Small Business Owners Cite Personal Challenges, Including Lack of Time for Themselves and for Family and Friends, in New Constant Contact Survey

Even in the face of these hardships, 84% would choose to do it all over again

WALTHAM, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Just how hard is it to run a small business today? Extremely hard, according to a new survey from Constant Contact®, Inc.(NASDAQ: CTCT), released in conjunction with National Small Business Week. The sacrifices are considerable: 56 percent say they feel like they can never be away from their business and just over half (51 percent) say they don't have time to focus on themselves. Yet the rewards are considerable, too – and highly personal. A combined 59 percent cite having the freedom to try new things and make their own mistakes, or controlling their destiny, as the best part of running a small business. The overall message? The rewards far outweigh the challenges: 84 percent say if they had it to do all over again, they would still choose to run a small business.

> *"less red tape at a small business."*

Personal Sacrifice for Professional Gain

In addition to feeling tethered to their business and having zero time for themselves, small business owners say they don't take vacations (43 percent) or see their family and friends as much as they would like (40 percent). Forty-one percent say their money is tied up in their business.

Having to wear so many different hats is cited by 43 percent as the most difficult part of their job. In essence, they are in charge of sales and marketing, operations, customer relations, payroll, accounts payable, and more. Coming in second was "riding out bad economic times" (20 percent), followed by hiring and managing a staff (10 percent).

While conventional wisdom might point to healthcare and taxes, the top business concerns of small business owners are:

-- Finding new customers	66 percent
-- Having enough time to do everything I need to do	55 percent
-- Retaining existing customers	40 percent
-- Paying my bills	32 percent
-- Keeping up with technology advances	30 percent

The economy, taxes, and healthcare costs came in further down the list at 25 percent, 22 percent and 18 percent respectively.

So Why Do They Do It?

Given all of the challenges, both personal and professional, the million dollar question is, "Why do they do it?" Here is what they say:

-- Ability to pursue my passion	62 percent
-- Freedom to control my professional life	59 percent
-- Flexibility	50 percent
-- I don't want to work for anyone else	41 percent

"How many people can say they love what they do? As this survey shows, while being a small business owner may be one of

the toughest jobs in America, it's also one of the most rewarding," says Gail Goodman, CEO of Constant Contact. "Small business owners face incredible professional challenges that often impact every aspect of their lives. Yet their job represents their passion, and that seems to make the sacrifices worth it. It's also that passion that can translate to a great customer experience, which is why so many of us prefer to shop at, or work with, a small business over a larger competitor."

Big Company Defection

More than a half of those surveyed (54 percent) worked at a large or mid-sized company before running their small business. As for the biggest differences between running a small business and working at a larger company, respondents pointed largely to small business benefits: 69 percent cited "more freedom at a small business" and 50 percent cited "less red tape at a small business." Tied for third at 46 percent were corporate advantages: "more affordable benefits" and "more resources" at a large company.

The Best is Yet to Come

Despite lingering economic concerns, small business owners are optimistic about the future. Sixty-five percent say that five years from now they envision their business thriving, with more customers and/or more employees, a 12 percent increase from 2013, when the question was last asked.

As for what the best part of running a small business is, respondents say:

-- The freedom to try new things and make my own mistakes	30 percent
-- Controlling my destiny	29 percent
-- Being the decision-maker	19 percent
-- Putting my stamp on things	12 percent

In honor of Small Business Week, and in recognition of just how hard the job of a small business owner can be, Constant Contact has curated the best pieces of business advice received from small businesses, influencers, and more. Click here to view the advice.

About the Data

This Constant Contact data was compiled from a survey administered in March 2015 to 785 people running a small business who participate in the Constant Contact Small Biz Council – a research panel of US small businesses and nonprofits recruited from the Constant Contact customer base. The survey is part of an ongoing series about the state of small businesses and the ways they connect with, and grow, their audiences.

About Constant Contact®, Inc.

Constant Contact introduced the first email marketing tool for small businesses, nonprofits, and associations in 1998. Today, the company helps more than 600,000 customers worldwide find marketing success through the only all-in-one online marketing platform for small organizations. Anchored by our world-class email marketing tool, the Constant Contact Toolkit™ helps small businesses drive repeat business and find new customers. It features multi-channel marketing campaigns (newsletters/announcements, offers/promotions, online listings, events/registration, and feedback) combined with shared content, contacts, and reporting; free award-winning coaching and product support; and integrations with critical business tools – all from a single login. The company's extensive network of educators, consultants/resellers, technology providers, franchises, and national associations offer further support to help small organizations succeed and grow. Through its Innovation Loft, Constant Contact is fueling the next generation of small business technology.

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