

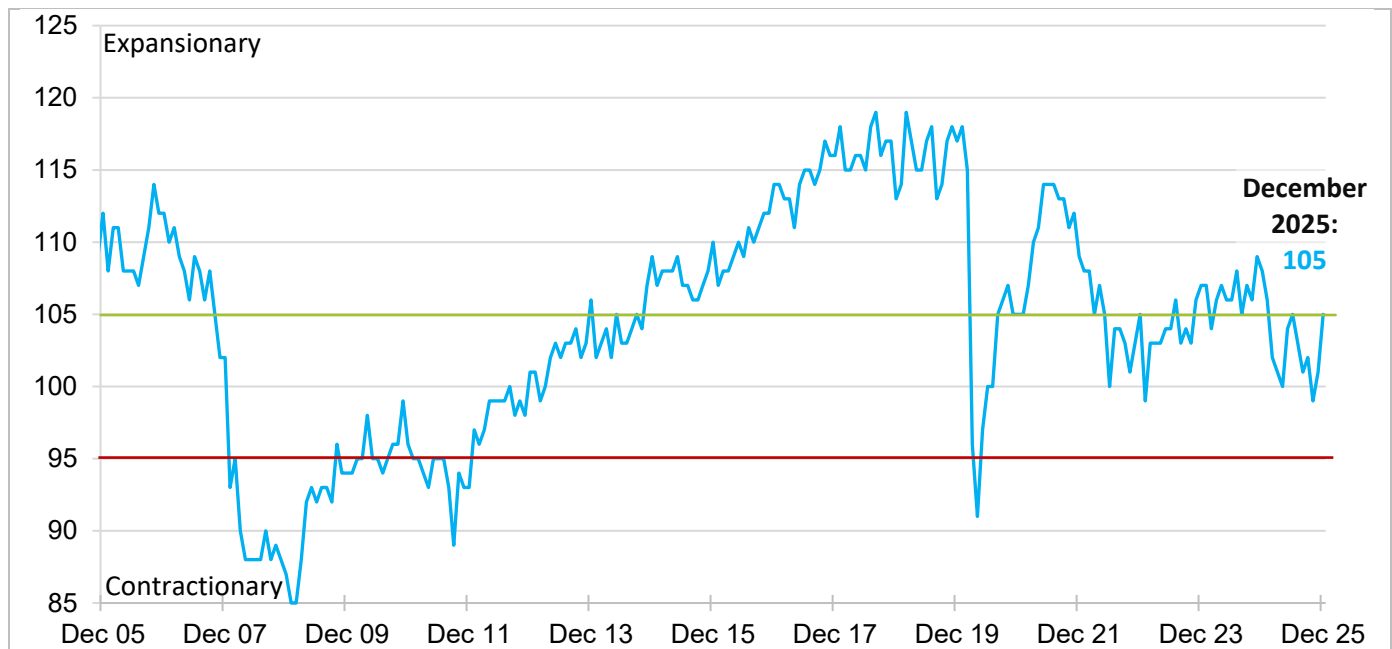


Decision Analyst's December Economic Index is Signaling an Uncertain Economy

Arlington, Texas—The Decision Analyst U.S. Economic Index for December 2025 was 105, an uptick of 4 points from the previous month. This is a significant increase, but maybe a seasonal jump as everyone got into the spirit of the Holiday Season. Falling gasoline prices in December might also partly explain the jump in consumer expectations, along with falling interest rates toward the end of 2025. The downtrend in the Economic Index during most of 2025 seems to be driven by tariffs and tariff fears and growing worries about U.S. inflation. 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

December 2005–December 2025



Decision Analyst Economic Index

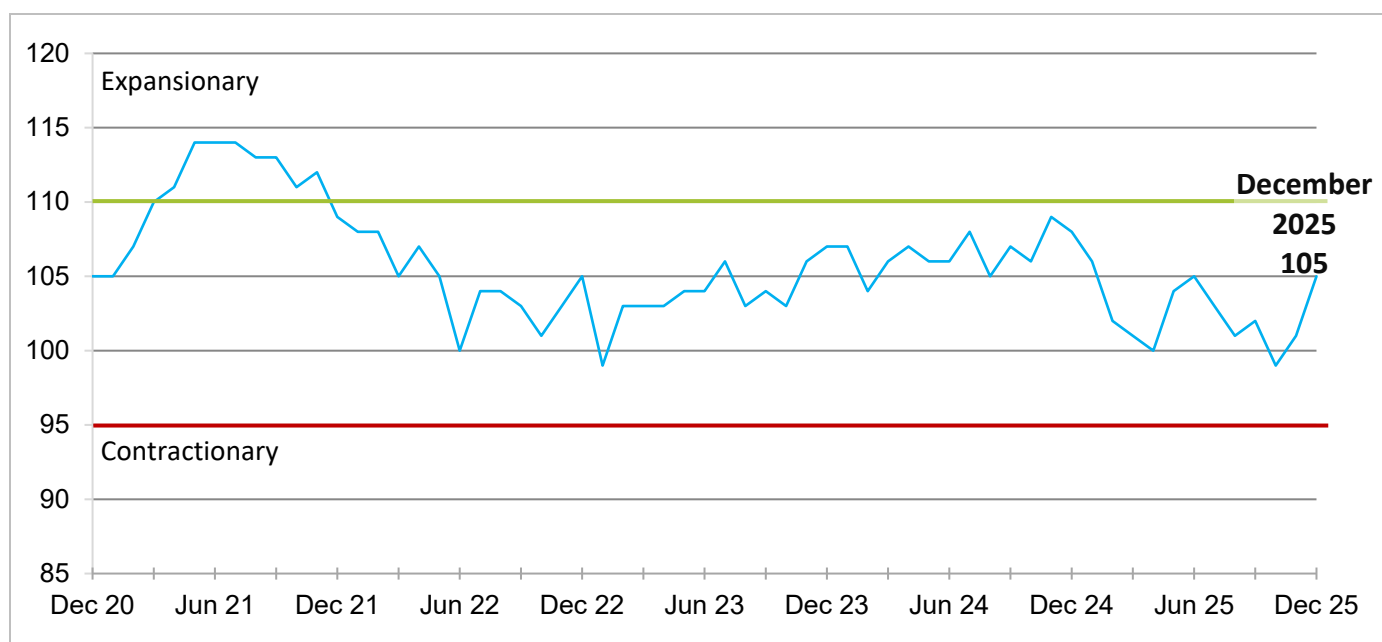
December 2025



Close-Up of the Past 5 Years

United States Economic Index

December 2020–December 2025



The percent of U.S. residents who say “Jobs are plentiful and easy to find” has declined about 6 to 7 percentage points over the past 12 months, and the percent who say “prices are increasing rapidly” has remained above 40% for the last 5 months. If the “prices are increasing rapidly” percent is added to the percent who say “prices are increasing slowly,” the “prices are increasing” total is close to 80%. The percent “very worried” or “somewhat worried” about losing their jobs currently stands at around 50%, said Jerry W. Thomas, CEO of Decision Analyst. “Some consumer spending plans over the next 12 months are showing signs of weakness, but other product categories are showing upticks, so no clear pattern of future spending plans is evident. The economy is probably still expanding, but the expansion is still at risk,” said Thomas, “because the full effects of increased tariffs will take a year or two to fully manifest themselves.”

Decision Analyst Economic Index

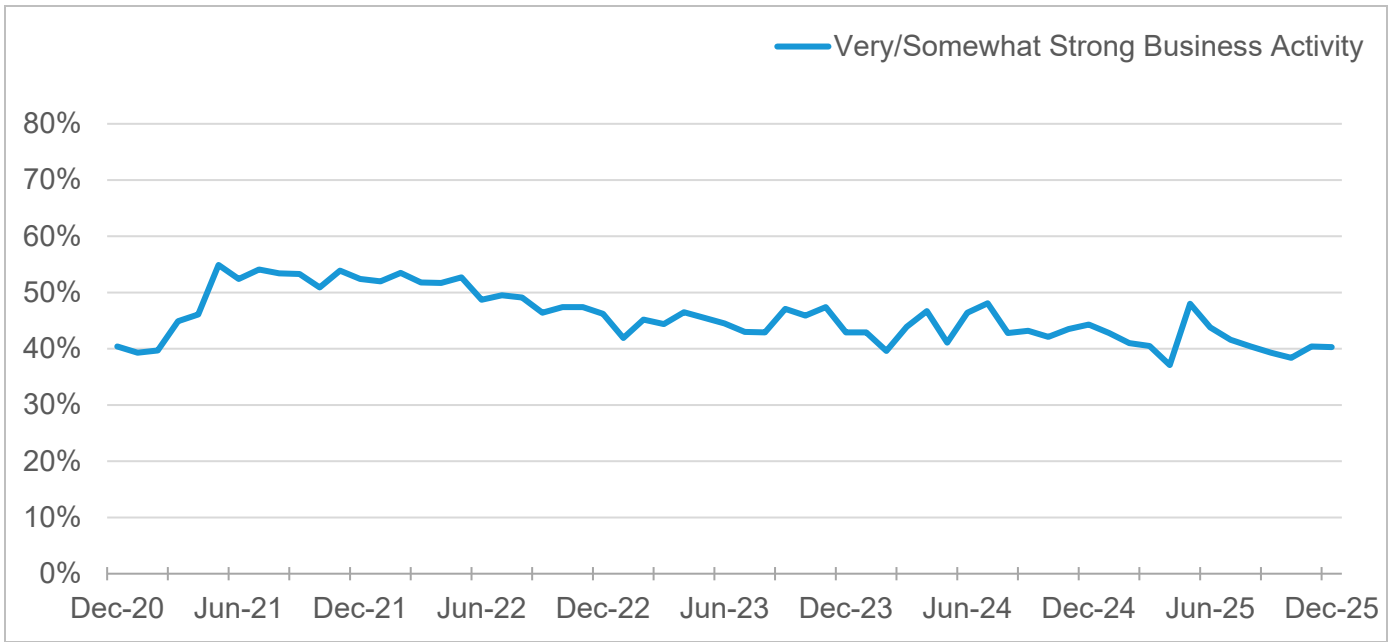
December 2025



General Business Activity

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

Consumer Perceptions of General Business Activity December 2020–December 2025





Job Availability Perceptions

The job market is definitely weakening, a trend that began at least four years ago, as indicated by the decline in the percent of U.S. residents who say “jobs are plentiful and easy to find.” The percent fell from the 50% level in December 2021 to less than 15% in December 2025.

Job Availability

December 2020–December 2025



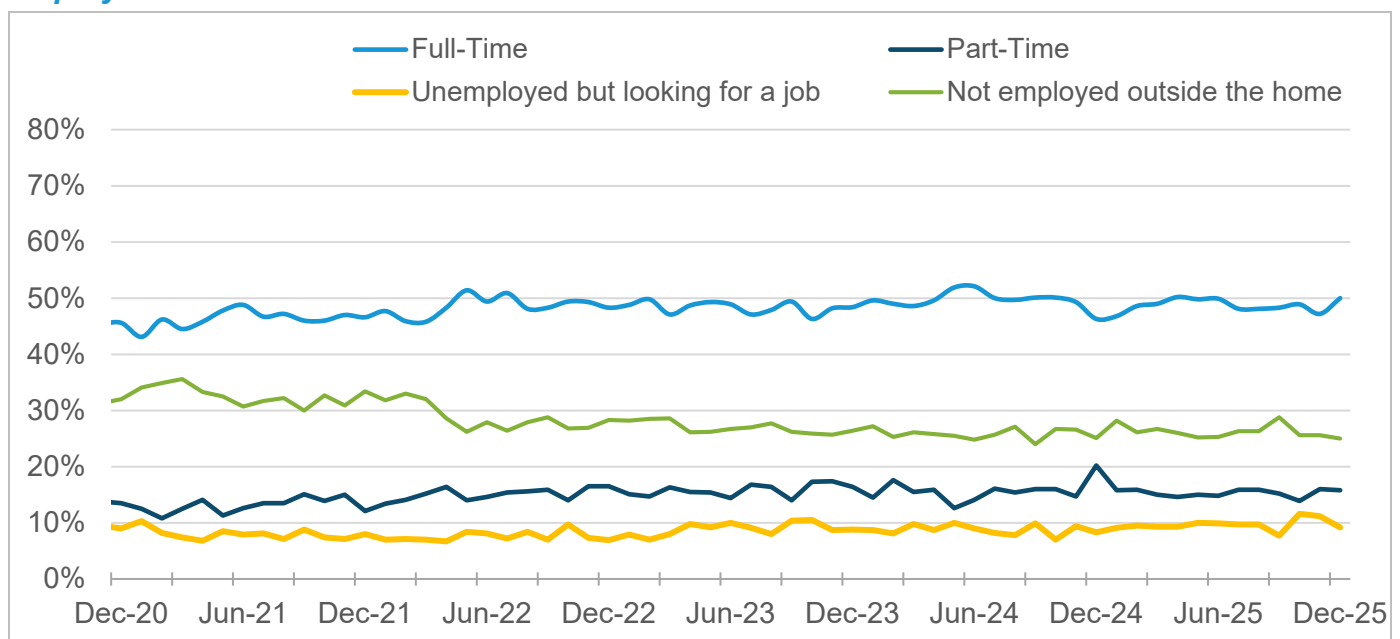


Employment Status

Full-time employment and part-time employment have remained relatively steady over the past 5 years, but the unemployment rate (i.e., those unemployed and actively looking for jobs) has gradually increased over the same time as more people moved into the labor market. Again, both are signs of a weakening job market. It's interesting that the unemployment rate in 2025, as measured in this survey, is at the 9% to 11% level versus the government's reported rate of a little over 4%. Our definition of unemployment is slightly different from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, but it is also possible that the U.S. Government is under-reporting unemployment (not necessarily on purpose, but through methodological weakening over time). There are indications that some retired or inactive workers moved back into the labor force during 2025 because of inflation and financial stress.

Employment Status

December 2020–December 2025



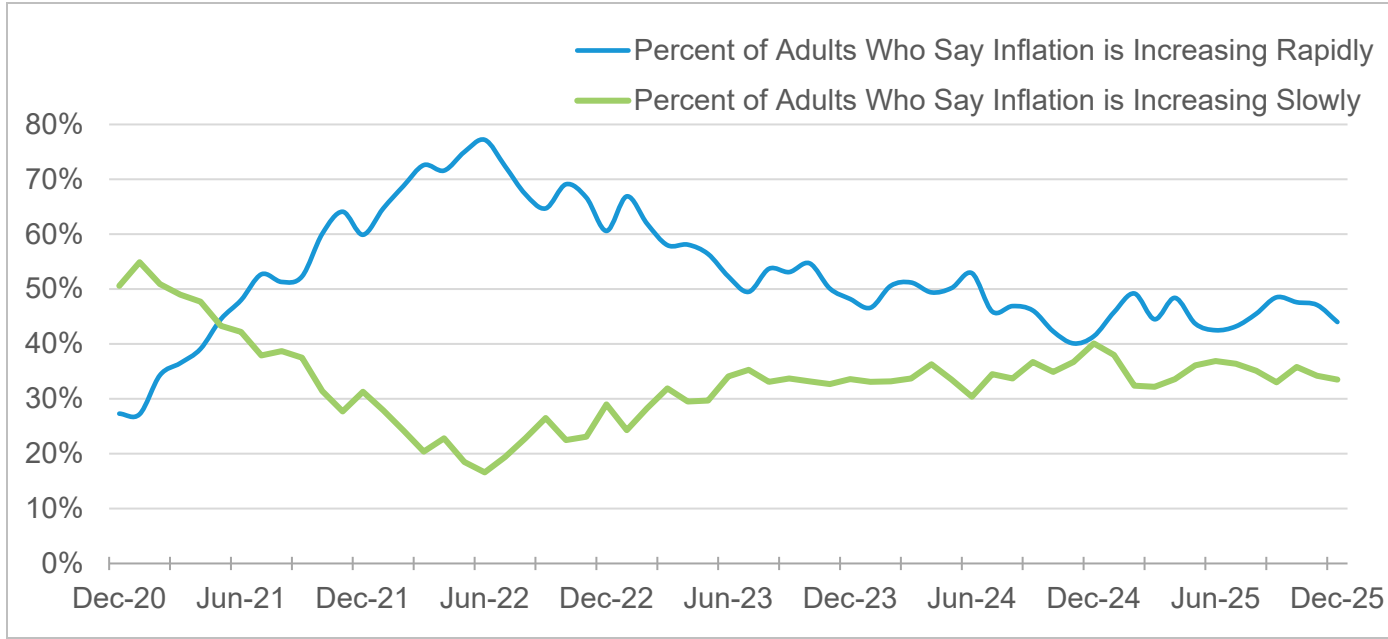


Consumer Perceptions of Prices

Consumers continue to express serious concerns over rising prices. While inflation is moderating in 2025 compared to the previous 3 or 4 years, over 44% of U.S. adults continue to report that prices are “increasing rapidly, so perceived inflation remains an important issue among U.S. residents.

Consumer Perceptions of Rising Prices

December 2020–December 2025

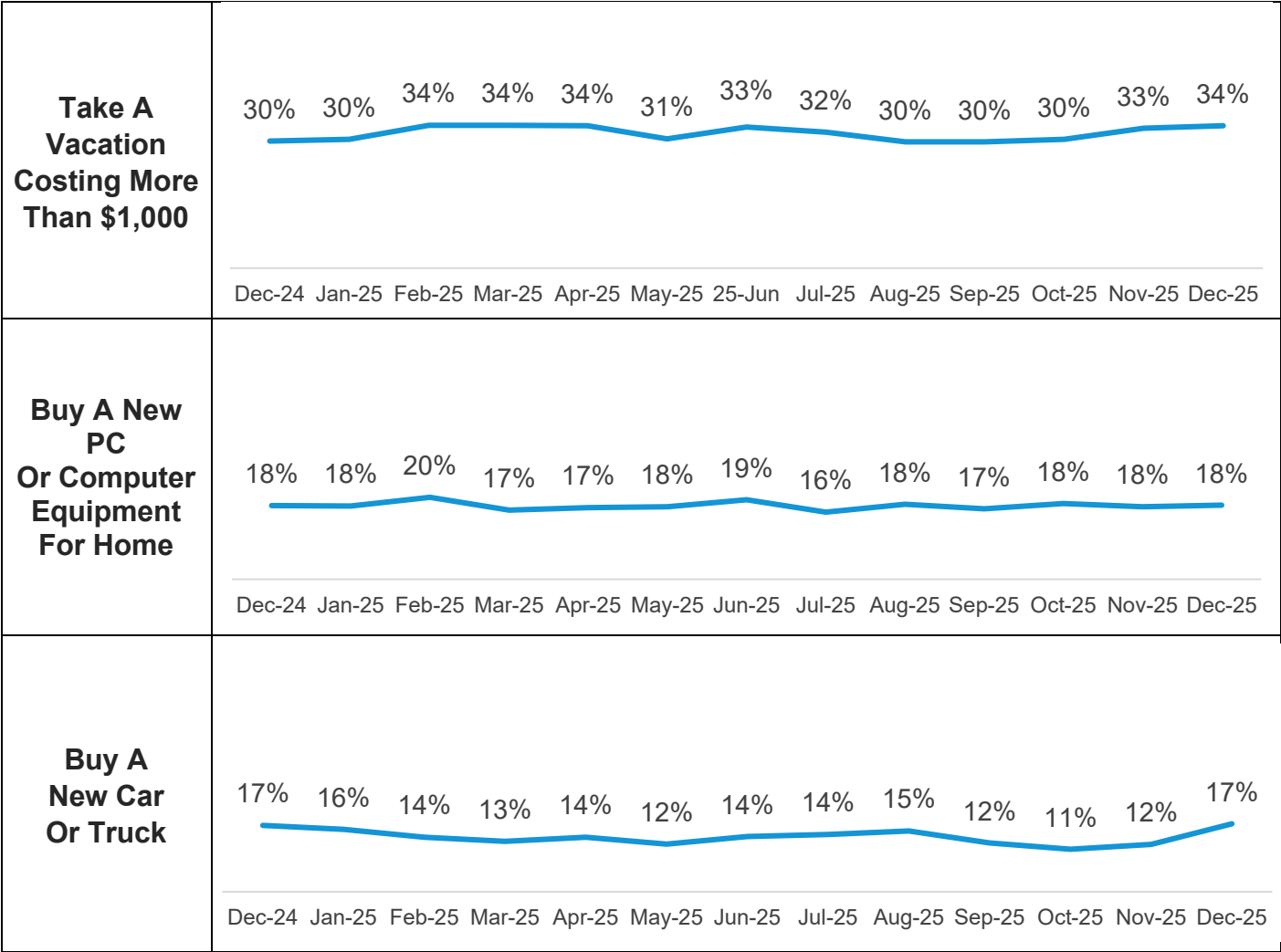




Future Purchase Intent

A quick look at the trend charts reveals that consumers’ spending plans are basically flat to up slightly, and part of the uptrend might be seasonal. Consumer spirits tend to rise around the Holiday Season and then again as Spring comes and the flowers bloom. 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.

Likely Consumer Purchases In The Next 12 Months December 2024–December 2025



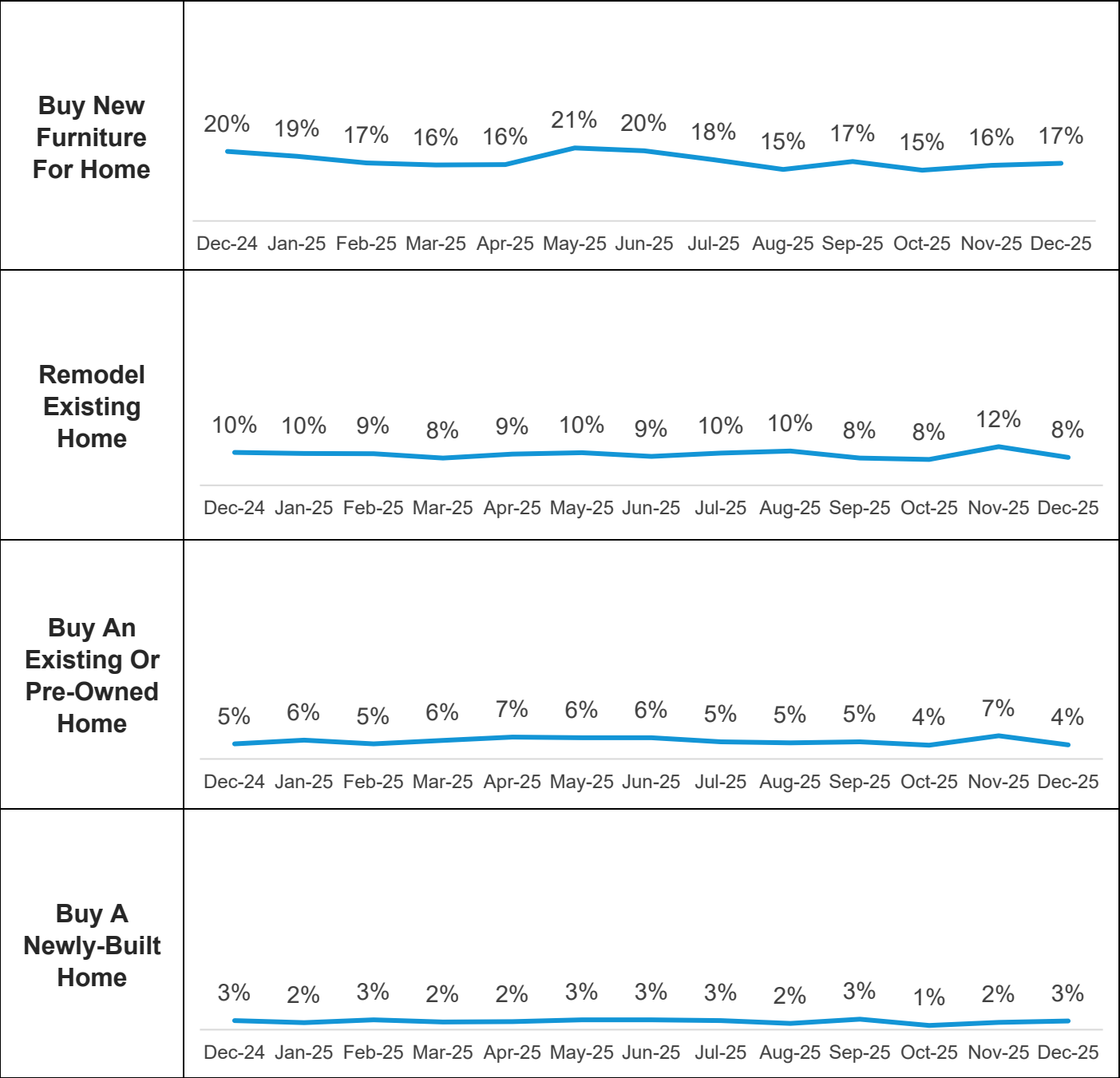
Decision Analyst Economic Index

December 2025



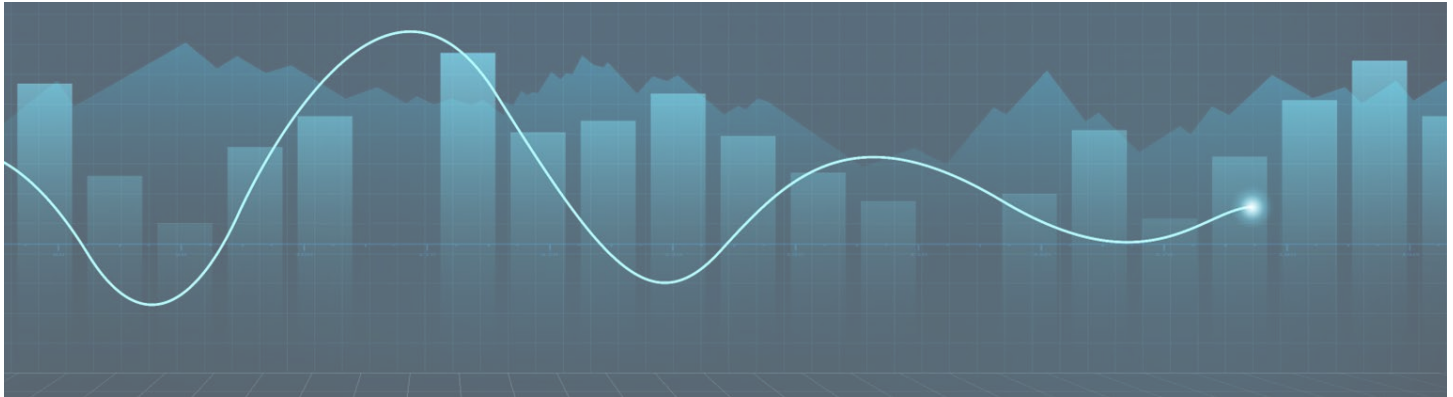
Likely Consumer Purchases In The Next 12 Months

December 2024–December 2025



Decision Analyst Economic Index

December 2025



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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