

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Which industries did best, worst in '09?

By Jan Norman, small-business columnist

December 26th, 2009, 6:00 am

Although 2009 was a tough year for millions of Americans and small businesses, some industry categories did better than others, according to Sageworks Inc, which provides financial analysis of privately owned businesses.

Here are the best and worst performing industries, based on Sageworks database:

Industry	Sales - % Change
Best in Business, 2009	
Physical and Occupational Therapists, Chiropractors, Optometrists, Podiatrists	12%
Physicians Offices	10%
Property Managers, Appraisers	8%
Grocery Wholesalers	5%
Quick-Service Restaurants	3%
Worst in Business, 2009	
Wood Product Manufacturing	-26%
Law Firms	-21%
Automobile Dealers	-20%
Petroleum Wholesalers	-17%
Home Furnishings Stores	-16%

Note that certain types of doctors and cheap eats categories were among the winners, while a couple of housing-related industries - a big loser for about 3 years now - the auto industry - can you say GM - and gasoline wholesalers performed the worst.

Overall, small-business sales fell an average 3.8% in 2009 (as of Nov. 18). In all of 2008, their sales rose 2.4%, Sageworks says, adding that big public companies saw their sales slip just 1.8% this year.

* Source: Sageworks Inc.