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Study: Federal government not helpful to small businesses

A new poll says an overwhelming number of small businesses do not seek assistance from federal agencies.

The poll of 438 small businesses in 18 states, conducted by American Management Services and Suffolk University in Boston, found that 93 percent of small business respondents say they have not worked with any federal agencies to receive assistance.

Only seven percent said they had.

George Cloutier, chairman and CEO of small business management consultant American Management Services says the poll indicates the federal government is ineffectual in its ability to build awareness about its small-business assistance programs.

"The poll shows that the federal government has programs that can help small businesses, but the government has been woefully inadequate in making small business owners

knowledgeable about these programs."

The disconnect with federal agencies was contrasted by a strong connection to local government.

When asked, which of the following elected officials/branches do you think is the most creative and innovative in helping small businesses, 29 percent said mayors/local officials, followed by state legislatures (20 percent), president/executive branch (13 percent), governors (10 percent), and Congress (4 percent).

"Small business owners see mayors and other local officials as their biggest ally. Because of this, they are the key link to helping small businesses reach their true potential," says Cloutier.

Overall, the poll "revealed data that is vital for the future success of small business owners," says David Paleologos, Director of the Suffolk University Political Research Center.



George A. Cloutier

The Suffolk University poll was conducted from January 9 to January 19, 2006. The margin of error is +/- 4.53% at a 95% level of confidence. The 468 small business owners were drawn from a Dun & Bradstreet sample of small business owners from 38 states, including the northeast, Midwest and south regions, per Department of Commerce/Census Regional and Gender Quotas.