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## Small Business Optimism

*Ellen C. Wells*

It's on the rise! So says the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB). The organization's Optimism Index rose 2.9 points to top off at 102.5 for the month of June. The same index declined in May.

The uptick in the index proves small business optimism is increasing. This is despite small-biz owners still worrying about a real labor shortage and the risk of inflation. And even though 46% of small business owners reported unfilled job openings in June, 28% of businesses indicated plans to create new jobs in the next three months. The rise in optimism also belies the fact that the quality of labor was ranked as businesses' single most important problem. Also, the survey showed that 56% of the respondents indicated they had few or no qualified applicants for open jobs in June.

What's to be optimistic about? The economy is reopening, for one. But the NFIB press release was scant on why seven of the 10 index components improved, choosing to focus on why the glass is one-third empty rather than two-thirds full. **GP**