

SURVEY: PROFESSIONAL HIRING TO INCREASE IN SECOND QUARTER



A survey of U.S. executives revealed 10 percent of companies expect to increase the number of full-time employees in professional occupations during the second quarter of 2010 and six percent expect a decrease in staff. The results are based on a telephone survey of more than 4,000 executives throughout the United States conducted by The Robert Half Professional Employment Report. Max Messmer, CEO of Robert Half International, said the survey was conducted because the unemployment rate within professional occupations can differ from the general job market. "For example," he notes. "In recent years, the U.S. unemployment rate for workers with college degrees has been about half that of the overall unemployment rate." Among the survey's notable results:

- A net four percent of executives plan to increase hiring during the second quarter.
- The legal field is expected to see the strongest hiring activity, with a net 26 percent of respondents expecting to increase staff levels.
- Executives in the finance, insurance and real estate sector plan to do the most hiring of professional staff, with a net nine percent projecting hiring increases.
- The West North Central(1), West South Central(2) and Mountain(3) regions of the United States showed the most promise, with a net seven percent of executives from each area planning to add personnel.
- Nearly four in 10 executives (37 percent) said it is challenging to find skilled professionals today.

Messmer notes the second-quarter projections could indicate that companies are "cautiously rebuilding." "Many firms, especially those that found they cut staff too aggressively during the worst of the recession, may need to add personnel at the first sign of a pickup in business," he said. Executives also appear to be exuding greater optimism in their companies' prospects as 82 percent of respondents said they were either "very confident" or "somewhat confident" for the next quarter. Robert Half International was founded in 1948 and has staffing and consulting operations in 365 locations worldwide.

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