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## SME poll endorsement for Clegg

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**More than half of small-business owners believe the Lib Dems will do the most to help their business grow of the three major parties, according to a survey.**

The outcome, surprising given the business community's traditional allegiance to the Tories, suggests that the Tories' plans to reverse part of Labour's National Insurance rise weren't as persuasive as many commentators believe.



The Lib Dem's manifesto intends to help small businesses

Despite the publication yesterday of a letter backing the Tories over the issue, signed by 1,100 small-business owners, the Conservatives came second to Nick Clegg's party in a poll of 750 SMEs by the business directory FreeIndex. Fifty-three percent of those asked who they thought had the best policies for fostering business growth favoured the Lib Dems, while 31% backed David Cameron's party and a meagre 16% support Gordon Brown's policies.

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“The Liberal Democrat's manifesto on small business issues, which includes intentions such as simplifying the corporate tax system and making cut backs on red tape, appears to be sitting well with business owners,” says Martin Turner, FreeIndex managing director.

“Last week's first live leaders' debate may also have been an influence. Nick Clegg was widely seen as coming out of the debate as a strong candidate and this has seemingly not gone unnoticed by the business vote.”