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j2 Global's Annual Mid-Year Small Business Report Card: How SMBs Get Work Done

More SMBs Will Take a Vacation This Year, but Nearly Two Thirds of Them Admit to Doing Work Poolside

LOS ANGELES, CA -- (Marketwired) -- 07/17/13 -- Small business owners around the country are grabbing their shades this summer as business sentiment calls for a sunny forecast for the rest of the year. The majority of those polled in a new j2 Global (NASDAQ: JCOM) survey (88 percent) are optimistic about their businesses' growth for the remainder of 2013, compared to 76 percent last year. Click [here](#) for an infographic of the survey results.

Small businesses are gaining more than just optimism this year. The annual j2 Global Small Business Mid-Year Survey, conducted by j2 Global, Inc (see description of the survey below) -- to which more than 2,500 small business owners and employees in the United States who are [eVoice®](#), [eFax®](#), and [Campaigner®](#) customers responded -- reveals additional insights into the forecast for the rest of 2013. Savvy small businesses are also gaining mobility, embracing mobile technology and [cloud services](#) to keep their businesses running. In fact, 53 percent could see themselves working *entirely* from an iPad® or tablet within the next year.

"The modern workforce is more mobile than ever. And whether it's in the office, on the train, or on the couch, small business owners are pushing forward with increasing optimism," says Mike Pugh, Vice President of Marketing for j2 Global. "Cloud and mobile solutions are a catalyst within these small businesses, allowing them to work hard, but on their own terms. Tech-savvy owners are forecasting a bright future as they lead the charge in technology adoption and push us toward a more nimble and productive mobile economy."

Vacation, Staycation, or Workcation?

Vacations are on the rise: 63 percent of those surveyed have committed to take one vacation this summer, while in a similar survey conducted by [j2 Global in 2012](#), only about half (54 percent) of small business owners planned to take a vacation. Getting away doesn't mean leaving work behind, however, as nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of those who are taking a vacation plan to bring their work along with them.

Hardest working is Generation X, with 43 percent of those ages 34-48 planning to work during vacation, compared to only 34 percent of Millennials (age 33 or younger). Boomers (ages 49-67) fall right in the middle, with 40 percent planning to work during vacation this year.

The new productivity hotspot: on a train, on a plane...

When working outside the traditional office, more than one in three (34 percent) small business owners say they're most productive while commuting to and from work -- whether their commute is in the car, bus or on a plane. That's good news for the more than one in four (27 percent) respondents who travel at least once a month for business. Outside the office, women consider downtime their prime work time as TV provides background noise for catching up on email: 32 percent of women say they are most productive outside the office while relaxing or watching TV, compared to just 27 percent of men.

Look Out Social Media: The King is Back!

Small businesses still cite [email marketing](#) as their top tool for their 2013 marketing strategies. Search engine optimization (SEO) is a close second, but down from its No. 1 spot in 2012. Social media may be on the decline as well -- 14 percent saw it as the *least* important business marketing strategy in 2012, while this year a third of small businesses (33 percent) put social media in their bottom two priorities. Email's steady marketing presence is mirrored in a recent report conducted by Custora, a marketing analytics platform. The company's customer acquisition report shows that customer acquisition through email marketing has quadrupled in four years, beating out Facebook and Twitter combined.¹

Back to the Basics

In addition to email's lead in marketing initiatives, email is also the No. 1 mobile phone activity for small businesses, but it barely beats out the mobile phones' traditional use - regular phone calls. While some industries are getting back to the basics, mobile business app usage is up over all--34 percent of those surveyed use five to 10 apps for business on a daily basis, compared with only 17 percent last year. Mobile productivity varies across industries as well:

- ***Restaurant:*** 40 percent of restaurant owners spend the bulk of their time using business apps for activities such as [faxing](#) or tracking hours.
- ***Marketing and Advertising:*** 30 percent of these creative professionals rank business apps like scanning or billing in their top two mobile activities during business hours.

- ***Real Estate and Mortgage:*** Traditionally an on-the-go profession, 47 percent of respondents in the real estate and mortgage industry stay productive out of the office using five or more apps daily. Twenty-two percent spend the majority of their mobile time texting.

The Ever Optimistic Youth: Millennials Make Their Mark

As businesses are more optimistic than ever, Millennials remain the most optimistic generation, with 94 percent optimistic for business growth this year, up from 85 percent last year. Optimism decreases with age, but is up across all generations: 91 percent of Gen X and 87 percent of boomers are optimistic--up from 81 percent and 71 percent, respectively, last year.

As optimism for business profits increases, so may hiring trends. When it comes to which generation small businesses are most likely to hire in the coming year, 43 percent look to Millennials first; 30 percent would pick Gen X; and 4 percent, Boomers.

An infographic showing results of the survey is available [here](#).

Complete results of the j2 Global Small Business Opinion Survey are available [here](#).

About the j2 Global Mid-Year Small Business Survey - 2013

Between June 12 and June 25, 2013, 2,536 small business professionals responded to an email invitation from [j2 Global](#) to [eVoice](#), [eFax](#), and [Campaigner](#) customers to participate in an online survey about hot topics such as the use of iPads and apps, optimism in company's growth, mobile productivity, and summer vacation plans. The margin of error is +/- 1.95 percentage points. The statistical figures provided herein may have been rounded up or down.

About j2 Global

j2 Global, Inc. (NASDAQGS: JCOM) provides Internet services through its two divisions: Business Cloud Services and Digital Media. The Business Cloud Services Division offers Internet fax, virtual phone, hosted email, email marketing, online backup, unified communications and CRM solutions. It markets its services principally under the brand names eFax®, eVoice®, FuseMail®, Campaigner®, KeepItSafe® and Onebox® and operates a messaging network spanning 49 countries on six continents. The Digital Media Division consists of Ziff Davis Inc., which offers technology, gaming and lifestyle content through its digital properties which include [PCMag.com](#), [IGN.com](#), [AskMen.com](#), [Toolbox.com](#) and others. Ziff Davis also operates BuyerBase, an advanced digital ad targeting platform and Ziff Davis B2B, a leading provider of research to enterprise buyers and leads to IT vendors. As of December 31, 2012, j2 had achieved 17 consecutive fiscal years of revenue growth. For more information about j2, please visit www.j2global.com.

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¹ [Source: <http://blog.custora.com/2013/06/e-commerce-customer-acquisition-snapshot/>].

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