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Direct Marketing Hiring Plans Hold Steady

Online News published in DMReview.com
October 11, 2007

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

"The numbers are showing little change compared with 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, which began about a year and a half ago."

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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 61percent during the summer quarter. In April of 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 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

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they are having little or no difficult," 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.

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Topping the list of skill sets that will be in highest demand is analytics, including statisticians, database marketing analysts and circulation analysts. Account management and sales 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 1st.

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

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