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Business Optimism Index – Saudi Arabia Q4 2012

Highlights

- Composite Business Optimism Index for the non-hydrocarbon sector increases by 10 points to 47 in Q4 2012 on the back of strong sales, new orders and profitability outlook
- Composite Business Optimism Index for the hydrocarbon sector moves up to 25 points as profitability outlook rises
- Availability of skilled labor is a chief concern for the non-hydrocarbon sector while inflationary pressure emerges as the topmost concern for hydrocarbon sector players

Hydrocarbon sector

The world economy has been growing at a tepid pace in 2012 and will continue to face several challenges in the coming months. There are four key weaknesses that continue to feed into each other and collude against a healthy economic recovery. First, the ongoing deleveraging by banks, firms and households; is holding back normal credit flows and implied consumer and investment demand. Second, unemployment remains high, especially in developed nations, which is a condition that is both a cause and effect of the lack of economic recovery. Third, fiscal austerity responses to deal with rising public debts are further deterring economic growth, which in turn is making a return to debt sustainability all the more difficult. Fourthly, bank exposure to sovereign debt and the weak economy are perpetuating financial sector fragility, which in turn is spurring continued deleveraging.

Recessionary conditions continue in the Euro zone, reinforced by intensifying fiscal austerity and rising unemployment. Weakness is becoming more evident in the larger economies, with economic conditions softening further in France and business confidence moving decisively lower in Germany alongside the reduction in European trade. In the US, real GDP decelerated to 1.3% in Q2 from 2.0% in Q1 2012, as domestic fiscal issues and global uncertainty regarding the European debt crisis led consumers and firms to hold back on spending and investment. A major source of uncertainty to the US economic outlook particularly in 2013 is the so-called "fiscal cliff". The US\$ 607 bn planned deficit

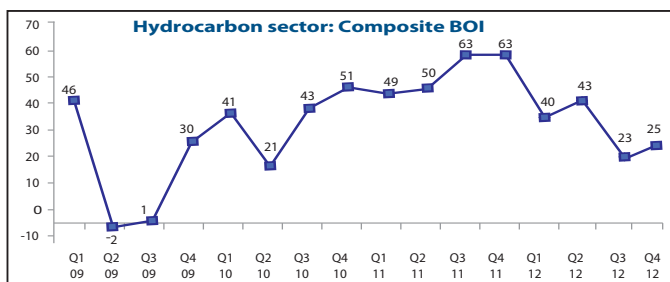
reduction would constitute a significant drag for real economic activity, imposing a recession-sized fiscal tightening. China's economy has entered a period of subdued growth, with weak exports, credit and property prices. The rest of 2012 will continue to be dominated by the persistent weakness in external demand and further property market adjustment.

The IMF has revised down its forecasts for 2013 growth (relative to the forecasts made in April), from 2.0% down to 1.5% for advanced economies, and from 6.0% down to 5.6% for emerging market and developing economies. Sluggish global economic growth and recovery of non-OPEC crude supply is likely to lead to a gradual easing of oil prices in the short term.

The third quarter witnessed a steady increase in oil prices, with the average monthly OPEC basket increasing from US\$ 99.55 per barrel in July to US\$ 109.52 in August and US\$ 110.67 in September. The upward trend in oil prices was reflective of the tightening of the global oil market due to the impact of a larger-than-expected loss of Iranian oil due to sanctions, ongoing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, this year's slow growth in non-OPEC supplies and supply outages in the North Sea due to strikes & field maintenance. OPEC prices climbed as high as US\$ 114.87 in mid-September, before receding to US\$ 109.68, as the euphoria on central bank stimulus faded and on increasing concerns about the global economy and oil demand growth.

The OPEC reference basket has averaged US\$ 110 per barrel this year, and high oil prices are bruising world economic growth and will also hurt oil demand growth in the long run. To counter the high price, Saudi Arabia has been pumping around 10 million bpd of crude this year. The Kingdom's GDP from the crude and natural gas sector amounted to SAR 319.6 bn in Q2 2012, compared to SAR 298.1 bn in Q2 2011, a growth of 7.2%.

The BOI survey reveals that Saudi Arabia's hydrocarbon sector optimism has improved in Q4 2012, gaining 2 points to 25 from 23 in the third quarter of 2012. Though two out of three parameters have retreated from Q3 levels, a strong rebound in





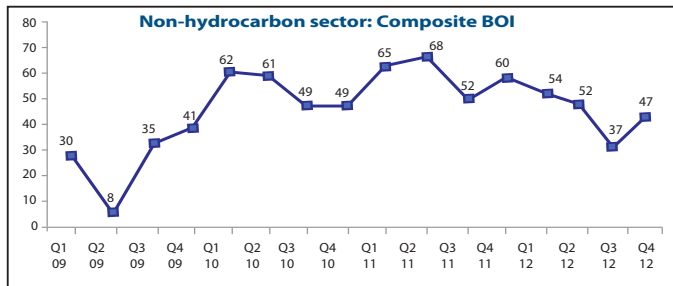
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Business Optimism Index – Saudi Arabia

the profitability outlook has helped the composite index to log an uptrend. The parameter score for Net Profits has spiked by 25 points to 48 in Q4 2012 from 23 in the previous quarter. The Level of Selling Prices expectations of the industry players have moderated by 3 points to 5 in Q4 2012. The BOI for Number of Employees too has lowered to 40 in Q4 2012 from 53 in the third quarter of 2012.

Non-hydrocarbon sector



Saudi business sentiments within the Non-Hydrocarbon sector have shown a significant improvement in Q4 with respect to the previous quarter. The composite index for the non-hydrocarbon sector stands at 47 in Q4 2012, compared to the index score of 37 in the third quarter of 2012. Saudi Arabia's economic growth for 2012 is estimated at 6% by the IMF. Data from the Central Department of Statistics and Information shows that real GDP grew at 5.94% in Q1 (y-o-y) and 5.51% in Q2 (y-o-y). The non-oil sector recorded a real GDP growth of 5.71% in Q1 and 5.48% in Q2. The key growth driver for the non-oil segment is government spending. Saudi Arabia is accelerating efforts to take its industrialization process to the next level, particularly industrial projects based on downstream petrochemical operations. The buoyant projects market is helping support broader corporate activity. The Kingdom's construction sector is also expected to achieve robust growth this year, buoyed by elevated government spending into social and physical infrastructure. The development of six economic cities is already underway to advance the Kingdom's diversification and investment plans.

The BOI survey reveals that five out of the six non-hydrocarbon sector parameters have improved in Q4 2012. The BOI for the Volume of Sales parameter has registered a value of 56 compared to 39 points in Q3 2012, while the BOI for the New Orders parameter is recorded at 57 compared to 52 in Q3. The BOI for Level of Selling Prices stands at 19 points in Q4 2012, compared to 15 in the last quarter. The inflation rate in Saudi Arabia was recorded at 3.8% in August 2012. There is expectation of a relative stability or a slight increase in the inflationary pressures in the coming period. Profitability expectations have also strengthened from the previous quarter. The BOI for the Net Profits parameter is recorded at 53 in Q4 2012, up from 37 points in the third quarter of 2012. The BOI for Number of Employees has improved by 4 points to 48 from 44 in Q3 2012. The BOI for Level of Stock stands at 16 in Q4 2012, down from 29 in the previous quarter.

Four out of the five business sectors in the non-hydrocarbon sector have registered higher optimism levels while one has tracked sideways. The construction sector holds the most optimistic outlook among the various sectors surveyed for the fifth consecutive quarter. The manufacturing sector holds the least optimistic outlook for Q4 2012.

Despite the improvement in business outlook for Q4, the survey reveals that the environment for doing business has become tougher. Only 25% of the respondents in the non-hydrocarbon sector have said that they do not expect any negative factors to influence their business operations in Q4 2012 compared to 45% in Q3. It is found that 36% are concerned about availability of skilled labor, 14% foresee availability of finance as a concerning factor and 10% are concerned about inflationary factors. The remaining 15%

of the respondents are concerned about factors such as market conditions, competition, securing labor, delays in payments and supplies of raw material, etc. In terms of investment in business expansion in Q4 2012, 59% of the non-hydrocarbon companies have said that they would invest in business expansion in Q4 2012, 25% do not plan any investments and 16% are unsure.

In the hydrocarbon segment, none of the firms feel that their businesses are impacted by any negative factors in Q4 2012 compared to 40% in Q3. Inflationary pressure is a leading concern for 40% of the respondents while 20% are concerned about availability of skilled labor and 8% about availability of finance. The remaining 32% are concerned about other factors such as shortage of advanced machineries and market conditions. In addition, 45% of the hydrocarbon sector respondents plan investment in business expansion, 38% do not plan any investment and 17% are unsure.

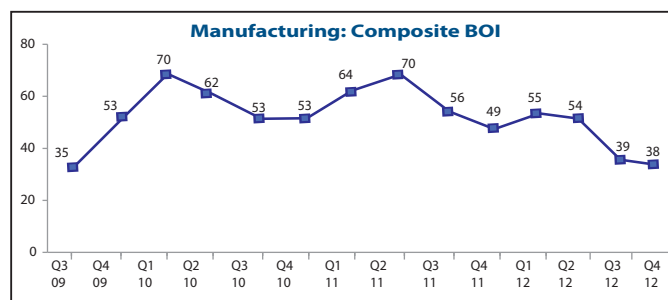
Sector Analysis

Manufacturing sector

The downturn in the global manufacturing sector continued in September, following further contractions in both output and new orders. The JPMorgan Global Manufacturing PMI posted 48.9, up slightly from August's 38-month low of 48.1, but below the neutral 50.0 mark for the fourth month running. US manufacturing unexpectedly grew last month for the first time since May but Euro zone factories suffered their worst quarter since early 2009, with China indicating some lost steam, thus reiterating challenges for the world economy. The gloomy situation in Europe is expected to persist in the fourth quarter. While the US manufacturing sector has fared better than in other developed countries, the world's largest economy remains hobbled by high unemployment.

The BOI survey reveals that the Saudi manufacturing sector outlook has tracked sideways in the fourth quarter of 2012 as the various parameters have evinced a mixed trend. The composite BOI for Q4 2012 stands at 38 compared to 39 in the previous quarter. Demand expectations, which are reflected in the BOIs for Volume of Sales and New Orders, have moderated by 1 and 4 points to stand at 47 and 48 respectively. The selling price optimism has strengthened by 5 points to 13 from 8 points in Q3 2012. Profitability expectations have moderated to 37 from 42 in Q3 2012 considering moderation in sales and new orders. The manufacturing sector outlook towards hiring, as represented by the Number of Employees parameter, has remained at the same level as in the previous quarter at 43. Moderation in demand and profitability outlook has weighed on expectations for inventory levels, indicated by the Level of Stock parameter, which has weakened by 14 points to 20 from 34 in Q3 2012. In relative terms, the sector holds the least optimistic outlook among all the non-hydrocarbon sectors for / towards Q4 2012.

39% of the firms in the manufacturing sector do not expect business operations to get impacted by adverse factors in Q4 2012. Availability of skilled labor is reported as a key issue by 22% of the sector respondents. Availability of finance and inflationary factors are a leading concern as represented by 6% of the respondents in each category. 27% of the respondents foresee



challenges such as competition, project related problems, exchange rate fluctuation, cash flow issues, visa issues for labor and associated impact of the global economic crisis. Though the sector is the least optimistic among all non-hydrocarbon sectors, business units in the sector hold robust business expansion plans. 64% of the respondents (highest among all sectors) plan to invest in business expansion in Q4 2012, whereas 26% have blocked investment in expansion and 10% are reported to be unsure.

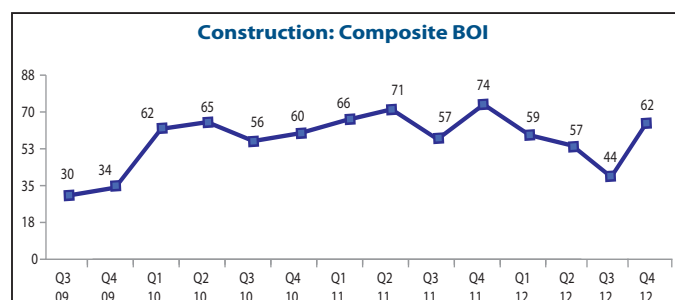
■ Construction sector

As the global economy continues its slow recovery in 2013, it should support modest growth in the construction sector. Emerging markets will be the engine of growth as a result of population growth, expanding middle class, economic development and wealth transfer from developed to emerging economies as these developing economies industrialize and commodity prices increase. Among the developed markets, countries such as the US and Australia, will grow at a slower pace than emerging markets but faster than most economies in Western Europe and Japan.

Also, among the major sectors of the construction industry, the global infrastructure and commercial segments are expected to be the engine of growth in the short and medium term as developed countries upgrade their aging infrastructures and emerging countries continue their agenda of investment.

The BOI Survey for Q4 2012 shows improvement in business sentiments among Saudi firms in construction sector. The composite index for the sector has improved considerably in Q4 2012 from the previous quarter. The composite BOI for the sector stands at 62 in the fourth quarter of 2012, up from 44 points in the previous quarter. The improvement is mainly on account of a spike in the BOI scores for sales, new orders and profitability. The BOI for Volume of Sales stands at 76 compared to 46 in Q3 2012 whereas the BOI score for the New Orders parameter has jumped to 71 from 56 in Q3 2012. The Level of Selling Price parameter has moderated by 3 points to 24 from 27 in Q3 2012. A strong rebound in sales and improvement in the order book status has led to higher profitability expectations. The BOI for the Net Profits parameter has jumped 32 points to 66 in Q4 2012 from 34 in Q3. The Number of Employees parameter has gained 17 points to 73 from 56 in the third quarter of 2012, while the Level of Stock parameter stands at 14 compared to 18 in Q3 2012.

In terms of factors affecting business operations, 31% of the respondents do not expect any negative factors compared to 47% in the previous quarter. 31% of the respondents are concerned about availability of skilled labor, while 11% are observed to be concerned about availability of finance. Only

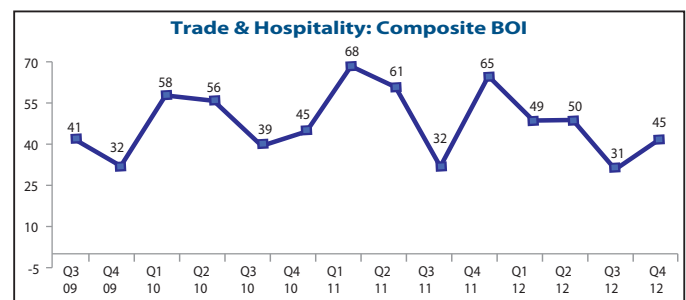


4% of the sector respondents feel that inflationary factors will impact their business in a negative way, while the remaining 23% foresee other factors impacting their businesses such as market competition, slowdown in business and other labor related issues. 61% of the firms plan to invest in business expansion compared to 56% in the previous quarter. 21% of the respondents do not plan any investments while 18% are reported to be unsure.

■ Trade & Hospitality sector

Rising GDP growth, burgeoning population, greater disposable income, and increasing consumer spending are combining to drive the global retail industry. The global economic recession, inflation, and high unemployment rates are some of the challenges that are negatively affecting the retail industry. Conversely, some factors that are likely to boost sales in the industry include urbanization, technological growth, increase in product demand and selection, and the continued popularity of online purchasing. Asia-Pacific continues to dominate global retail sales. The contribution from the region is expected to increase from just over 30% in 2006 to just under half by 2016. Both Europe and North America are expected to see a decline in their share towards global retail sales. While Latin American share is expected to increase marginally by 2016; that of Middle East and Africa will remain unchanged.

The composite BOI for the trade & hospitality sector has improved in Q4 2012 as most parameters have registered higher scores; the composite BOI stands at 45 in Q4 compared to 31 points in Q3 2012. The business units in the Kingdom's trade & hospitality sector hold an optimistic outlook towards sales; the BOI for Volume of Sales is at 54 for Q4 2012 compared to 28 in the previous quarter. The BOI score for New Orders stands at 63, up 15 points from the third quarter's score of 48. In terms of selling price expectations, the BOI has moderated slightly by a single point to 14 in Q4. Strong demand and sales prospects with a steady pricing outlook have boosted profitability expectations; at 58 points the BOI for Net Profits stands 29 points higher from the third quarter's score. The sector's hiring outlook has hardly changed from the last quarter; the BOI for Number of Employees



is recorded at 36 compared to 35 in Q3 2012. The Level of Stock parameter has witnessed a decline to 6 points from 29 in Q3 2012.

Most respondents in the sector reaching 48% do not anticipate any negative factors impacting business operations in Q4 2012. Availability of skilled labor is a challenge for 20% of the respondents while 9% respondents are concerned about availability of finance. Only 1% of the sector respondents foresee



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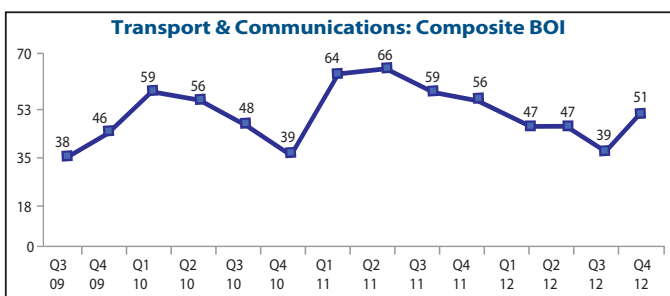
inflationary factors as a challenge while the remaining 22% of the respondents have cited factors such as competitive pricing, market conditions and fluctuations in currency. 53% of the firms plan to invest in business expansion during Q4 2012 compared to 64% in the previous quarter; while 28% do not have any expansion plans and the remaining are unsure.

■ Transport & Communications sector

The growth of world trade volume slowed from 12.6% in 2010 to 5.8% in 2011 and 2012 is expected to register even slower growth at 3.2%. Maritime transport handles over 80% of the volume of global trade and accounts for over 70% of its value, according to UN figures. In 2010, deliveries of new vessels reached a 36-year record high, increasing the world's maritime carrying capacity by 11.7%. The massive order book of 2008, placed when the world economy and trade were booming, led to record ship deliveries in 2010 following the fragile recovery. In the next few years, analysts forecast a continued oversupply of deliveries in the dry bulk and container sectors. The current imbalance in ship carrying-capacity strongly challenges the shipping industry, as oversupply exerts a dampening effect on freight rates and revenues.

The BOI survey reveals an improvement in the optimism level in Q4 compared to the previous quarter. The composite index has posted a score of 51 in the fourth quarter of 2012 compared to 39 in Q3. All parameters have reported higher scores but the improvement in the score is mainly on higher optimism levels for the sales and profitability parameters. The BOI for the Volume of Sales stands at 55 compared to 37 in Q3 2012 while the BOI for the New Orders parameter stands at 64 compared to 60 in Q3. The BOI for Level of Selling Prices stands at 26 in Q4 2012 compared to 18 in the third quarter. Profitability expectations have received a boost from a strong demand, new orders and selling price expectations, the BOI for the Net Profits parameter has jumped 22 points to 65 in Q4 2012 from 43 in Q3. The BOI for the Number of Employees parameter stands at 47 compared to 37 in Q3 2012.

In spite of the improved business outlook, all of the sector respondents cited that their businesses are likely to be impacted by factors affecting operations in Q4 in contrast to Q3, when 57% respondents had expressed that no negative factors would impact their business operations. 55% of the respondents in



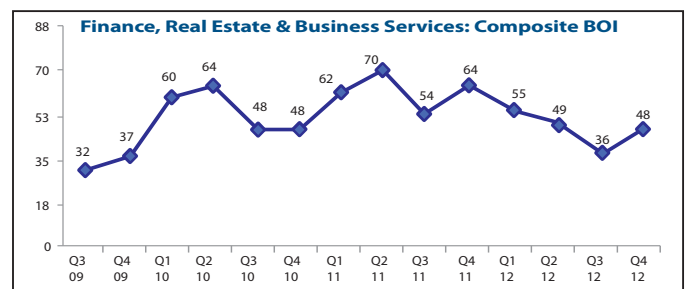
the sector foresee availability of skilled labor as a challenge while availability of finance is a concerning issue for 27% of the respondents. The remaining 18% are observed to be concerned about inflationary factors. 55% of the respondents in this sector plan to invest in business expansion during the fourth quarter of 2012, while 27% stated that they do not envisage invest in expansion.

■ Finance, Real Estate & Business Services sector

The Global Financial Stability Report published by the IMF finds that risks have increased to the global financial system, led by the sovereign debt crisis in Europe. The past quarter saw important monetary policy actions from the US Federal Reserve, the European Central Bank, the Bank of Japan and the Bank of England in an effort to address investor fears. According to the IMF, the combination of lower risk appetite, a weakened outlook for growth and persistently volatile and wide spreads in the Euro area periphery has led to an increase in macroeconomic risks. Emerging market risks have also risen, as the prospects for these economies appear increasingly linked to the global cycle.

Respondents in Saudi Arabia's financial, real estate & business services sector expect the business outlook to improve compared to that in Q3 2012. The composite BOI score for this sector is 48, 12 points higher from the previous quarter score. The BOI for Volume of Sales stands at 55 compared to the previous quarter's 34, while the BOI for the New Orders parameter stands at 53 compared to 47 points in Q3. The BOI for the Level of Selling Prices parameter has strengthened by 10 points to 25 from 15 in Q3. Profitability expectations are backed by strong sales, new orders and pricing expectations and has soared 19 points to 55 from 36 in Q3. The BOI for the Number of Employees parameter has inched up by a point to 50 compared to 49 in Q3.

All of the respondents in the sector feel that their businesses will be impacted by negative factors in Q4 2012; whereas in Q3, 43%

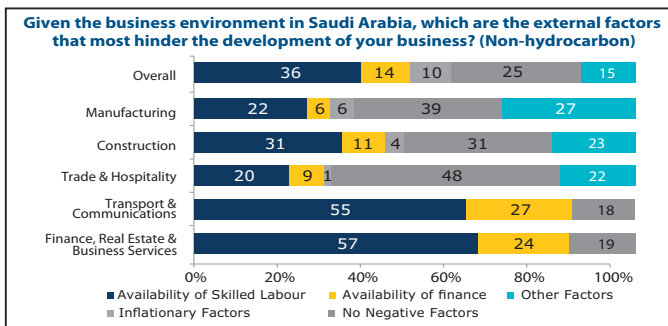


did not expect any negative factors to influence their business. 57% (highest among all sectors) of the respondents foresee availability of skilled labor as a challenge while availability of finance is an issue for 24% of the sector respondents. 19% of the respondents are concerned about inflationary factors affecting their business operations in Q4 2012. 57% of the respondents in this sector say that they will invest in business expansion during Q4 2012, compared to 64% in the third quarter of 2012.

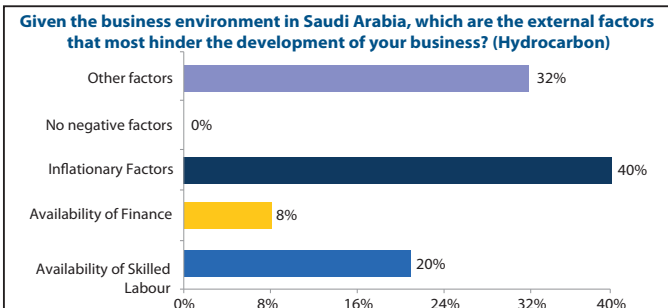
Business Issues

Factors impacting business

Three quarters of the survey respondents feel that the influence of a single or combination of factors will impact their business operations. Only 25% of the respondents in the non-hydrocarbon sector have said that they do not expect any negative factors to influence their business operations in Q4 2012 compared to 45% in Q3. 36% are concerned about availability of skilled labor, 14% foresee availability of finance as a concerning factor and 10% are concerned about inflationary factors. The remaining 15% of the respondents are concerned about factors such as market conditions, competition, securing labor, delays in payments and supplies of raw material, etc.



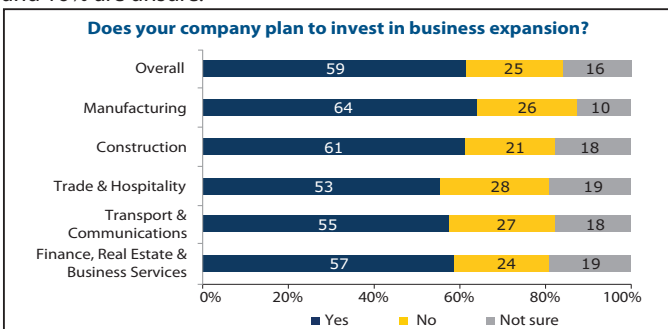
In the hydrocarbon segment, all of the firms expect to be impacted by negative factors in Q4 2012; compared to Q3 when 40% of the respondents had cited that their businesses faced no challenges. Inflationary factors is a leading concern for 40% of the respondents while 20% are concerned about availability of skilled labor and 8%



about availability of finance. The remaining 32% are concerned about other factors such as shortage of advanced machineries and market conditions.

Investment plans

In terms of investment in business expansion in Q4 2012, 59% of the non-hydrocarbon companies have said that they would invest in business expansion in Q4 2012, 25% do not plan any investments and 16% are unsure.



In the hydrocarbon segment, 45% of the hydrocarbon sector respondents plan investments in business expansion, 38% do not plan any investment and 17% are unsure.

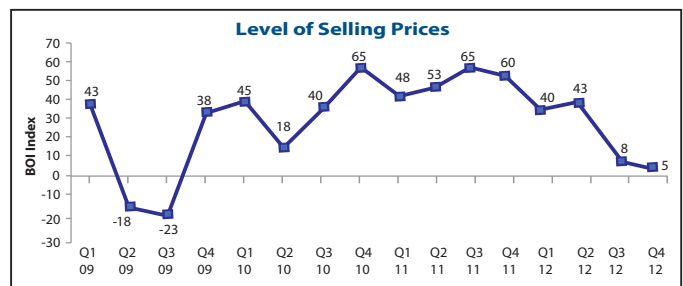
Appendix

Hydrocarbon Sector

Volume of Sales

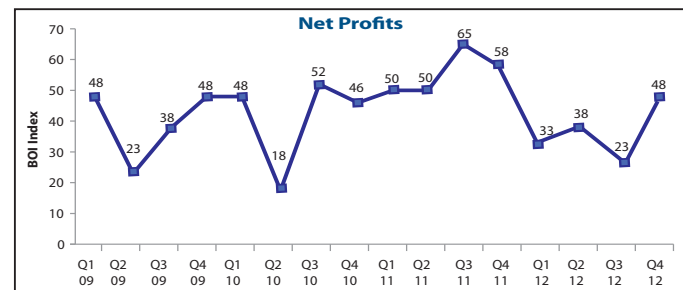
The BOI for the Volume of Sales parameter stands at 60 in Q4 2012 compared to 33 in Q3 2012. 65% of the respondents in the hydrocarbon segment anticipate an increase in sales volume. 30% of the respondents do not anticipate any change and 5% of the respondents foresee a decline.

Level of Selling Prices



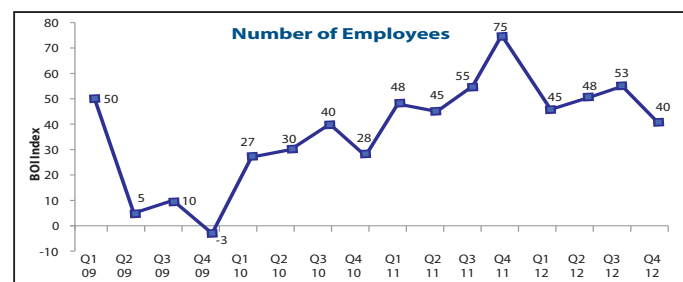
The BOI for Level of Selling Prices has dropped by 3 points to 5 in Q4 2012. 20% of the respondents anticipate higher selling prices while 65% expect no change, only 15% foresee a decline in Q4 2012.

Net Profits



The Net Profits BOI has scaled up to 48 points in Q4 2012 compared to 23 in the previous quarter. 58% of the respondents in the hydrocarbon sector anticipate an improvement in profitability whereas 32% expect no change and 10% foresee a decline in Q4 2012.

Number of Employees



The BOI for the Number of Employees is recorded at 40 points compared to 53 in Q3 2012. 40% of the respondents expect to increase their head count, whereas 60% anticipate no change and none of the respondents surveyed foresee a decline in their employee numbers in Q4 2012.

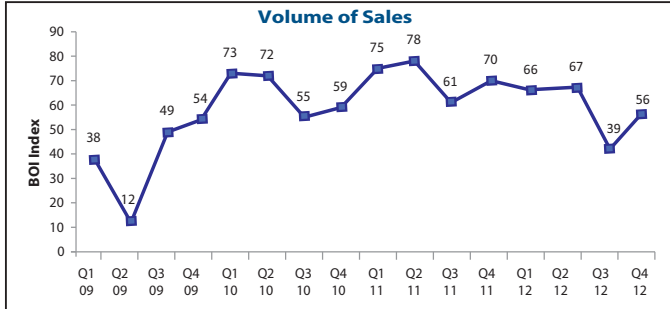


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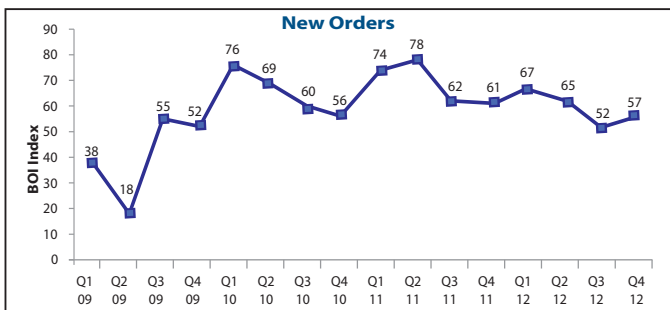
Non-hydrocarbon sector

Volume of Sales



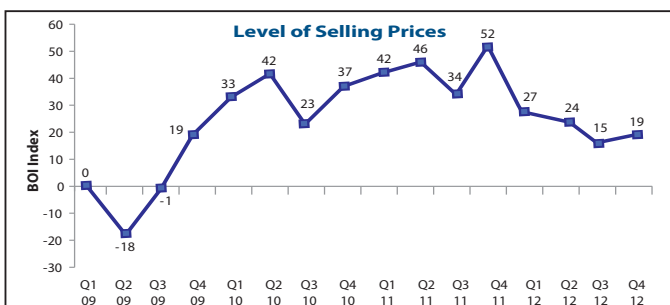
The BOI for Volume of Sales has registered an increase of 17 points in Q4 2012 to stand at 56. Overall, 66% of the non-hydrocarbon sector firms anticipate an increase in their sales, 24% anticipate no change and 10% foresee a decline in Q4 2012.

New Orders



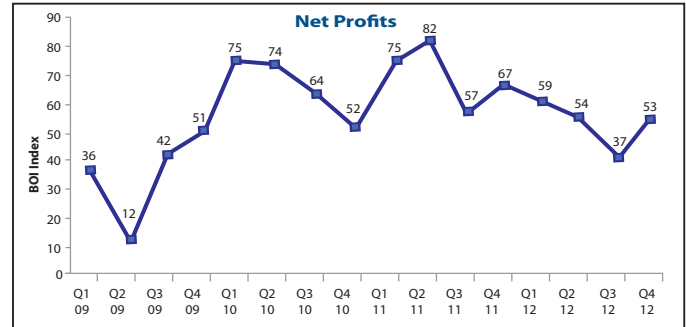
The BOI for the New Orders parameter has increased by 5 points in Q4 2012 to stand at 57. Out of the total respondents surveyed in the non-hydrocarbon sector, 63% expect an increase in their order book status, 31% anticipate no change while 6% are expecting a decline.

Level of Selling Prices



The BOI for Level of Selling Prices stands at 19 in Q4 2012, 4 points higher than the score in Q3 2012. Overall 27% of the respondents are expecting an increase in their Level of Selling Prices, while 8% expect to reduce their selling prices. The remaining 65% of the respondents expect price levels to stay intact.

Net Profits



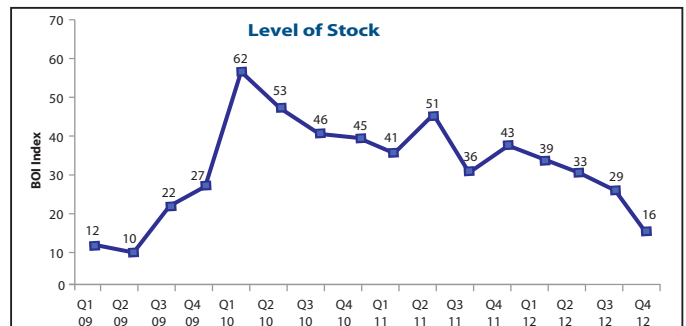
The BOI for Net Profits has increased 16 points to 53 in Q4 2012 compared to 37 in the previous quarter. 65% of the non-hydrocarbon sector respondents expect their profitability to improve, 23% foresee no change whereas 12% expect a decline in their Net Profits in Q4 2012.

Number of Employees



The BOI for Number of Employees has increased by 4 points in Q4 2012. The BOI for this parameter stands at 48, with 50% expecting to up their headcount, 48% foreseeing no change and 2% expecting a decline in their headcount in Q4 2012.

Level of Stock



The BOI for Level of Stock has tipped lower by 4 points in the At 16, the BOI for Level of Stock has tipped lower by 13 points in the fourth quarter. Overall, 27% of the respondents are expecting their inventory levels to improve while 62% are expecting it to remain unchanged and 11% are expecting a decline.

About Dun and Bradstreet (D&B)

Dun & Bradstreet (NYSE:DNB), the world's leading source of global business information, knowledge and insight, has been enabling companies to Decide with Confidence® for more than 170 years. D&B's global commercial database contains more than 200 million business records. The database is enhanced by D&B's proprietary DUNSRight® Quality Process, which transforms the enormous amount of data collected daily into decision-ready insight. Through the D&B Worldwide Network - an unrivaled alliance of D&B and leading business information providers around the world - customers gain access to the world's largest and highest quality global commercial business information database.

Customers use D&B Risk Management Solutions to mitigate risk, increase cash flow and drive increased profitability, D&B Sales & Marketing Solutions to analyse markets, locate prospects and increase revenue from new and existing customers; D&B Export Marketing Solutions to gain significant insight into overseas markets and increase sales; D&B Financial Education Solutions to facilitate professional growth and excellence among their executives and D&B Economic Analysis Group to derive pragmatic and solution-oriented analyses of strategic economic and business developments, thereby aiding informed decision making. D&B features on FORTUNE Magazine's Most Admired Companies Industry

List, ranking first in the Financial Data Services category. D&B ranked first in the areas of employee talent, financial soundness, long-term investment, quality of management and use of corporate assets. D&B has achieved this distinction for the second consecutive year.

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About our partners

The National Commercial Bank

The National Commercial Bank was the first bank in Saudi Arabia, established under Royal Decree on the 26th of December 1953, and is the largest bank in terms of capital in the Arab world. The Bank's paid up capital at year-end 2007 was USD 4 billion. The Bank has been a pioneer in the Saudi banking industry, and was the first bank to offer mutual funds in the kingdom. Since the beginning of the 1990s the Bank has been one of the trailblazers in Islamic Banking, providing a wide range of innovative Islamic products and services. NCB has one of the largest branch networks in Saudi Arabia, and also operates 2 international branch offices in Beirut and Bahrain, and 3 representative offices in London, Seoul, and Singapore. True to its Islamic roots, the bank has a prominent role in the area of social responsibility through a range of social programs.

The National Commercial Bank

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Methodology

■ The D&B Business Optimism Index

The D&B Business Optimism Index is recognized as a product that measures the pulse of the business community and serves as a reliable benchmark for investors. The D&B Business Optimism Index is arrived at on the basis of a quarterly survey of business expectations. It is conducted in various countries that D&B operates in. Over time, the quarterly survey has emerged as a leading indicator of turning points in economic activities in these countries.

A random sample is selected from Dun & Bradstreet's commercial database for conducting this survey. This sample is divided into hydrocarbon and non-hydrocarbon segments to eliminate the dominance of the former over the latter and understand their dynamics individually. The hydrocarbon segment includes Saudi Arabia's mining, oil and gas companies whereas the non-hydrocarbon segment encapsulates in its purview the following sectors:

- Manufacturing (140 units)
- Construction (70 units)
- Trade & Hospitality (80 units)
- Transport & Communications (60 units)
- Finance, Real Estate & Business Services (110 units)

The sample is a microcosmic representation of Saudi Arabia's business community. The survey respondents are asked if they expect an increase, decrease or no change regarding the following parameters: Volume of Sales, Net Profits, Level of Selling Prices, New Orders received, Level of Stock, and Number of Employees.

The individual indices for each of the above parameters are then calculated by subtracting the percentage of respondents expecting decrease from those expecting increase.

Additional poll questions are asked relating to the current economic scenario and are aimed at gauging the business sentiments with regards to several key current issues.

For the purpose of the survey, Q1 is the period between January and March, Q2 is the period between April and June, Q3 is the period between July and September, and Q4 is the period between October and December each year.

Composite Business Optimism Index

The purpose of the Composite Business Optimism Index is to capture the aggregate weighted behavior of all the six individual indices in the non-hydrocarbon sector. Beginning in Q3 2010, D&B has further introduced composite indices for all sub-sectors in the non-hydrocarbon sector to allow one indicator to summarize optimism levels in each of these sub-sectors..