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DIRECT MARKETERS CONTINUE TO SCALE BACK HIRING, REPORTS BERNHART ASSOCIATES

July 21, 2008 — The US direct marketing employment outlook has taken a turn for the worse with employers planning more cutbacks in hiring this summer, according to the latest Bernhart Associates employment survey, which was released today.

“This represents the sixth quarter in a row in which employers have told us they plan to fill fewer jobs,” said Jerry Bernhart, president of Bernhart Associates Executive Search, LLC, Owatonna, MN. “However, we’re not seeing widespread layoffs like we did during the last downturn, and employers are still filling critical positions while letting other roles that have become vacant, stay vacant.”

According to the survey, 47 percent of the companies responding said they plan to add to staff during the current third quarter, a decline of 7 percent from last quarter and the first reading below 50 percent since 2002.

Bernhart said planned layoffs and hiring freezes both remained unchanged, with 12 percent of those surveyed planning staff cutbacks and 20 percent currently imposing a hiring freeze. Forty (40) percent said they are holding steady and plan no change in headcount for the summer.

Bernhart said despite the slumping economy many direct marketing companies are still hiring. “Nearly half of the employers responding to this survey said they are still going to have positions to fill in the near-term, mostly at the low-to-mid levels, and many of the respondents indicated that they are having some degree of difficulty finding qualified candidates for certain positions,” he said.

“We always ask companies to list the positions they expect to fill during the coming three months,” said Bernhart. “This time around the list was top-heavy with analytics, with both sales and e-commerce related openings a close second.”

A total of 132 direct marketing agencies, service providers and users responded to the random survey which was emailed during the first two weeks of July.

Results of past surveys can be found in the DMA’s *Statistical Fact Book*.

Companies interested in participating in the Bernhart Associates Executive Search Quarterly Direct Marketing Employment Survey should send an email to survey@bernhart.com with “Opt-In” in the subject line.

Bernhart Associates Executive Search, LLC, uses Alterian’s Dynamic Messenger e-mail solution to serve as the engine for its quarterly Direct Marketing Employment Survey.

About Bernhart Associates:

Bernhart Associates Executive Search, LLC is a leading and nationally recognized direct marketing search firm, owned and managed by veteran direct marketing recruiter Jerry Bernhart. 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 national speaker on direct marketing employment trends and has written dozens of articles for leading direct marketing publications. He is a Charter Board Member of Data University and is also owner of the Internet job posting site www.directmarketingcareers.com.

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