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Direct Marketing Employment Holds Steady, New Hiring Still Slow



Direct marketers can expect little change in the employment outlook for the remainder of '07, but a slowing trend in new hiring continues, according to the latest survey by **Bernhart Associates**,

MarketingCharts **reports**.

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

According to the most recent 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.
- 9 percent plan to reduce staff in the coming three months, up from 7 percent during the summer.
- 29 percent expect no change in hiring plans during the coming three months.
- 85 percent of those surveyed said they are having either 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.

"While hiring is not at the heated pace it was a couple of years ago, the supply of qualified applicants remains tight," said Bernhart.

In some job categories, he said, it's apparently getting tighter:

- Topping the list of skill sets that will be in highest demand is analytics, resulting in demand for 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.

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