

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Economic Outlook

- Expectations about the short-term future of the economy continue to worsen. This pessimism is being driven by anxiety about unemployment.
- Less than one-in-five think the federal government is doing a good job of managing Canada's economy. Provincial governments fare somewhat better on this issue, but all garner less than majority approval.
- Canadians believe the free trade agreement with the U.S. and the GST (i.e. specific government initiatives) are driving the current recession. The reason selected third most often is global economic conditions.

Competitiveness

- Awareness of the competitiveness issue has rebounded to the level recorded in the late summer (56%).
- A growing majority believe Canada is falling behind its international competitors and is not competing as well as it should be.
- Canadians without fail accept that the only way to preserve our standard of living is through trading competitively in the global marketplace.
- Only a minority (down from the majorities recorded previously) now believe the federal government is committed to making Canada internationally competitive.
- Most Canadians believe that Canadian businesses must take more responsibility for competitiveness by investing in research and employee retraining.
- A strong majority agree that to ensure that Canada's standard of social programs is maintained, Canada's economy must be more competitive.
- There is rising support for protectionism. Almost half agree that the government should take action to protect Canadian business and industry by limiting the amount of foreign goods sold here, even if it means that Canadians will pay more for their products.