

Empire State Manufacturing Survey: Supplemental Report

April 2008

For release April 15, 2008

Manufacturers Foresee Little Change in Their Workforces in the Next Year

Supplementary questions in the April 2008 *Empire State Manufacturing Survey* focused on recent and expected changes in firms' workforces and other employment measures.

On average, manufacturers anticipated little change in the size of their workforces in the upcoming year; the percentage of firms expecting increases (45 percent) somewhat exceeded the percentage expecting declines (29 percent). However, the results were more negative among the larger firms in the sample. Slightly more than one in four firms in the current survey had 200 or more employees in New York State; of those firms, 45 percent expected declines while 30 percent predicted increases. Among smaller firms, half anticipated increases while fewer than 25 percent anticipated declines.

In response to a separate question about the probability of various employment outcomes, respondents expressed a fair degree of uncertainty. The average respondent reported a less than 50 percent chance that employment levels would remain at or near current levels (within 5 percent); the perceived probability that employment would increase more than 5 percent was 30 percent, while the perceived probability of a decline greater than 5 percent was 22 percent.

When asked how many workers had quit or retired in the past twelve months, respondents, on average, reported about 23. Looking ahead to the next twelve months, respondents predicted an average figure of just under 20. Layoffs were reported to be—and, in the next twelve months, expected to be—a good deal less common: the average respondent let go 4.5 workers in the past year and expected to lay off 4.7 in the coming year. Finally, the average workweek was expected to be slightly shorter in twelve months than it was at the time of the survey.

Supplementary Questions

- 1) For each category, please indicate the number of employees you have currently (or as of the end of March) and your best estimate of how many employees you will have twelve months from now:

	Average Number of Employees		
	Current	Expected	Percentage Change
Full-time workers	214.4	211.8	-1.2
Part-time workers	2.9	2.6	-10.2
Contract workers	4.1	4.4	8.8
Total workers	227.5	228.7	0.5
	Percentage of Firms Expecting . . .		
	Increases	Decreases	
Full-time	45.6	26.7	
Total workers	44.6	29.3	

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2) What would you say is the percentage chance that, over the next twelve months, your total number of employees will:

	Average Percentage Chance
Increase by 10% or more	12.3
Increase by between 5% and 10%	17.3
Stay within 5% of where they are now	48.6
Decrease by between 5% and 10%	14.1
Decrease by 10% or more	7.7

3) Please indicate how many (if any) workers have retired, quit, or been laid off over the past twelve months, and what you expect for the next twelve months.

	Past Twelve Months	Next Twelve Months
Average retirements	2.6	2.9
Average quits	18.1	15.0
Average layoffs	4.5	4.7

4) What is your best estimate of the average workweek at your establishment now and twelve months from now—that is, the average number of hours worked by employees (including part-time employees)?

	Current	Expected
Average workweek (hours)	41.8	40.9