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FINANCIAL NEWS / RESULTS

January 28, 2004

64% of Direct Marketers Planning New Hires

Direct Marketing Employment Indicators Up Sharply, Survey Shows.

January 22, 2004, Owatonna, MN -- Showing sharp improvement over last year, nearly two-thirds of direct marketers are planning new hires this quarter, according to the latest direct marketing employment survey by Bernhart Associates Executive Search.

Bernhart Survey Shows Increased Confidence

"The new jobs index, the one we follow most closely, is up 13 percent over last quarter, representing the biggest quarter-to-quarter increase since the survey began three years ago," said Jerry Bernhart, President of Bernhart Associates. "Plans to add staff are broad-based across all major job categories."

The survey also shows that one of out of five direct marketing companies still has a hiring freeze, although the percentage of companies with freezes continues to decline and employers are eliminating added approval requirements once those freezes are lifted.

Survey results are published in The Direct Marketing Association's (DMA) annual Statistical Fact Book.

"We're also seeing a significant pick-up in recruiting activity from entry level up to senior management," said Bernhart. "Calls are coming in from both users and suppliers. Boards of Directors are giving executives the green light to add headcount so they can hit more aggressive revenue targets for 2004."

Bernhart said that taken together the indicators are at their best levels since Summer 2001.

"What this shows is that barring any unexpected shocks, the slow turnaround in direct marketing employment that began this past Fall is not only going to continue, by all indications it's going to accelerate. Another sure sign of steady recovery is that an increasing number of candidates are once again receiving multiple offers."

Survey Results...

According to the survey, 64 percent said they will be adding to staff this quarter, up from 51 percent last quarter. The number of companies with hiring freezes fell slightly to 20 percent. Only one indicator, the number of companies planning further layoffs, showed a more negative trend increasing to 12 percent from 9 percent last quarter.

"The layoff indicator doesn't worry us too much because we think some of that might be seasonal," said Bernhart.

Bernhart said the survey shows hiring is expected to pick up in many of the major direct marketing job categories with account management, creative, customer service, production, analytics, marketing, operations, database, administrative, sales, technical and project management all trending higher.

A total of 194 direct marketing companies took part in the latest quarterly survey, which was e-mailed the week of January 11, 2004.

Companies interested in being added to the quarterly survey should send an email to survey@bernhart.com with "opt-in" in the subject line.

Bernhart Associates Executive Search, since 1989 concentrating exclusively in Direct Marketing, CRM/Database Marketing, Quantitative Analysis and Sales/Business Development. Find us on the Internet at www.bernhart.com. In 2001 proud member of The Pinnacle Society (www.pinnaclesociety.org), an honors organization of the nation's highest achievers in executive search. Home of www.directmarketingcareers.com, the Internet's most complete job posting website for the direct marketing industry.



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