



Decide with Confidence

PRESS RELEASE

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Local businesses show encouraging signs of growth— *D&B Singapore Business Optimism Index*

Singapore, 12 April 2010 – Buoyed by the favourable economic environment and improving global sentiment, a large proportion of local companies have reported strong and uplifting market expectations in the latest Dun & Bradstreet Business Optimism Index (BOI) survey.

On the whole, the general business sentiment in Singapore is expected to improve in Q2 2010. With the exception of the construction sector, all industries are powered into an upswing in almost all indicators, namely sales volume, net profit, selling price and inventory level. With the national unemployment rate projected at 2% for the whole of 2010, the surveyed companies are also certain that they will hire more workers in Q2.

Overview (Sector Breakdown)

Compared to the previous quarter, the manufacturers are more upbeat about their sales volume, net profit, selling price, inventory level and employment. However, they expect their selling price to continue to decline in Q2 2010.

Both the financial and services sectors, which contributed to more than 25% of Singapore's nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2009, are also bullish about the business outlook. A large proportion of the companies anticipate a rise in sales volume, net profit and employment.

On the contrary, the construction sector continues to present a pessimistic outlook. Although the demand for housing is fuelled by a stronger economy and stronger foreign investor confidence, the construction sector is likely to witness a decline in sales volume, net profit, inventory level and employment in Q2 2010.

The details about the indicators are discussed in the following sections:

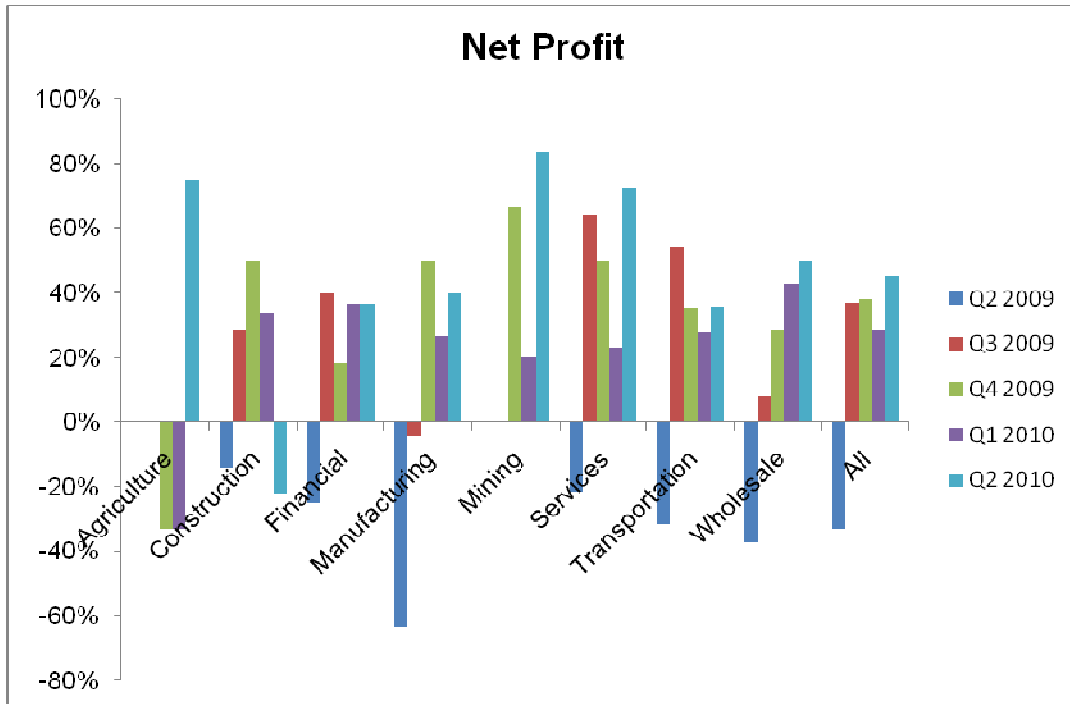
Net Profits

An increase of +34% (compared to Q1 +11%) optimism amongst companies surveyed, mainly driven by the mining, agricultural and services sectors.

The construction sector is the only sector that remains pessimistic reflecting a negative optimism index of net – 22%.



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Volume of Sales

An increase of +22% (compared to Q1 +19%) optimism amongst companies surveyed, mainly driven by the agricultural, mining and financial sectors.

The overall sentiment is more bullish than Q1 2010 (net +33%), except for the construction sector reflecting a negative index of net -11%.

Selling Prices

A positive optimism index of +14% (compared to Q1 +6%).

The moderately improved sentiment is strongly reflected by the agricultural sector (net +50%).

New Orders

A positive optimism index of +42% (compared to Q1 net +16%).

The manufacturing sector is the only sector that supplied the information about their expectation on new orders.

Employment

A positive optimism index of +14% for the fourth quarter running. Employer hiring expectations are strongest in the mining (+33%) and transportation (+28%) sectors.

Manufacturers maintain cautiousness with a net 8% optimism index, while the construction sector (net -22%) remains pessimistic on its hiring trends.

Inventory Levels

A modest optimism index of +6%. The situation is similar to Q1 2010.

The growth is observed in all sectors, except for construction (net -22%) and mining (net -17%) sectors.

Commentary

This is the 4th D&B Singapore Business Optimism Index (BOI) released. (1st issue was released in July 2009)

The D&B Business Optimism Index (BOI) is a measure of business confidence in the economy. Released quarterly, it is based on a business sentiment survey that is designed to capture business expectations and is one of the most effective ways to track how the business community perceives the business environment, and where they think it is moving. This is commonly used, worldwide, to assist in analyzing major trends and issues concerning the business community through tracking business parameters including net profits, selling prices, new orders, inventory levels, and employee count.

About the Survey

D&B Singapore conducts latest Business Expectations Surveys every quarter. Each quarter, 200 business owners and senior executives representing major industry sectors across Singapore are asked if they expect increases, decreases or no changes in their upcoming quarterly Sales, Profits, Employment, New Orders, Inventories and Selling Prices.

Note: The index figures used in the survey represent the net percentage of survey respondents expecting higher sales, profits, etc., compared with the same quarter of the previous year. The indices are calculated by subtracting the percentage of respondents expecting decreases from the percentage expecting increases.

About D&B

D&B is the world's leading provider of business-to-business credit, marketing and purchasing information and receivables management services. D&B manages the world's most valuable commercial database with information on more than 145 million companies.

Information is gathered in over 200 countries, in 95 languages or dialects, covering 186 monetary currencies. The database is refreshed more than one million times daily as part of D&B's commitment to provide accurate, comprehensive information for its customers around the world.

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