



**Business Services Research**

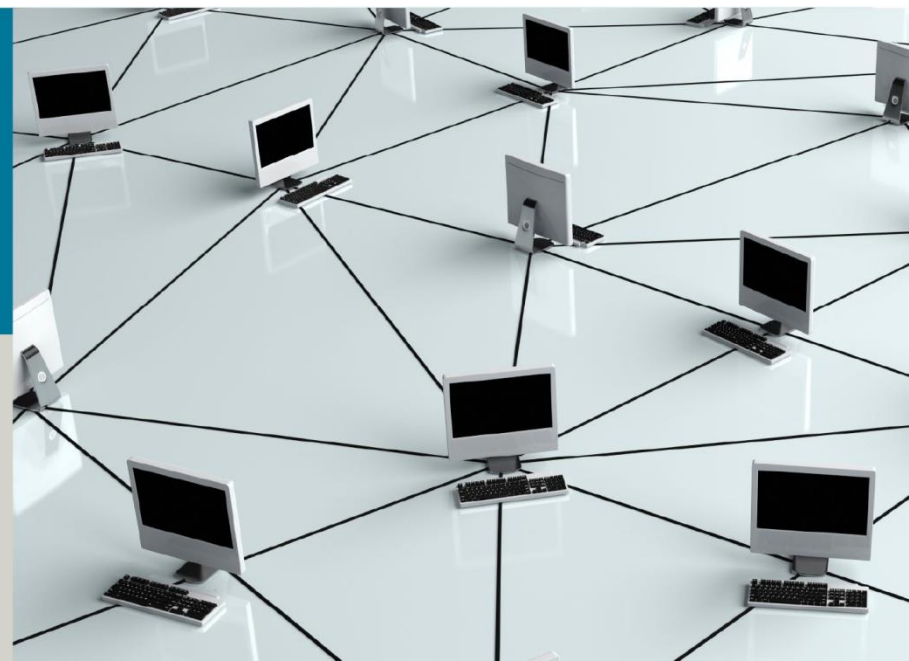
December 16, 2019

# Robert W. Baird & Co. 4Q 2019 Textile Rental Services Survey

**Andrew J. Wittmann, CFA**  
Senior Research Analyst  
awittmann@rwbaird.com  
414.298.1898

**Justin P. Hauke**  
Senior Research Associate  
jhauke@rwbaird.com  
314.445.6519

Please refer to Appendix – Important Disclosures and  
Analyst Certification on pages 19-21



# Overview



- Thank you to the ~300 professionals who received copies of our survey!
- Please take the 60 seconds next quarter to respond to the survey request!
- If you have any questions or comments, please email:  
Senior Analyst Andrew Wittmann ([awittmann@rwbaird.com](mailto:awittmann@rwbaird.com))  
Senior Research Associate Justin Hauke ([jhauke@rwbaird.com](mailto:jhauke@rwbaird.com))

***IMPORTANT: WE HIGHLY RESPECT SURVEY RESPONDENT ANONYMITY***

*All responses are presented in aggregate form*

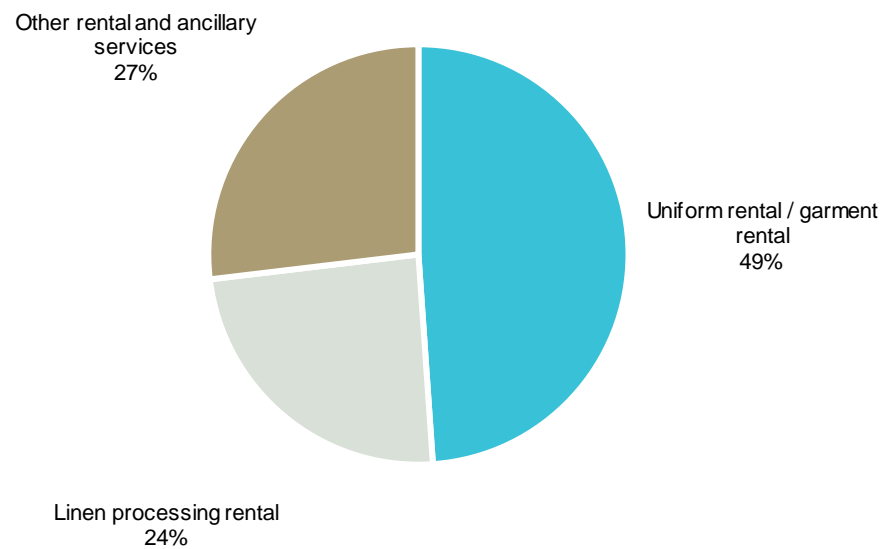
*We never share or discuss individual responses*

## Survey Participants

- The participants in the Baird textile rental services survey are senior executives at uniform and/or linen rental firms
- Respondents are evenly distributed across the United States, with some operations in Canada and other international locations
- Total response pool consisted of ~275 independent firms (25 responses)

Survey Respondent Prolife: Revenue by Service Line (%)

---



---

Source: Baird Research

# UNIFORM RENTAL TRENDS

# Executive Summary: Uniform Rental

## UNIFORM RENTAL SURVEY SUMMARY

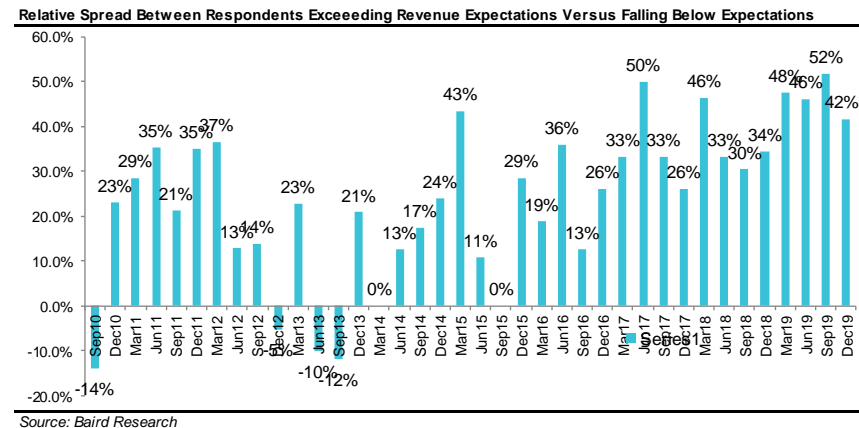
- **Uniform rental survey data show another very strong quarter for the industry.** Our 4Q19 survey saw continued strength across all key metrics. Nearly all respondents continue to meet/exceed expectations (92%), while employment-driven gains have increased and customer interest remains high. 2020 growth expectations are solid and pricing remains at a relative high. Labor availability/inflation is the one source of pressure. Key details:

## 4Q19 UNIFORM RENTAL SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

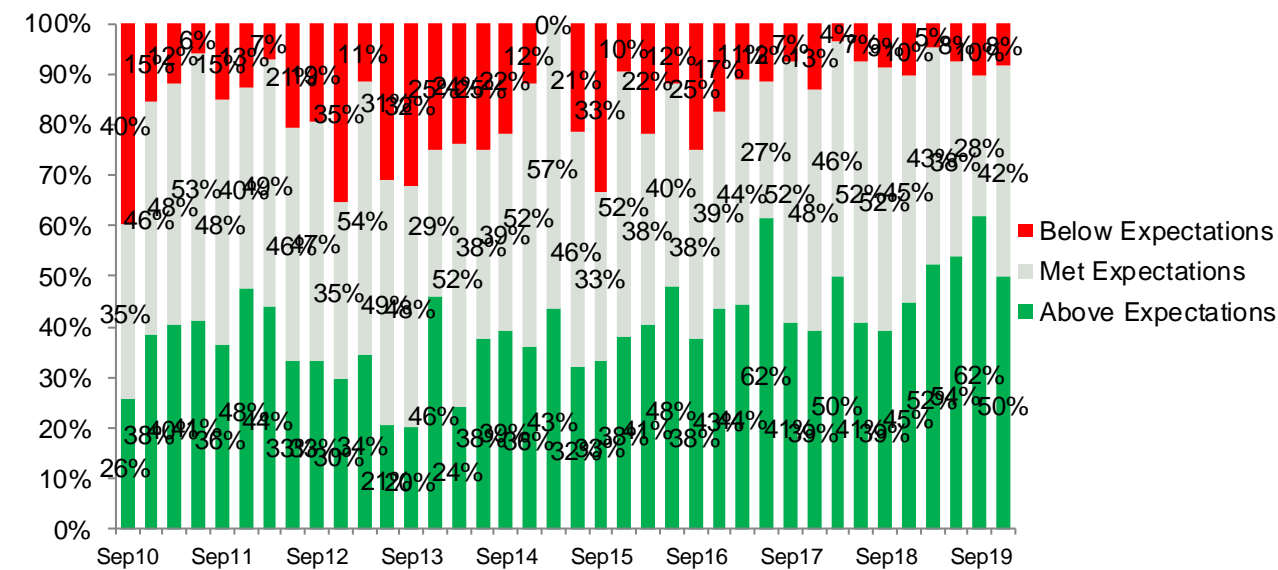
- **Rental Revenue Trends.** 92% of respondents met/exceeded internal 4Q19 revenue expectations with 50% of respondents actually exceeding budgets, versus just 8% falling short.
- **Add/Stops.** Employment-driven expansion at existing accounts (i.e., Add/Stop Diffusion Index) improved QOQ to 63.0 (from 60.7 last quarter) and at its highest level in a year. This quarters marks the 13th consecutive positive (i.e., >50) reading in this metric (since late 2016).
- **Pricing.** Base pricing gains are running at ~2% and improved QOQ, now at their highest level since June 2018. Most respondents see annual price increases in the 2-4% range. New business pricing remains challenging, however (index was 43.5, down from 48.3 last quarter).
- **No-Programmers.** Our no-programmer diffusion index was mostly unchanged at 54.3 (55.2 last quarter), solidly positive. We note that this metric has been consistently in positive territory since briefly dipping negative in 2015-2016.
- **Growth Outlook.** Respondents see 2020 organic revenue growth in the +5.1% range, the best starting forecast for a year since 2011. Growth expectation improved modestly from a +4.9% 12-month growth forecast last quarter.

# Uniform Rental: Revenue Trends Versus Expectations

- Rental Revenue Trends.** 92% of respondents met/exceeded internal 4Q19 revenue expectations with 50% of respondents actually exceeding budgets, versus just 8% falling short, a spread of 42% (see chart at right).



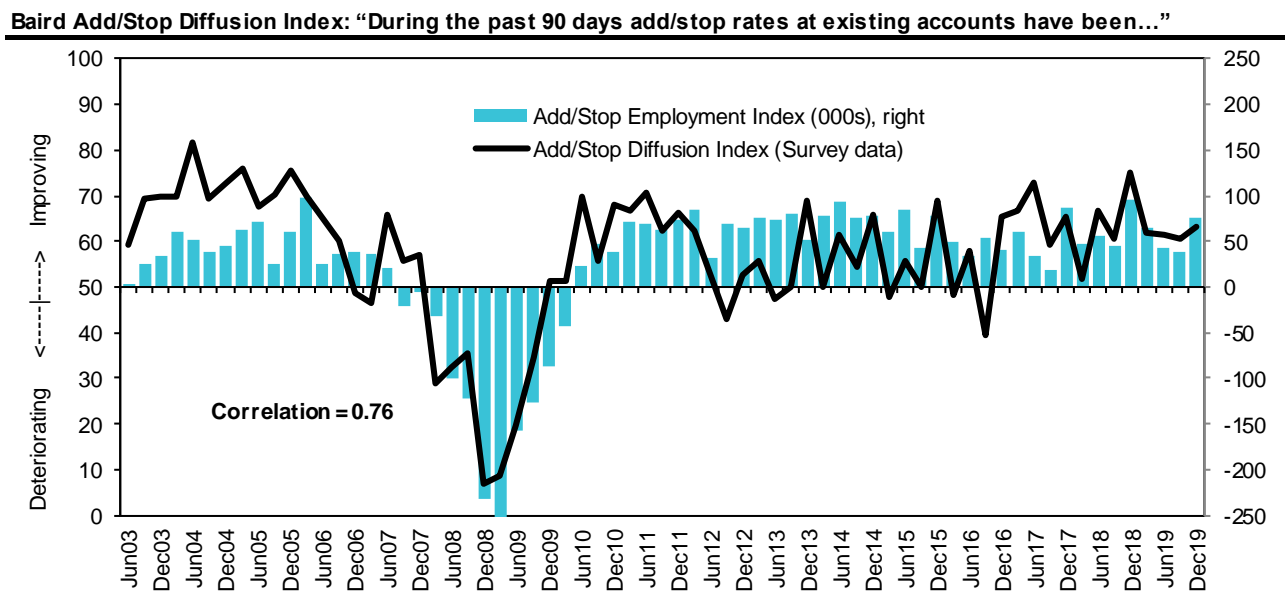
“Which of the following best describes your rental revenue trend during the past 90 days?”



# Uniform Rental: Add/Stop Trends

- Add/Stops.** Employment-driven expansion at existing accounts (i.e., Add/Stop Diffusion Index) improved QOQ to 63.0 (from 60.7 last quarter) and at its highest level in a year. This quarters marks the 13th consecutive positive (i.e., >50) reading in this metric (since late 2016).

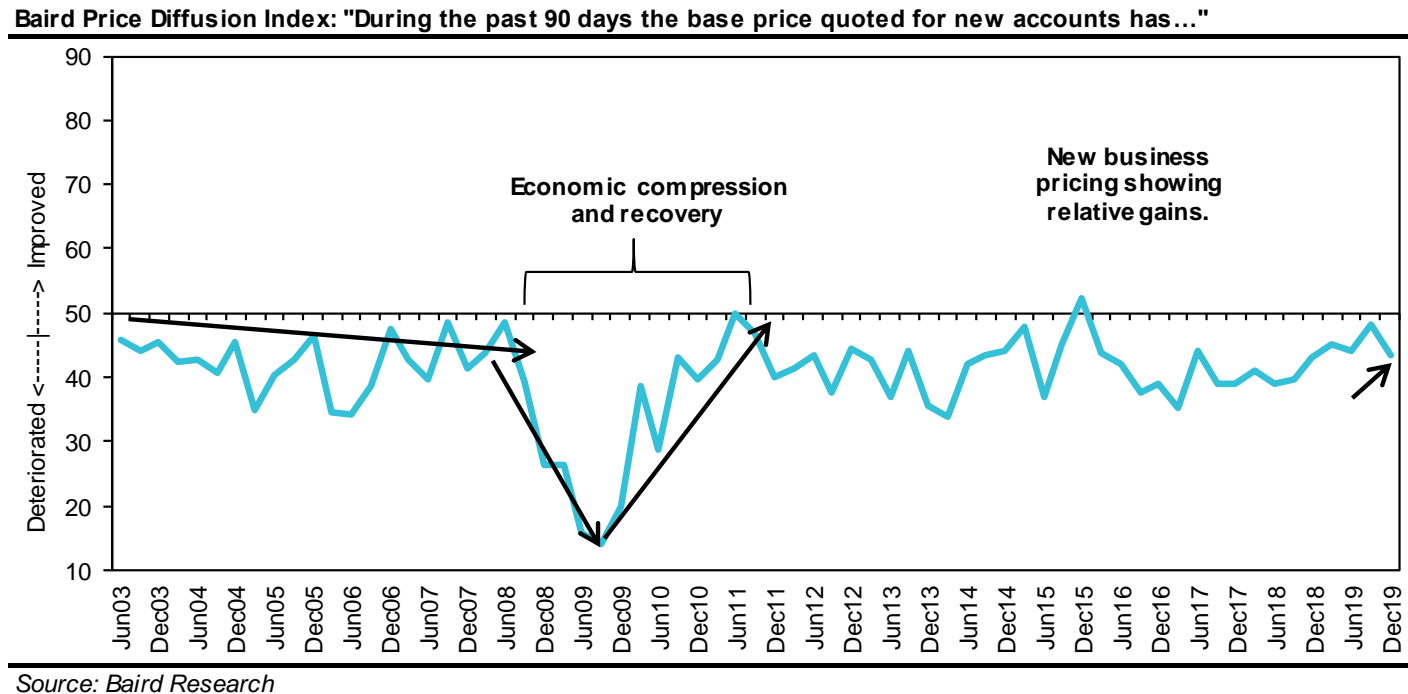
*Note: A diffusion index represents a normalized index (to 50=neutral) that is based on the percentage of respondents citing improvement (100) versus deterioration (0), with 50 representing a "base" level (equal number of positive/negative responses)*



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics and Baird Research

## Uniform Rental: New Account Pricing Trends

- **New Account Pricing.** New business pricing remains competitive with our diffusion index of 43.5 falling from a relative high of 48.3 last quarter. We note that this metric has been consistently <50 for years and suffers from an inherent “negative” bias.

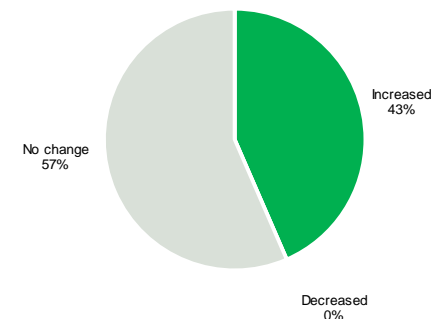




# Uniform Rental: Existing Account Pricing Trends

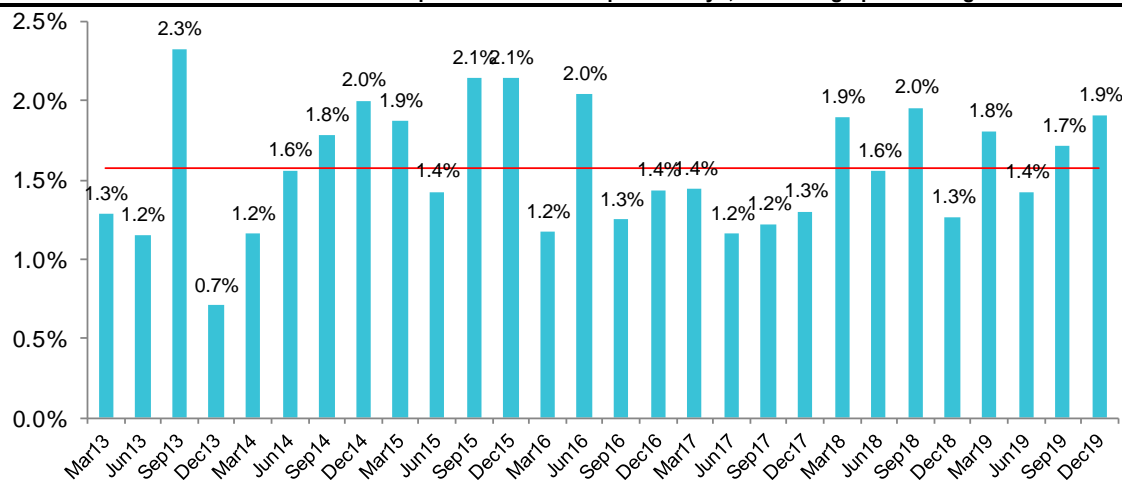
- **Base (Existing) Account Pricing.** Base pricing gains are running at ~2% and improved QOQ, now at their highest level since June 2018. Most respondents see annual price increases in the 2-4% range (see chart at bottom right).

During the past 90 days, pricing on existing rental accounts has:



Source: Baird Research

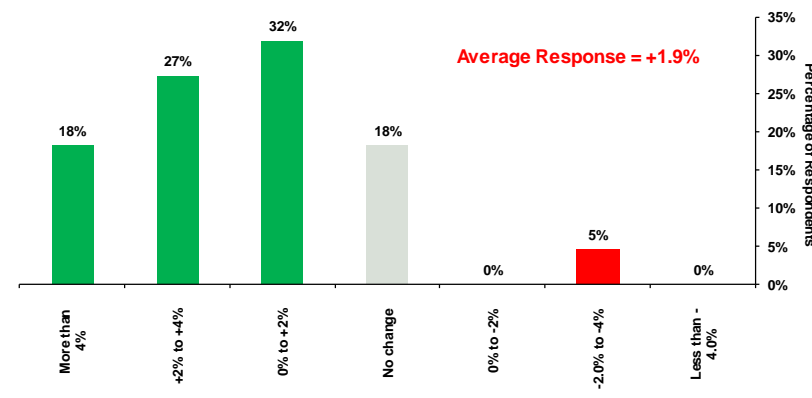
“For accounts which underwent an annual price review in the past 90 days, the average price change was...”



Note: Growth rates reflect average responses of survey participants; Red line indicates sample average

Source: Baird Research

For existing accounts which underwent an annual price review this quarter, the average price change was:

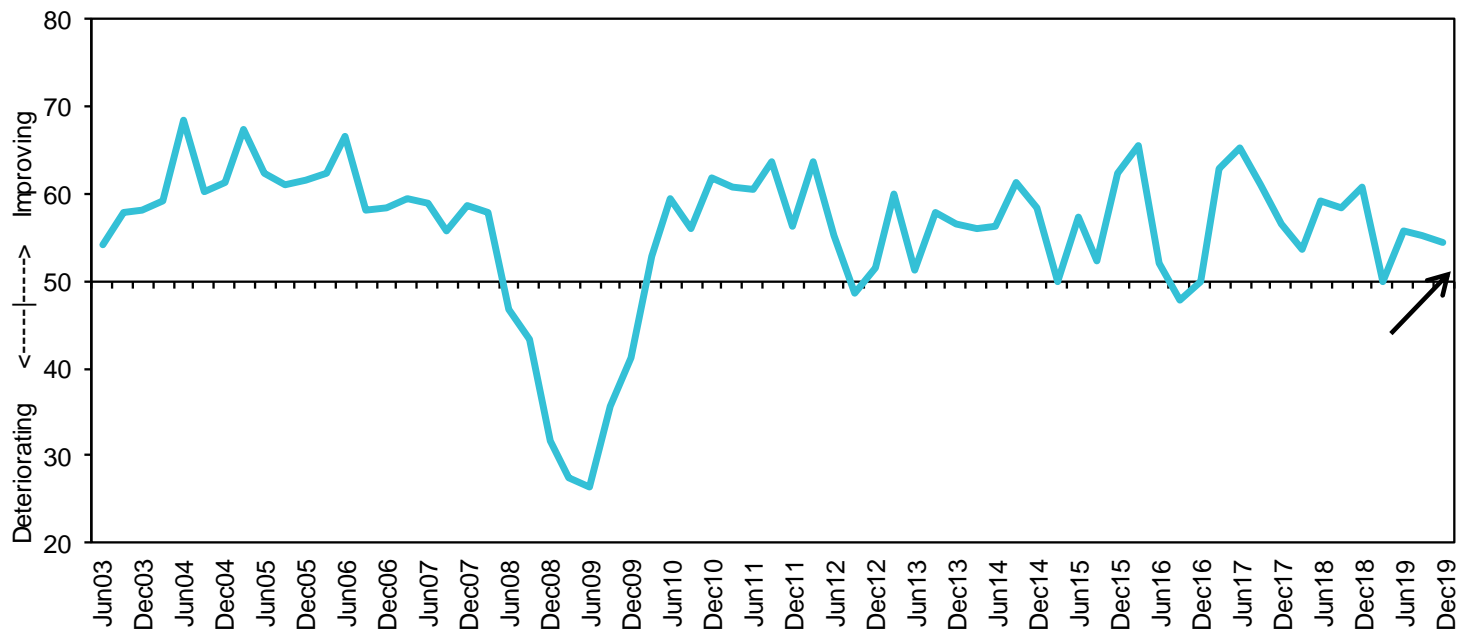


Source: Baird Research

## Uniform Rental: New Business (No-Programmers) Trends

- **No-Programmers.** Our no-programmer diffusion index was mostly unchanged at 54.3 (55.2 last quarter), solidly positive. We note that this metric has been consistently in positive territory since briefly dipping negative in 2015-2016.

**Baird No-Programmer Diffusion Index: "During the past 90 days interest from no-programmer accounts has been..."**

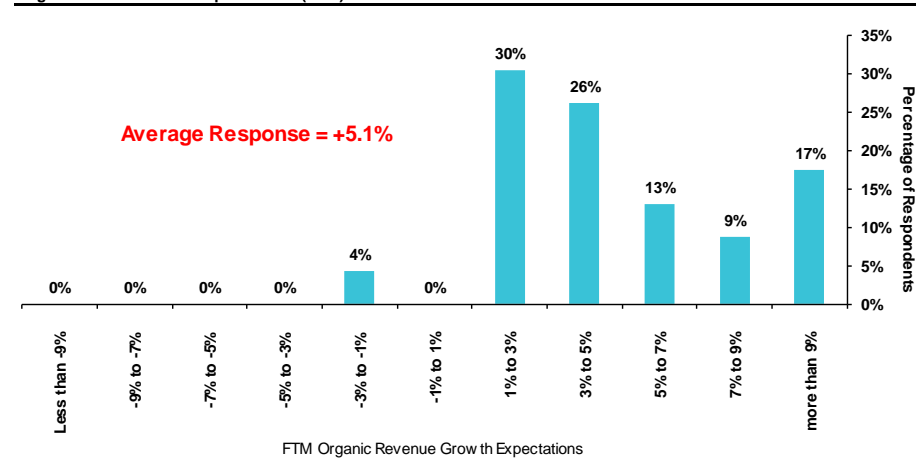


Source: Baird Research

# Uniform Rental: 12-Month Growth Outlook

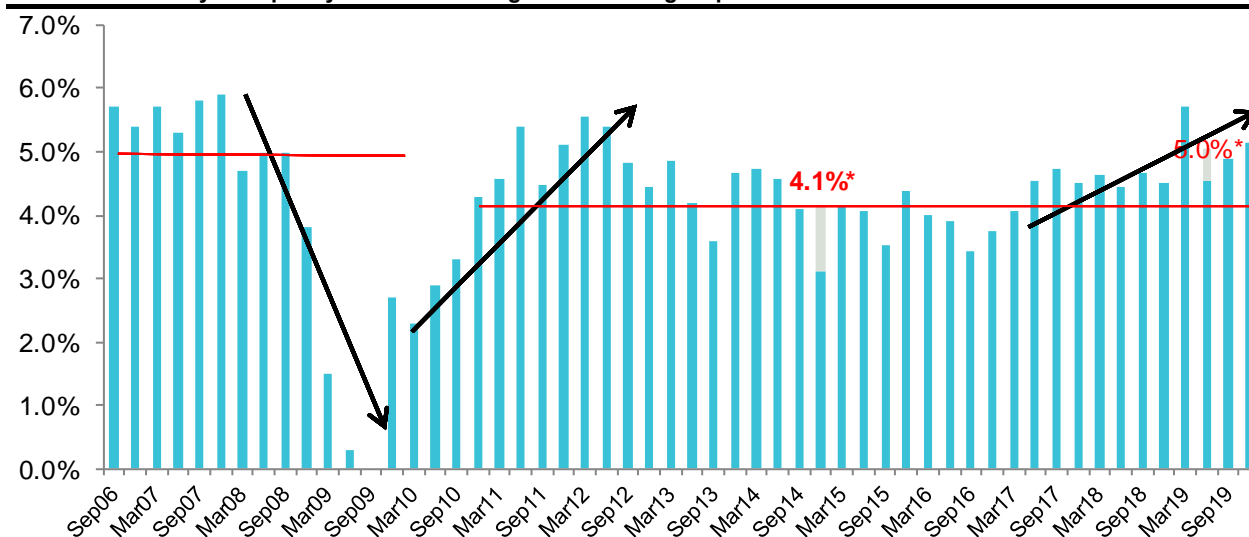
- Growth Outlook.** Respondents see 2020 organic revenue growth in the +5.1% range, the best starting forecast for a year since 2011. Growth expectation improved modestly from a +4.9% 12-month growth forecast last quarter. See charts.

Organic Rental Growth Expectations (FTM)



Source: Baird Research

“At what rate do you expect your revenue to grow excluding acquisitions in the next 12 months?”



Note: Growth rates reflect average responses of survey participants; \*4Q 14/2Q 19 adjusts for "outlier" response rates

Source: Baird Research

# LINEN RENTAL TRENDS

# Executive Summary: Linen Rental

## LINEN RENTAL SURVEY SUMMARY

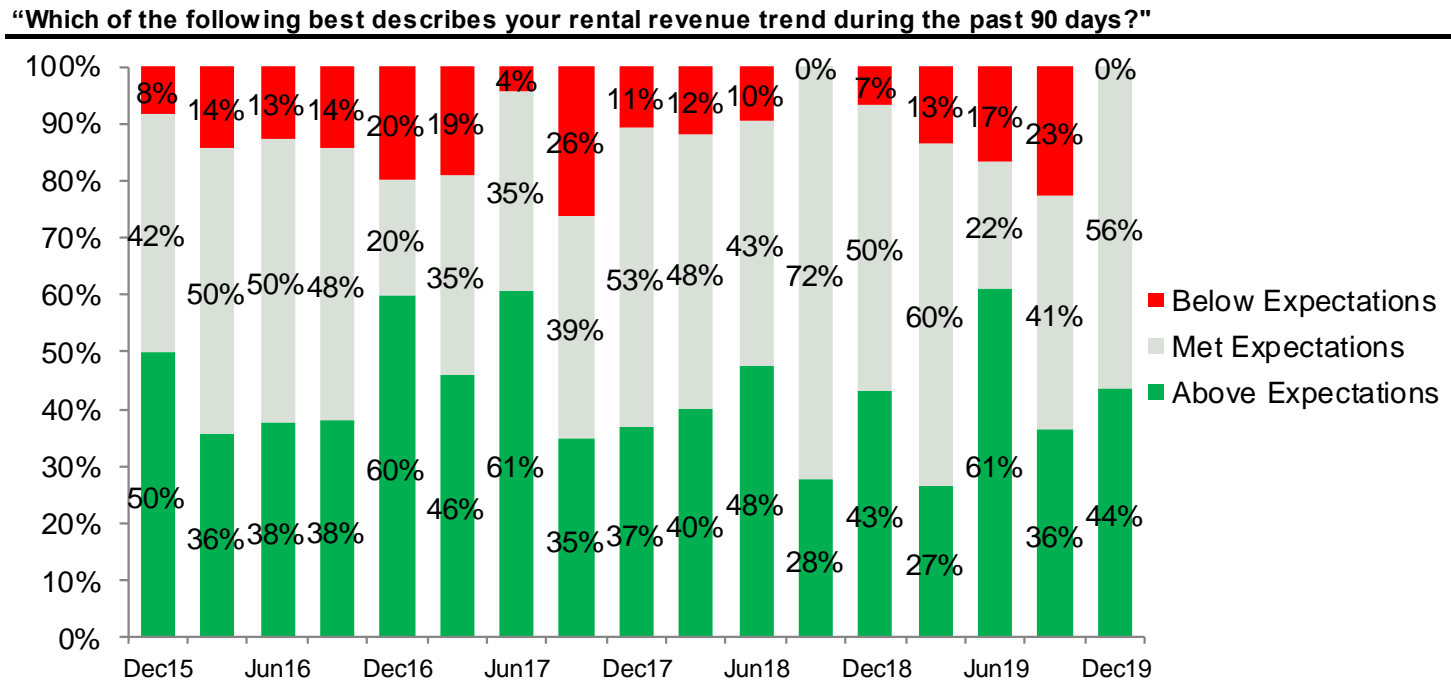
- Linen rental business trends were equally as strong as uniform rental and showed good sequential gains. Incredibly, 100% of respondents met/exceeded revenue forecasts for the quarter, a record, with both new customer interest and pricing improving QOQ and in expansionary territory. 2012 organic revenue growth expectations matched uniform rental at +5.1%, near historical highs for this metric.

## 4Q19 LINEN RENTAL SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Rental Revenue Trends.** 44% of respondents cited rental revenue trends above expectations in 4Q19 with the remaining 56% of respondents meeting expectations. Impressively, not a single respondent cited falling short of expectations for the quarter.
- **New Account Pricing.** 6% of respondents cited more aggressive new account pricing in 4Q19 while 13% saw net improvement. The balance (81%) saw no change. As a result, our diffusion index pushed higher to 53.1, from 43.2 last quarter. This is the first time that this metric has been above 50 in the history of this data series (since December 2015).
- **Base Account Pricing.** The average price increase on existing accounts undergoing price review in 4Q19 was +1.3%, slightly below last quarter's +1.6%. Still, 38% of respondents cited price increases with balance reporting no material change.
- **No-Programmers.** No-programmer interest showed QOQ gains with our diffusion index hitting 56.3 (from 54.5 last quarter). This reversed a two-quarter slump in this metric of moderating gains.
- **Growth Outlook.** Forecasted 12-month growth rates are now seen at +5.1%, above last quarter's report of 4.0% and at the relative high-end of the range for the last several years (in the 4-5% range). Growth expectations are similar to uniform rental in 2020.

# Linen Rental: Revenue Trends Versus Expectations

- Rental Revenue Trends.** 44% of respondents cited rental revenue trends above expectations in 4Q19 with the remaining 56% of respondents meeting expectations. Impressively, not a single respondent cited falling short of expectations for the quarter.

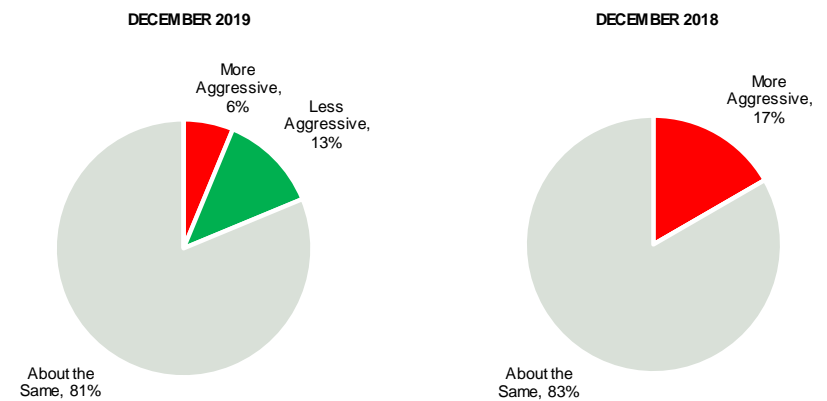


Source: Baird Research

# Linen Rental: New Account Pricing Trends

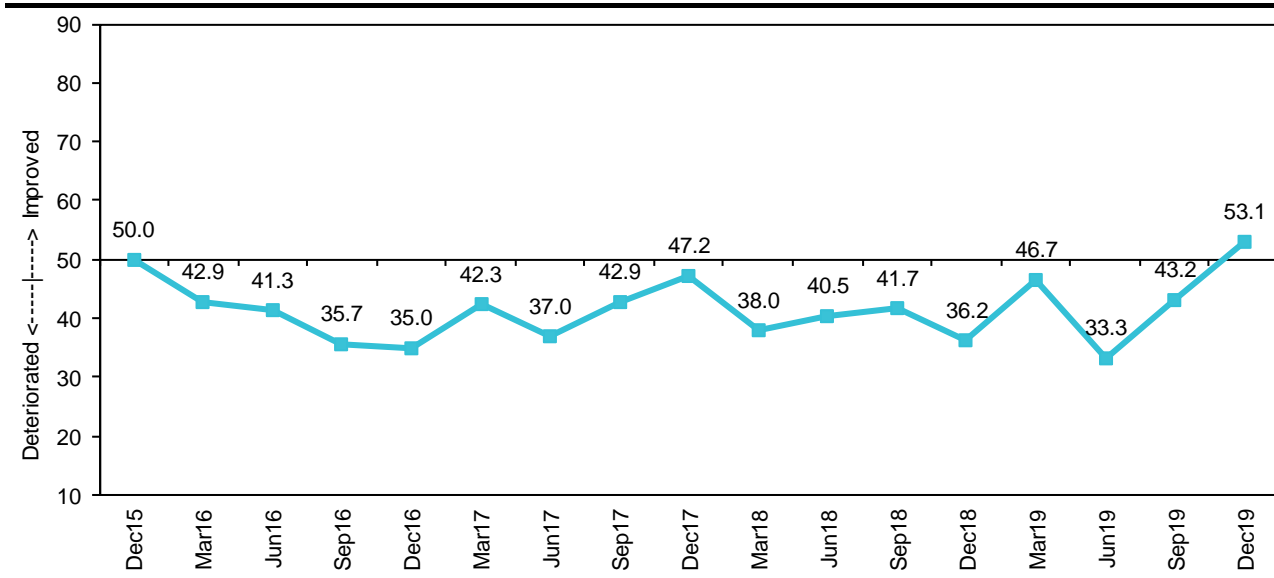
- New Account Pricing.** 6% of respondents cited more aggressive new account pricing in 4Q19 while 13% saw net improvement. The balance (81%) saw no change. As a result, our diffusion index pushed higher to 53.1, from 43.2 last quarter. This is the first time that this metric has been above 50 in the history of this data series (since December 2015). See charts.

During the past 90 days the base price quoted for new accounts generally has become:



Source: Baird Research

Baird Linen Rental Price Diffusion Index

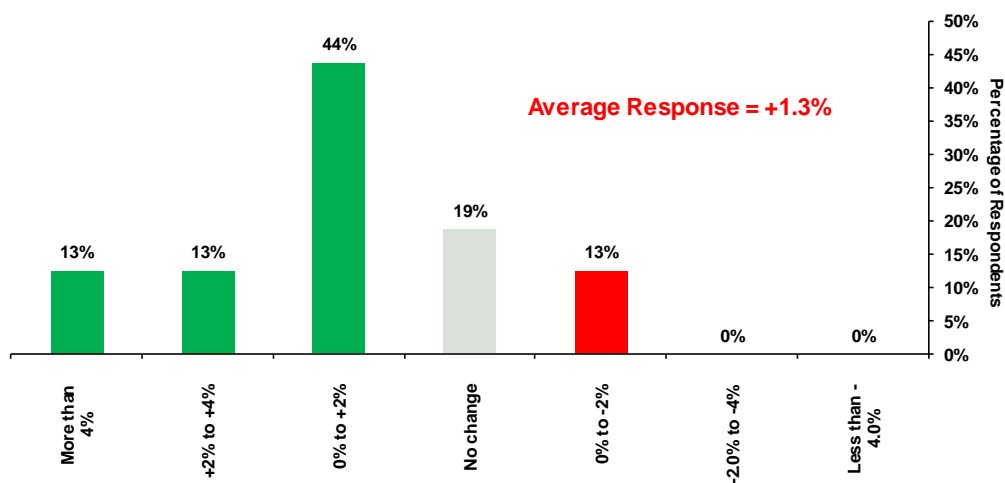


Source: Baird Research

# Linen Rental: Existing Account Pricing Trends

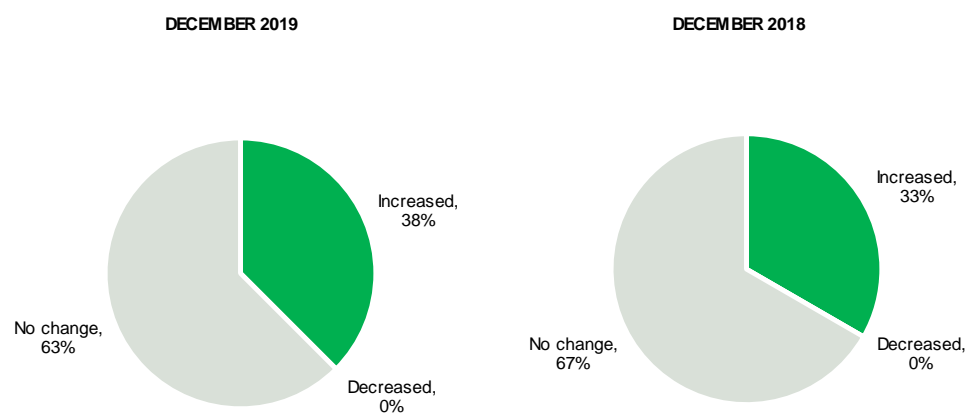
- Base Account Pricing.** The average price increase on existing accounts undergoing price review in 4Q19 was +1.3%, slightly below last quarter's +1.6%. Still, 38% of respondents cited price increases with balance reporting no material change.

For existing accounts which underwent an annual price review this quarter, the average price change was:



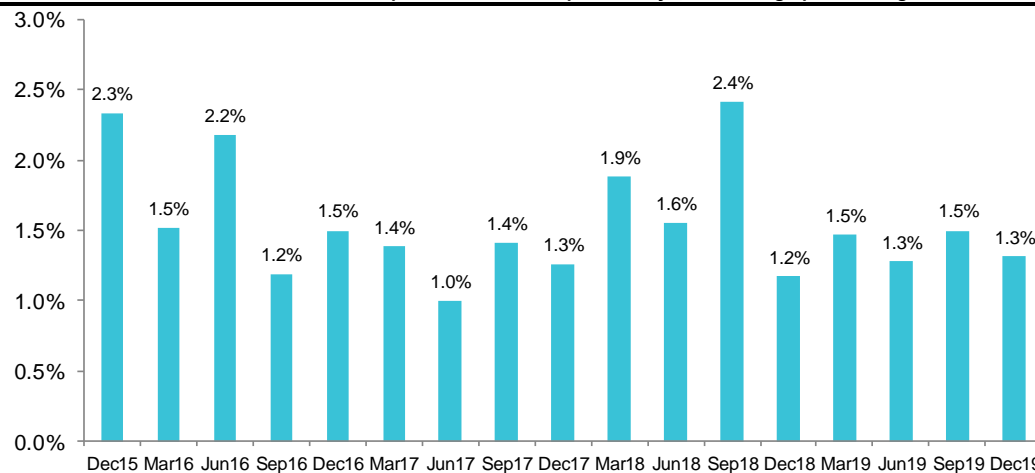
Source: Baird Research

During the past 90 days, pricing on existing rental accounts has:



Source: Baird Research

“For accounts which underwent an annual price review in the past 90 days, the average price change was...”



Source: Baird Research

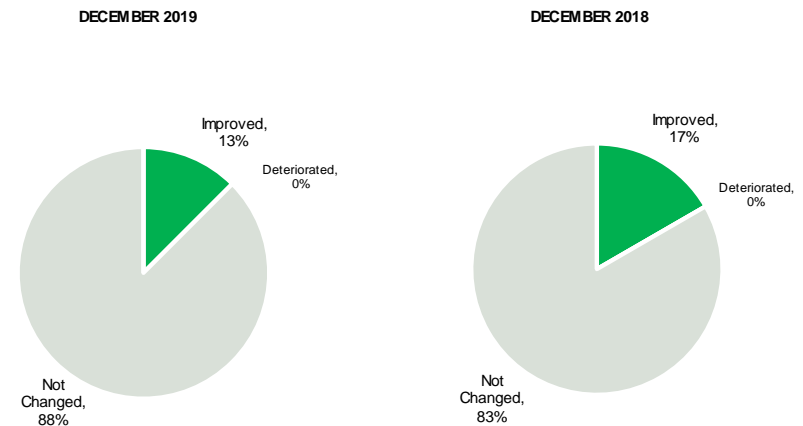




# Linen Rental: New Business (No-Programmers) Trends

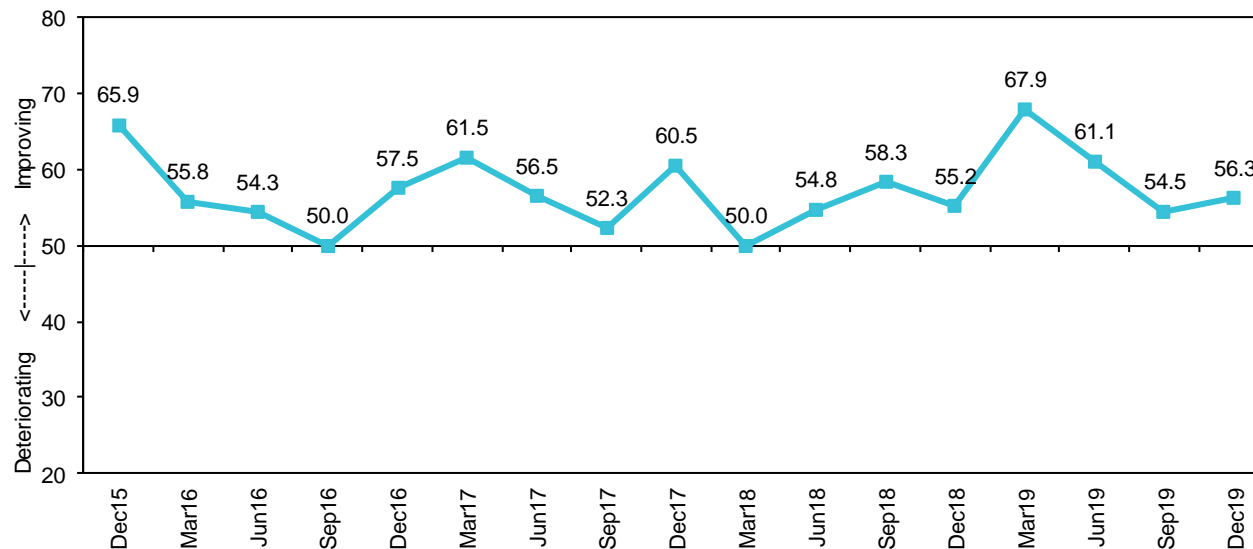
- No-Programmers.** No-programmer interest showed QOQ gains with our diffusion index hitting 56.3 (from 54.5 last quarter). This reversed a two-quarter slump in this metric of moderating gains. See charts.

During the past 90 days interest from no-programmer accounts (those without an existing contract) has:



Source: Baird Research

Baird Linen Rental No-Programmer Diffusion Index

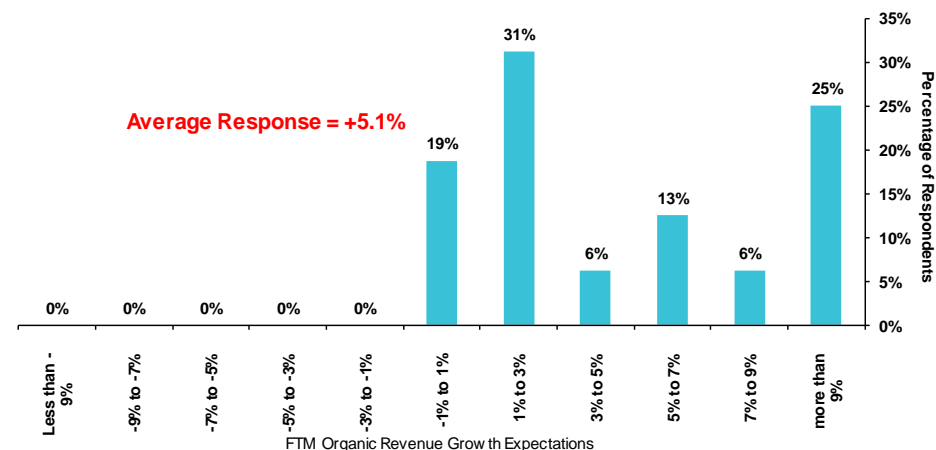


Source: Baird Research

# Linen Rental: 12-Month Growth Outlook

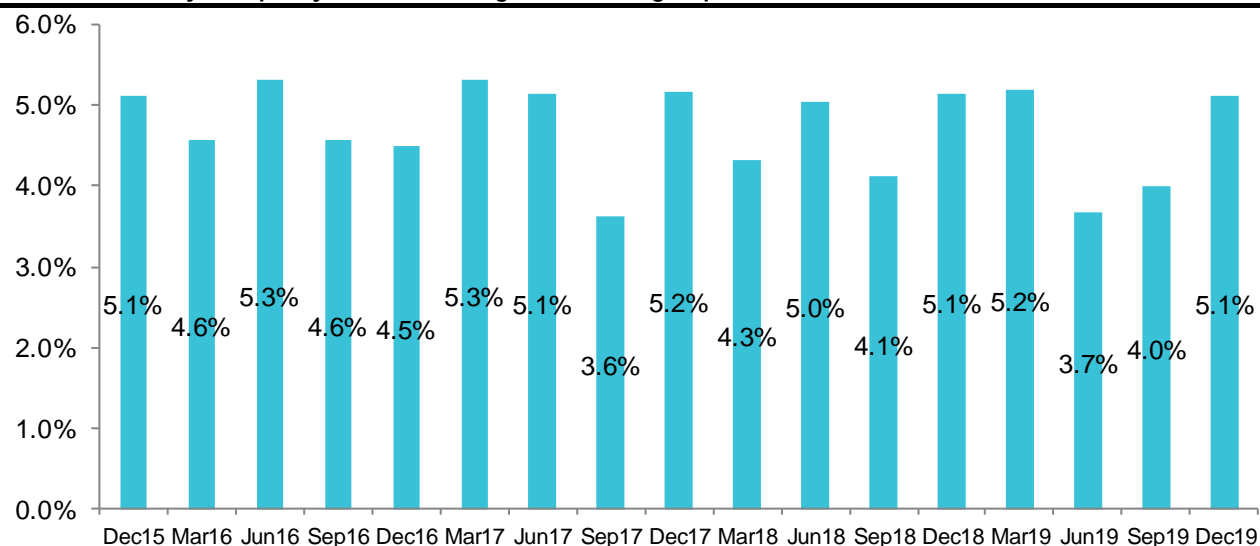
- Growth Outlook.** Forecasted 12-month growth rates are now seen at +5.1%, above last quarter's report of 4.0% and at the relative high end of the range for the last several years (in the 4-5% range). Growth expectations are similar to uniform rental in 2020. See charts.

Organic Rental Growth Expectations (FTM)



Source: Baird Research

“At what rate do you expect your revenue to grow excluding acquisitions in the next 12 months?”



Source: Baird Research

# Appendix – Important Disclosures and Analyst Certification

The logo for Baird, consisting of the word "BAIRD" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, set against a blue parallelogram background.

Robert W. Baird & Co. Incorporated (“Baird”) and/or its affiliates expect to receive or intend to seek investment-banking related compensation from the company or companies mentioned in this report within the next three months. Baird may not be licensed to execute transactions in all foreign listed securities directly. Transactions in foreign listed securities may be prohibited for residents of the United States. Please contact a Baird representative for more information.

**Investment Ratings: Outperform (O)** - Expected to outperform on a total return, risk-adjusted basis the broader U.S. equity market over the next 12 months. **Neutral (N)** - Expected to perform in line with the broader U.S. equity market over the next 12 months. **Underperform (U)** - Expected to underperform on a total return, risk-adjusted basis the broader U.S. equity market over the next 12 months.

**Risk Ratings: L - Lower Risk** – Higher-quality companies for investors seeking capital appreciation or income with an emphasis on safety. Company characteristics may include: stable earnings, conservative balance sheets, and an established history of revenue and earnings. **A - Average Risk** – Growth situations for investors seeking capital appreciation with an emphasis on safety. Company characteristics may include: moderate volatility, modest balance-sheet leverage, and stable patterns of revenue and earnings. **H - Higher Risk** – Higher-growth situations appropriate for investors seeking capital appreciation with the acceptance of risk. Company characteristics may include: higher balance-sheet leverage, dynamic business environments, and higher levels of earnings and price volatility. **S - Speculative Risk** – High growth situations appropriate only for investors willing to accept a high degree of volatility and risk. Company characteristics may include: unpredictable earnings, small capitalization, aggressive growth strategies, rapidly changing market dynamics, high leverage, extreme price volatility and unknown competitive challenges.

**Valuation, Ratings and Risks.** The recommendation and price target contained within this report are based on a time horizon of 12 months but there is no guarantee the objective will be achieved within the specified time horizon. Price targets are determined by a subjective review of fundamental and/or quantitative factors of the issuer, its industry, and the security type. A variety of methods may be used to determine the value of a security including, but not limited to, discounted cash flow, earnings multiples, peer group comparisons, and sum of the parts. Overall market risk, interest rate risk, and general economic risks impact all securities. Specific information regarding the price target and recommendation is provided in the text of our most recent research report.

**Distribution of Investment Ratings.** As of November 29, 2019, Baird U.S. Equity Research covered 716 companies, with 59% rated Outperform/Buy, 40% rated Neutral/Hold and 1% rated Underperform/Sell. Within these rating categories, 11% of Outperform/Buy-rated and 3% of Neutral/Hold-rated companies have compensated Baird for investment banking services in the past 12 months and/or Baird managed or co-managed a public offering of securities for these companies in the past 12 months.

**Analyst Compensation.** Research analyst compensation is based on: (1) the correlation between the research analyst's recommendations and stock price performance; (2) ratings and direct feedback from our investing clients, our institutional and retail sales force (as applicable) and from independent rating services; (3) the research analyst's productivity, including the quality of such analyst's research and such analyst's contribution to the growth and development of our overall research effort; and (4) compliance with all of Baird's internal policies and procedures. This compensation criteria and actual compensation is reviewed and approved on an annual basis by Baird's Research Oversight Committee. Research analyst compensation is derived from all revenue sources of the firm, including revenues from investment banking. Baird does not compensate research analysts based on specific investment banking transactions.

A complete listing of all companies covered by Baird U.S. Equity Research and applicable research disclosures can be accessed at <http://www.rwbaird.com/research-insights/research/coverage/research-disclosure.aspx>. You can also call 800-792-2473 or write: Robert W. Baird & Co., Equity Research, 777 E. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53202.

## Analyst Certification

The senior research analyst(s) certifies that the views expressed in this research report and/or financial model accurately reflect such senior analyst's personal views about the subject securities or issuers and that no part of his or her compensation was, is, or will be directly or indirectly related to the specific recommendations or views contained in the research report.

# Appendix – Important Disclosures and Analyst Certification



## Disclaimers

### **Baird prohibits analysts from owning stock in companies they cover.**

This is not a complete analysis of every material fact regarding any company, industry or security. The opinions expressed here reflect our judgment at this date and are subject to change. The information has been obtained from sources we consider to be reliable, but we cannot guarantee the accuracy.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON COMPANIES MENTIONED HEREIN IS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

The Dow Jones Industrial Average, S&P 500, S&P 400 and Russell 2000 are unmanaged common stock indices used to measure and report performance of various sectors of the stock market; direct investment in indices is not available. Baird is exempt from the requirement to hold an Australian financial services license. Baird is regulated by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission, FINRA, and various other self-regulatory organizations and those laws and regulations may differ from Australian laws. This report has been prepared in accordance with the laws and regulations governing United States broker-dealers and not Australian laws.

## Other Disclosures

The information and rating included in this report represent the research analyst's views based on a time horizon of 12 months, as described above, unless otherwise stated. In our standard company-specific research reports, the subject company may be designated as a "Fresh Pick", representing that the research analyst believes the company to be a high-conviction investment idea based on a subjective review of one or more fundamental or quantitative factors until an expiration date specified by the analyst but not to exceed nine months. The Fresh Pick designation and specified expiration date will be displayed in standard company-specific research reports on the company until the occurrence of the expiration date or such time as the analyst removes the Fresh Pick designation from the company in a subsequent, standard company-specific research report. The research analyst(s) named in this report may, at times and at the request of clients or their Baird representatives, provide particular investment perspectives or trading strategies based primarily on the analyst's understanding of the individual client's objectives. These perspectives or trading strategies generally are responsive to client inquiries and based on criteria the research analyst considers relevant to the client. As such, these perspectives and strategies may differ from the research analyst's views contained in this report.

Baird and/or its affiliates may provide to certain clients additional or research supplemental products or services, such as outlooks, commentaries and other detailed analyses, which focus on covered stocks, companies, industries or sectors. Not all clients who receive our standard company-specific research reports are eligible to receive these additional or supplemental products or services. Baird determines in its sole discretion the clients who will receive additional or supplemental products or services, in light of various factors including the size and scope of the client relationships. These additional or supplemental products or services may feature different analytical or research techniques and information than are contained in Baird's standard research reports. Any ratings and recommendations contained in such additional or research supplemental products are consistent with the research analyst's ratings and recommendations contained in more broadly disseminated standard research reports. Baird disseminates its research reports to all clients simultaneously by posting such reports to Baird's password-protected client portal, <https://bol.rwbaird.com/Login> ("BairdOnline"). All clients may access BairdOnline and at any time. All clients are advised to check BairdOnline for Baird's most recent research reports. After research reports are posted to BairdOnline, such reports may be emailed to clients, based on, among other things, client interest, coverage, stock ownership and indicated email preferences, and electronically distributed to certain third-party research aggregators, who may make such reports available to entitled clients on password-protected, third-party websites. Not all research reports posted to BairdOnline will be emailed to clients or electronically distributed to such research aggregators. To request access to Baird Online, please visit <https://bol.rwbaird.com/Login/RequestInstLogin> or contact your Baird representative..

**Dividend Yield.** As used in this report, the term "dividend yield" refers, on a percentage basis, to the historical distributions made by the issuer relative to its current market price. Such distributions are not guaranteed, may be modified at the issuer's discretion, may exceed operating cash flow, subsidized by borrowed funds or include a return of investment principal.

**United Kingdom ("UK") disclosure requirements for the purpose of distributing this research into the UK and other countries for which Robert W. Baird Limited holds a MiFID passport.** The contents of this report may contain an "investment recommendation", as defined by the Market Abuse Regulation EU No 596/2014 ("MAR"). This report does not contain a "personal recommendation" or "investment advice", as defined by the Market in Financial Instruments Directive 2014/65/EU ("MiFID"). Please therefore be aware of the important disclosures outlined below. Unless otherwise stated, this report was completed and first disseminated at the date and time provided on the timestamp of the report. If you would like further information on dissemination times, please contact us. The views contained in this report: (i) do not necessarily correspond to, and may differ from, the views of Robert W. Baird Limited or any other entity within the Baird Group, in particular Robert W. Baird & Co. Incorporated; and (ii) may differ from the views of another individual of Robert W. Baird Limited.

# Appendix – Important Disclosures and Analyst Certification



This material is distributed in the UK and the European Economic Area ("EEA") by Robert W. Baird Limited, which has an office at Finsbury Circus House, 15 Finsbury Circus, London EC2M 7EB and is authorized and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority ("FCA") in the UK.

For the purposes of the FCA requirements, this investment research report is classified as investment research and is objective. This material is only directed at and is only made available to persons in the EEA who would satisfy the criteria of being "Professional" investors under MiFID and to persons in the UK falling within Articles 19, 38, 47, and 49 of the Financial Services and Markets Act of 2000 (Financial Promotion) Order 2005 (all such persons being referred to as "relevant persons"). Accordingly, this document is intended only for persons regarded as investment professionals (or equivalent) and is not to be distributed to or passed onto any other person (such as persons who would be classified as Retail clients under MiFID).

All substantially material sources of the information contained in this report are disclosed. All sources of information in this report are reliable, but where there is any doubt as to reliability of a particular source, this is clearly indicated. There is no intention to update this report in future. Where, for any reason, an update is made, this will be made clear in writing on the research report. Such instances will be occasional only.

Please note that this report may provide views which differ from previous recommendations made by the same individual in respect of the same financial instrument or issuer in the last 12 months. Information and details regarding previous recommendations in relation to the financial instruments or issuer referred to in this report are available at <https://baird.bluematrix.com/sellside/MAR.action>.

Robert W. Baird Limited or one of its affiliates may at any time have a long or short position in the company or companies mentioned in this report. Where Robert W. Baird Limited or one of its affiliates holds a long or short position exceeding 0.5% of the total issued share capital of the issuer, this will be disclosed separately by your Robert W. Baird Limited representative upon request.

Investment involves risk. The price of securities may fluctuate and past performance is not indicative of future results. Any recommendation contained in the research report does not have regard to the specific investment objectives, financial situation and the particular needs of any individuals. You are advised to exercise caution in relation to the research report. If you are in any doubt about any of the contents of this document, you should obtain independent professional advice.

Robert W. Baird Limited and Robert W. Baird & Co. Incorporated have in place organisational and administrative arrangements for the prevention, avoidance, and disclosure of conflicts of interest with respect to research recommendations. Robert W. Baird Limited's Conflicts of Interest Policy, available [here](#), outlines the approach Robert W. Baird Limited takes in relation to conflicts of interest and includes detail as to its procedures in place to identify, manage and control conflicts of interest. Robert W. Baird Limited and or one of its affiliates may be party to an agreement with the issuer that is the subject of this report relating to the provision of services of investment firms. Robert W. Baird & Co. Incorporated's policies and procedures are designed to identify and effectively manage conflicts of interest related to the preparation and content of research reports and to promote objective and reliable research that reflects the truly held opinions of research analysts. Robert W. Baird & Co. Incorporated's research analysts certify on a quarterly basis that such research reports accurately reflect their personal views.

This material is strictly confidential to the recipient and not intended for persons in jurisdictions where the distribution or publication of this research report is not permitted under the applicable laws or regulations of such jurisdiction.

Robert W. Baird Limited is exempt from the requirement to hold an Australian financial services license and is regulated by the FCA under UK laws, which may differ from Australian laws. As such, this document has not been prepared in accordance with Australian laws.

## **Copyright 2019 Robert W. Baird & Co. Incorporated**

This information is prepared for the use of Baird clients and may not be redistributed, retransmitted or disclosed, in whole or in part, or in any form or manner, without the express written consent of Baird. Any unauthorized use or disclosure is prohibited. Receipt and review of this information constitutes your agreement not to redistribute, retransmit, or disclose to others the contents, opinions, conclusion, or information contained in this information (including any investment ratings, estimates or price targets) without first obtaining expressed permission from an authorized officer of Baird.