AT&T Small Business Tech Poll 2012

Key National Findings

67% of small businesses surveyed use tablet computers.

General Wireless Technologies

- Nearly all small businesses (96%) surveyed use wireless technologies in their operations, with almost two-thirds (63%) indicating that they could not survive — or it would be a major challenge to survive — without wireless technologies.
- More than four in 10 (43%) small businesses surveyed report all of their employees use wireless devices or technologies to work away from the office, a nearly 80% jump from three years ago.
- Despite being a relatively new device, two-thirds (67%) of small businesses surveyed indicate that they use tablet computers, up from 57% a year ago.
- By end of 2012, some 50% of small businesses surveyed expect to have all their employees using wireless technologies to work away from the office.

Use of Tablets

Nationally, the use of tablet computers has jumped by 17.5% from last year. Seventy-five percent of small business users check email with their tablets.

Significance of Technology

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of small businesses nationally report that without wireless technologies, they either could not survive or it would be a major challenge.
Based on responses to questions regarding four factors – perceived importance of wireless, use of wireless technology, use of mobile apps, and percentage of employees using wireless to work away from the office— a Wireless Quotient, or “WiQ,” was calculated for each of the 12 markets surveyed. The top three include:

1. Dallas
2. Washington, D.C.
3. Atlanta

In 2011, Miami, Atlanta, and San Diego topped the "WiQ" rankings.

Mobile Applications
- Almost one-third (30%) of small businesses surveyed use mobile apps for business, with key reasons being to save time, increase productivity and reduce costs.
- Mobile apps are gaining importance for small businesses that use them, with half (50%) saying they could not survive – or it would be a major challenge to survive – without mobile apps, a 31% jump over the past year.
- GPS navigation and mapping mobile apps are by far the most popular, with 80% of business owners reporting use, followed by location-based services (44%) and social media marketing apps (42%).

Smartphones and Devices
- 85% of small businesses reported using smartphones for their operations, up from 80% last year and more than double the usage five years ago (42%).
- 4G Devices:
  - One third of smartphones used by small businesses for business are 4G.
  - Nearly nine in 10 (86%) of the businesses using 4G smartphones are satisfied with the speed.
  - Of those who don’t have 4G devices, more than one-third (35%) report that they plan to purchase 4G smartphones within the next year, and more than half (54%) within the next two years.
- Keypads:
  - 50% of small businesses indicated that touchscreen is the predominant type of keypad in their operations, followed by traditional QWERTY keypads at 21%.
  - 21% indicated that their businesses use both types of smartphone keypads.

The national results of the “AT&T Small Business Technology Poll” are based on an online survey conducted in November 2011 of 1,232 small business owners and/or employees responsible for Information Technology (IT). The sample of participating companies was drawn from e-Rewards’ online business panel of companies. Small businesses were defined as having between 2 and 100 employees.