

## **Groundhog Day: 25 Predictions for Spring's Small Business**

By Cynthia Bunting, February 2, 2011

It's Groundhog Day, and while Punxsutawney Phil may have a lock on predicting the weather, we think our own readers are best suited to predict what the spring holds for small business.

When the snow melts and the daffodils bloom, business owners will be ready to reinvest, reinvent and redouble their efforts to break new ground, grow and even flourish.

Here, 25 small business owners share their spring predictions with BusinessNewsDaily.

Businesses will continue their frugal ways until they are able to re-build and re-establish themselves.

— **Scott Allen Stouffer, seoengine.com**

With the growing population of very smart retirees, small business will choose to tap [into] their knowledge, guidance and advice for their small-biz growth rather than the old-fashioned route of hiring someone full-time to figure it all out.

— **Doug Poretz, nuuko.com**

We will continue to see a lack of loans and investments for small businesses for years to come. With a corporate tax rate in our country of almost double that of China and some Eastern European bloc countries, it will continue to be a tough road for small businesses. People will continue to invest in businesses in other countries because of the high tax rate here.

— **Neal Duncan, myradio.com**

I have been hearing a lot of continued buzz about "social" and "mobile" as the continued trends for business to get in on, but I don't know that either has yet come to fruition to truly be monetized for the small business. I do think it is important to begin inroads into those areas, so when they do become true methods that can lead toward sales for small businesses, one is not behind the curve.

— **Paul Shrater, minimus.biz**

I think in a few months you will start to see a very high demand for creative folks (developers, designers and engineers). As there are a ton of ideas floating around, people did not have the budget to vet out in 2010. Come July/August and mid-2011, I think you will start to see a lot of marketing folks, community managers and biz development

people getting hired.

— **Jonathan Kay, grasshoppergroup.com**

I believe that overall employment growth will still be slow, but small-business optimism will be up. There will still be controlled spending on the part of business owners, but they will free up some dollars for growth to keep their efforts moving forward.

— **Rob Basso, liadvantage.com**

I see the spring as being a gold mine for small business. Raising money on the low end of the spectrum (less than \$250k) has never been better and is poised for continued growth. Business owners who have had some level of success on their sites with customers, revenue, etc., should be in good shape to raise their first round of capital.

— **Michael Ivey, rentsavr.com**

The spring of 2011 will be a profitable climate for small businesses, but success will only be attained by those who can move forward and adapt to an ever-evolving business atmosphere. It needs to be back-to-basics time and the good 'ol fashioned sink-or-swim mentality.

— **Steven Picanza constantmotioncm.com**

I speak to and work with many small-business groups, and I'm seeing more of them abandon the typical "Write Business Plan — Ask for Bank Loan" route in lieu of just getting a prototype or simple business model off the ground quickly. They are using many of the free publishing, production and media tools out there to get things up and running and are trying to fund their growth themselves, as they grow. I think this backlash was due to the credit tightening many of them experienced, and the ones who made it were the ones who just bootstrapped and braced for action — any action — to keep them moving forward.

— **Maria Ross, red-slice.com**

We see a shift away from the hype of the dotcom and more personal business service.

— **Max Stewart, bellperformance.com**

I see more promotions and extending market reach the only way for small businesses to survive. People are giving more discounts than normal and innovating their products to the public. I think there will be some growth if small businesses can conquer a niche media and contain costs.

— **Jenna Loeb, justsweetnyc.com**

Businesses clearly need to increase hiring to lower the unemployment rate that has painstakingly hovered at 9.5 percent or greater for the last 16 months, and while the slight gain in payroll that we have seen in the government data over the past few weeks is positive, it is still not enough yet to make a meaningful dent in unemployment.

— **Will Boland, sageworksinc.com**

In order to stay active and competitive, small businesses will need to begin building an online presence and broadcasting their inventory online.

— **Josh Weaver, [pricefalls.com](http://pricefalls.com)**

I think the business climate for small business is looking up. Although the banks are not lending to small businesses with any real level of importance, corporations are moving forward. Customer confidence has steadied, if not improved. Government spending is leveling off as the need to pump cash into the system to keep everything moving started to be realized.

— **Jeffrey Yefsky, [5xtechnology.com](http://5xtechnology.com)**

We are seeing new business startups on the rise, due in no small part to the unemployment rate. People who have been unable to find employment, or who have been stuck in jobs beneath their experience level, are going out on their own as free-lancers and small businesses. These small business are helping to boost the business climate by offering services at lower prices than had been previously available, allowing other business to purchase more of those services.

— **Eric Lopkin, [modernobserver.com](http://modernobserver.com)**

Optimism, the currency of entrepreneurial success in general, is back, and it is flourishing. Few things sell as well as someone with a smile on their face.

— **John Klymshyn, [johnklymshyn.com](http://johnklymshyn.com)**

Spring 2011 looks great. The past couple of years were hard on the fundraising industry and some major players went away. But schools still need to raise money, and as the economy warms back up, things look great for those of us who managed to hang on.

— **Jordan Gottlieb, [go-green-fundraising.com](http://go-green-fundraising.com)**

In 2011, entrepreneurs will drive America's economic rebirth. The drumbeat has begun. Starting with the long-delayed ratification of the U.S. - South Korea Free Trade Agreement, a rise in U.S. exports and a slight shrinking of the U.S. trade imbalance, American small businesses will eventually find their footing.

— **Neal Asbury, [thelegacycompanies.com](http://thelegacycompanies.com)**

This has never been a better time for small business. The Internet is the great equalizer. Small businesses can compete with much bigger businesses and market far less expensively by using blogs, social media and by taking advantage of new, location-based platforms to attract new local customers.

— **Jon Gelberg, [bluefountainmedia.com](http://bluefountainmedia.com)**

I think this will be the year of the female entrepreneur. With the government rolling out a set-aside certification program just for women business owners, the private sector will follow this spring with a shift in focus on women business owners.

— **Melinda F. Emerson [succeedasyourownboss.com](http://succeedasyourownboss.com)**

We see new construction continuing to be slow. On the flip side, though, we expect home renovation, especially among higher-end homeowners, to be very strong. On the downside, we expect financing availability for home remodeling to continue to be limited.

— **Todd E. Miller, [classicroof.com](http://classicroof.com)**

This is going to be another great year for green, as we are starting to see it go mainstream. More and more consumers are actively seeking it, making green business a must-have.

— **Marcos Cordero, [gbb.org](http://gbb.org)**

The only way I see any improvement in the small-business arena is if we see dramatic decreases in government spending and regulation. There is a disincentive for small-business owners to hire with the uncertainty of the health care bill, thousands of new regulations and a temporary extension of the Bush tax cuts. Unless the newly elected members of Congress and state legislatures are able to return us to some level of normalcy on both fronts (spending and regulation), I do not see any real change in small-business owner's willingness to take more risk and invest in people, equipment or training.

— **Shawn Brodof, [clarity-coaching.biz](http://clarity-coaching.biz)**

Segments that should see some great growth in the next year are health care and IT. The climate is ripe for the IT world because many businesses put off doing anything with IT for the past few years.

— **Rob Jager, [hedgehogconsultinginc.com](http://hedgehogconsultinginc.com)**

I think the main change we will see in the spring of 2011 is more- friendly lending practices from banks to small businesses. Banks are starting to realize that it is small businesses that are ones that really create jobs in this economy.

— **Marty Ferrill, [phillysoftpretzelfactory.com](http://phillysoftpretzelfactory.com)**