

CEO Confidence Surges Heading into 2025

by **MICHAEL SIPE, Chairman — Vistage Int'l 667**

As 2025 kicks off, how's your confidence level?

According to the Vistage International 2024 Q4 CEO Confidence Index Survey, CEO confidence is at its highest in nine years, with optimism driving strategic investments, hiring plans, and growth initiatives. Since 2003, the Vistage CEO Confidence Index has captured the sentiment of small and midsize business CEOs and business leaders in the United States about the economy each quarter.

As the world's largest private advisory program serving 45,000 CEOs and business leaders worldwide, Vistage International has the best and most accurate insights into the challenges and opportunities facing small to mid-sized businesses. Consequently, ITR Economics (ITReconomics.com) validates the Vistage CEO Confidence Index as a leading indicator of the U.S. Industrial Production Index 9-months in advance.

The Q4 Vistage Index signals a strong economic outlook and the long-anticipated return to a growth cycle.



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Key Takeaways:

- 55% of CEOs believe the economy will improve in the next year, up from 32% last quarter and more than double the 21% recorded in Q4 2023.
- 76% of CEOs expect increased revenue in 2025, the highest level since Q1 2017.
- 65% of CEOs plan to expand their workforce, indicating strong hiring demand.
- Investment in technology, AI, and cybersecurity remains a top priority, with 45% increasing their tech budgets to enhance efficiency and security.
- Only 13% of CEOs believe the economy will worsen, marking a significant decline in pessimism from previous quarters.

Top Challenges for CEOs in 2025

Despite the optimism, CEOs are still navigating challenges, including:

- Talent Acquisition & Retention — The top concern among CEOs, with strong hiring demand making workforce engagement and wage management critical.
- Economic Uncertainty & Rising Costs — Inflation, interest rates, and operational expenses remain major concerns.
- Sales Growth & Revenue Generation — Competition and shifting consumer behavior make consistent revenue growth a challenge, requiring a mix of organic and inorganic expansion strategies.

Technology & Artificial intelligence: Key Investment Areas

Technology continues to be a **top investment priority** as CEOs look to improve efficiency and security:

- AI & Automation: 45% of CEOs are increasing tech budgets to incorporate AI-driven solutions that boost productivity.

- Cybersecurity: 25% of CEOs reported cyberattacks in 2024, reinforcing the need for robust cyber defense strategies in 2025.

Interest Rates and Inflation

Although we are early in the year and the new Presidential administration, ITR Economics anticipates that interest rates, inflation and the cost of labor will all increase somewhat toward the end of the year. Therefore, the general ITR view is that if an investment makes business sense, go ahead and invest now. Don't wait in hopes inflation will dramatically abate or that interest rates will drop a half point. Grab the opportunity and go for it.

Looking Ahead: A Year of Opportunity

With confidence levels surging, CEOs are strategically positioning their businesses for growth, investment, and workforce expansion in 2025. While economic uncertainties remain, the outlook is decidedly positive, marking a shift toward renewed business momentum. Here in Central Oregon, our Vistage chapter of some of the region's top business leaders share that optimism. We are geared up for the best year ever.

If you'd like to review more detailed results of the CEO Confidence Index report, email me at Michael.Sipe@VistageChair.com. I'd be happy to provide it at no cost or obligation because, as our local businesses prosper, we all prosper.

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Whispering Pines RV Park
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Two tax lots of 2.15ac and .75ac with improvements for an RV Park. City water, power and septic hookups for 35, long term RV parking spaces in a 55+ RV park. Spaces have individual power meters. Easy access on Hwy 97 across from Ray's Market with other amenities within close distance. The park is well managed and residents comply with park rules and regulations. Might be possible to expand the number of spaces. Buyer to do their own due diligence. Rental and payment collection is handled by the owner. Each tenant has a signed lease. The property includes native pines, U shaped access driveway, storage building and a shower/restroom/laundry building.

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