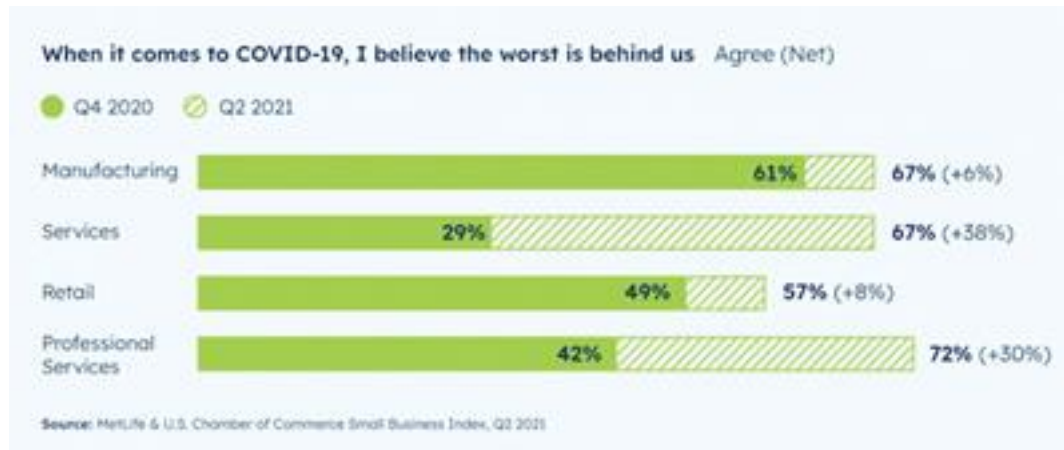


Small Businesses are Hopeful as Pandemic Recovery Accelerates



The latest [MetLife and U.S. Chamber of Commerce Small Business Index](#) finds a majority (65%) of small business owners are more optimistic that the worst of the pandemic is over.

By the numbers: The dominant emotion small business owners are feeling about their current operating strategy is “hopeful” (44%). Thirty-one percent say they are “comfortable,” and 24% say they are “concerned,” rounding out the top three current feelings.

- **What about hiring?** In a tight labor market, employers are holding onto the workers they have. Most small businesses anticipate retaining the same staffing level (52%). 32% plan to increase staffing, and 11% plan to decrease staffing over the next year.

Our take: “Small businesses are seeing real reasons for optimism this quarter and we’re seeing that reflected in the data,” said Tom Sullivan, Chamber vice president of small business policy. “The easing of capacity restrictions due to increased vaccinations means more small businesses are welcoming more customers. Increased foot traffic equates to economic growth and that is moving our country’s recovery forward.”

ICYMI: [Sullivan told Yahoo! Finance](#), “Small businesses are doing all they can to make their current employees happy and to attract qualified employees.”

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