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DIRECT MARKETING TALENT GAP WIDENS AS HIRING PLANS HOLD STEADY, FINDS BERNHART ASSOCIATES' LATEST SURVEY

April 18, 2007 — Nearly one in four direct marketers are finding it very difficult to find qualified candidates to fill their open positions, according to the latest direct marketing employment survey by Bernhart Associates Executive Search, LLC.

"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. "As we suspected, a talent shortage seems to be developing in certain direct marketing job functions."

According to the survey, 24 percent of respondents said they were having a "very difficult" time finding qualified candidates, while 53 percent described it as being "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, exactly two-thirds said they would be adding to staff, unchanged from the first quarter. Thirty percent plan no change in staffing levels while 11 percent said they were retaining a hiring freeze.

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

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

Past survey results can be found in the DMA's *Statistical Fact Book*.

A total of 182 companies responded to the survey which was emailed to a random sample the week of April 9, 2007.

Companies interested in being added to the Bernhart Associates quarterly direct marketing employment survey should send an email to survey@bernhart.com with "Opt-In" in the subject line.

About Bernhart Associates:

Since 1989, Bernhart Associates Executive Search, LLC, (<http://www.bernhart.com>) has been a leading and nationally recognized direct marketing search firm, owned and managed by veteran direct marketing recruiter Jerry Bernhart. The firm's job site board is located at <http://www.directmarketingcareers.com>.

The Bernhart Associates Direct Marketing Employment Survey, conducted quarterly, has become the most widely followed and quoted employment report in the direct marketing industry and is published annually in the Direct Marketing Association's Statistical Fact Book, the most comprehensive publication of facts and trends in the direct marketing industry.

Bernhart is a frequent speaker at DMA conferences and has written dozens of articles for leading direct marketing publications and Web sites. He is a Charter Board Member of Data University and is also owner of the internet job posting site [directmarketingcareers.com](http://www.directmarketingcareers.com).

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