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DM talent gap widens as hiring plans hold steady

By [Melissa Campanelli](#) [E-Mail to a friend](#) [Print this article](#) [Reprints](#)

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Almost one in four direct marketers say it is very difficult to find qualified candidates to fill open positions, according to the latest direct marketing employment survey by Bernhart Associates Executive Search LLC.

According to the survey, 24 percent of respondents said they were having a "very difficult" time finding qualified candidates and 53 percent described it as "somewhat difficult."

Only 18 percent said they were having little or no difficulty filling positions.

When asked about their hiring plans for the current quarter, two-thirds said they would be adding staff. Thirty percent plan no change in staffing levels, and 11 percent said they still have a hiring freeze.

"We added a new question to the survey this quarter to measure the ease or difficulty direct marketers are having in filling their open positions," said Jerry Bernhart, president of [Bernhart Associates](#) in Owatonna, MN. "As we suspected, a talent shortage seems to be developing in certain direct marketing job functions."

A total of 182 companies responded to the survey, which was e-mailed to a random sample the week of April 9. Companies interested in being added to the Bernhart employment survey should send an e-mail to survey@bernhart.com with "Opt-In" in the subject line.

Mr. Bernhart said analytic-related positions are still in strong demand and dominate the list of anticipated openings, followed by positions in creative, circulation and sales.

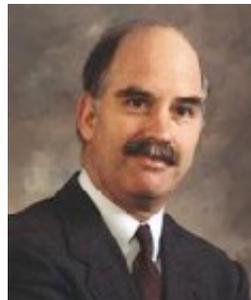
"Not only are a lot of new jobs opening up, layoffs are down to near record lows," Mr. Bernhart said. He added that only 3 percent of the companies responding expect to reduce staff during the current quarter.

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Jerry Bernhart

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