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Manpower Employment Outlook Survey Reveals U.S. Employers' Hiring Plans Remain Guarded Through Year-End

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MILWAUKEE, Sept. 13, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Amid ongoing market uncertainty, U.S. employers expect hiring to remain relatively stable in the fourth quarter, according to the latest [Manpower Employment Outlook Survey](#) released today by ManpowerGroup. According to the seasonally adjusted survey results, the Net Employment Outlook for Quarter 4 2011 is +7%, up from +6% during the same period last year and down from the +8% Outlook during Quarter 3 2011. While the Outlook is positive overall and marginally ahead of one year ago at this time, the one point quarter-over-quarter drop is the first decrease, although slight, in nine quarters.

(Logo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20110519/CG05115LOGO>)

This quarter's survey reveals mixed hiring expectations:

- **Softening Outlook in Many Industries:** The Outlook is positive overall for 11 of 13 industry sectors surveyed, but employers in 12 of the 13 expect hiring to slow down compared to three months ago. Six industry sectors expect hiring to decrease considerably.
- **Most Areas Remain Positive, But Fewer are Improving:** Employers in 45 states report positive hiring intentions for Quarter 4 2011, a slight dip compared to the previous quarter when employers in all 50 states had a positive hiring Outlook. Similarly, 85 percent of the Metropolitan Statistical Areas surveyed report a positive hiring Outlook for Quarter 4 2011 compared to 99 percent three months ago.
- **Two Years of Positive Employment Growth:** Employers have expressed overall optimistic hiring intentions for eight straight quarters, following three quarters of pessimistic employment plans in 2009. The level of optimism however, as evidenced by single digit Net Employment Outlook levels, is reflective of the uncertain environment and remains significantly below pre-recession levels.

"Employers are hesitant to make big decisions when it comes to hiring in the fourth quarter," said Jonas Prising, ManpowerGroup president of the Americas. "Recent economic conditions, coupled with the results of the Manpower Employment Outlook Survey, indicate hiring intentions among U.S. employers remain guarded with a low level of job creation expected in the short term. When all eyes are focused on jobs as a true indicator for economic stability, our survey results suggest no significant hiring increases at least through year end."

Of the more than 18,000 employers surveyed, 16 percent anticipate an increase in staff levels in their Quarter 4 2011 hiring plans, while 11 percent expect a decrease in payrolls, resulting in a Net Employment Outlook of +5%. When seasonally adjusted, the Net Employment Outlook becomes +7%. Seventy percent of employers expect no change in their hiring plans. The final 3 percent of employers indicate they are undecided about their hiring intentions.

"Even though we're seeing a slight slowdown in hiring momentum for the fourth quarter, we know employers are struggling to fill open positions that require specialized and technical skills," said Prising. "This talent mismatch, between the available job candidates and the skills needed for open positions, presents a challenging paradox as we see high unemployment rates along with employers who want to hire but can't find the right person in the right place. This workplace challenge will continue to build when more jobs open up and the economy recovers."

Hiring Outlooks for Industry Sectors and Regions

Employers in 11 of the 13 industry sectors surveyed have a positive Outlook for Quarter 4 2011: Wholesale & Retail Trade (+17%), Mining (+15%), Financial Activities (+9%), Durable Goods Manufacturing (+8%), Nondurable Goods Manufacturing (+8%), Information (+8%), Professional & Business Services (+8%), Leisure & Hospitality (+8%), Other Services (+5%), Education & Health Services (+4%) and Transportation & Utilities (+3%). Employers in two industry sectors have a slightly negative Outlook: Construction (-4%) and Government (-3%). Employers in Education & Health Services anticipate the largest increase quarter-over-quarter, with a gain of six percentage points. Employers in the Wholesale & Retail Trade, Information, Financial Activities, Other Services and Government industry sectors expect the hiring pace to slightly decrease compared to three months ago at this time, while Nondurable Goods Manufacturers expect the hiring pace to moderately decrease. Employers in the remaining six industry sectors expect a considerable decrease: Mining, Construction, Durable Goods Manufacturing, Transportation & Utilities, Professional & Business Services and Leisure & Hospitality.

Employers in all four U.S. geographic regions surveyed anticipate a positive seasonally adjusted Outlook. The quarter-over-quarter hiring Outlook is stable in the Midwest, South and West regions. Employers in the Northeast expect job prospects to slightly dim compared to three months ago. Compared to one year ago at this time, employers in the Midwest and West look for hiring to increase slightly and those in the Northeast and South anticipate hiring to remain on the same pace.

The next Manpower Employment Outlook Survey will be released on December 13, 2011, to report hiring expectations for the first quarter of 2012. To

receive e-mail notification when the survey is available each quarter, visit <http://press.manpower.com/signup>.

*The **Net Employment Outlook**, often shortened to simply Outlook or NEO, is derived by taking the percentage of employers anticipating an increase in hiring activity and subtracting from this the percentage of employers expecting a decrease in hiring activity.

About the Survey

ManpowerGroup's quarterly Manpower Employment Outlook Survey measures employers' intentions to increase or decrease the number of employees in their workforce during the next quarter. It is the only forward-looking survey of its kind, unparalleled in size, scope, longevity and area of focus.

The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey is conducted using a validated methodology in accordance with the highest standards in market research. In the U.S., the survey is conducted by an independent, third-party research firm and includes a select sample of more than 18,000 U.S. employers. This sample represents the top 100 Metropolitan Statistical Areas based on business establishment count and all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The mix of industries within the survey follows the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Supersectors and is structured to be representative of the U.S. economy. With this number of interviews, the overall U.S. survey carries a margin of error of +/-0.61%, with a 90% confidence index.

The complete results from the U.S. national Manpower Employment Outlook Survey are available for download at press.manpower.com, where you will also find the survey results for the 100 MSAs, 50 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico.

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