

## THIS CHRISTMAS COULD BRING A WINDFALL OF SEASONAL JOBS



For many unemployed the best gift this Christmas could be a job as retailers are hiring for the holidays and chances are very bright that more seasonal jobs will be available this year than in any other season in the past five years. According to a new survey by Snagajob, America's largest hourly employment network, 75 percent of retailers are expecting a substantial increase in holiday sales and they will need workers to meet this boom – this could perhaps be the best news in a long-long time for struggling Americans. According to a recent survey by Hay Group, a management consulting firm, around 57 percent plan to hire around the same number of workers as last year but 36 percent say they plan to hire even more than before. Snagajob survey of hiring managers found that hiring for retailers would be around 63 percent, the highest in the last five years. "Retailers are betting that 2012 is going to be a great holiday season," said Craig Rowley, vice president and global practice leader for Hay Group's retail practice, in a press release. "After four years of economic turbulence, they have figured out how to operate in an uncertain business environment and are calm and cool, knowing that they are ready as they head into the holidays." Most employers say that they intend to fill in their vacant positions by the end of October so that they are well prepared for the official season that begins in late November. This year's seasonal hiring is also important in the sense that it could provide a platform for permanent hiring and lead to a long-term employment. Nearly half the companies surveyed said they were focused not just on hiring workers for the holiday season but also those who had the capacity for working full-time. Many big names are hiring big. Kohl's amongst the country's largest department stores chains, said that it would hire upwards of 52,700 workers. It was likely to hire a further 5,700 seasonal workers at its distribution centers. Target says that it is expecting to hire between 80,000 and 90,000 workers, which is less than the 92,000 it hired last year, but still means upwards of 80,000 jobless Americans will get a chance to make some money. Wal-Mart said that it would pay overtime to its current workers and ask them to work additional hours and were seeking to recruit more than 50,000 seasonal workers to their labor force. "This is our busiest time of the year and we are focused even more on providing excellent service to our shoppers throughout the holiday season," said Gisel Ruiz, Wal-Mart's executive vice president and chief operating officer, in a company statement. "One way we do that is by ensuring our stores are adequately staffed by our associates." Toys R Us says that it is likely to hire around 45,000 seasonal workers across the country. Last year of the 40,000 it had employed, around 6,000 were hired full-time. The company says that this time around too, they are going to provide growth opportunities and the seasonal work could turn into a full-time job. Apart from the money that it will bring, those who get the jobs benefit in other ways as well. The temporary jobs can lead to permanent jobs, because companies prefer to hire people who are employed rather than the unemployed and the seasonal job will give them a recent reference. All said and done, it is a win-win situation for all. The employers get more business, its good news for the economy and for the unemployed something to cheer about in the Christmas season.