



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SURVEY FINDS “BUSINESS IS GOOD” BUT SMALLER BUSINESSES STILL PRACTICING CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM WITH HR AND BENEFITS

Dedham, Mass. – January 23, 2014 – Insight Performance, a human resources consulting and employee benefits firm, has issued results from its third annual Human Resources Programs & Business Climate survey. The survey, conducted in partnership with the Smaller Business Association of New England (SBANE) consists of respondents primarily of New England businesses ranging in size from 10 to 100 employees, with some larger and smaller businesses also responding. Respondents were asked to consider the business climate for 2013 and to look ahead to 2014.

“The key takeaway from the survey is ‘business is good,’” said Nancy Mobley, CEO of Insight Performance. “For many respondents, there was a marked feeling of positive energy in terms of the 2013 results and the outlook for the future. At the same time, companies continue to remain conservative and fiscally responsible, but are recognizing the value of rewarding employees through benefits and employee programs.”

Some of the most pivotal findings from the HR Programs & Business Climate survey include:

- 64% of respondents feel business conditions today are better than 12 months ago.
- 78% of respondents expect business in 2014 to be better than 2013.
- Employee conditions in 2013: More than 60% hired new employees, more than 60% maintained or enhanced benefits, roughly 65% held company events such as holiday parties or summer outings and 50% awarded merit-based pay increases.
- Compensation: 73% of survey respondents plan to award base pay increases in 2014, with a majority of those companies budgeting between 0-3% increases.
- Bonuses and incentive compensation (not including commission): 24% of companies are planning such rewards for 2014 based on company performance, while 46% of companies have no such rewards planned at all.
- Employee benefits: The most popular benefits offered to full-time employees include medical insurance (95% offer), dental insurance (83%), long-term disability (73%) and life insurance (77%). The most popular additional programs offered include telecommuting/working remotely (42%), tuition reimbursement (68%) and paid maternity leave (66%).

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“Over the past three years, we’ve really seen HR and benefits become a calculated component of businesses’ overall strategy,” Mobley said. “2014 looks to be the year of doing more with less. As evidenced by the HR Programs & Business Climate survey, businesses will likely invest in what they already have rather than increasing headcount as their top priority. We will see more businesses finding ways to be creative with their existing staff, rethinking job positions and reorganizing strategically. We are seeing significant investments being made in leadership development, managerial training and coaching, for example, to ensure that employees are engaged, motivated and ready to accept new challenges.”

“Our observations, based on this survey and our experience in the smaller business marketplace, are that companies are currently sitting on more cash and profit than in years past,” said Bob Baker, President of SBANE. “We expect companies to remain cautious about adding to payroll, and believe those companies will continue to invest in their current staff to secure retention. This caution will likely continue for at least another year, as some companies who recently became too aggressive too soon seem to have regretted their decisions.”

SBANE and Insight Performance’s HR Programs & Business Climate survey was conducted in November 2013 to identify trends regarding business conditions, hiring and employee benefits and programs. The survey primarily targeted smaller businesses with 100 or fewer employees and most respondents were from the following industries: Manufacturing (26%), Technology (20%), Professional Services (20%), Non-Profit (14%) and Financial Services (11%).

To obtain the entire survey report, please contact Annelise Grant of Thomson Communications at annie@thomsoncommunications.com.

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About Insight Performance

Founded in 1995, Insight Performance, Inc. is a strategic human resources consulting firm that works with small and mid-sized companies to build exceptional workplaces. The firm, with offices in Dedham and Salem, Massachusetts, provides proven and cost-effective HR solutions to help companies, in a wide range of industries, solve real-world problems, and achieve their business goals. Insight Performance has been named a “Best Place to Work in Massachusetts,” the national recipient of Employer of the Year and Best Overall Company of the Year for Service Businesses (under 100 employees), and was a national finalist for Best Human Resources Organization. Additional information can be found at www.insightperformance.com.

About SBANE

The Smaller Business Association of New England, Inc. (SBANE), founded in 1938, is a private not-for-profit association of approximately 700 member companies located throughout the six-state region. SBANE was established to provide a legislative voice for small business at the state and federal levels and to make practical information available to help business owners grow their companies. SBANE runs diverse, educational programs each year and has active chapters in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Additional information can be found at www.sbane.org.