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DIRECT MARKETING HIRING PLANS HOLD STEADY FOR 2007, FINDS BERNHART ASSOCIATES STUDY

October 10, 2007 — Direct marketers can expect little change in the employment outlook for the remainder of 2007 but a slowing trend in new hiring continues, according to the latest survey by Bernhart Associates.

"The numbers are showing little change compared with this summer," said Jerry Bernhart, president of Bernhart Associates Executive Search, LLC, which has been conducting the quarterly survey since 2001. "At the same time, the new hire percentage continues to show a slow and steady decline that began about a year and a half ago."

According to the survey, 60 percent of companies responding said they plan to add to staff by the end of the year, down slightly from 61 percent during the summer quarter. In April 2006, when the new hire percentage reached its recent peak, the new hire percentage stood at 72 percent. The record high for the index occurred in the fall of 2005, when it reached 80 percent.

The latest survey also shows that 9 percent plan to reduce staff, up from 7 percent during the summer, while 29 percent expect no change in hiring plans during the coming three months.

The survey also examines the degree of difficulty companies are having finding talent.

Bernhart said 85 percent indicated they are either having a "very difficult" time or a "somewhat difficult" time finding qualified applicants for open positions. "Only 15 percent said they are having little or no difficulty," said Bernhart.

"While hiring is not at the heated pace it was a couple of years ago, the supply of qualified applicants remains tight, and in some job categories it's apparently getting tighter," said Bernhart.

Topping the list of skillsets that will be in highest demand is analytics, including statisticians, database marketing analysts and circulation analysts. Account management, sales, and creative were also listed as areas where needs will be greatest.

A total of 116 companies responded to the random survey which was emailed the week of October 1.

Results of past surveys can be found in the Direct Marketing Association's *Statistical Fact Book*.

Companies interested in participating in 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:

Bernhart Associates Executive Search, LLC, (<http://www.bernhart.com>) is a leading and nationally recognized direct marketing search firm, owned and managed by 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 frequent speaker at DMA conferences 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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