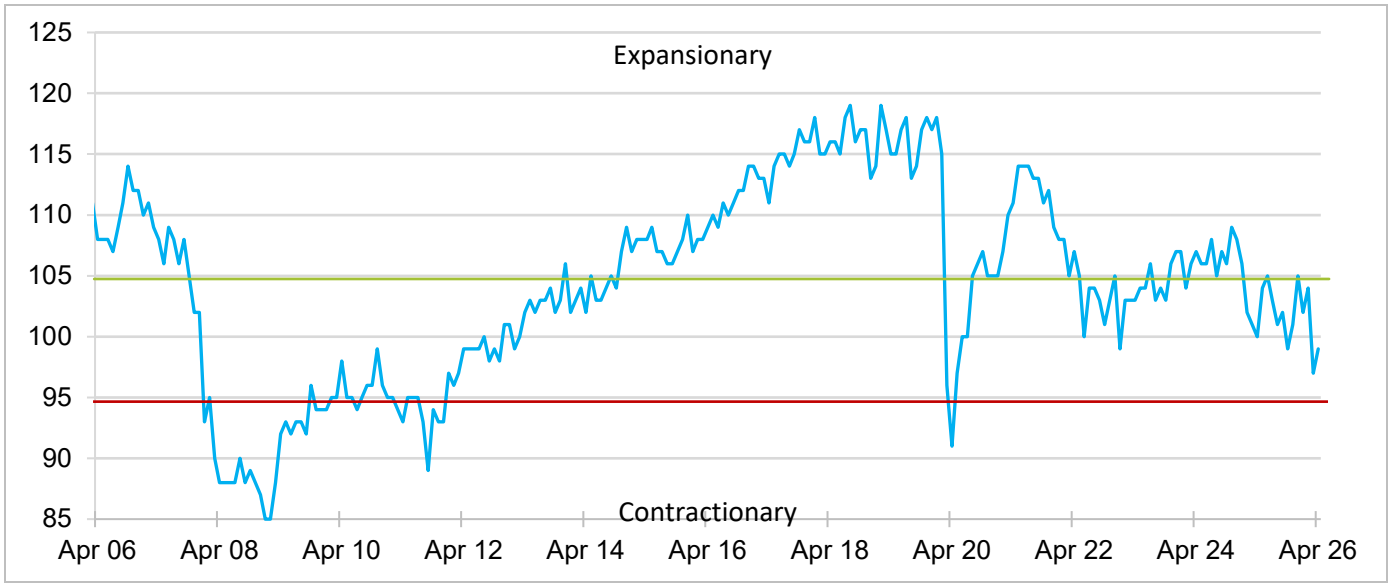
Decision Analyst Economic Index
April 2026

Index	↓5	Prices Increasing Rapidly	Very Strong Business Activity	Take A Vacation Costing More Than $1000
99	From May 2025	50%	13%	36%
↑2 from previous month		↑6% from May 2025	↓6% from May 2025	↑6% from May 2025

Index Drops: Economy at Risk

Arlington, Texas—The Decision Analyst U.S. Economic Index for April 2026 was 99, an increase of 2 points from the previous month, but a decrease of 5 points from May 2025. The U.S. Economic Index has, on average, trended downward over the last 18 months. The U.S. economy is now very similar to its status (or level) in 2012, when the U.S. economy was digging out of the Great Recession. The U.S. Economic Index tends to be a leading indicator of the U.S. economy as the history of the Economic Index below indicates:

United States Economic Index ***April 2006–April 2026***



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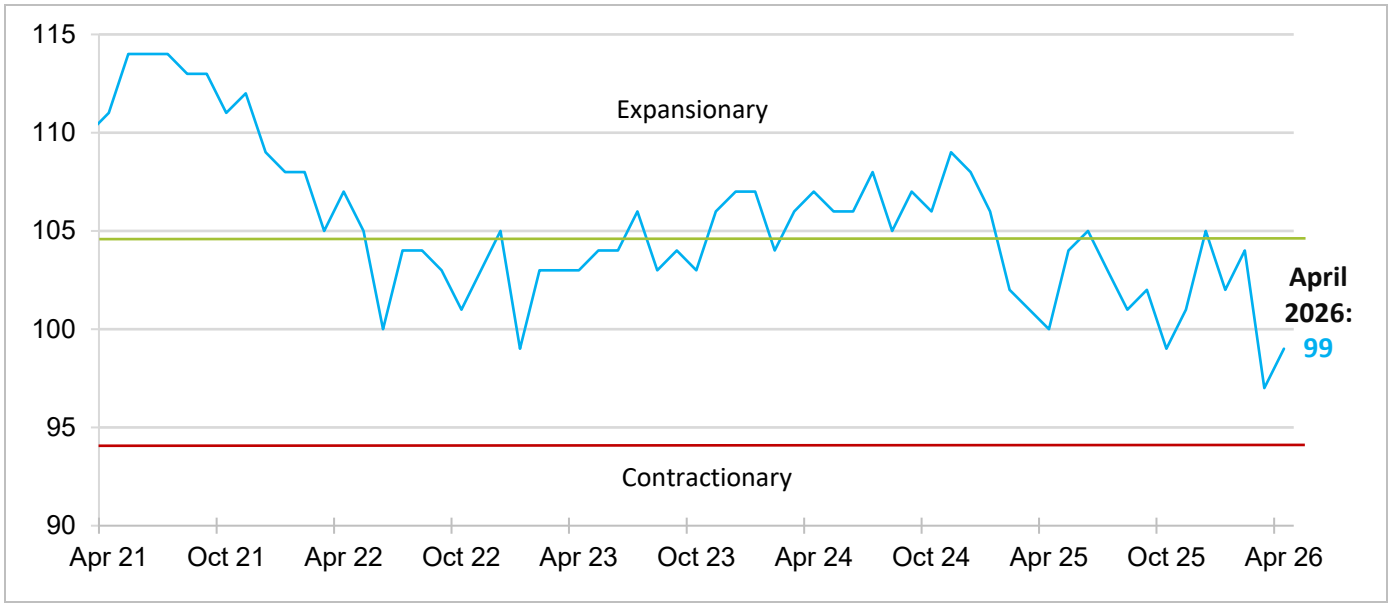
Close-Up of the Past 5 Years

As the Close-Up graph below clearly shows, the U.S. economy has been slumping, on average, since the Fall of 2024, an 18-to-20-month decline. This downtrend has been driven by growing weakness in the U.S. labor market and continued inflation pressures on middle and lower-income households.

United States Economic Index ***April 2021–April 2026***



"The percent of U.S. residents who say "Jobs are plentiful and easy to find" has declined about 2 percentage points over the past 12 months, a downtrend that started 5 years ago. The percent who say "prices are increasing rapidly" remains stubbornly high at 50%. Those "very worried" or "somewhat worried" about losing their jobs in April 2026 stands at 52%," said Jerry W. Thomas, CEO of Decision Analyst. "And consumer spending plans over the next 12 months declined in April, compared to a year ago. The economy is facing strong threats, and recession risks are rising," said Thomas. "The war in Iran probably accounts for most of the decline in the Economic Index, perhaps aided by lingering effects of increased tariffs and still relatively high interest rates."

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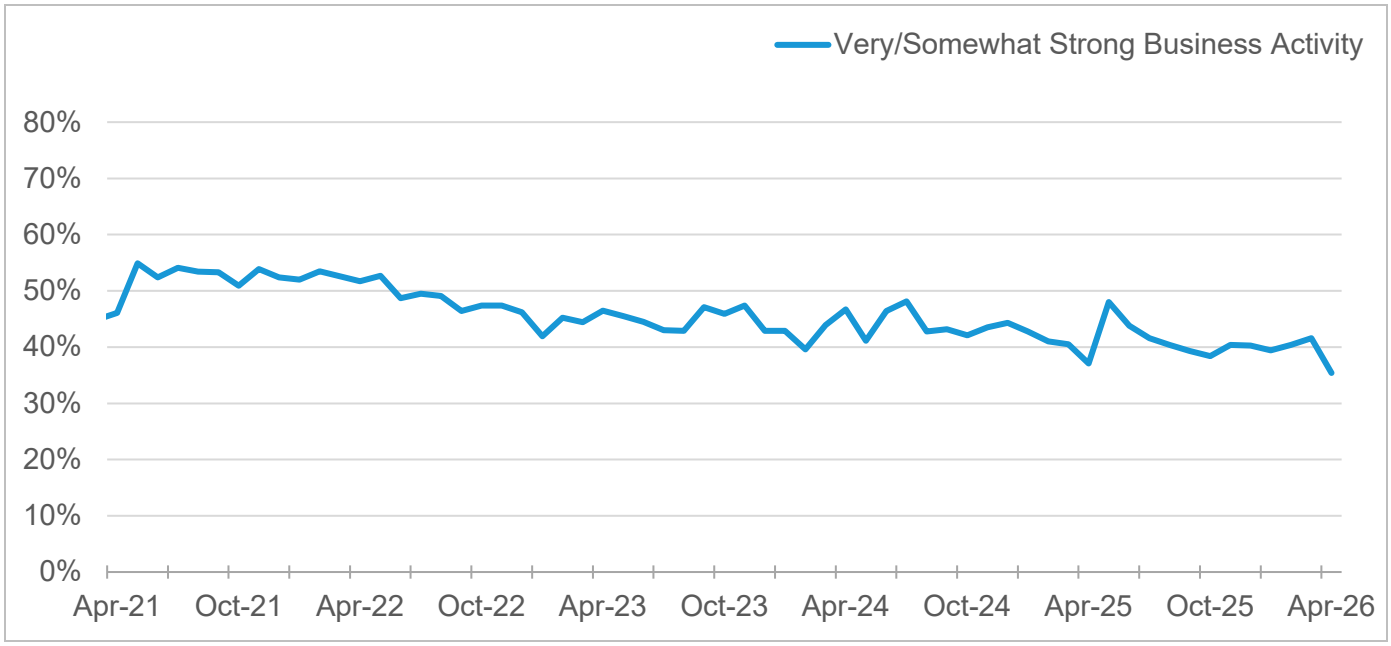
General Business Activity

General business activity (where people work) has gradually trended downward over the past 4-5 years. A trend also reflected in the chart on job availability (next page).

Consumer Perceptions of General Business Activity ***April 2021–April 2026***



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Job Availability Perceptions

The job market is in a long-term downtrend (over the past 5 years), as revealed by the decline in the percent of U.S. residents who say, “jobs are plentiful and easy to find.” The percentage fell from above the 50% level in 2021 to 15% in April 2026.

Job Availability ***April 2021–April 2026***

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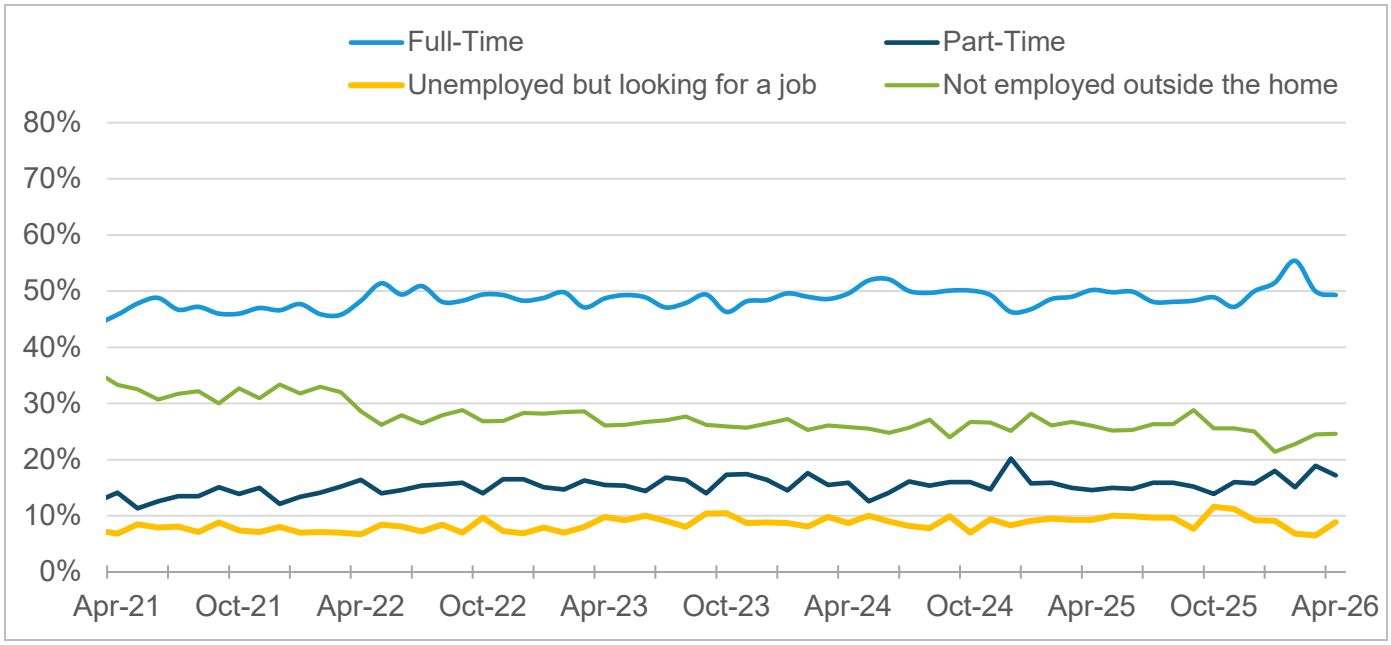
Employment Status

Full-time employment and part-time employment have remained relatively steady over the past 5 years, showing modest growth in both metrics, but full-time employment appears to be turning downward. However, the unemployment rate (i.e., those unemployed and actively looking for jobs) has gradually increased over the past 5 years. There are indications that some retired or inactive workers have moved back into the labor force during 2025 and 2026 because of inflation and financial stress.

Employment Status ***April 2021–April 2026***



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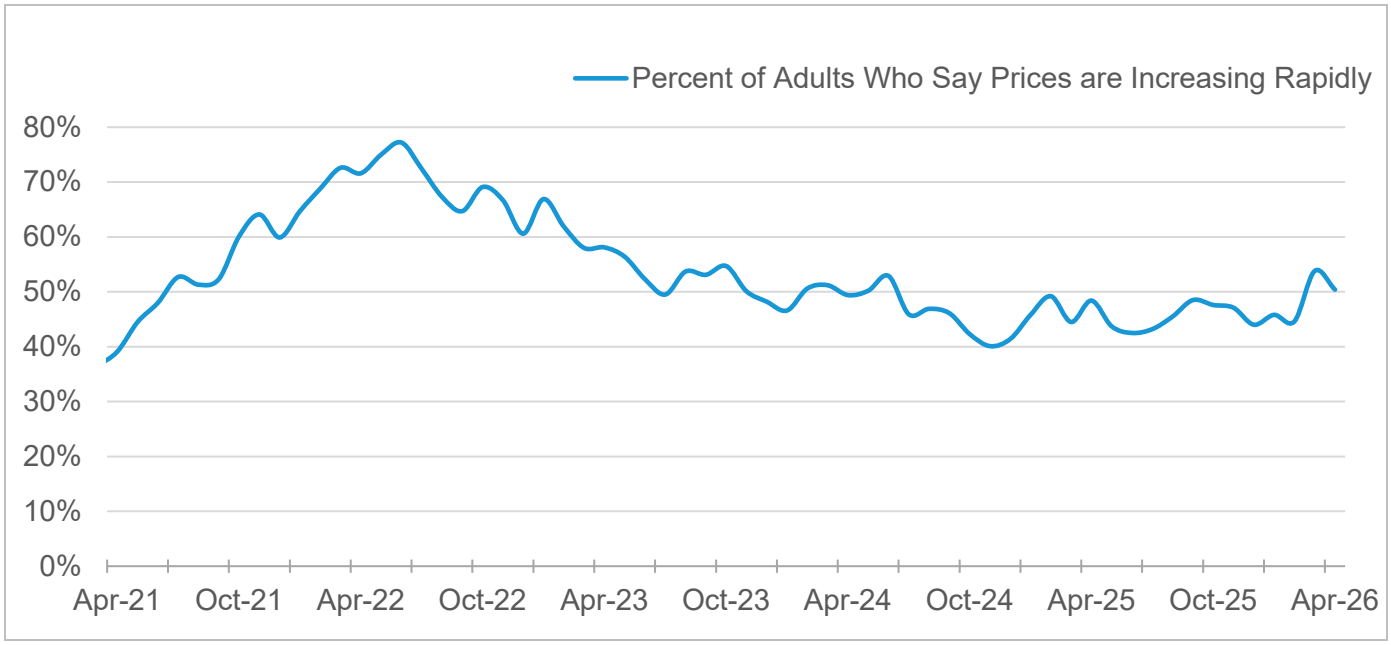
Consumer Perceptions of Prices

Consumers continue to express serious concerns over rising prices. Fifty percent of U.S. adults report that prices are “increasing rapidly”, so perceived inflation remains an important issue among U.S. residents.

Consumer Perceptions of Rising Prices ***April 2021–April 2026***



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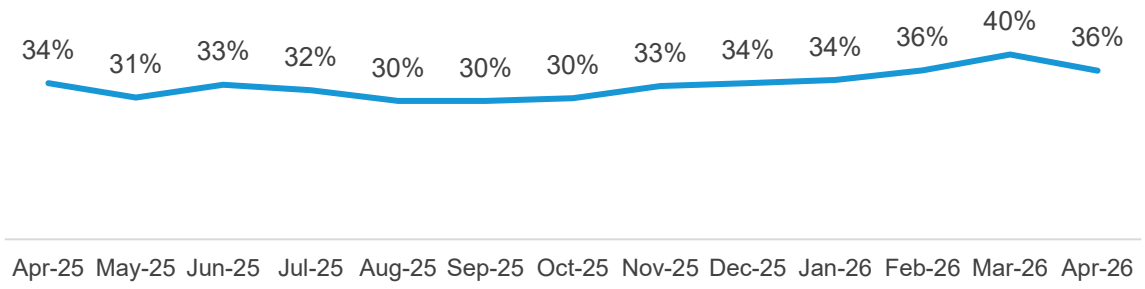
Future Purchase Intent

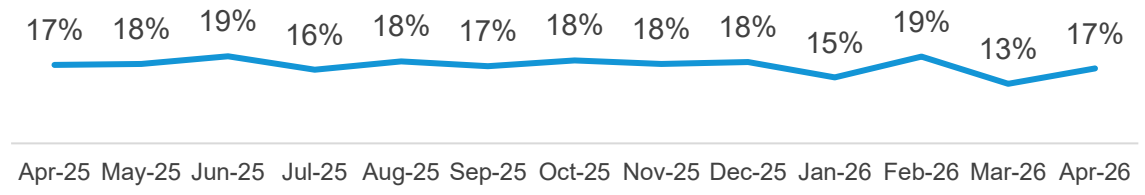
A quick look at the trend charts reveals that consumers were still planning to spend on vacations as recently as last month; however, that percentage dropped 4 percentage points in April. Consumer spending is a major driver of the U.S. economy (roughly 70%), so as consumer spending waxes and wanes, the U.S. economy tends to move in parallel. Consumer spending plans for the next 12 months were flat to down across most sectors of the economy.

Likely Consumer Purchases In The Next 12 Months ***April 2025–April 2026***

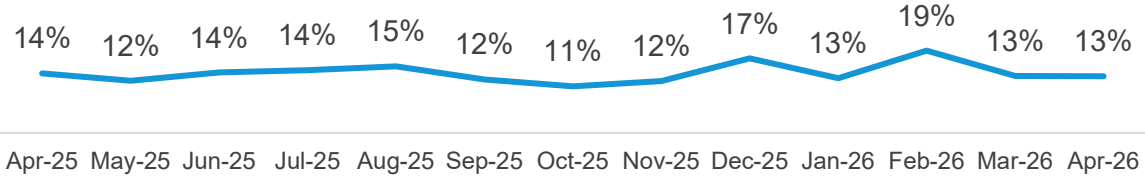
Take A Vacation Costing More Than $1,000



Buy A New PC Or Computer Equipment For Home



Buy A New Car Or Truck



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Decision Analyst Economic Index

April 2026

Likely Consumer Purchases In The Next 12 Months ***April 2025–April 2026***

Buy New Furniture For Home	16%	21%	20%	18%	15%	17%	15%	16%	17%	18%	17%	15%	17%
	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	1-Apr
Remodel Existing Home	9%	10%	9%	10%	10%	8%	8%	12%	8%	8%	9%	7%	8%
	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26
Buy An Existing Or Pre-Owned Home	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	5%	4%	7%	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%
	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26
Buy A Newly-Built Home	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	1%	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%
	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26

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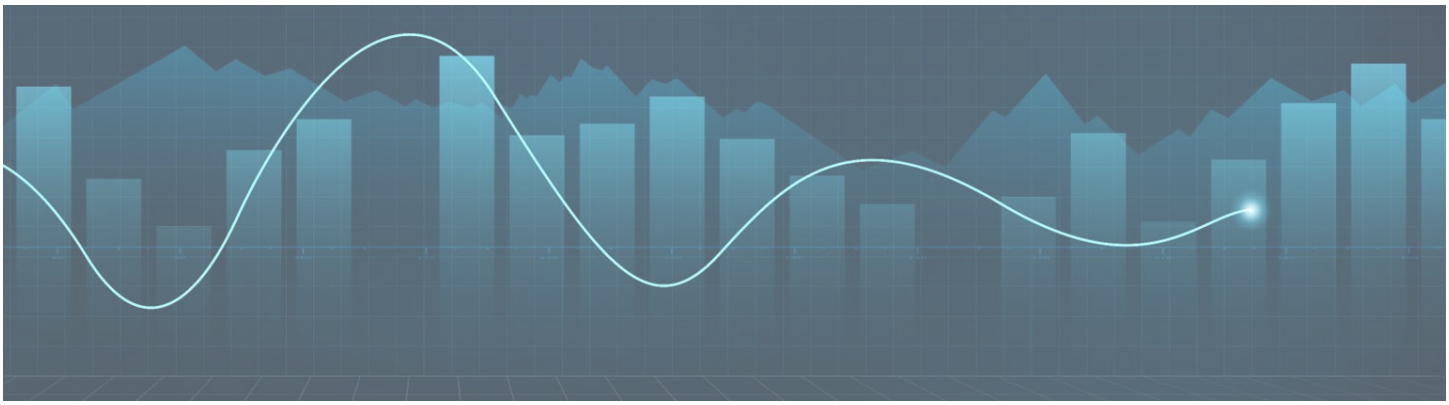

Methodology

The Decision Analyst Economic Index is based on a monthly online survey of several thousand households balanced by gender, age, and geography. The scientific survey is conducted in the last 10 days of each month. The Economic Index is calculated from 9 different economic measurements using a sophisticated econometric model. The result is a snapshot of future economic activity in each country surveyed, as seen through the eyes of representative consumers living in their respective countries.

Whenever the Decision Analyst Economic Index is greater than 105, it tends to signal an expanding economy. An Index value below 95 indicates recession, and an Index of 110 or above indicates rapid expansion of the U.S. economy. These guidelines vary by country, however.

About Decision Analyst

Decision Analyst (www.decisionanalyst.com) is a global research and analytical consulting firm specializing in strategy research, new product development, advertising testing, and advanced modeling for marketing decision optimization. For more than 45 years, the firm has delivered competitive advantage to clients throughout the world in consumer-packaged goods, high technology, retail, medical, automotive, and other major industries.

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