

2025 Business Insights

Trends Report



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About this Report

The 2025 Business Insights Trends Report by Fora Financial provides a window into how business owners are navigating today's economic landscape and strategically positioning themselves for future success.

Drawing directly from business owners, this report reveals compelling insights across critical areas including inflation response, cash flow strategies, technology adoption, and financing behaviors. These findings offer business leaders valuable perspective on both the challenges and opportunities shaping the business ecosystem in 2025.

At Fora Financial, our commitment to business success begins with understanding your unique needs and challenges.



Research Methodology

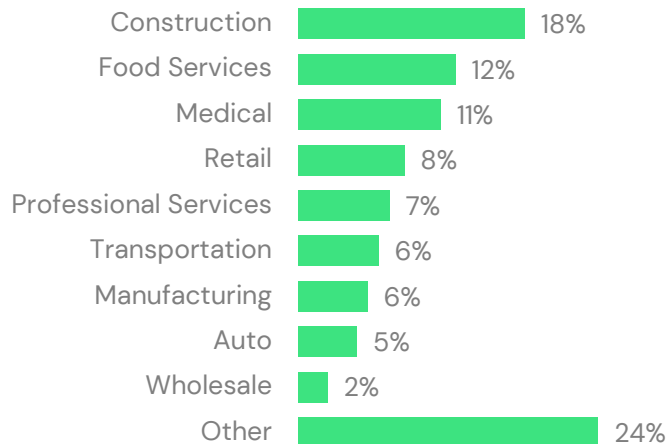
This report is based on an online survey conducted by Fora Financial among 351 of its current customers and approved merchants. The survey was fielded during March and April 2025 and participation was voluntary. Respondents received an incentive for completing the survey.

The findings reflect the perspectives of a sample of Fora Financial customers who chose to participate and may not be fully representative of the broader business population. All responses were self-reported and have not been independently verified.

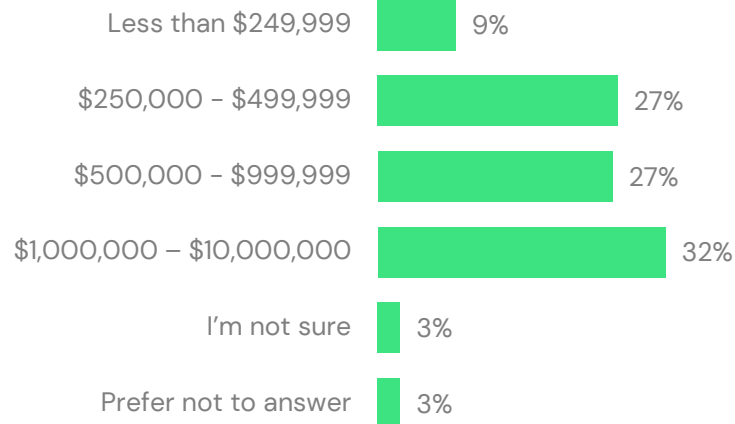
Respondent Overview:

We Surveyed 351 Fora Financial Customers

Business Industry



Business Revenue



Q: What is your business's annual revenue?

Q: Which industry does your business primarily operate in?

Key Findings



77% Expect Growth This Year

Business confidence is strong with over three quarters of owners anticipating growth.



54% Experiencing Cash Flow Issues

Despite optimism, over half of business owners continue to face cash flow challenges.



Technology is Fueling Efficiency

Business owners are leveraging technology to streamline operations and boost productivity.

2025 Business Owner Outlook

Revenue Growth is On the Horizon

More than three out of four business owners expect their revenue to grow over the next 12 months, with 21% projecting significant growth. Only 11% expect a decline, pointing to a cautiously hopeful outlook despite ongoing economic uncertainty.

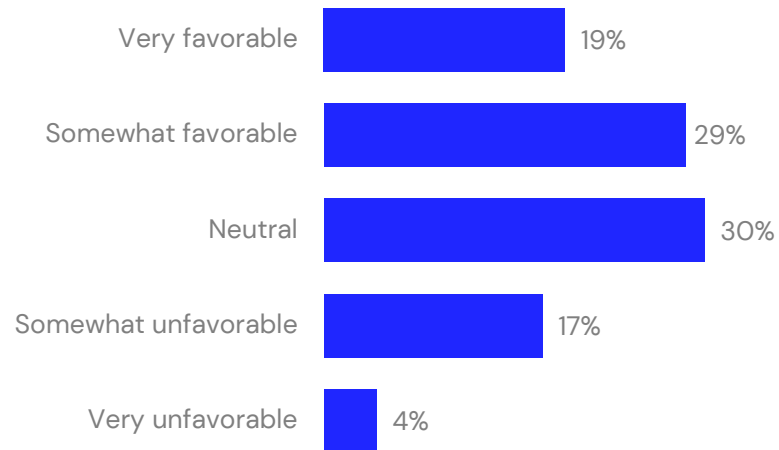


Business Owners Show Economic Resilience

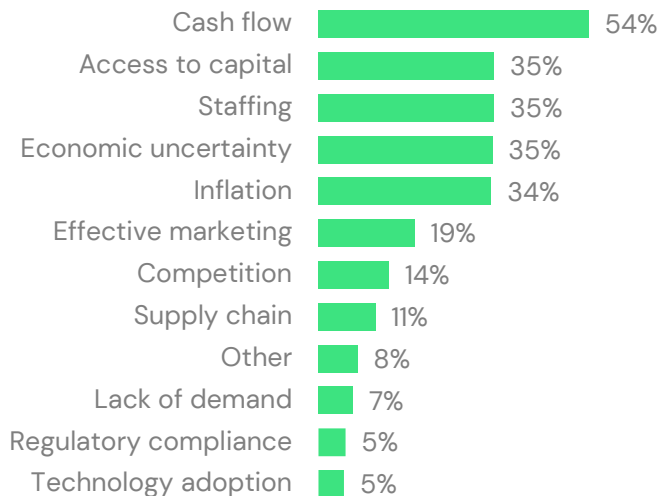
Business owners expressed remarkable optimism about broader economic conditions. Nearly 80% anticipate either neutral or favorable business conditions over the coming year. Particularly noteworthy is that just 4% expect "very unfavorable" conditions. As upcoming findings will reveal, business owners aren't simply hoping for the best, they're actively implementing strategies to navigate economic pressures and taking ownership of their path forward.

Q: How favorable do you expect economic conditions will be for businesses over the next 12 months?

Expected Economic Conditions



Top 3 Challenges Impacting Businesses



“As a small franchise owner facing tight margins and **unpredictable cash flow**, I'd benefit greatly from more flexible, relationship-based lending options—like payment terms aligned with sales cycles.

”

Cash Flow Topped the List of Business Challenges

Cash flow management emerged as the most pressing concern for business owners, with 54% identifying it among their top three challenges.

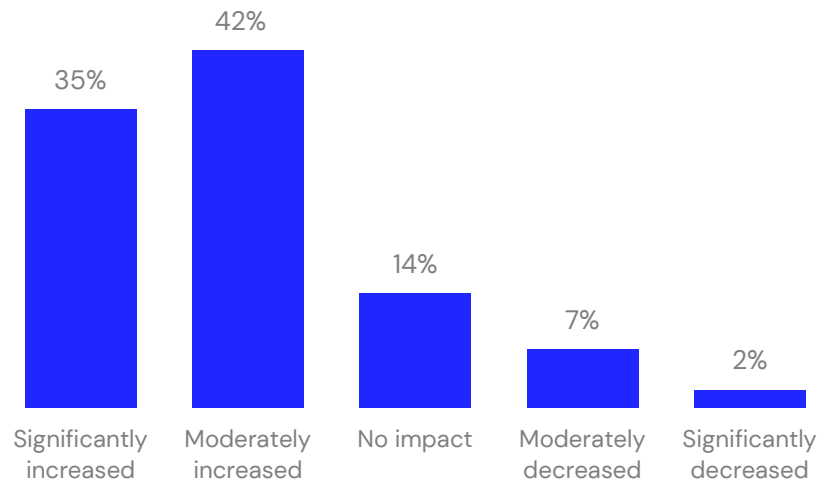
Flexible financing solutions, such as working capital loans and lines of credit, can help businesses bridge the gap between expenses and revenue, alleviating cash flow pressures and creating breathing room for operations and growth opportunities.

Inflation is Amplifying Cash Flow Pressure

For most business owners, inflation isn't just a headline, it's a daily operational challenge. Nearly 80% reported that inflation has driven up their operating costs, with over a third experiencing a significant impact. This added financial strain is putting pressure on cash flow, the primary challenge identified by respondents.

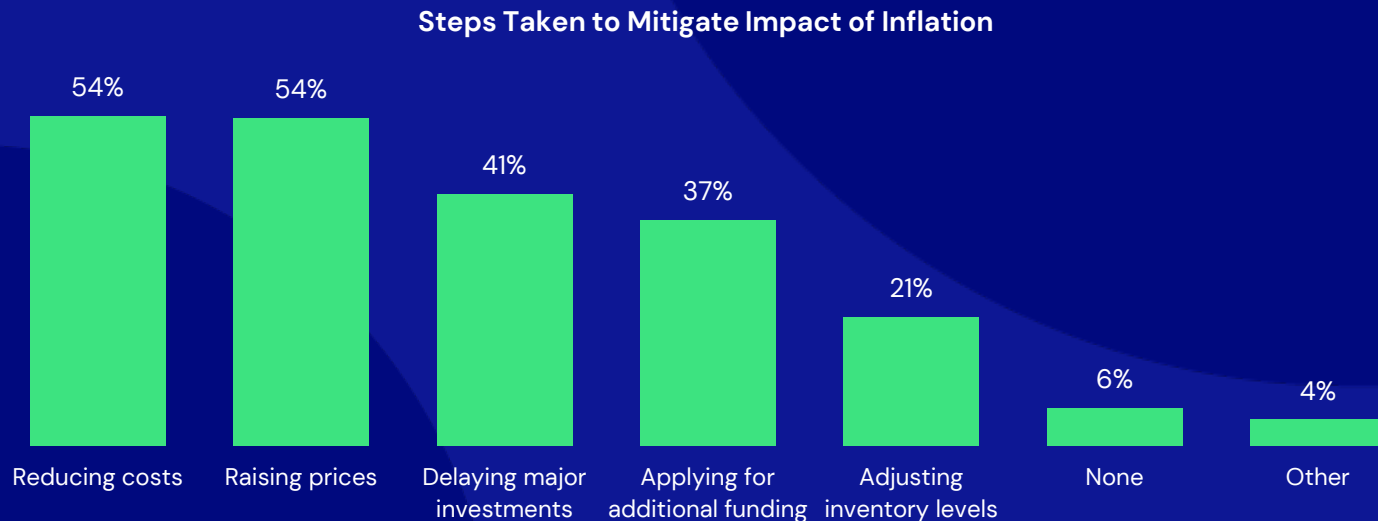
Q: To what extent has inflation impacted your business's operating costs over the past 12 months?

Impact of Inflation on Operating Costs



Businesses are Proactively Managing Inflation

In response to mounting inflation, business owners are taking action. The most common strategies include reducing operating costs (54%) and raising prices (54%), reflecting an effort to protect margins. Notably, for 37% of business owners, plans for mitigating inflation include applying for additional funding.

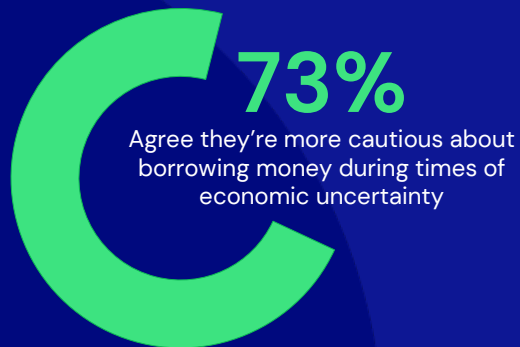


Q: What steps, if any, are you taking to mitigate the impact of inflation on your business? Select all that apply.

Economic Uncertainty is Driving Borrowing Caution

In addition to adjusting their operations, business owners are also rethinking their approach to borrowing.

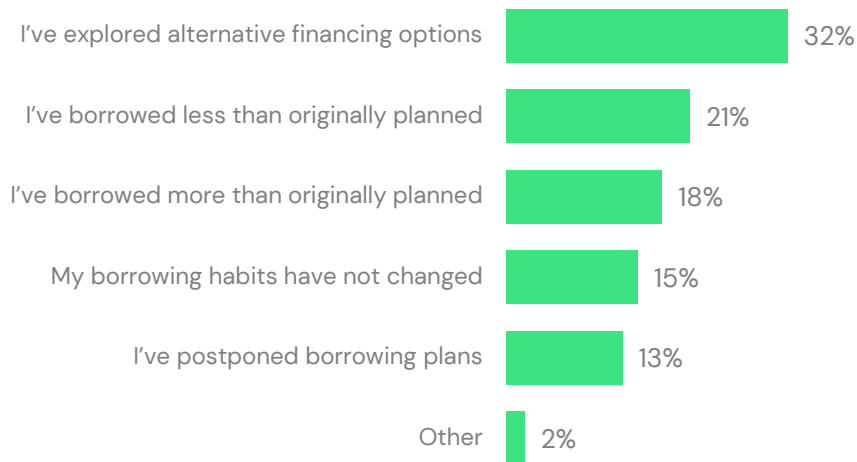
Over 70% agree or strongly agree that they're exercising more caution about borrowing money during times of economic uncertainty. This shift reflects a broader pattern seen throughout the survey: business owners are becoming increasingly selective and strategic, carefully weighing the potential costs, timing, and implications of borrowing decisions.



Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: "I'm more cautious about borrowing money for my business during times of economic uncertainty?"



Impact of Economy on Borrowing Decisions



Business Owners Are Exploring New Paths to Capital

While many business owners are more cautious about borrowing, that doesn't mean they've stopped. Instead, they're becoming more intentional in how they access capital, once again underscoring their adaptability.

The most common shift has been toward alternative financing options (32%), with some borrowing less (21%) and others borrowing more than originally planned (18%).

In today's climate, successful financing isn't one-size-fits-all solutions, it's about finding the right financial tools for the moment and staying flexible as conditions evolve.

Q: How have recent economic factors (e.g., inflation, interest rates, uncertainty) influenced your borrowing decisions over the past year?

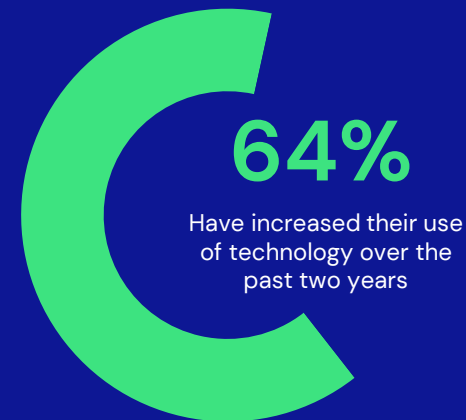
The Growing Role of Technology



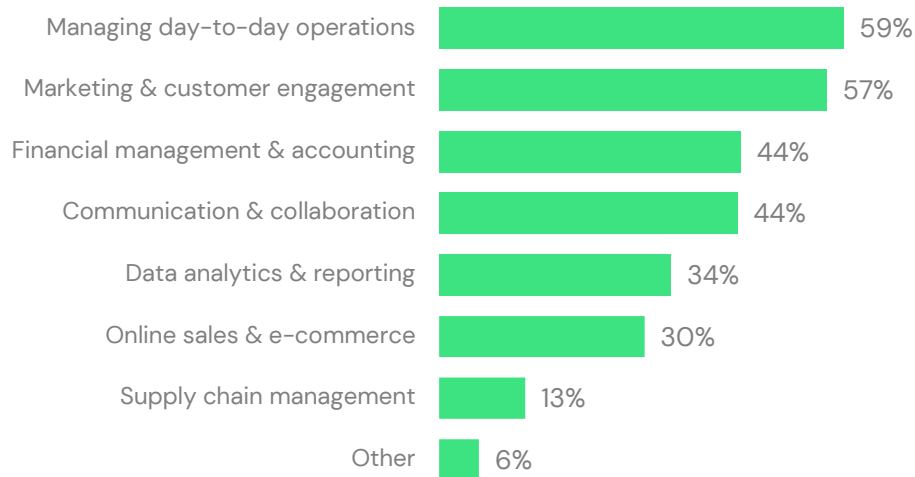
Tech Adoption is Powering Operational Efficiency

As inflation is driving up costs and margins are tightening, forward-thinking businesses are leaning into technology. Nearly two-thirds of respondents have increased their technology utilization over the past two years, a clear sign that owners are relying on digital tools to improve efficiency, streamline operations, and better serve customers.

While current economic conditions may be accelerating tech adoption, this digital transformation isn't just about short-term fixes, it reflects a commitment to building more resilient, efficient operations for the long haul.



Areas Where Technology has Increased



Operations and Marketing are Leading the Digital Shift

Among businesses that increased their use of technology, the biggest growth has occurred in managing day-to-day operations (59%) and marketing/customer engagement (57%).

While tools vary widely across industries, this might include inventory management systems, accounting software, email marketing tools, CRM platforms, and point-of-sale solutions.

For many businesses, financing can be a helpful way to cover the upfront costs of technology upgrades without straining cash flow.

Q: In which areas of your business has the role of technology increased in the past two years? Select all that apply.

The Business Financing Landscape

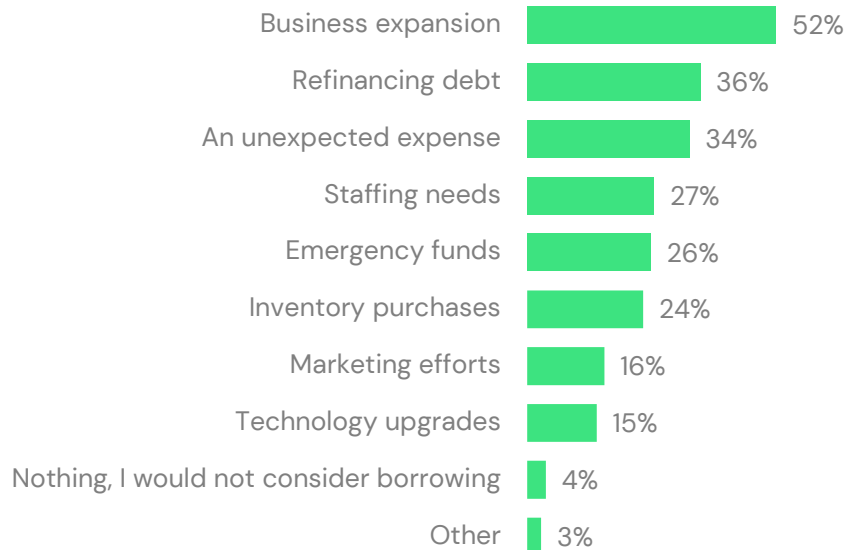
Financing as a Strategic Tool for Business Growth

Our findings showed that one-third of business owners only consider taking out financing during special or unexpected circumstances. Indicating that for many, financing is used as a strategic tool that's carefully considered in the context of growth plans and market conditions.

As shown here, business expansion is the #1 driver for borrowing money. For businesses, financing isn't only about staying afloat during challenging times, it's a launchpad for progress, helping owners to realize their vision and grow with confidence.

Q: Looking ahead to the next 12 months, what might motivate you to borrow money for your business? Select all that apply.

Motivations for Borrowing Money



NEED FUNDING?

If your business is in need of working capital,
contact us to **apply for a small business loan**
or revenue advance.

Thank you!