



Affirm survey: 90% of small businesses are confident in growth outlook and turning to flexible payments to compete

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Finds business owners see Buy Now, Pay Later as a growth tool, a trust signal, and a way to level the playing field with bigger businesses

SAN FRANCISCO--(BUSINESS WIRE)--May 11, 2026-- Affirm (NASDAQ: AFRM) today released results from its inaugural Small Business Sentiment Survey. The findings show small business owners are navigating a more demanding market but remain confident about the year ahead, looking to flexible payment options to help them keep pace.

Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) is one of those tools, with many saying it helps them attract customers and build trust. Most also said expanding access to these options would benefit both businesses and the consumers they serve.

"Small businesses are the backbone of the American economy, and this survey makes clear that they are resilient, ambitious, and always looking for an edge," said Pat Suh, SVP of Revenue at Affirm. "Nearly 70% told us BNPL acts as a stamp of approval in the eyes of their customers, signaling credibility at checkout and helping bring in new shoppers. This puts a premium on transparency and trust, which is exactly what small businesses are looking for in a partner as they work to stand out and grow."

Small businesses are confident and ready to compete amid real pressure

Small business owners are bullish on their prospects. 90% say they are confident in their business outlook over the next 12 months, with 65% saying their confidence is higher than at the same point last year. That optimism exists alongside ongoing economic pressure: 86% say rising costs are a top concern, and 61% say they worry about competing with larger businesses.

BNPL is moving from nice-to-have to a competitive need

Small businesses broadly agree that flexible payment options help level the playing field. 70% say BNPL helps attract new customers, and 66% say it helps them compete with bigger businesses.

Among respondents currently offering BNPL, both those numbers rise to 92% — underscoring that once small businesses start using flexible payment options, they are much more likely to see the business value firsthand.

Flexible payments are good for small businesses and good for consumers

The survey also shows that small business owners see BNPL as more than just a payment tool. 68% of respondents agree that offering BNPL at checkout acts as a "stamp of approval" for customers. In other words, it signals trust.

61% of small businesses say customers who use BNPL are exercising smart financial planning. That matters because business owners are not just focused on driving sales. They are thinking about the customer experience and want to offer payment options that help customers feel confident.

Support for BNPL access cuts across party lines

The survey data also shows broad, bipartisan support for expanding access to BNPL.

68% of respondents say they would be more likely to support policymakers who advocate for small business access to these tools.

That support spans the political spectrum: 72% of self-identified Republican and 74% of Democratic business owners say they are more likely to support lawmakers who push for policies that expand access to flexible payments.

Views on responsible use were similarly broad. 67% of Republican and 66% of Democratic small business owners say BNPL is a smart financial tool that reflects planning and careful money management.

"Small businesses across the country are asking for the same thing: a fair shot," said John Pitts, Vice President for Government Relations, Public Affairs, and Social Impact. "76% of small business owners support expanding access to flexible payment tools like BNPL. It's not an ideological issue, it's a Main Street issue. It's about whether local businesses have access to the tools they need to serve customers and stay competitive."

Trust and transparency matter

When asked what matters most in a BNPL partner, 55% of small business owners said transparency around fees and terms.

That is central to how Affirm operates, and it aligns with another key finding from the survey: 72% of respondents said they trust Affirm to operate fairly and transparently. Among small businesses that already offer Affirm, that figure rises to 95%.

"We've built Affirm around the principles of transparency, no late fees, and fair treatment for consumers," said Suh. "Small and medium-sized businesses—which make up 95% of Affirm's merchant base—are clear about wanting access to flexible, transparent pay-over-time tools. We believe that trust is earned through simple, honest products that help both merchants and consumers succeed."

About the Survey

The Affirm Small Business Sentiment Survey was conducted by Tunnl using online data collection methods between February 27 and March 4, 2026. The survey includes responses from 511 U.S. small business owners with at least 2 and no more than 250 employees. The sample was weighted to align with key demographic benchmarks, including age, region, and company size. The margin of error for the full sample is ± 4.3 percentage points.

About Affirm

Affirm's mission is to deliver honest financial products that improve lives. By building a new kind of payment network — one based on trust, transparency, and putting people first — we empower millions of consumers to spend and save responsibly and give thousands of businesses the tools to fuel growth. Unlike most credit cards and other pay-over-time options, we never charge any late or hidden fees. Follow Affirm on social media: [LinkedIn](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [X](#).

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