

Competitive Job Market in 1989.

Both employers and job-hunters may be frustrated by the job market in 1989. A new study by the Technical Service Council, an industry-sponsored placement service and personnel consulting firm, predicts that shortages of some professionals and surpluses of others will exist simultaneously.

Fewer Promotions

The decrease in birth rates and the aging labour force will mean increasing competition for young workers and eventually, pressure on starting salaries. Personnel managers expect to have trouble keeping older employees happy when reduced growth and fewer organizational levels will combine to generate fewer promotional opportunities for middle managers.

Although Canada's stock of engineers, accountants, scientists and data-processing staff is at record levels, employers report difficulty filling positions. Many

vacancies require specialized experience. Recruiting may take up to 14 months because many candidates will not move geographically. This trend will continue because of the large percentage of two-career families and candidates' emphasis on the quality of life.

Staff turnover rates are increasing and more job offers are being declined. Three Ontario employers have responded by offering managers and an engineer sign-up bonuses ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000.

The recruiter's job is made more complex by legislation on human rights, reference checking and the Charter of Rights. A recent court case suggests that employees may be able to win legal damages if recruiters misrepresent a job.

Alert firms are combating shortages by making recruiting specifications more realistic, for example, considering graduates with three to seven years' experience, rather than only those with four or five.

Other firms are considering technologists as well as engineers, MBA's as well as CA's, and answering applications more quickly to avoid losing candidates. Some firms are offering new employees vacations based on total experience, rather than experience with their new firm.

Recruiting innovations include advertising on cable television, job listings on computer bulletin boards, referrals from relocation counselling consultants and payments to employees for referrals.

Contracts Popular

To improve the availability of personnel, more firms are developing staff retention policies and hiring retired staff. Professionals and managers are more often hired on contracts to reduce the size of the permanent work-force, and to reduce the risk of law suits for wrongful dismissal.

The Council expects slower growth in the economy

in 1989 and a consequent slackening of demand. Most remaining shortages will be of specialists such as instrumentation engineers and tax accountants.

Employers will continue to be selective. A Vancouver firm had 68 applications, but found none suitable. An Ontario company interviewed 30 chemists, all new graduates, but ruled all out because of lack of communication and inter-personal skills. More employers are demanding both skills.

Compared to 1988, the number of openings for professionals will drop most dramatically in Ontario and the Atlantic provinces. Surpluses will be less pronounced in Quebec, with the Prairies and B.C. having relatively active job markets, in spite of some surpluses.

Vacancies will be most numerous for experienced systems analysts, computer programmers, mechanical sales engineers, accountants, electronic engineers and plant

engineers. Employers will have a wide range of prospects for executive vacancies, as well as for positions in credit, traffic, public relations and purchasing.

Job Prospectives

The anticipated demand for 1989 for 18 occupations and new college graduates is described in Technical Service Council's booklet "Review of Professional Employment, 1988-89".


"Review of Professional Employment, 1988-89", Technical Service Council.

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