



Presented by DeVry University

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Job Seekers are Out of Sync with Hiring Managers

Third-annual survey reveals various “disconnects” – not job market – may be biggest barrier to employment

DOWNERS GROVE, Ill., Oct. 28, 2013 – Findings from a recent study by the [Career Advisory Board](#), established by DeVry University, indicate a widening gap between America’s hiring managers and job seekers. The third-annual Job Preparedness Indicator spotlights differences in each group’s view of the skills employees need to thrive in the workforce, their outlook on the U.S. job market and the steps job seekers should take in order to gain employment. Harris Interactive conducted the survey on behalf of the Career Advisory Board in July and August among 507 U.S. job seekers (ages 18 and older) and 500 U.S. hiring managers.

2013 Job Preparedness Indicator Key Findings

Are overconfident job seekers missing the mark?

- Seventy-two percent of job seekers are confident they know how to present their skills and experience to an interviewer and more than half of job seekers (56 percent) are confident they know what employers are looking for in candidates today
- Yet, just 15 percent of hiring managers say nearly all or most job seekers have the skills and traits their companies are looking for in candidates

Hiring managers are bullish...and picky

- Eighty-six percent of hiring managers are at least somewhat confident the job market will improve in 2014, up considerably from 67 percent of hiring managers with a similar level of confidence in last year’s poll
- The percentage of hiring managers who describe themselves as either “extremely confident” or “very confident” in an improving job market nearly doubled to 30 percent, up from 16 percent the year prior
- Sixty-seven percent of hiring managers don’t feel like they have to settle for a candidate without the perfect qualifications for the job

Job seekers are bearish...and growing more pessimistic

- Thirty-seven percent of job seekers are not at all confident that the job market will improve next year – a 7 percent increase over last year
- While overall employment is up for job seekers in 2013 over last year – 64 percent compared to 55 percent – the proportion of unemployed job seekers out of work for the past two or more years nearly tripled from 14 to 38 percent

- Seventy-two percent of job seekers agree companies often refuse to consider a candidate for a job if he or she is not currently employed

“We’re seeing an increasing number of job seekers who are losing hope, but the economy isn’t fully to blame,” said Alexandra Levit, business and workplace consultant and Career Advisory Board member. “Opportunities do exist for job seekers who are able to effectively demonstrate to hiring managers that they have specific in-demand skills.”

Managerial candidates have biggest disconnects

The survey presented respondents with a set of 15 skills or traits. Job seekers were asked to choose which skills best and least described them. Hiring managers were asked which skills were most and least important in someone seeking employment in entry-level, mid-level and managerial/executive positions.¹

- For the third year in a row, managerial-level candidates² had the largest gaps between their rankings of priority skills compared to the skills demanded of them by hiring managers:
 - “Global outlook” (36 point gap)
 - “Strategic perspective” (28 point gap)
 - “Business acumen” (26 point gap)
 - “Ability to network effectively” (16 point gap)
- Managerial-level job seekers are short-changing themselves by touting skills that hiring managers consider to be baseline expectations for their senior level candidates:
 - “Strong work ethic” (57 point gap)
 - “Self-motivation” (31 point gap)
 - “Ability to work well with others” (23 point gap)

“It is clear that senior-level job seekers need to focus less on the skills that enabled them to rise through the ranks and more on the high-level abilities they have developed over the years that can be used to lead organizations,” said Levit.

Missing the value of a mentor

These perceptual gaps and the durable sense of self-confidence reported by job seekers may explain why many candidates have not taken steps to gain employment that hiring managers consider essential:

- Seventy-four percent of hiring managers say job seekers should have a mentor, counselor or job coach to talk to about whether their skills and experience match those required for the jobs they are interested in—yet, only 40 percent of job seekers report having a similar professional resource
- The proportion of job seekers who would rely on their own experience to decide what information to include on applications, resumes and cover letters rather than seek advice from others – including career counselors or instructors – has grown from 58 percent in 2012 to 67 percent in 2013

“Job seekers are doing themselves a huge disservice by ignoring the wealth of guidance and insight a mentor could provide,” said Madeleine Slutsky, chairman of the Career Advisory Board and vice president of career services at DeVry University. “Cultivating relationships with individuals who have experience with the current employment landscape can be a tremendous help in the job search process.”

Tough time for recent graduates

- Ninety-two percent of hiring managers think hiring of college graduates is increasing slowly post-recession compared to hiring of more experienced candidates
- Sixty-six percent of hiring managers and 64 percent of job seekers think the primary reason for the slow recovery is competition from more experienced candidates for entry level jobs
- The most significant consequences of organizations not actively increasing the hiring of college graduates:
 - Forty-one percent of hiring managers believe college graduates will have to develop professional skills outside the job to be more competitive—with 28 percent of job seekers in agreement
 - Twenty-nine percent of job seekers think college graduates will be chronically unemployed
 - Twenty-two percent of job seekers believe fewer people will aspire to be a college graduate

To access the full research report and for expert commentary on solutions for closing the gaps between job seekers and hiring managers, please visit: www.careeradvisoryboard.org.

About The Career Advisory Board

Established in 2010 by DeVry University, the Career Advisory Board is comprised of leading representatives from business and academia, and recognized career experts who deliver valuable insights on today's most important career trends and provide actionable advice for job seekers. The Career Advisory Board generates original research and commentary, and creates tools, insights and resources to prepare job seekers for success. Its members include executives from DeVry University, HP, IBM, LinkedIn, Microsoft Corporation and Quintiles, as well as nationally recognized career experts. For more information, visit www.careeradvisoryboard.org.

Survey Methodology

The 2013 Job Preparedness Indicator survey is designed to identify gaps between the skills candidates say they have and the skills employers seek to fill available positions. The research was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of the Career Advisory Board between July 18 – August 6, 2013 among 507 U.S. adults aged 18 and up who are looking for work ("job seekers") and 500 employed U.S. adults, with titles of Director and above or HR manager, with responsibility for hiring decisions within a company with Fortune 1000-equivalent annual revenue ("hiring managers"). For a full methodology, including weighting variables, please view the full research report at www.careeradvisoryboard.org

¹ In order to develop the indicator scores, Job Seekers and Hiring Managers completed a maximum-differential task ("max diff"). A set of fifteen skills or traits was presented to respondents, in groups of four at a time, and ensured each item was evaluated against every other item. Job Seekers were asked to choose which skill best described them, and which least described them. Hiring Managers were asked which skill or trait was most important and which was least important in someone seeking employment in entry level, mid-level, and managerial/executive positions.

We use a multivariate statistical technique to estimate the likelihood that each feature is picked as "most preferred," "least preferred," or "neither most preferred nor least preferred." For ease of interpretation and creating comparable measures as indices, each skill or trait is placed on a 0-100 scale where "0" indicates lowest preference and "100" indicates highest preference. In order to determine "hiring manager value," another multivariate statistical technique was applied to combine importance from the max-diff and how common or uncommon a skill was. Results were scaled from 0-100, with higher values representing a skill that was very important but very rare. "Gap" values reported in this press release describe the differing results between hiring manager and job seeker indicator values.

² Small base (<100).