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Career Watch: A cautious outlook for hiring

Jamie Eckle

November 2, 2009 ([Computerworld](#))

The Employment Outlook

Expect [new hiring](#) in the technology sector to be cautious for the rest of the year, says Robert Half Technology, whose IT Hiring Index and Skills Report for the fourth quarter shows that 6% of CIOs surveyed expect to expand their IT teams, while 6% are planning staff reductions. RHT calls that a wash, though there's nothing to suggest that those hiring and those laying off will do so at the same rate. Here are some other findings from the survey:

- The best region for getting hired might be New England, where 8% of managers expect to expand staffs, while only 4% anticipate staff reductions.
- Companies with 1,000 or more employees will be the most likely to hire new staff, with 11% of managers at such companies saying they plan to do some hiring, compared with 7% who expect to let staff go. At the same time, a study by Forrester Research Inc. concludes that midsize businesses offer more stable employment for tech workers, with fewer layoffs. The two studies aren't contradictory; it could be that large companies have to do more hiring now to make up for their larger layoffs earlier.
- Network administration is the skill most in demand, cited by 69% of the respondents.

The quarterly study is based on more than 1,400 telephone interviews with CIOs from a random sample of U.S. companies that have at least 100 employees.



Canceled Out

Hiring expectations remain well below last year's levels, while layoff expectations remain much higher.

	CIOs expecting to hire		CIOs expecting layoffs	
Q1 2008	13%		3%	
Q2 2008	14%		2%	
Q3 2008	14%		4%	
Q4 2008	11%		3%	
Q1 2009	12%		4%	
Q2 2009	8%		6%	
Q3 2009	8%		6%	
Q4 2009	6%		6%	

Source: Robert Half Technology IT Hiring Index and Skills Report, August 2009

Marketing You

[Résumés](#) still matter, because they are the best way for job hunters to present a quick synopsis of their skills -- to make a compelling argument for why they are the best choice for the job. But just slapping all your degrees and accomplishments on an 8 1/2-by-11-inch sheet of paper and adding your contact information isn't enough. Design matters, because you want your skills and experience to leap out at hiring managers.

One group that takes résumés very seriously is Career Directors International. It hosts an annual competition among professional

résumé designers, and it also makes some résumé professionals available at career fairs to provide brief critiques of people's résumés. (Go to NationalCareerFairs.com to find out when a fair will be held near you.)

You might also keep an eye on the CareerDirectors.com site to see whether winners of this year's résumé competition -- which was held on Oct. 17 -- have been posted, as they have been in years past. One intriguing approach that was used by the winner of last year's contest seems especially [adaptable for IT workers](#). Sharon Williams of JobRocket.com used an eye-catching chart in a résumé for a sales manager. The chart illustrated retention rates for clients of a weight-loss clinic, but it could just as easily have shown network availability under your stewardship or a decline in data breaches since you took over security at your company.

What's Your Earning Power?

How does your pay compare with that of your peers? *Computerworld's* 24th Annual Salary Survey will feature the latest IT salary trends and advice on where to find the best-paying jobs. This year's survey participants can enter a drawing to win one of 10 new 8GB Apple iPod Nanos, which feature a built-in video camera, a larger screen than previous models and an FM radio. The drawing is open to legal U.S. residents age 18 or older. Take our annual Salary Survey today at computerworld.com/salary2010M.

No. 1

Ranking of computer science/IT among fields of study recommended by HR professionals in a survey by Challenger, Gray & Christmas Inc. In the survey, conducted in August, 150 HR professionals were given 11 fields of study and asked to select one that they would highly recommend to college-bound students.