

## AMERICA FACES FREEFALL IN TALENT CLIFF: MILLIONS OF JOBS GO ABEGGING



Millions of jobs go abegging in industries as contrasting and unrelated as oil and gas, utilities, computing and manufacturing. Data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics say that the 1.2 million computer science graduates will be needed to fill the job vacancies likely in the computer industry by 2018. Analysts say that taking the existing US graduation rates into account, only around a third of those jobs are likely to be filled with millions of them remaining unfilled. When recruiters were posed the question why they were not managing to get candidates for these posts when millions of Americans were desperate for work, they said that there was no dearth of applicants, but they did not 'fit', lacking as they were in the requisite skills to do the job. The talent and more significantly, the skills, are just not there, they moaned. So the crux of the problem is that US businesses are unable to find appropriate workers for specific jobs because they lack the basic skills, that only appropriate education in science, technology, engineering and math can provide. In black and white it does sound a trifle discomfoting and embarrassing that a country, that prides itself in being called the land of opportunity and one that occupies the topmost pedestal amongst the most powerful in the world, is facing record unemployment rates, yet unable to provide education that could help provide jobs for millions. What has gone wrong or rather where have we gone wrong? Our country's ability to compete with others in the world are very future depends on addressing this issue. The US is known for creativity and innovations, yet we find ourselves in this mess, to get out of which all we need to do is modify and change our education and professional development systems to ensure that they generate more engineers, scientists and innovators. At the moment demand exceeds supply; we have to reverse this trend. Education must increase its number of qualified graduates and bridge the mismatch gap that currently exists. The stakes are extremely high. Failing to do so simply means that America cannot compete. Microsoft says that it has upwards of 6,000 open jobs within the country that need filling. The looming fiscal cliff has seen defense and aerospace laying off workers, yet they are frantically seeking computer skilled workers to fill newly emerging cyber jobs. The government says that it spends almost a \$ trillion a year on appropriate education. Given that it is hardly yielding the results that are required, one can conclude that is money recklessly and imprudently spent. It is not enough to spend the money, it is more important to understand how to spend it. It is better that the government discard these existing models as they have demonstrated their ineffectiveness and look to enter into collaboration with private-public partnerships and business elders, assess and evaluate successful programs elsewhere in the world that are proven to work and then implement them in our educational systems here. Everyone has to brought into the mix. Recruiters must leverage demand for skills that will get more candidates in the jobs pipeline. Students should have role models, both male and female and from diverse backgrounds, in front of them with whom they can identify and seek to emulate. Teachers, counselors and professors need to be appropriately educated and what is needed from them to prepare for the painstaking and demanding curriculum ahead. And above all we need the people who are saying they have millions of jobs unfilled to tell us exactly what they want, so that with an objective in mind, the rest have a known benchmark ahead of them.