

Bulletin Board: A good year for graduates

by Amy Winter

The future appears bright for those 2007 graduates entering the working world. MRINetwork, an international recruitment organization, shows the job market for college graduates as being in the best shape it has been in since the 1990s.

After hitting a low point in 2003, the job market has advanced for graduates during the last four years. The Economic Policy Institute shows that the employment rate has increased to 86 percent after dropping to 84 percent in 2003 and 2004, according to Michael Jalbert, president of MRINetwork.

"The demand for information technology graduates, while not on a par with the frenzy we saw at the height of the dot-com boom, is very high," said Jalbert. "Graduates with degrees in finance and accounting should also find good opportunities. Manufacturing, logistics and supply distribution are heating up, as well. Companies are looking for graduates with information systems and statistical capabilities, along with solid business training and communications skills."

Challenger, Gray & Christmas Inc., a global outplacement agency, confirms the positive job outlook for this year's grads. The best job opportunities for this year's 1.3 million college seniors are in health care, financial services, technology and international business, according to their annual college graduate job search outlook. The agency found these areas as having the highest demand for this year's grads:

- Austin, Texas.

- Jacksonville, N.C.

- Lawrence, Kan.

- Dubuque, Iowa.

Those who studied specialty areas of the desired fields may have an easier time landing a position right out of college. For example, petroleum engineers could help the country benefit from the decreased supply of oil.

"Even if your major was not directly related to one of the growth industries, there still could be ample job opportunities for you," said John A. Challenger, chief executive officer. "Biotechnology firms not only need scientists and engineers, they need marketing people and project managers. Google needs computer programmers, but the company is also hiring tons of advertising sales representatives."

Despite the setbacks in housing and automobile areas, companies continue to look for entry-level employees in order to build a foundation for the future. An April poll conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers indicated that employers hope to hire 19.2 percent more college graduates this year.

"The fact is that small dips in the economy caused by housing and automotive or other factors often do not impact the graduate job market," said Challenger. "Entry-level hiring is less about immediate expansion plans and more about building solid workers for the distant future. In a weak economy, hiring suffers the most among middle managers and above as companies attempt to limit the number of higher salaried employees."

For more information, visit www.mrnetwork.com or www.challenger.com.

FEW ORIENTATION PROGRAMS

New employees may find it harder to adapt to a new working environment without a proper orientation.

One-third of the 492 workers polled said their company failed to provide a formal orientation program when they were hired, according to a survey completed by Robert Half International, a staffing service.

Eighty-seven percent who received an orientation said the training helped them to be more successful with the company. Only 8 percent responded that the orientation was not very effective.

"An employee's first days of work leave a lasting impression, and an orientation program helps staff acclimate more quickly and comfortably," said Max Messer, chairman and CEO and author of "Human Resources Kit for Dummies." "These programs also provide employers an opportunity to reinforce the firm's values and set expectations."

Half has these tips for a beneficial orientation:

- Give new employees a tour of the office and have them meet their co-workers.
- Bring in an executive or leader to have more credibility in the orientation.
- Develop an outline of the sessions so employees know what to expect.
- Emphasize the company's ideas and how it presents itself.

For more information visit www.rhi.com.

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