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Survey of "Hot Jobs" in Industry and Services Sectors (First of a four-part series)



OVERVIEW

This LABSTAT Updates is the first in a four-part series that presents the highlights of the 2007/2008 BLES Integrated Survey (BITS) module entitled Occupational Shortages and Surpluses. The BITS is a nationwide sample survey covering 6,460 establishments with 20 or more employed persons in the industry and services sectors. The reference period covered the months from January 2007 to June 2008.

This issue presents: (1) top hard-to-fill vacancies by occupation groups sorted by number of vacancies; (2) reasons why vacancies were difficult to fill; and (3) duration of recruitment. In this survey, **hard-to-fill vacancies** was defined as vacancies for which establishments found difficulties in recruitment.

SURVEY RESULTS

Two in every five establishments got job openings ...

- Of the total 24,457 establishments covered in this survey, 41.3% or 10,103 reported the presence of job openings during the survey reference period - with 25.1% (6,132) reporting difficulties in recruiting the right applicants for the job openings.

- More specifically, a total of 203,972 job vacancies were available for placements - the majority (64.3% or 131,192) was regarded by the employers as easy to fill.
- The rest (35.3% or 72,060) comprised hard-to-fill vacancies - still a sizeable proportion in relation to total job vacancies.

Accountants, engineers, IT-based professionals at the top of "Hard-to-Fill" list ...

- Vacancies for professional workers accounted for one-fourth (24.3% or 17,530) of total hard-to-fill occupations.
- The top ten (10) hardest vacancies to fill ranked according to the volume of openings were as follows:

Top 10 Hard-to-Fill Vacancies (Professionals)	
1. Accountants and auditors	1,668
2. Systems analysts and designers	1,152
3. Electrical engineers	1,059
4. Computer programmers	795
5. Computer engineers	772
6. Mechanical engineers	730
7. Chemical engineers	480
8. HRD professionals	471
9. Electronics and communications engineers	428
10. Industrial engineers	409

- The list was dominated by occupations related to engineering and information technology.
- This finding underscores the difficulties of attracting qualified engineers (electrical; computer; mechanical; chemical; electronics and communications; and industrial) as observed in a wide range of industries such as mining, manufacturing, utilities, construction, transport and communications.
- It also highlights the increasing application of information technology in many areas of production and services as indicated by the big demands for IT professionals.
- The next top ten hard-to-fill vacancies as shown below was a mixture of professions related to health, construction, mineral exploration, journalism and social services.

Next Top 10 Hard-to-Fill Vacancies <i>(Professionals)</i>	
11. Medical technologists	323
12. Civil engineers	315
13. Journalists/writers	281
14. Pharmacists	270
15. Architects	249
16. Chemists	136
17. Librarians/archivists	112
18. Medical doctors	111
19. Geologists and geophysicists	53
20. Social work professionals	23

Pilots, mechanical engineering technicians and bookkeepers at the top of the hard-to-fill list among technicians and associate professionals ...

- Vacancies for technicians and associate professionals constituted 12.7% (9,181) of

the total hard-to-fill jobs - comparatively modest compared with the volume of vacancies for professional workers.

- Mechanical engineering technicians ranked foremost in the hard-to-fill list. Also included were workers from the aviation industry which are encountering difficulties in recruiting pilots and air traffic safety technicians.

Top 5 Hard-to-Fill Vacancies <i>(Technicians and Associate Professionals)</i>	
1. Mechanical engineering technicians	1,587
2. Aircraft pilots, navigators and flight engineers	314
3. Bookkeepers	243
4. Social work associate professionals	69
5. Air traffic safety technicians	53

Call center agents registered the biggest number of job vacancies in all categories of occupations ...

- Numerically large vacancies were reported for clerks at 32,644 - representing nearly one-half (45.3%) of total hard-to-fill jobs in all categories of occupations.
- Call center agents represented the single largest item in the hard-to-fill list (20,820 or 63.8%) - on the back of the continuing expansion of business process outsourcing (BPO) activities in the country. Medical transcriptionists also appeared in the list.

Top 5 Hard-to-Fill Vacancies <i>(Clerks)</i>	
1. Call center agents	20,820
2. Cashiers and ticket clerks	3,902
3. Accounting and bookkeeping clerks	1,910
4. Data entry operators	387
5. Medical transcriptionists	159

Skill-based workers accounted for only a small fraction of hard-to-fill vacancies ...

- Recruitment difficulties were less pronounced among skill-based workers compared with other occupation groups.
- For craft and related trades workers, the proportion of hard-to-fill vacancies to total job openings was placed at only 12.5% (3,334 against 26,649).
- The five (5) most difficult to fill vacancies for this category of workers were listed below:

Top 5 Hard-to-Fill Vacancies <i>(Craft and Related Trades Workers)</i>	
1. Tailors and dressmakers	335
2. Machine-tool setters and setter-operators	257
3. Linemen, line installers and cable splicers	223
4. Cabinet/Furniture makers	134
5. Potters and related clay and abrasive formers	133

- Smaller still was the proportion of hard-to-fill vacancies in the case of plant and machine operators and assemblers at 9.5% (2,371 out of 24,851).
- The five (5) vacancies most difficult to fill for this occupation group were as follows:

Top 5 Hard-to-Fill Vacancies <i>(Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers)</i>	
1. Heavy truck and lorry drivers	363
2. Lifting truck operators	266
3. Bus drivers	215
4. Incinerator, water treatment and related operators	133
5. Machine tool operators	85

Reasons Why Vacancies were "Hard to Fill"		
Reason	Number	Percent
TOTAL	14,159*	100.0
Lack of competency	5,145	36.3
Expectation of high salary	3,044	21.5
Lack of years of experience	2,627	18.6
No applicant	1,112	7.9
Competitions from overseas jobs	717	5.1
Location/work schedule problem	561	4.0
Lack of license/certification	408	2.9
Others	484	3.4
No response	60	0.4

* Refers to the total number of responses in all occupation titles identified/listed by respondents as hard to fill.

Lack of competency, "high reservation wage" and lack of work experience most common problems in filling up of vacant positions ...

- When asked why vacancies were hard to fill, a little more than one-third (36.3%) of total responses cited the shortage of applicants with the right competencies as the biggest recruitment challenge. This was followed by applicant's expectation of high salary (21.5%); and the lack of applicant's work experience (18.6%).
- Other reasons cited were: absence of job applicant (7.9%); competition from overseas employment (5.1%); location or work schedule problems (4.0%); lack of professional license/TESDA certification (2.9%); and other reasons (3.4%).

Hard-to-fill vacancies took an average of four (4) months to fill ...

- The average duration of recruitment for hard-to-fill vacancies was computed at 4.2 months for all occupation groups.
- About one-third (33.8%) of total hard-to-fill vacancies took four months or more to be filled up.
- The longest average duration was reported for plant and machine operators and assemblers at 6.5 months while the shortest was accounted for by craft and related trade workers at 2.6 months.

Average Recruitment Period of "Hard-to-Fill" Vacancies	
Item	Average Duration (in months)
All Occupations	<u>4.2</u>
Professionals	4.3
Technical and associate professionals	4.3
Clerks	3.4
Craft and related trade workers	2.6
Plant and machine operators	6.5
Laborers	2.8
Duration in Months	Percent Distribution
Total	<u>100.0</u>
< 1 month	11.5
1 to 3 months	54.6
4 to 6 months	15.3
> 6 months	18.5
No report	0.1

FOR INQUIRIES:

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