

Annual Study From Robert Half International and CareerBuilder.com Reveals Tale of Two Job Markets

- Survey Shows Both Employees and Employers Face Challenges in Tough Economy -

Key Findings:

- More than half of employers said it is challenging to find skilled professionals today; Generation Y workers are the most difficult to recruit.**
- Closely mirroring responses from employers, more than half of workers said it is challenging to find a job today.**
- Nearly two-thirds of workers are more likely to try to negotiate a better compensation package today than last year.**
- A lack of qualified workers and the higher cost of gas/commuting were among the top factors impacting companies' ability to recruit skilled labor.**
- Many employers are likely to offer reduced work schedules, "bridge" jobs and consulting arrangements as an alternative to retirement.**
- The time to fill open positions ranges from four to 14 weeks, with senior-level roles demanding the most time.**
- Six-in-10 employers estimate at least a quarter of applicants who contact them are not qualified.**

PRNewswire

MENLO PARK, Calif. and CHICAGO

While many workers are having a tough time finding suitable employment in today's uncertain economy, companies also face challenges finding highly skilled people. According to the fourth annual Employment Dynamics and Growth Expectations (EDGE) Report by Robert Half International and CareerBuilder.com, employees rated the level of challenge in finding a job at 3.56 on a one-to-five sliding scale; similarly, employers rated the level of challenge in finding qualified candidates at 3.47.

"A dual hiring environment seems to be taking shape," said Max Messmer, chairman and CEO of Robert Half International. "Job seekers in some fields are competing aggressively for open positions, giving employers the edge in those segments of the hiring market. At the same time, however, companies continue to face a shortage of highly skilled professionals in fields such as technology and accounting. These in-demand workers may not be willing to leave secure positions unless firms extend very attractive job offers."

The Employment Dynamics and Growth Expectations (EDGE) Report is an annual survey on employment and compensation trends by Robert Half International and CareerBuilder.com. The survey includes responses from more than 500 hiring managers and 500 workers, and was conducted from May 7 to June 1, 2008 by International Communications Research in Media, Pa. It was designed to compare the perspectives of hiring managers and workers on the state of the current employment market.

The Challenge of Recruiting Qualified Staff

The shortage of qualified workers has grown more acute, with 59 percent of hiring managers citing it as their primary recruiting challenge, up from 52 percent in 2007. Six out of 10 employers estimate that at least a quarter of the applicants who contact them are not qualified. Thirty-one percent report more than half of applicants are not qualified.

Complicating the task of finding qualified talent are spiraling energy costs, hiring managers said. Twenty-nine percent said the rise in fuel prices and commuting expenses has negatively impacted their ability to attract skilled candidates who may want to limit their travel distance to and from the office.

As employers manage through these challenges, recruiting has become increasingly time consuming, taking anywhere from four weeks to 14 weeks to fill open positions. More than half of hiring managers (56 percent) said Generation Y employees (born between 1979 and 1999) are the most difficult to recruit, perhaps because of high expectations around pay, career advancement, flexible schedules and overall work environment.

The Compensation Question

When they find qualified professionals, firms appear anxious to win them over. Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of hiring managers said they are willing to negotiate compensation for top candidates; 19 percent are very willing.

Despite not feeling overly confident in job prospects, professionals are increasingly inclined to negotiate better compensation levels as fuel, food, healthcare and other expenses grow. Sixty-three percent said they are more likely to try to negotiate a better compensation package with a new employer compared to 12 months ago. This

contrasts with 58 percent in 2007.

"Businesses are operating on leaner resources and are competing to secure the intellectual capital that will drive productivity and new revenue streams. Companies are also replacing lower-performing employees to strengthen their talent bench to prepare for a time when the economy shifts into higher gear," said Matt Ferguson, CEO of CareerBuilder.com. "Recruiting highly skilled professionals may require a greater financial commitment or special perks that provide a more attractive work environment, however. Nearly three-quarters of employees surveyed said the availability of flexible schedules may cause them to choose one job over another."

Holding on to Top Performers

While employee retention may be less of a concern in a tougher economy, many employers have nonetheless taken measures in the last 12 months to prevent good workers from leaving their organizations, including:

- Allowing flexible work schedules -- 63 percent
- Providing funding for additional training/certification -- 62 percent
- Increasing salaries -- 56 percent
- Instituting telecommuting options -- 29 percent

Companies also expressed an interest in retaining employees nearing retirement age to manage through the exodus of the baby boomers from the workforce. Forty-seven percent are likely to offer reduced work schedules as an alternative to retirement. Thirty-nine percent are likely to offer "bridge" jobs, while 37 percent are likely to offer consulting arrangements.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted by International Communications Research on behalf of Robert Half International and CareerBuilder.com among more than 500 employers (employed full-time; not self employed; with at least some involvement in hiring decisions), and more than 500 employees (employed full-time; not self employed; with no involvement in hiring decisions) ages 18 and over within the United States between May 7 and June 1, 2008.

About Robert Half International

Robert Half International is the world's first and largest specialized staffing firm with more than 360 worldwide staffing locations. The company's professional staffing divisions include Accountemps(R), Robert Half(R) Finance & Accounting, and Robert Half(R) Management Resources, for temporary, full-time and senior-level project professionals, respectively, in the fields of accounting and finance; OfficeTeam(R), for highly skilled temporary administrative support; Robert Half(R) Technology, for information technology professionals; Robert Half(R) Legal, for project and full-time staffing of attorneys, paralegals and legal support personnel; and The Creative Group(R), for creative, advertising, marketing and web design professionals. For more information about the specialized staffing and recruitment divisions of Robert Half International, visit <http://www.rhi.com/>.

About CareerBuilder.com

CareerBuilder.com is the nation's largest online job site with more than 23 million unique visitors and over 1.6 million jobs. Owned by Gannett Co., Inc., Tribune Company, The McClatchy Company and Microsoft Corp., the company offers a vast online and print network to help job seekers connect with employers. CareerBuilder.com powers the career centers for more than 1,600 partners, including 140 newspapers and leading portals such as AOL and MSN. More than 300,000 employers take advantage of CareerBuilder.com's easy job postings, 26 million-plus resumes, Diversity Channel and more. CareerBuilder.com and its subsidiaries operate in the U.S., Europe, Canada and Asia. For more information, visit <http://www.careerbuilder.com/>.

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