

Employer & Candidate Mismatch...



“
**CONFIDENCE
RISES**
*...noted
improvements*

“
**INFLATION
WOES**
*...continued
worry*

“
**CASH
FLOW**
*...belt
tightening*

“
**TAXATION
FEARS**
*...will we see
taxes rise*

Employer vs Candidate

As the economy bites and more are looking for work will candidate demands lessen?

Though the vast majority of jobs posted are for full time set hour roles many candidates are looking for part-time or flexi working, causing issues for employers.

We are starting to see a slight shift to more part-time roles being on offer, which may go some way to reducing the mismatch.

“ Will automation and AI be needed to fill the skills gaps... ”

Employers are still seeing candidates with high expectations, often way above their skills set and experience levels. Work ethic and poor soft skills are still high on the list of negatives articulated by employers. Pressure for higher wages, greater flexibility and other benefits continue.



We want to hear your views...

Each quarter Shropshire Chamber takes part in the British Chambers of Commerce national economic survey. In this report, you will see the results for Shropshire, trending from as far back as 2009. If you and your company would like to take part in these surveys, please contact policy@shropshire-chamber.co.uk giving your name, company name and the email to which invitations should be sent.

Please note this is only open to businesses in **Shropshire** and **Telford & Wrekin**, and Chamber Membership is not required to take part. Those in neighbouring counties should approach the British Chambers of Commerce to locate their nearest BCC Accredited Chamber.

This survey is open to businesses from all sectors including public sector and the third sector. The survey is open to any size of business from micro's, who employ no staff, to the very largest businesses. The data is used both locally and nationally to lobby those in power on the main topics of concern. The national survey is highly respected and is used by Central Government and the Bank of England to understand the economic situation and pressures facing businesses in the UK.

The greater our business voice, the more valuable the information becomes, so we want to encourage every business, Chamber member or not, to add their voice to this vital survey.

DOMESTIC (UK) SALES
INCREASES

UK Sales Past:

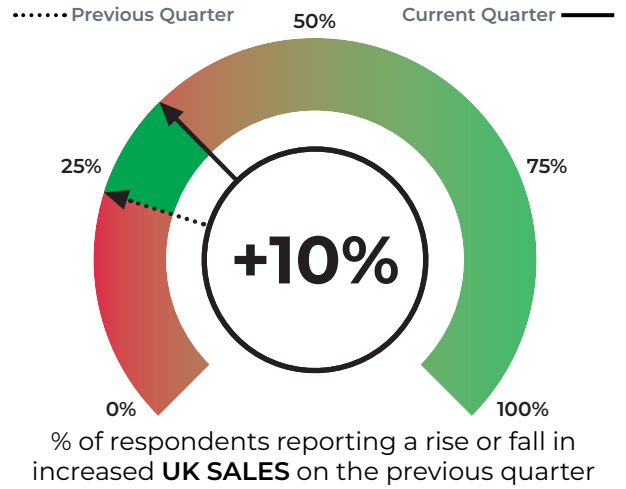
"We had a strong Q4 of 2023 but Q1 of 2024 has started slowly. We are looking to develop new customers to achieve growth, but our existing customers are slow this year so far."

Retail / Wholesale Sector

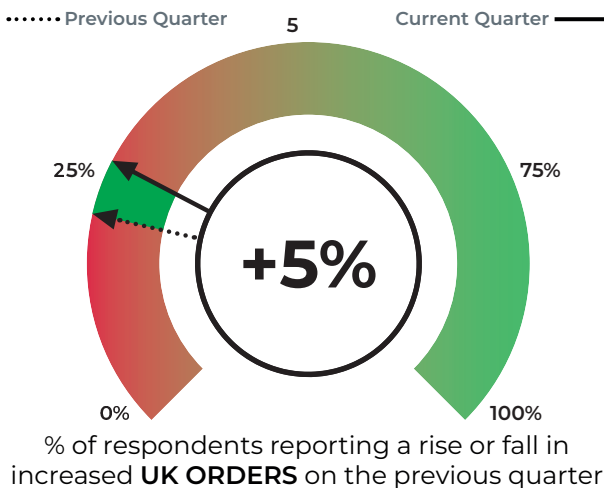
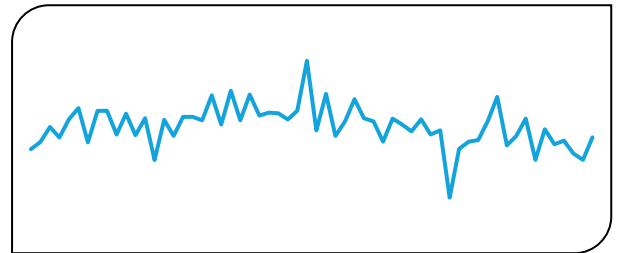
"We spend more time trying to get business and the customer commitment with lots of pre sales work."

Professional Services Sector

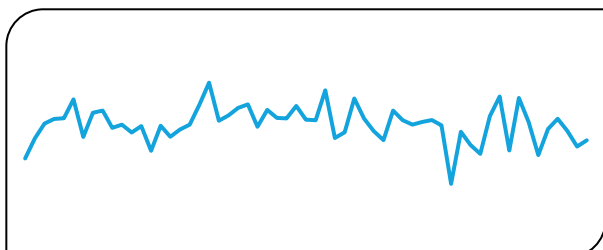
Over 40% said sales remained static.



2009 UK Sales Past 2024



2009 UK Sales Future 2024



UK Sales Future:

"There is still a huge amount of uncertainty out there - exacerbated by the political situation and upcoming general election, making trade uncertain."

Marketing / Media Sector

"We have had to increase marketing spend substantially to maintain income levels. This is evidence of underlying structural problems in the economy."

Professional Services Sector

54% expect no change in sales levels looking forward.

EXPORT SALES

INCREASES

Export Sales Past:

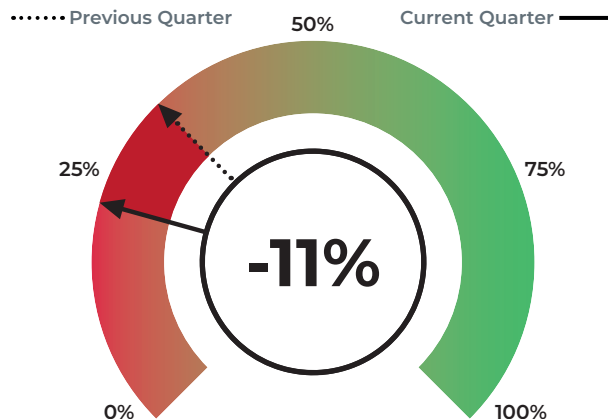
“Export - US sales are okay, but European sales are down.”

Manufacturing Sector

“Brexit is still making it hard to sell to Europe, been so long now cannot see this ever recovering.”

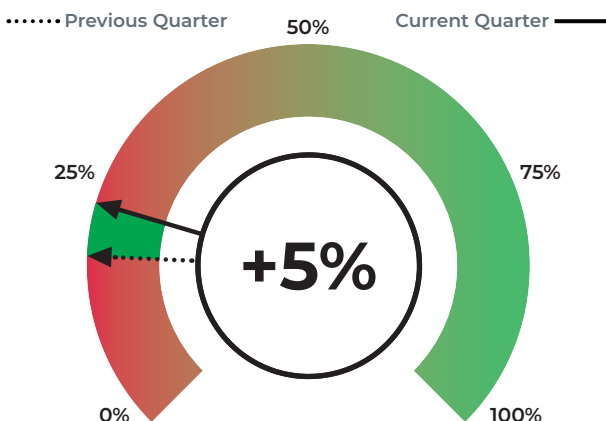
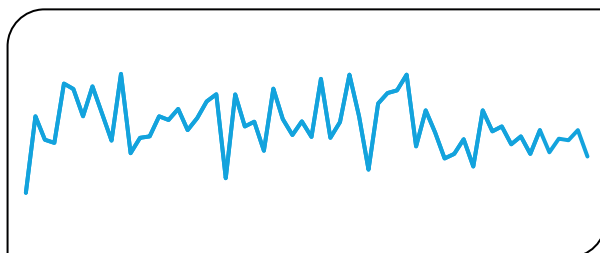
Manufacturing Sector

Quarter of exports saw a decline in sales over the past three months.



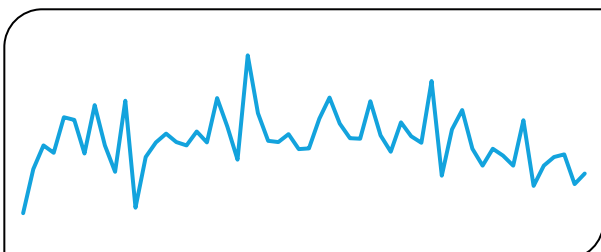
% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **EXPORT SALES** on the previous quarter

2009 Export Sales Past 2024



% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **EXPORT ORDERS** on the previous quarter

2009 Export Sales Future 2024



Export Sales Future:

“Export and Future Export - it has become far more challenging to export, with extra costs and red tape. UK Sales & Future Sales - The Cost of Living crisis and the impact felt by the Pub Trade nationwide, with unprecedented closures has reduced the market size for us, as such remaining consistent is seen as market share growth, but ever more competitive.”

Manufacturing Sector

52% expect their export future sales (next three months) to remain the same.

WORKFORCE PAST & FUTURE

INCREASES

Workforce Past:

“Recruitment has been and still is, very difficult in our area of the County. As a result, we are upskilling the existing workforce and investing in greater levels of automation in order to increase productivity.”

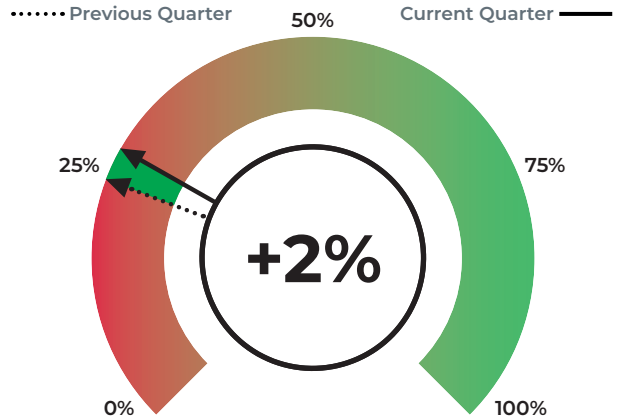
Manufacturing Sector

“Struggling to recruit legal secretaries, solicitors and accountants.”

Professional Services Sector

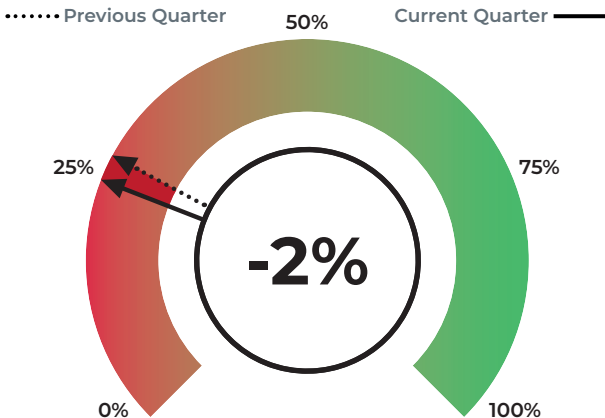
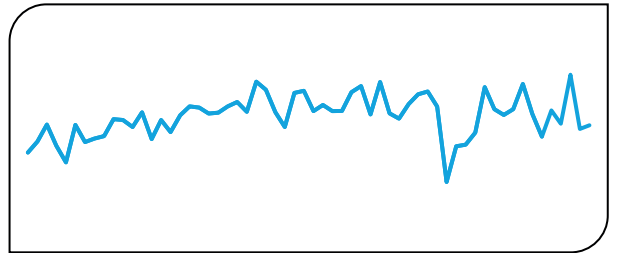
“Reliability and work ethic deteriorates year on year.”

Marketing / Media Sector



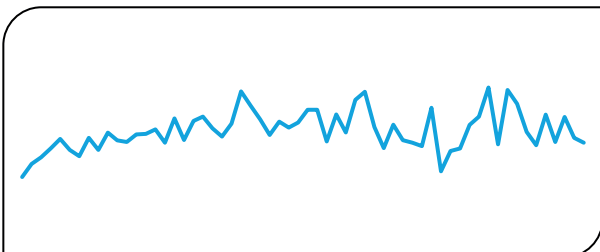
% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in **WORKFORCE** numbers on the previous quarter

2009 **Workforce Past** 2024



% of respondents expecting a rise or fall in **WORKFORCE** numbers on the previous quarter

2009 **Workforce Future** 2024



Workforce Future:

“Finding and retaining sales staff with good Shropshire knowledge has been a huge challenge in recent years, and remains so.”

Marketing / Media Sector

“Recruitment for skilled labour is very difficult, we need to attract more foreign labour again.”

Retail / Wholesale Sector

“Lots of applicants applying from overseas hoping roles are 100% remote (they aren't!).”

Professional Services Sector

SKILLS & RECRUITMENT

Companies Recruiting:

2017 Recruited Faced Difficulties **2024**

“It seems to take at least 12 - 18 months before School / College / University applicants grasp the work ethic.”
Marketing / Media Sector

“We have to be very careful on our costs at the moment in an ever more competitive and shrinking market, therefore any recruitment has to be very carefully considered, as such I don’t envisage any employment growth, unless we gain a significant amount of business.”
Manufacturing Sector

“Lack of clear communication skills. Over-ambitious with limited experience.”
Professional Services Sector



Staff Types:

2017 Part-Time Full-Time Temporary Permanent **2024**

“We need staff skilled in leadership, time management & sales.”
Retail / Wholesale Sector

“The issue is not so much specific skills, as ability with those skills!”
Public Sector

“We need people who have a good knowledge of the county. Hard to find or retain.”
Marketing / Media Sector

Post Types:

2017 Clerical Professional - Managerial Skilled Manual-Technical Semi-Skilled & Unskilled **2024**

“Fuel and travel costs are a factor for staff requesting to work from home.”
Marketing / Media Sector

“We have started to employ people from further afield in order to get the skills we need.”
Marketing / Media Sector

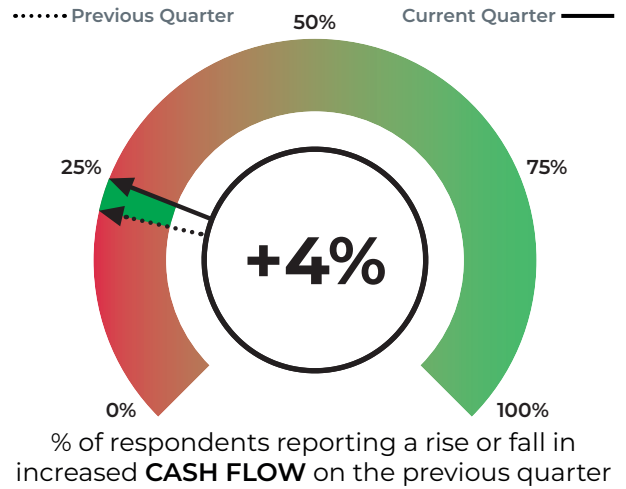
CASH FLOW INCREASES

Cash Flow:

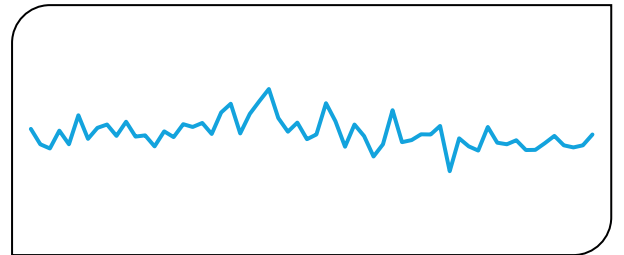
“Essentially the same despite a slight rise in order levels.”
Manufacturing Sector

“Cash Flow - Is a big concern due to late payments from suppliers we had to make some very uncomfortable decisions in the last 3 months.”
Professional Services Sector

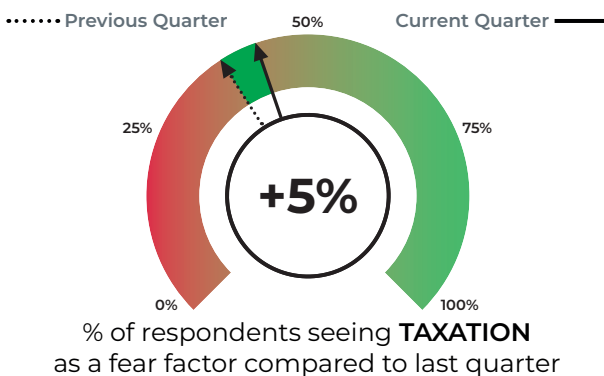
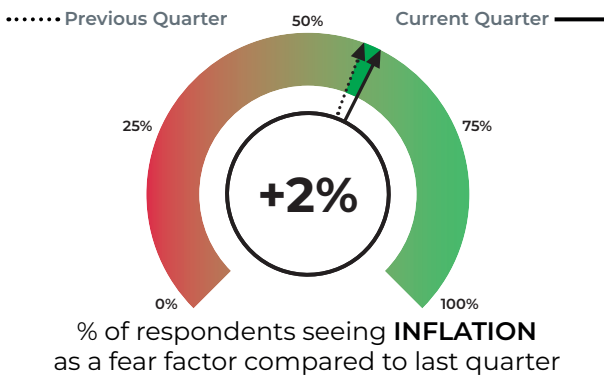
37% said their cash flow had decreased over the past three months.



2009 Cash Flow 2024



FEAR FACTORS



Fear Factors:

“Interest rates affect what my customers will pay and inflation reduces their margins.”
Professional Services Sector

“The cost of living crisis is impacting all our customer base. There is less demand from consumers who have less disposable income. If the government do not get inflation under control this will be a serious situation.”
Retail / Wholesale Sector

“Increase in taxes is extremely unfair on small growing businesses.”
Professional Services Sector

INVESTMENT INCREASES

Plant & Machinery:

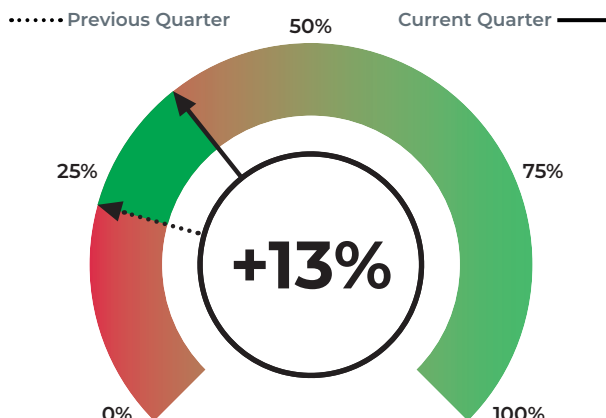
"We recently completed a purchase of some important equipment to help us diversify our product range."

Manufacturing Sector

"We continue to invest in more equipment to increase productivity."

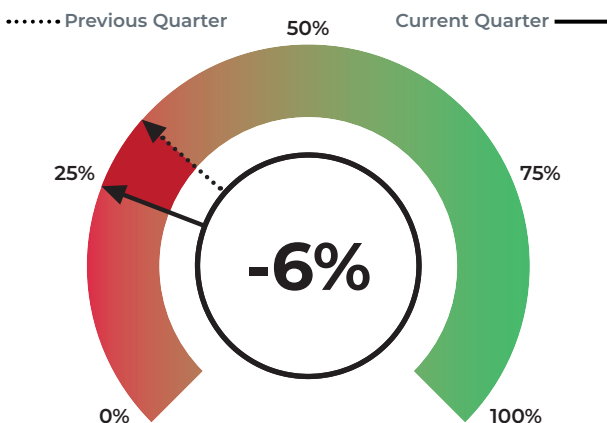
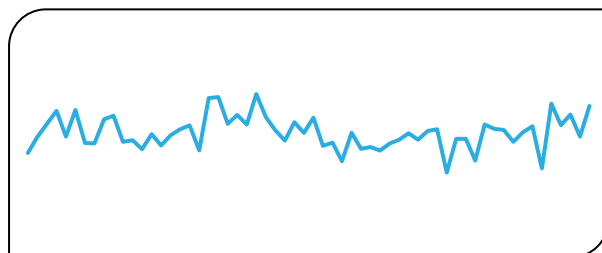
Manufacturing Sector

23% said they had decreased plans for spend on plant & machinery.



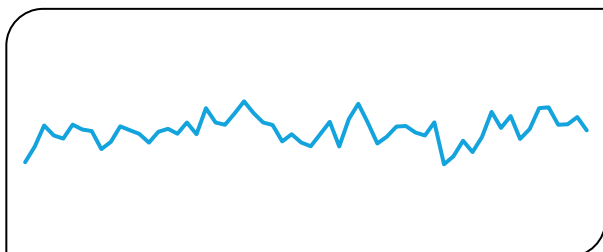
% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **P&M INVESTMENT** on the previous quarter

2009 **Plant & Machinery** 2024



% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **TRAINING INVESTMENT** on the previous quarter

2009 **Training** 2024



Training:

"Training, CIS cards, Mental Health Training, Health & Safety Training are what we have undertaken using courses on line for all staff."

Consumer Services Sector

"We have recently completed Equality and Diversity Training with our entire workforce as part of our commitment to our employees to create a safe and happy workplace."

Manufacturing Sector

54% stated they had not changed their plans for the level of training they would provide to their workforce.

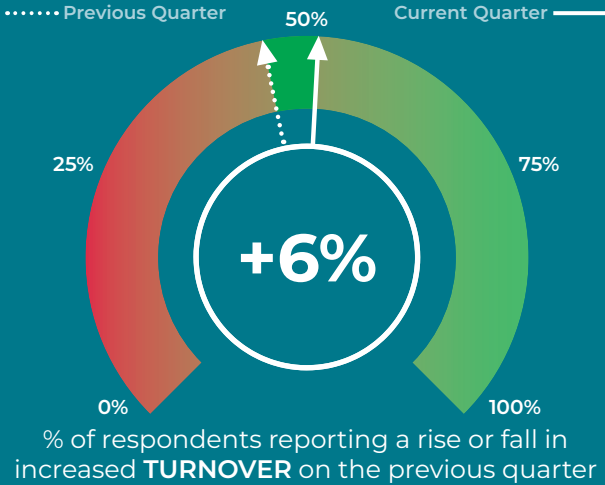
CONFIDENCE INCREASES

Turnover Confidence:

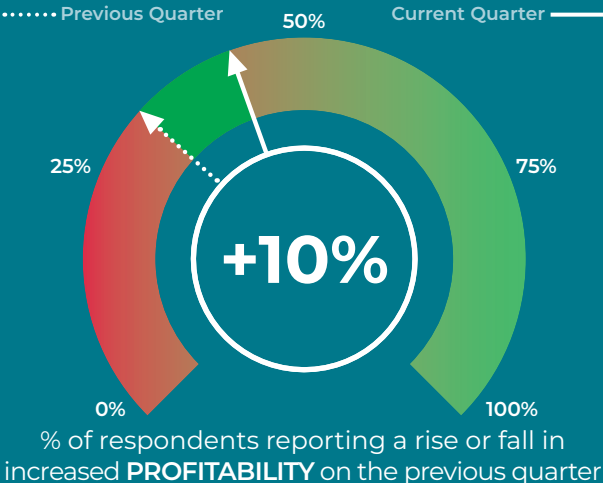
“Relative reduction in revenue = reduced cashflow.”
Public Sector

“As demand lowers, competitors reduce their prices and we have to remain competitive as a challenger brand.”
Retail / Wholesale Sector

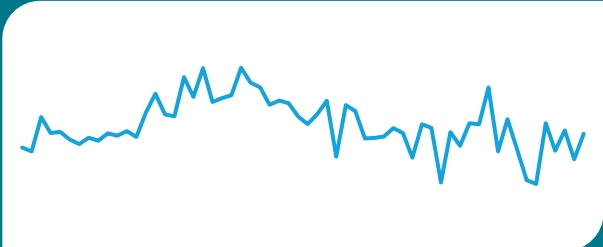
“We are spending more time than ever before chasing late payment.”
Marketing / Media Sector



2009 Turnover 2024



2009 Profitability 2024



Profitability Confidence:

“Just completed a round of price rises, some raw materials are however very volatile on the open market.”
Service Sector

“Impact of NMW increases will affect our profitability.”
Professional Services Sector

“Although income has gone up this is only in line with outgoings, so seen a small increase in net profit none of which has come from local sources.”
Service Sector

CAPACITY | PRICE vs COST

Capacity:

“Investments in new equipment have increased our capacity significantly but only part of this has been absorbed by increased orders so far.”

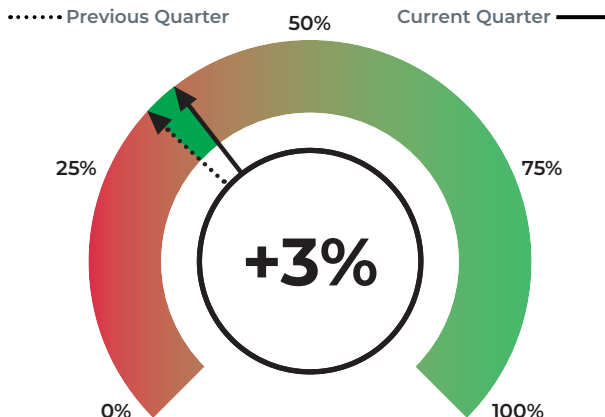
Manufacturing Sector

“In need of more admin staff to increase capacity.”

Consumer Services Sector

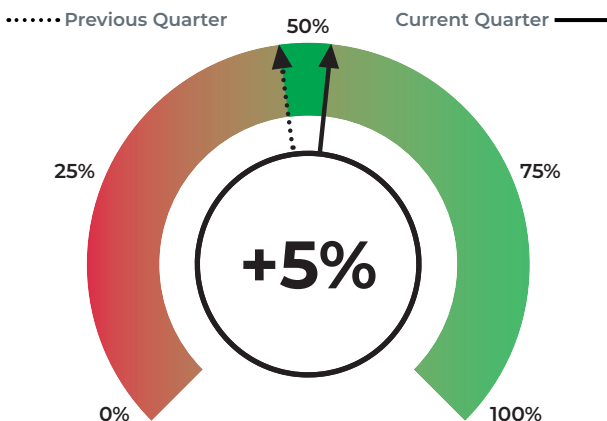
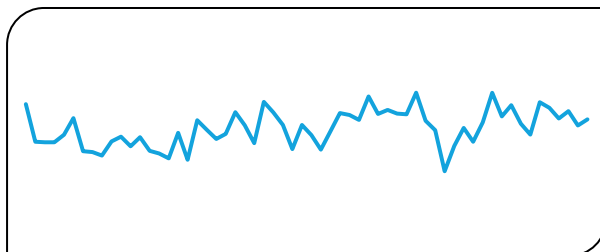
“Full at the moment, but if we get investment, we will increase capacity.”

Service Sector



% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in **FULL CAPACITY WORKING** on the previous quarter

2009 Full Capacity 2024



% of respondents expecting to **INCREASE PRICES** compared to the previous quarter



Price vs Cost:

“The Red Sea situation isn’t helping due to increased insurance and/or freight costs. Also, minimum wage increases, fuel prices and increases in hybrid car costs are not helping with overall cost control.”

Manufacturing Sector

“A complete price increase of all products and service being implemented April 1st to try and absorb increase in NMW and salaries.”

Hospitality Sector

Still the majority say they expect to increase prices to compensate for overhead increases.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Business Pressures:

1

Are you having to offer higher wages to attract new staff?

2

As a result of higher cost do you anticipate having to lay off any staff?

3

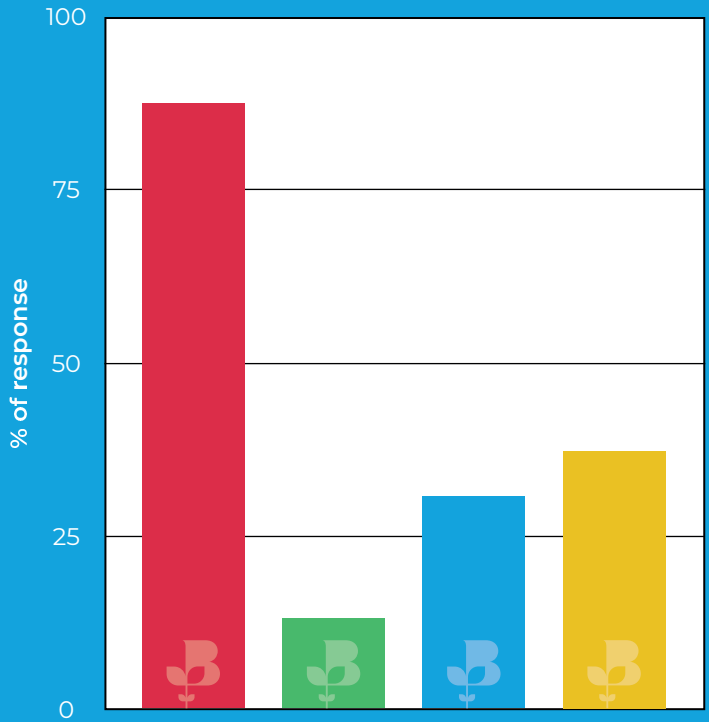
Are your credit terms getting worse?

4

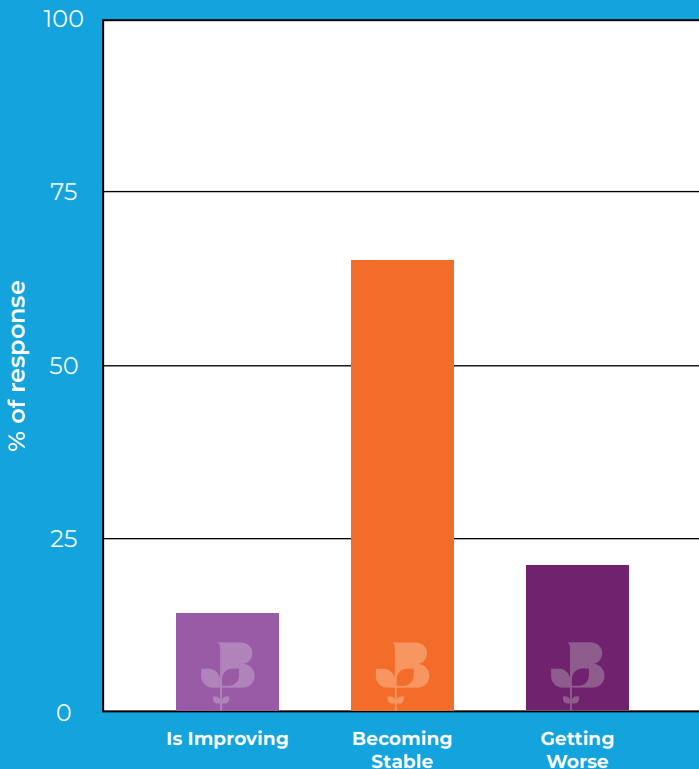
Are bad debts increasing?

Graph shows the use who said YES to each question

YES to



Graph shows the responses regarding the current Supply Chain situation



Supply Chain:

"Things were slightly improving until the Red Sea attacks took hold. Might I suggest a rather bigger more powerful Navy to combat these sorts of incidents."

Manufacturing Sector

"Product price increases and air freight costs affecting supply chain."

Service Sector

65% feel their supply chain is stable.

your voice MATTERS!

The greater the voice, the greater the influence we can have to support you

- ✓ Confidential
- ✓ Highly Respected
- ✓ Informs Government



Contact us
TODAY!

Contact policy@shropshire-chamber.co.uk
today to have your name
added to the Chamber
survey invite list

About the QES

The **Quarterly Economic Survey (QES)** is the flagship economic survey from the **British Chambers of Commerce**. **Shropshire Chamber** is responsible for the collection of data, for the survey, in both Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. The data gives Shropshire Chamber vital economic indicators, facts which are used to lobby, inform Chamber strategy, as well as to support the local business community.

The national collated data, the largest and most highly respected survey of its type, is used to inform and lobby Government departments, assist the Bank of England, and inform a wide variety of other relevant bodies and economists. The survey happens four times per year.

Every Single Business Voice Matters!

The greater the voice, the greater the influence we can have to support you and your business. **All businesses from Shropshire / Telford & Wrekin are welcome**, Chamber member or not, sole trader to multinational. It is anonymous to ensure you can speak freely.

If you would like to discuss partnering with us for the next **Quarterly Economic Survey**, please contact **Ruth Ross** on:
r.ross@shropshire-chamber.co.uk

