, president of CBIZ Employee Services Organization.

Wednesday's jobs report from payroll processor ADP and Moody's Analytics revealed that businesses added 200,000 new hires versus the 195,000 expected for March. February's revised total equaled 205,000 jobs from the 214,000 previously announced.

Additional takeaways from the March SBEI include:

- **March snapshot:** When compared to February's Index, 27.4 percent of companies included in the SBEI increased payroll commitments during March and 20.6 percent decreased their workforces. 52 percent of the small businesses in the Index made no change to their employee totals.
- **What industries should we be watching?** For March, Entertainment was the leading industry in job gains, followed by Education, Construction, and Retail Trade. Entertainment and Education have enjoyed two consecutive months of growth. Meanwhile, Manufacturing and Life Sciences were the largest declines in employment this period.
- **Geographical Hiring:** Following a poor showing during February, the Northeast led the country's regions in hiring to fill business demand followed by the Central region and the West. The Southeast region, which gained in employment for February, retreated during March.
- **What's next?** Our economy, broadly, seems to be idling in a holding pattern as the global economy and its struggles dictate broad economic policies, business conditions and outcomes. While fears of a potential domestic recession may have eased, heightened awareness to the Fed's language and potential actions remains high.

Noftsinger adds, "As the economy continues to fight domestic and global headwinds, we will continue to see small business owners respond only to what they need, rather than take larger risks anticipating new growth."

CBIZ Payroll Services manages payroll services for more than 4,000 businesses. Its index reflects a broad array of industries and geographies corresponding to the markets across the U.S., where CBIZ provides human capital services. The data represented by the SBEI is derived from a segment of employers not completely accounted for by the ADP and Federal BLS employment reports.

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