



Presented by DeVry University

Dan Dement
DeVry University
ddement@devry.edu
619.618.9785

Emily Kellam
MSL Chicago
emily.kellam@mslgroup.com
312.861.5262

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hiring Managers Struggle to Find Senior Talent as Boomers Retire

Annual Job Preparedness Indicator Reveals Skills Gaps Persist

DOWNERS GROVE, Ill., Oct. 16, 2012 – As Baby Boomers continue to retire from the U.S. workforce, findings from the [2012 Job Preparedness Indicator](#) show that prospective replacements are falling short in their quest to fill critical positions. Research from the [Career Advisory Board](#), established by DeVry University, found only 17 percent of hiring managers said that job seekers have the skills and traits their organization is looking for in a candidate.

A deeper dive into the findings show that the skills gap issue may not always be the result of a lack of hard professional skills. According to Alexandra Levit, business and workplace consultant and Career Advisory Board member, candidates seeking managerial level positions often fail to communicate their skills effectively.

“While job seekers in the market may have the appropriate skills for a position, they simply don’t effectively communicate the experience and leadership traits sought by hiring managers,” said Levit. “Ultimately, senior-level job seekers are underselling themselves; they’re not focused on demonstrating higher order professional skills like strategic thinking and a global perspective.”

The 2012 Job Preparedness Indicator is the second annual survey 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 by Harris Interactive between July 10-24, 2012 and surveyed 516 hiring managers and 541 job seekers. The annual survey is conducted on behalf of the [Career Advisory Board](#) as part of its mission to provide insight, advice and counsel on trends, economic forces and cultural shifts that impact career opportunities for today and tomorrow.

Managerial level experiencing largest gap

For those hiring managers with responsibility for senior-level candidates, approximately one in five (18 percent) indicated that very few job seekers have the necessary skills and traits, compared to only 13 percent of hiring managers who are responsible for entry or mid-level candidates. The research also found that hiring managers place the greatest demand on big picture traits such as strategic perspective, global outlook and business acumen. However, job seekers are more likely to focus on skills being sought for lower level workers, such as strong work ethic and self-motivation.

Job candidates reluctant to seek professional guidance

Fifty-eight percent of job seekers surveyed for the 2012 Job Preparedness Indicator said that they rely on their own experience to decide what information to include on applications, resumes and cover letters rather than to seek advice from others such as career counselors. Deeper analysis of the responses found that senior-level job seekers tend to look at how positions can fit them instead of how they can fit positions. The research found that across all job seekers, 66 percent include skills specifically mentioned in the job description while only 34 percent use descriptions of skills or experiences that can be broadly applied to many jobs.

“The Job Preparedness Indicator helps prepare candidates for success in their job search by providing insight directly from hiring managers,” said Madeleine Slutsky, chairman of the Career Advisory Board, and vice president of Career Services at DeVry University. “While gaps continue to exist, if job seekers more proactively engage in professional development and guidance during the job search, they will be more successful in delivering what hiring managers and companies are seeking.”

Advice for job seekers

Beyond the immediate need for job candidates to enhance their communications skills, Career Advisory Board member and business and workplace consultant, Alexandra Levit, offers several recommendations to boost readiness for today’s competitive employment market:

- **Get management experience:** Ensure that you gain team management experience, even if it means volunteering for a position in which you can oversee a committee or an initiative.
- **Stay abreast of world news and events:** Follow news and events taking place on a global scale. Take any opportunity to learn how business is conducted overseas. This could involve interviewing colleagues in other countries, or even living and working briefly overseas to gain first-hand experience.
- **Refresh your tech skills:** It is no longer enough to know how to use a computer and the Internet. Learn the software and get certifications associated with your industry and make sure you’re also up to date on the latest office applications.
- **Consider a temporary position:** This may or may not lead to permanent work with that company, but you will become well-versed in the skills, traits, and experiences required of executives today and can practice honing them for future opportunities.

Additional key findings

- Job seekers and hiring managers agree on the top factors leading a job seeker to obtain a desirable job:
 - Prior experience (70 percent job seekers and 81 percent hiring managers)
 - Appropriate education (64 percent job seekers and 73 percent hiring managers)
 - Strong interviewing (59 percent job seekers and 67 percent hiring managers)
 - Willingness to develop skills and gain experience (57 percent job seekers and 56 percent hiring managers)
- Both job seekers and hiring managers identify skills that are becoming more important in the next five years:

- Ability to be cross-functional (78 percent job seekers and 77 percent hiring managers)
- Basic understanding of technology (83 percent job seekers and 62 percent hiring managers)
- Global perspective (54 percent job seekers and 62 percent hiring managers)
- Using social media as a part of one's job (70 percent job seekers and 60 percent hiring managers)

To read more or access the full research report, visit: www.careeradvisoryboard.org.

About The Career Advisory Board

Established in 2010 by DeVry University, the Career Advisory Board is a panel of leading career experts and authors from business and academia who provide actionable advice for job seekers. The Career Advisory Board generates proprietary research and commentary, and creates tools, insight and resources to prepare job seekers for success. Its members include executives from Cisco, DeVry University, IBM, LinkedIn, McDonald's USA, LLC, and Microsoft Corporation as well as nationally-recognized career experts. For more information, visit www.careeradvisoryboard.org.

Survey Methodology

The Job Preparedness Indicator survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of the Career Advisory Board July 10-24, 2012. Participating in the study were 541 adults age 18+ who are looking for work and 516 hiring managers age 18+ at Fortune 1000-equivalent companies (at least \$1.5 billion in annual revenue) across major industries and markets. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For a full methodology, including weighting variables, please view the full research report at www.careeradvisoryboard.org.

#