

# Direct Hire Associates

Southern California Job Market - March

## So Cal employers are beginning to believe!

Hope is not normally a good strategy... However, one of the main things missing from this recovery has been the belief that we will recover. The local economy is starting to believe we will get there! In the first 2 months of the year, we have seen the general overall business climate continue to improve. Our favorite signal is that employers seem to be less and less affected by the broader national bad news that they find in the mass media. The ability to shake this off is a leading indicator for improved confidence.

We'd like to be more specific in explaining the general shift we are feeling in the Southern California market. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2009, employers were asking us who might be available at a discount, but they weren't ready to interview anyone, generally speaking. In the first 2 months of this year, the inquiries have been more of a 2:1 conversation; "Do you have one person who can do 1 ½ to 2 ½ jobs for us?" Companies still have somewhat unrealistic expectations, but **our clients are shifting their focus from price to value** and this is good for all of us. Their expectation of the unemployed talent available is adjusting too, albeit, slowly. There are still some very good unemployed professional office staff (Accounting, Finance, Legal, IT, HR and Admin.) in Los Angeles, but we estimate the number to be under 5% at this point. As we get into the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2010, we believe client expectations will go from 'candidate perfection' to 'better than our current/previous staff'.

Another leading indicator of an improving economy is agency hiring of sales professionals and recruiters. We are seeing the majority of our competition add sales staff in response to a pick-up in mostly temp and temp-to-hire positions, in anticipation of accelerated growth in hiring overall. Direct hire positions, especially those at the \$100,000 and up level, are beginning to show signs of life, but remain well below average levels. At this point in the recovery, we do see the hiring landscape improving and we are confident in the potential of 2010, particularly the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.

### Note of the month for candidates:

You may be frustrated in your search; you know it's a buyer's market; you keep getting low-ball offers; you never get a response; you have been at this for months and months... DO NOT let it show! Approach each communication regarding a potential job like it's your first – smile and enjoy it, it'll make a difference.

*Paul Costa, CPC, President*

Several hundred conversations every week with HR professionals, hiring managers and candidates in Southern California allow us to offer a current and accurate opinion on the hiring climate. Think of our monthly update above as more than just our 2 cents – maybe call it a nickel! If you have a specific question about your current situation or just a general question, please feel free to call us directly and speak to an Associate anytime. We're happy to talk and share our collective point of view.

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