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Taking Stock of the Worst-Performing Industries of 2008

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In continuation of the year-end list-making spirit, here's another one. Data provider Sageworks Inc. recently put together a compilation of 2008's worst performing industries, and many of the sectors are home to lots of small businesses. Looking at the list, there's no question it's been a tough year for many many people. And as my colleague Kelly Spors pointed out in the last [Independent Street post](#), tough times are likely to continue well into the new year.

Some of the industries with sales declines come as no surprise: Construction materials is close to the top, and so is real-estate sales. Others are less obvious. Florists find their way onto the list, and so do limousine companies - a sign that both businesses and consumers are pulling back and spending less.

Here are the top 15 worst-performing industries of 2008 — and their annual percentage sales decline — according to Sageworks:

Sawmills and Wood Preservation - 6%

Lumber and Other Construction Materials Merchant Wholesalers - 6%

Offices of Real Estate Agents and Brokers - 6%

Activities Related to Credit Intermediation - 5%

Cement and Concrete Product Manufacturing - 3%

Motor Vehicle and Motor Vehicle Parts and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers - 3%

Taxi and Limousine Service - 2%

Credit Intermediation - 2%

Florists - 2%

Wood Product Manufacturing - 2%

Building Material and Supplies Dealers - 2%

Furniture Stores - 1%

Furniture and Home Furnishings Merchant Wholesalers - 1%

Veneer, Plywood, and Engineered Wood Product Manufacturing - 1%

Drycleaning and Laundry Services - 1%

Readers, do any of the industries on this list surprise you? How has your business fared this year in comparison?