

EMPLOYERS SAY THOUSAND OF GOOD JOBS IN CENTRAL FLORIDA GO UNFILLED: THE JOBLESS CRY, FOUL



It is indeed paradoxical that whilst federal reports show that there are at least three to four people aspiring for a single job, many employers say that they are having positions that they are finding hard to fill. Lauren Volcheff, vice president of marketing of Turico Holidays, a wholesale vacation provider in Altamonte Springs says that she had wrongly assumed that she would soon find a worker to fill the opening she had. "I assumed from posting to start date it would take about two months," she said. It wasn't any minor job; the opening sought a senior marketing manager for Turico in Orlando, with remuneration between \$50,000 and \$65,000, a windfall for the thousands of long-term jobless in Central Florida. Four months since she had advertized, Volcheff is still searching for the right candidate to come along. Of around the 30 resumes that she has seen of the applicants to the job, none fit the bill. "I've seen roughly 30 resumes in that time," Volcheff said. "Qualified candidates are few and far between." The unemployment rate in Metro Orlando does not seem to go lower than 8.7 percent and there are continual reports in the newspapers and the media of the trials and tribulations of the unemployed and when will it all end. But it is indeed ironical, that in the midst of all these tragic stories, thousands of unfilled jobs await endlessly for weeks and months for the right candidate to come along. According to Roger Lear, founder of orlandojobs.com there are 11,500 open jobs now in Central Florida, most of them being in the hospitality industry, health care and IT/computer industry. Lear says that this does not automatically mean that there are enough jobs around for everyone to share; availability does not necessarily translate into capability. "Many of the jobs are either 'touch money' jobs – sales positions that require real selling skills just to get the job – or require some advanced degree," he said. Full Sail University in Winter Park has posted upwards of 150 jobs on Orlandojobs.com that include opening for nighttime housekeeping supervisor and web product manager to data analyst. Most remain unfilled even though they have been there for weeks. "When you look down the list of jobs, probably 50 are course director positions" requiring specialized credentials and experience, Lear said. "Not only that, but if you're that good, why teach when you can go out make \$50 or \$60 an hour *doing it*?" The growth of the health care industry here has opened up many job opportunities. Nemours Children's Hospital scheduled to open in October had advertised for almost 600 jobs and most got filled fairly fast. Hospital spokeswoman Yusial Ramirez whilst confirming that only 40 openings still awaited filling, confessed that she was "pleasantly surprised at how quickly we've been able to fill positions." Lear said that he is skeptical if there are enough skilled workers to keep up with the demand from the ever growing healthcare industry. "Our employment demographic in Central Florida doesn't fill this need," he said. Employers are saying that there have been many occasions when they have had to revise contracts and raise salaries when worker's put in the mandatory two week notice saying that they want to leave. How dire is the situation can be seen from the ironical fact that Lear is having trouble filling a job in his own company. "We're a little company with 22 employees, very well-connected in the community, and I can't hire an esp.net guy to save my life." The truth is that he can hire them, but retaining them and persuading them to stay on is the problem. Over the last 18 months he has hired three people for the job, two were not worth it and the third left for more lucrative pastures. Job specialist Lear says that he uses all the tricks in his book and does a lot of things to persuade them to stay but things don't seem to work out. "We tell them we do all sorts of fun things," Lear said. "We take people on cruises, we do events all the time, and we have full benefits. It's not enough." Many unemployed have not taken very lightly to the claims that jobs are hard to fill and that appropriate candidates are not available. Aleic Grant wrote, "As someone who has been job hunting for 10 months and sent out about 500 resumes, it comes with quite a sting to hear them gripe," wrote Aleic Grant, 44. "It angers me to no end to hear companies complain about not being able to fill positions. If you don't exactly match the qualifications to a 'T' you never hear from them. He said that instead of cribbing, it would be better if they find candidates who best match their jobs and then train them on the job just like companies would do in the good old days. "Is it that much of an economic hardship to train someone who might stay at the job instead of having it unfilled for months, he asks?" Another worker who said he's prefer to remain unnamed since he was afraid that his words "could come back to harm me big time" said that employers and recruiters do not give the applicants enough time to understand their needs. He said that I fulfill most of the needs of the jobs that I aspire for me, but no recruiter or employer has had the time or inclination to discuss things with me, he says. Both sides have different stories to tell but embedded between the comments is the harsh reality, that given the economic condition prevailing today and given the vast pool of unemployed to choose from, it's an employer's market.