TESS VAN STRAATEN ARTICLE OF APRIL 04 2008 – "Skilled IT worker shortage a major concern"

ANALYSIS OF SOURCE DOCUMENTS

PURPOSE OF ANALYSIS:-

TO DETERMINE THE LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE SOURCES, CONCERNING CERTAIN CRITICAL CANADIAN LABOUR MARKET ISSUES

KEYWORDS / KEY EXPRESSIONS LIST AND SEARCH RESULTS:-

Labour – many instances
Shortage – many instances
Unemployment – many instances, all referring to the "official" unemployment rate
Social – one instance only , in "Minister of Human Resources and Social Development"
Social assistance – not found
Hidden – not found
Ottawa – no instances of "Ottawa's Hidden Workforce"
Discouraged – no instances
Employable – no instances
Agreement – no instances found (as in 2006 Ontario / federal "Labour Market Agreement", for instance)
Under – many instances but none concerning "under-employment".
Hire – many instances but none involving the term "re-hire" (as in re-hire after being laid off)
Layoff – zero instances
Old – zero instances
Hours – see article below, "What does it take to hire and retain technical talent?". Report on difficulty retaining workers, particularly more senior workers, on account of the long hours they are expected to work.

Searches of the source documents below, based on the above terms, reveal no awareness at all of any of the following:-

1. True state of the high tech labour market with respect to hidden unemployment or "under-employment"
2. Re-hires of individuals previously laid off
3. The implications of the numbers in the "Ottawa's Hidden Workforce" report of Fall 1998
4. People out of work who are on social assistance due to not being able to get work
5. The Ottawa Talent Initiative and the difficulties encountered by its members - high tech people out of work, all encountering various barriers and prejudices tending to block re-employment
6. Correct method for counting individuals re-hired out of those laid off
7. The Statistics Canada "Life After High Tech" report of July 20th 2006
8. Confusion and mis-reporting in the local media, in Ottawa, over the numbers laid off and re-hired , caused by incomplete and contradictory information ":at source" emanating from Statistics Canada and O.C.R.I., and wrong analysis based thereon. Mis-use of the information to make it appear there was a "recovery", in terms of people getting back to work, when such was not the case.
9. Implications of immigration policies on the job market as a whole; no consideration therein of numbers of people in Canada who are out of work and cannot get work. Un-admitted and gross job market inefficiency, resulting from inattention to stimulating the economy to create the jobs actually required.
10. Some source documents below, indicating some people being over-worked, are not being considered as incentives to hire and re-train people who are out of work.
11. The Statistics Canada report of March 2006, "Work Hours Instability in Canada" which revealed a massive under-employment problem.
12. Re-training, with employment guarantees, as a requirement for getting laid-off people back to work.

THE SOURCE DOCUMENTS – DETAILS.

Ottawahitech posting: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OttawaHiTech/message/9865

Reference: http://www.forbes.com/reuters/feeds/reuters/2008/02/08/2008-02-08T123848Z_01_N07421141_RTRIDST_0_CANADA-ECONOMY-JOBS-UPDATE-2.

- doesn't seem to work
- found at: http://www.reuters.com/article/economicNews/idUSN0742114120080208
-

CORRECTED - UPDATE 3-

Canadian Jan employment defies expectations

Fri Feb 8, 2008 11:28am EST

(Corrects figures for jobs gains for the month and the year in third paragraph)

By Randall Palmer

OTTAWA, Feb 8 (Reuters) - The Canadian job market dispelled any idea of a slowdown in January, adding a stunning 46,400 jobs and pushing the unemployment rate back to October's 33-year low of 5.8 percent from December's 6.0 percent.

In figures released on Friday, Statistics Canada said wage pressure remained persistent, with the average hourly wages of permanent employees 4.9 percent higher than a year earlier.

All of the net new jobs were full time and in the private sector. Full-time positions rose by 64,300, and private-sector jobs were up by 76,600 on the month and 73,000 on the year.

The data, coupled with slightly higher than expected January housing starts, pushed the Canadian dollar <CAD=> just above the U.S. dollar, as it appeared to make aggressive interest rate cuts by the Bank of Canada less likely.

"It's a jaw dropper. I don't think anyone in their wildest imagination thought we'd do so well this month with the employment data, and no holes in the report,", said Steve Butler, director of foreign exchange at Scotia Capital.

Canada's economy has now added 337,000 jobs in the last year. Since Canada's population is roughly one-tenth that of the United States, similar job growth in the United States would have brought more than 3 million jobs.

Statscan had last Friday quietly revised its figures for December to a loss of 2,900 jobs, a stronger performance than the previously reported loss of 18,700 job loss.

Economists surveyed last week by Reuters had on average expected an increase of 10,000 jobs and a January unemployment rate of 6.0 percent.

Canada has not been as affected as the United States by the summer credit crunch and by troubles in the housing sector. But politicians and economists had warned that some spillover across the border was likely.

Data released later on Friday showed that January housing starts rose to a seasonally adjusted annualized rate of 222,700, from 184,700 in December. Analysts had expected 210,000 starts.

Butler said the market will now judge that the Bank of Canada's last rate cut last month, of 25 basis points rather than 50 basis points, was "the right thing to do".

"There is almost a month between now and the next Bank of Canada meeting (on March 4), so there's still some time to see if the woes in the United States are going to spill over into Canada. But for now, it looks like it's a made-in-America thing," he said.

Even the manufacturing sector, which has been hurt by the strong Canadian dollar, added 17,500 jobs in January, reducing its losses for the past year to 113,400.

BMO Capital Markets' Doug Porter said a deeper dive in U.S. activity would no doubt find an echo in Canada.

"Still, the sturdy jobs picture casts some serious doubt on just how fast the Bank of Canada will cut in the near-term. At the end of the day, the jobless rate is at a cycle low and wage growth is at a cycle high, so where's the urgency to cut rates?" he wrote in a note to clients.

Jacqui Douglas of TD Securities is still predicting an interest rate cut of 50 basis points in March. But she said the data reinforced the idea that the Bank of Canada "will not need to make the deep, protracted rate cuts that we've seen from the Federal Reserve to keep the Canadian economy afloat." (Additional reporting by John McCrank in Toronto; editing by Janet Guttsman)

Reference: http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601082&sid=aOVuGDUalY_0&refer=canada

Canada Adds 46,400 Jobs, Unemployment at 33-Year Low (Update2)

By Greg Quinn

Feb. 8 (Bloomberg) -- Canada added 46,400 jobs in January, more than four times as many as anticipated, indicating the full impact of a slowdown in the U.S., the country's main export market, has yet to spread through the Canadian economy.

The unemployment rate fell to 5.8 percent from 6 percent the previous month, returning to a 33-year low set in October, Statistics Canada said today from Ottawa. Economists forecast 10,000 new jobs and an unchanged unemployment rate, according to the median of 24 estimates in a Bloomberg survey.

Canadians are finding work even as the currency hovers near parity with the U.S. dollar, making the country's factory exports less competitive abroad. The Bank of Canada last month cut its economic growth forecast for this year because of weak U.S. demand for manufactured goods, and economists surveyed by Bloomberg say policy makers will lower borrowing costs at their next three meetings to boost consumer spending.

``It's partial evidence that Canada is holding its own against the U.S., but there are still a lot of risks,'' said Dustin Reid, a senior currency strategist at ABN Amro Inc. in Chicago. ``The high value of the Canadian dollar hasn't necessarily fed its way though the economy yet.''

The Canadian dollar strengthened 0.7 percent to C$1.0019 per U.S. dollar at 7:33 a.m. in Toronto, from C$1.0088 per U.S. dollar yesterday. It reached a record 90.58 Canadian cents per U.S. dollar on Nov. 7, on higher commodity prices. The advance has slowed factory exports as well as inflation.

Report Details

All of January's net job gains were full-time positions in the private sector. The 64,300 new full-time jobs and 76,600 net private-sector jobs were offset by declines in lower-paying part-time and self-employed work. The private-sector job gain was the biggest since May 2006.

About 30,200 Canadians found work in professional-service and science jobs, and another 19,500 were hired in construction, Statistics Canada said.

A commodities boom in western Canada continues to pressure wages. Hourly pay rose 4.9 percent in January from a year ago, matching the previous month's pace, which was the fastest since at least 1998.

Even central Canada's battered manufacturing sector, which the statistics agency said a month ago was in its worst slump since the country's last recession in the early 1990s, added jobs. Factories hired 17,500 workers, reducing the industry's decline over the past 12 months to 113,400.

Unemployment in the French-speaking province of Quebec, which relies on manufacturing and forestry, fell to a 33-year low of 6.8 percent in January from 7 percent in December.

Canada, the world's eighth-biggest economy, has benefited from rising demand for copper, gold, wheat and oil from the U.S. and emerging economies such as India and China. The country is also the world's largest producer of uranium, the second-biggest exporter of natural gas, and sits on the largest pool of oil reserves outside the Middle East.

To contact the reporter on this story: Greg Quinn in Ottawa at gquinn1@bloomberg.net.

Last Updated: February 8, 2008 08:00 EST

Reference: http://finance.sympatico.msn.ca/investing/news/businessnews/article.aspx?cp-documentid=6153724
Found at:- http://technology.canoe.ca/2008/02/03/4811746-cp.html

Canada's technology sector facing major skills shortage, web job postings soar

By David Friend, THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO - Calling all computer geeks and techies - Canada's technology sector needs you!

It began by posting "help wanted" signs, turned to a nationwide search, and now some companies are making a desperate effort to find computer technicians to fill a widening employment gap.

The Canadian economy may be slowing and the jobless rate creeping higher - as the industrial sector in Ontario and Quebec comes under renewed pressure from a looming U.S. recession and high dollar. But there are still major skills shortages and lots of jobs available in technology, services and skilled trades.

At Workopolis, the country's largest online job search operator, postings for qualified computer software programmers and hardware technicians have soared more than 300 per cent over the last year, and applicants are hard to come by.

"The majority of people that we've interviewed over the last little while are new Canadians, rather than people who were born in Canada," said Patrick Sullivan, president of Workopolis.

He said part of the problem lies in the fact that few Canadians are trained in computer and network programming, which would've surprised any high school guidance counsellor a decade ago.

Computer programming positions were once the holy grail of aspirations for freshly graduated high school students because they were in high demand by companies like Nortel (TSX:N) and Microsoft (Nasdaq:MSFT).

But all of that changed after the tech bubble burst and Nortel and others were wracked with mounting losses and massive job cuts and corporate streamlining.

"I think parents said to their kids 'Hey, you don't want to go into technologies,'" Sullivan said.

"There was a real slowdown in the number of kids entering tech fields in universities. So you can tag it right to those years and it hasn't recovered."

A recent report by the Conference Board of Canada suggested that the country will need 90,000 information technology workers within the next five years, in part to fuel the explosion in wireless and Internet businesses. Each position that isn't filled will cost the economy an estimated $120,000 per year.

Last month, Bell Canada (TSX:BCE) teamed with a group of Canadian companies to start a hunt for Canadian information technology workers.

"Youth are not interested in IT skilled careers because... they don't see the value and the impact of the IT function within our companies and our society," said Francois Morin, chief of staff at Bell Canada.

"They feel it's so embedded in our day-to-day now."

Information technology jobs tend to slide off the radar when it comes to monthly unemployment reports.

Economists have been focusing on the shock that Canada is feeling from the staggering U.S. economy. Local manufacturers are already struggling with a slowdown in exports, partly from a persistently strong loonie, and their sector is under a microscope.

"We are in a downturn on a cyclical basis. Canadian growth is slowing," said Michael Gregory, an analyst with BMO Capital Markets.

"Unfortunately with the double whammy of a likely U.S. recession plus the Canadian dollar still flirting with parity, that is going to create some major headaches - even more headaches - for Canadian factories going forward."

January's unemployment report from Statistics Canada is scheduled to be released Friday, and it's likely to show a gearing down of the job creation machine, Gregory said.

Job growth is expected to be "modest," and the unemployment rate unchanged at six per cent, with an estimated increase of 9,000 workers, less than one-third of the 30,000 per month annual trend, according to BMO Capital Markets.

Hotel and food services industries are expected to be one of the major growth performers once again.

Last month, Statistics Canada said the economy lost 2,900 jobs in December, revised from an initial reported loss of 18,700. That followed seven straight months of gains.

Reference: http://www.mjtimes.sk.ca/index.cfm?sid=105081&sc=520

BUSINESS

Last updated at 9:10 AM on 05/02/08

Canadian tech sector needs labour

The Moose Jaw Times Herald

TORONTO (The Canadian Press) — Calling all computer geeks and techies — Canada's technology sector needs you!

It began by posting "help wanted" signs, turned to a nationwide search, and now some companies are making a desperate effort to find computer technicians to fill a widening employment gap.

The Canadian economy may be slowing and the jobless rate creeping higher — as the industrial sector in Ontario and Quebec comes under renewed pressure from a looming U.S. recession and high dollar. But there are still major skills shortages and lots of jobs available in technology, services and skilled trades.

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04/02/08

Reference: http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601082&sid=ar6p7EA0W8K0&refer=canada

Canada Unemployment Stays at 33-Year Low; Wages Rise (Update5)

By Greg Quinn

Sept. 7 (Bloomberg) -- Canada's unemployment rate stayed at a 33-year low in August and wages rose the most in six years, suggesting there's a risk of faster inflation even as central bankers pause amid turmoil in financial markets.

The economy created 23,300 jobs, beating forecasts and keeping the jobless rate at 6 percent for a second month, Statistics Canada said today in Ottawa. Average hourly wages rose 4 percent from a year earlier, the fastest since May 2001.

The figures keep pressure on the central bank to raise interest rates soon to slow inflation to its 2 percent target, as a global credit squeeze passes. Policy makers yesterday said markets are functioning better, a day after they left the main interest rate at 4.5 percent and said they needed time to study the impact of tighter credit conditions on Canada's growth.

The wage figure ``just adds to the overall upward price pressure in the Canadian economy and that is something the Bank of Canada can't ignore,'' said Charmaine Buskas, senior economics strategist at TD Securities in Toronto. The central bank will probably raise rates in December, she said.

Economists expected 18,000 jobs and no change in unemployment, according to the median of 25 estimates in a Bloomberg News survey. Central bankers will see another jobs report on Oct. 5 before their next rate decision, on Oct. 16.

The Canadian dollar fell to 94.86 U.S. cents at 4:03 p.m. in Toronto from 95.06 U.S. cents late yesterday.

Hiring Details

Hiring in August was led by 32,800 new education jobs ahead of the school year that started this month, and by 15,500 new construction jobs, Statistics Canada said.

Draxis Health Inc. will hire 80 to 100 workers to handle an expanded contract from Johnson & Johnson, adding to its 500- person payroll, the Montreal-based supplier said Sept. 5.

``A tight labor market means that the September pause by the Bank of Canada is likely to prove just that,'' Mark Chandler, a senior fixed-income strategist at RBC Capital Markets in Toronto, wrote in a note to clients. Chandler predicted the bank will raise rates early next year.

Canadian consumer prices rose 2.2 percent in July from a year earlier, staying above the central bank's target for a fifth straight month, Statistics Canada reported Aug. 21. The core rate -- used by the bank as a guide to future trends because it excludes volatile items such as gasoline -- was 2.3 percent, above the bank's target for an 11th-straight month.

The global credit squeeze and a U.S. housing slump threaten Canada's domestic spending and exports, the central bank said two days ago.

Today the U.S. Labor Department reported the world's largest economy lost jobs in August for the first time in four years, shedding 4,000 workers. Exports to the U.S. account for almost a third of Canada's economy, according to the country's trade ministry.

To contact the reporter on this story: Greg Quinn in Ottawa at gquinn1@bloomberg.net.

Last Updated: September 7, 2007 16:50 EDT

Reference: http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/February2008/07/c8015.html

Attention News Editors:

Ontario Boosts Technology In Hamilton

McGuinty Government Invests In Opportunity For Students

HAMILTON, ON, Feb. 7 /CNW/ - Ontario is investing in tomorrow's high-tech leaders through an award-winning program at McMaster University and Mohawk College.

The government's $16.5-million investment will expand a joint technology program to help meet the high demand for skilled workers. New classrooms and computer labs will use new technology to train students for careers in IT, manufacturing, civil engineering and energy.

The program also helps internationally-trained professionals find jobs in Ontario.

"These students are going to help Ontario stay ahead of the competition," said Premier Dalton McGuinty. "We're investing in their skills and knowledge so we can continue to attract jobs and investment for our economy."

"Today's students will build tomorrow's knowledge-based economy," said John Milloy, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. "When they succeed, we all succeed."

Ontario is Canada's technology hub, with more than 5,000 high-tech companies and manufacturers. The Conference Board of Canada estimates Canada's tech sector may need up to 58,000 new workers this year.

Visit McMaster University: www.mcmaster.ca

Visit Mohawk College: www.mohawkcollege.ca

Learn about the joint technology program: www.mohawkcollege.ca/calendar/fet/McMoPartnership.html

See how Ontario supports postsecondary education and training:

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/

Explore what you can do after high school:
www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/students/

Disponible en français

<<
www.ontario.ca/premier
>>

For further information: Premier's Media Office, (416) 314-8975

Reference: http://www.mississauga.com/article/6878

Cast your ballot wisely

By: Hazel McCallion

September 19, 2007 12:39 AM - With less than one month to go until we head to the polls to elect our next provincial government, it is important for all of us to do our homework in order to make an informed decision on Oct. 10.

As a Mississauga resident, it is also important for you to know what provincial issues will affect our community and where candidates stand on those issues.

Tonight from 7-9 p.m., we have invited the leaders, or their designates, of the Liberal Party, NDP, Progressive Conservative Party and the Green Party to a town hall meeting at the Civic Centre. Each of the representatives will address three main questions related to their position on the following topics:

• investment in transit and transportation

• current value assessment, airport taxes and a new method to fund capital projects

• underfunding of municipal services

In preparing for this town hall meeting, a report was presented and endorsed by City Council on each of these topics, and each political party and registered candidate received a copy of these reports. We also went a little further, and asked all local parties to answer, in writing, three questions related to the above issues and state their position on each issue.

Their answers can be found on our website, at www.mississauga.ca under the heading, Mississauga Matters.

These issues are important as Ontario continues to grow at an extremely high rate. With 5.2 million people today, the GTA is the fifth-largest city/region in North America. And, according to the Ontario Places to Grow Strategy, the Golden Horseshoe can expect an additional two million people in the next 25 years.

At the centre of this growth is Mississauga. We have grown by approximately 480,000 residents in the last 33 years, and through the Places to Grow Act we have been identified as an area of added growth. We are entering a critical stage in our city's development and our role in the GTA is becoming more and more crucial to the success of the province.

We need the commitment of our provincial representatives on the three issues I outlined above. Ask your local candidates where they stand on these issues; what's their position and what's their plan to help Mississauga and Ontario succeed?

We've done our homework, and we ask that you do yours as well.

The town hall meeting will be broadcast live on Rogers Television (Cable 10) and webcast from our website. So, wherever you happen to be tonight, you will have access to this important meeting.

On Oct. 10, make an informed decision and make your vote count for our community and our province.

Hazel McCallion is the mayor of Mississauga.

Reference: http://www.networkworld.com/news/2007/101107-what-does-it-take.html

What does it take to hire and retain technical talent?

Finding and keeping talented IT employees isn’t easy as IT departments take on more responsibilities.
By Denise Dubie , Network World , 10/11/2007

IT managers say now more than ever they struggle to find qualified IT employees and to keep key talent on staff, while tasked with delivering ever more services to the business.

The concerns certainly are not new, but they are growing in importance, according to the Society for Information Management (SIM). This week the organization revealed that "Attracting, developing and retaining IT professionals" topped its annual list of IT management concerns, ahead of financial woes related to reducing costs and technology-related worries such as security and privacy. SIM reports that IT managers are experiencing staff turnover rates of less than 10% this year, which is far lower than years past, and that attracting talent worries most because of a dwindling resource pool.

"The challenges with attracting talent stems from a pipeline of qualified candidates that isn't as large as the demand companies are seeing for new people, which is a good thing for our discipline," says Jerry Luftman, SIM's vice president of academic affairs. "It's good news that the amount of resources being demanded from IT are on the rise, but it's happening at the same time a large number of workers are leaving the workforce."

As a result, IT managers say they wrestle often with the challenge of hiring people that fit well into their organization in the hopes they won't lose the talent quickly.

How one manager deals with dwindling IT talent pool.

"I do worry about getting IT talent in house. Ours, and many other [human resources] departments that are not within a technology company, do not set salaries in relevant ranges," says Michael Nix, assistant director of communications technology for IT Services at the Kansas University Hospital Authority in Kansas City, Kan. "It is often a battle with HR to ensure the position is properly classified and compensated. As the market picks up, there is a greater demand and higher salaries, and we are often behind that power curve."

Adding to the hiring challenge is the fact that fewer computer science, information systems and technology graduates are entering the job market while several veteran workers are planning for retirement.

Click to see: Top 10 management concerns

Top 10 IT management concerns for 2007

IT managers are taking issue with more than just employee retention, according to the Society for Information Management.

Top IT management concerns
1 Attracting, developing and retaining IT professionals.
2 IT and business alignment.
3 Building business skills in IT.
4 Reduce the cost of doing business.
5 Improve IT quality.
6 Security and privacy.
7 Manage change.
8 IT strategic planning.
9 Making better use of information.
10 Evolving CIO leadership role.

"There is a concern regarding an aging workforce, and the province expects to lose close to one-third of the IT workforce through retirement over the next few years," says Martin Webb, manager of data network operations, Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services, Province of British Columbia, Canada. "With new housing starts on the rise, there has been a large focus on careers within the trades. This has taken away from the emphasis on IT, and the local colleges have seen a drop in enrollment — which has resulted in a reduction of available new talent."

Debbie Joy, lead solution architect for CSC in Phoenix, reports that with impending talent shortages she also worries about retaining senior employees that seem to be challenged with balancing work and personal life in the face of a demanding job.

"We are having some trouble retaining employees, especially the more senior employees," says Joy, who clarifies she is speaking as a technology manager and non on behalf of CSC's HR department. "A lot of the issues that cause them to leave are the long hours that people are expected to work at my company."

Others report that employee retention would be a challenge even without the inevitable exodus of veteran, or baby boomer, employees. For instance, many IT shops have been charged with providing more services with the same or fewer resources. That does not make for ideal work conditions for ambitious technologists who want to use their troubleshooting, diagnostics and analysis skills for more than mundane, repetitive tasks. Also, with average IT workweeks running about 50 to 60 hours on the low end, network and other professionals are being pushed to the brink.

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"IT has long been expected to do more with less. The problem is, each year, the more gets more, and the less gets less. You can only drive a team so hard before they snap," Nix says. "Overworked, underpaid and underappreciated is a deadly combo, but even if richly appreciated, there still comes a point when they won't go any further."

Because of such issues, IT hiring managers say it takes more time than in the past to fill even entry-level positions, and once in-house, money is not nearly enough of an incentive to keep existing employees happy.

"Most IT professionals are not driven by money. They want to be challenged, and it's important they get a chance to do what they are best at each day, even if it is one small part of everything they do," says Chris Holbert, COO and CIO at LaunchPad Communications in Los Angeles. "Most IT tasks are thankless jobs, so IT professionals need to get their job satisfaction from tackling stuff they love to do, and if they can't, they will leave."

Joy agrees. Finding the right candidates and then working to keep staff happy is critical, she says, because employees leaving not only poses a management challenge but also negatively impacts the business' ability to deliver products and services to its customers.

"We are a knowledge-based company and have invested millions of dollars over the years to develop best practices and processes related to delivering our services," Joy says. "Training our employees in these practices and processes, and keeping them current with technology, is key to our success. And it is expensive if we have to provide this training more often than planned because of attrition."

Holbert, who is currently engulfed in a hiring process he expects to take at least four months, says investing the time during the hiring process pays off with employee retention down the road. While he is looking to fill two entry-level positions, one a database administrator and the other an application developer, Holbert says the lengthy hiring cycle works to ensure potential candidates fit the culture of his company — which means they are more likely to remain on staff for the long term.

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Click to see: Hiring lag

"We make the decision to hire with the idea that the candidate will be here at least more than three years, but ideally I don't like to even have an endpoint in mind. I'd rather put my efforts into keeping them happy and making their tenure indefinite," Holbert says.

But that is easier said than done.

Many IT managers turn to formal incentive programs to retain key staff. According to research from staffing specialist Robert Half International, about two-thirds of 1,400 CIOs polled provide training or professional development to keep staff happy. Close to half said they offer flexible schedules, while 41% increase base compensation and 31% offer bonuses.

For his part, Arun DeSouza, director of strategic planning and security, Global Information Systems and Service at Inergy Automotive Systems in Troy, Mich., taps multiple tools such as Myers-Briggs test to match employees with their job duties, and best practices such as periodic reviews and recognitions to keep staff content.

"Training, recognition, remuneration and challenging assignments within a collaborative global milieu set the foundation to help retain top talent," DeSouza says.

CSC's Joy says her company lets employees move into a variety of roles within the company, take overseas assignments and work from home. And for employees considered critical to specific accounts, CSC might include salary increases, promotions and bonuses to keep people on staff — though she reports that option is not very widely used. And new policies are being discussed to further retain staff with the baby boomer exodus on the horizon, she reports.

"Some programs that have been discussed are job sharing, full benefits for employees who work part time, hiring of retirees as contractors and providing benefits," Joy says.

Some appeal to human nature with their efforts to retain staff.

With long hours and little recognition, Nix says the standard operating policies of most IT shops work more to "discourage existing personnel as well as anyone contemplating the field" from staying with their technology-related career choices. To counter negative experiences in the workplace, Nix says he appeals to employees' need to feel useful and valued.

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"For most people, it comes down to being trusted, feeling needed, and being recognized for their contributions and accomplishments," Nix says. "There are many ways, but they all revolve around management admitting you cannot know everything and need their help and support in all ways, and involving them in decision-making processes."

In the end, Holbert says, companies can offer all the financial incentives in the world and still find unhappy employees. He says finding the perfect mix of metrics that keep employees satisfied varies among staff members, but on average he finds success in showing employees how their work relates to the business. "I work hard to make sure everyone in IT realizes they make a difference to the business and that their work directly impacts our success," he says.

Reference: http://www.albertaindex.com/content/view/260/9/

ECONOMY: Alberta’s prosperity is sustainable, breaking from traditional boom-bust cycles, says TD

(AlbertaIndex, October 3, Wednesday) --- Alberta is becoming less vulnerable to the traditional boom-bust cycles of the past, said TD latest assessment released last week at the Calgary Economic Development’s Economic Outlook luncheon.

The province is in a strong position for future prosperity, thanks to the high price of oil, which is likely to remain sustained, the recent g towns, and the success of its economic diversification programme. TD Economic said the strength of the oil patch has allowed Alberta to estab overall tax environment, “which should support growth in other industries.”

There are a number of “flashing warning signs” such as the decline in natural gas prices and drilling output levels, as well as slower growth in goods sales, but authors Don Drummond and Derek Burleton consider the “odds of a hard landing to be one in four.”

They cite the massive surge in oil sands investments and related activities as a key driver for the province’s ongoing expansion.

Specifically, the report states the Alberta economy will yield another solid advance in real GDP of 4.3 percent in 2007.

In the Calgary-Edmonton Corridor – Alberta’s main economic engine - growth is estimated to surpass 5 percent.

Through to 2009, TD Economics said projected growth rates will moderate to 2.5 to 3 percent, largely due to the dampening forces on demand rising labour, producer and infrastructure costs.

"While this equates a sub-par performance, it is far from the bust scenario that has followed past periods of euphoria," it said.

Medium-sized towns sprout

Indicative of Alberta's stellar growth is the emergence of medium-sized urban centres.

During the past five years, seven of Canada's 15 fastest growing centres (10,000-100,000 population) were located in Alberta: Okotoks, Wood Prairie, Red Deer, Canmore, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge. Five of these centres were outside the Calgary-Edmonton Corridor.

The economists reported that the Calgary Edmonton Corridor is "emblematic of the boom's benefits."

Among 19 large North American urban centres, this region ranked fourth in terms of job creation and enjoyed the lowest unemployment rate in Canada.

This region could build upon its enviable standard of living position, as measured by GDP per capita.

With the purchasing power of US$57,000 in 2005, individuals in the corridor surpassed the American average by US$15,000, and are ranked sec countries after Luxembourg in terms of prosperity.

Alberta's boom benefits Canada

TD Economics said Alberta's boom is benefiting the whole country.

While some Canadians are envious and claim that Alberta's gains have hurt the rest of Canada by raising overall costs, the two economists dis

Drummond and Burleton said Alberta's prosperity has generated "tremendous spin-off benefits" for the rest of Canada.

They cite a study that estimates 60 percent of the total output and employment benefits from oil sands development will migrate to other pa higher demand for manufacturing goods, such as steel.

Alberta's above average income level finances redistribution in Canada and helps to keep taxes down lower in the other provinces.

"Indeed, the net contribution of Alberta residents to federal coffers is about $9 billion per year, or almost $3,000 in per-capita terms," said t

The negatives

To be sure, there are some negative consequences to Alberta's economic boom.

Labour market shortages abound, partly spurred by an increasing number of baby boomers heading into retirement. This will likely curtail eco

Shortages are also found in housing and materials' across the province.

Prices are rising fast and enormous strains have been placed on infrastructure and the environment.

The vacancy rates for lower end rental units in the Edmonton market declined from 5-6 percent to 1-1.5 percent in 2006, pushing up rents sha

Homelessness has soared - up approximately 20 percent in 2006.

In Calgary, estimates of the number of homeless show a near five-fold increase over the past decade. Smaller markets in the corridor are now shortages of affordable housing.

Reference: http://www.canada.com/vancouversun/news/story.html?id=9aeae056-3a47-4da0-8dc9-543fa210ef54&k=10983

10,000 tech jobs opening in B.C.

With over 10,000 tech industry jobs in British Columbia up for grabs this year, the BC technology industry is pulling out all the stops in its effort to recruit new workers.

Brian Morton, Vancouver Sun

Published: Wednesday, February 06, 2008

B.C.'s technology industry is ramping up efforts to recruit new workers with more than 10,000 tech jobs up for grabs in the province this year.

A primary target, at least in the short term, is international technology students at U.S. universities who can't stay in that country after they graduate but want to live and work in North America.

"Over 100 students came to our workshop in Chicago [in November] and we had very good interest," Pascal Spothelfer, president of the B.C. Technology Industry Association [BCTIA], said in an interview.

Arthur Tymos president of Creation Technologies Inc. in Burnaby in 2006, with some of the high-tech boards the company manufactures for the global market. With over 10,000 tech industry jobs in British Columbia up for grabs this year, the BC technology industry is pulling out all the stops in its effort to recruit new workers.

Mark van Manen/Vancouver Sun

"The universities want to work with us on this because they want to find well-paying jobs for their graduates.

"These people are ready for the picking for us and they're a very attractive target group for us."

Spothelfer said they're not looking for temporary foreign workers: the BCTIA wants talented high-tech workers who want to immigrate to Canada and bring their skills to B.C. for the long term.

"Ideally, we want to bring them in and get them to stay. It's not a temporary thing."

According to a new BCTIA report, the industry's talent shortage is growing, requiring more aggressive action than when the shortage was first identified in 2006.

Spothelfer said the technology industry is tackling the talent shortage on many fronts, including this April when a number of B.C. tech employers will participate in three recruiting forums in California in partnership with the provincial government.

He said the industry also has to put efforts into retraining, supporting enrollment in technical programs and ensuring high school students see the industry as an exciting and well-paying career option.

According to the release, almost 400 technology companies participated in the annual TechTalentBC Labour Demand Study, funded by Western Economic Diversification Canada and the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education.

The study concluded that there is increased demand for customer-facing roles, in particular over 700 sales and sales management positions and over 950 customer service positions.

As well, there is a need for about 1,000 software engineers and over 500 project managers.

The study also saw an increased demand for multi-media developers, a high growth group. He said the demand in those areas indicates that there's a lot more to working in the technology industry than a job in a lab, although "there are plenty of opportunities in those areas too."

According to the study, while most companies recognize that much of the talent is going to come from immigration, over 77 per cent of respondents were not aware of the BC Provincial Nominee Program, a program that offers accelerated immigration for qualified skilled workers and experienced entrepreneurs who wish to settle in B.C.

To help address the lack of awareness, BCTIA is working with the provincial government to deliver a series of educational workshops in the upcoming months.

"Government shares the technology industry's concerns about addressing staffing issues," B.C.'s Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell, who is also responsible for research and technology, said in a statement.

Rona Ambrose, federal minister of western economic diversification, said in a statement that "the results of this study will help B.C.'s technology industry develop strategies to generate a better-educated, skilled and competitive workforce."

The study also found that an increasing number of women, persons with disabilities, aboriginals and seniors are being hired in non-traditional technical roles, particularly new media, life sciences and sustainable technologies.

In many difficult hiring positions, a number of employers indicated they would accept people who are willing to learn rather than looking for the specific skills and experience. The most desirable skills being sought by employers included the ability to work in teams and collaborate with others.

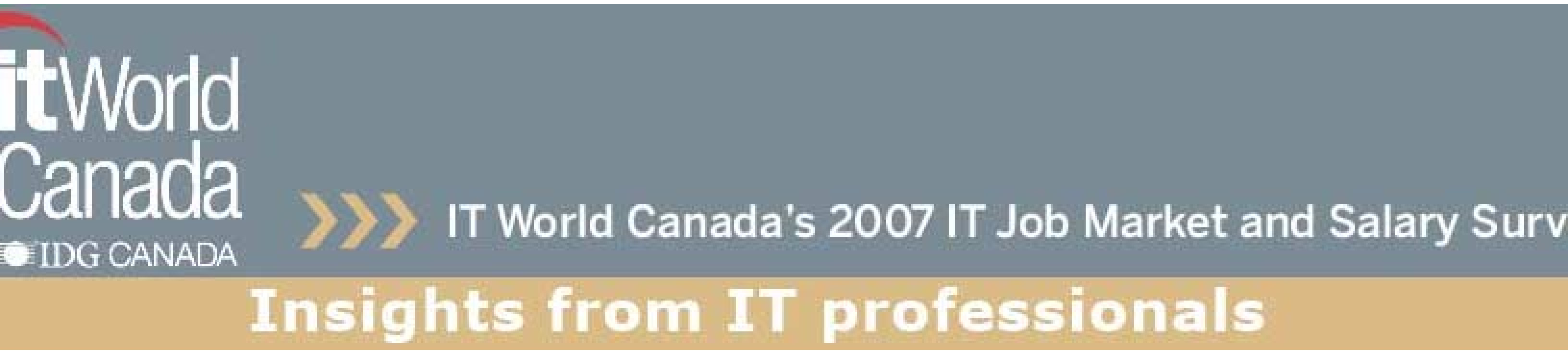
As well, the study found, the quality of work/life balance is increasingly important in attracting and retaining employees - particularly a convenient work location and close proximity to home.

Recreational amenities and a good corporate culture including a commitment to sound environmental practices were also listed as important.

The study noted that "sole entrepreneurs" now comprise over 8,000 companies in the B.C. technology industry and that many are expected to hire employees in the future, providing "the seed for the next generation of technology companies."

bmorton@png.canwest.com

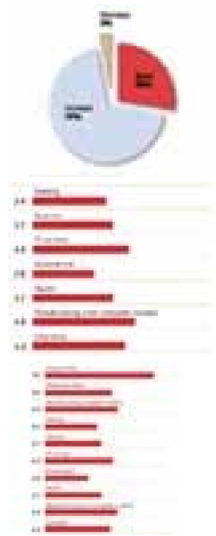
Reference: http://www.itworldcanada.com/salarycalculator/summary/industry.htm



Methodology

Respondents by gender

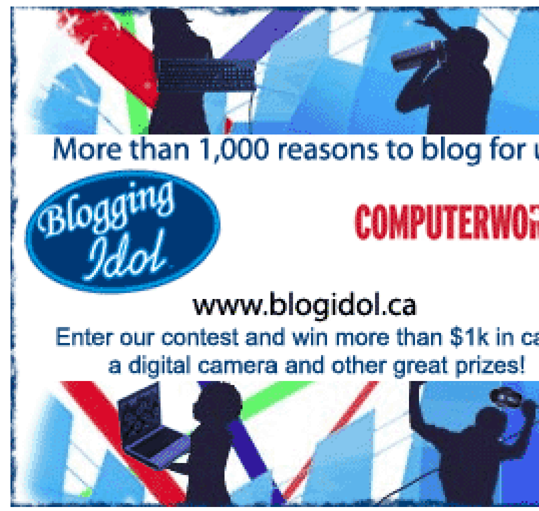
Respondents by company size



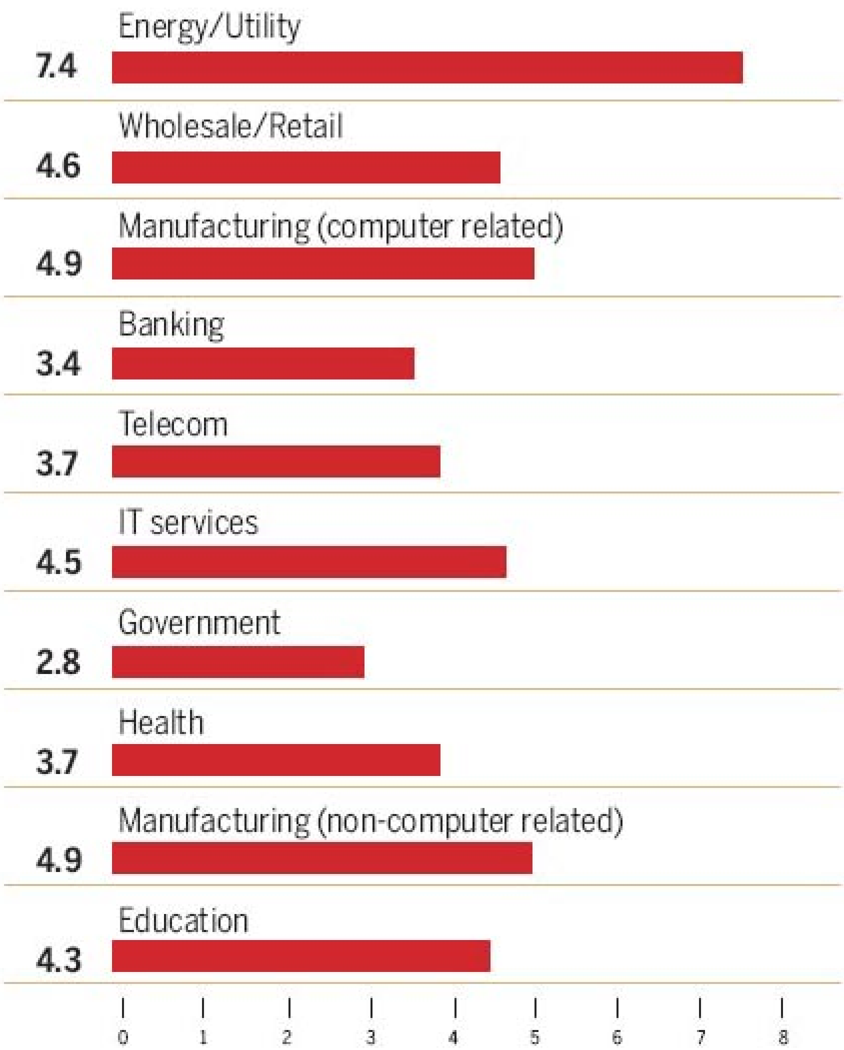
Compensation: Summary

% increase by industry

% increase by region



% increase by industry



The highest paid IT professionals are in the booming energy sector, which has seen the biggest increase i
pensation, up 7.4% from 2006 to 2007. The lowest paid are in education. The banking sector and governm
show the smallest year over year increases.

Methodology - Gender - Size - Compensation: Summary - Industry - Region
Purchase the full report, including detailed salary profiles.

Reference: http://www.financialpost.com/story.html?id=253575

Labour shortage could cripple Canada's tech industry: report

David George-Cosh, Financial Post Published: Monday, January 21, 2008

Related Topics

- Information Technology Sector
- Technology Sector

- Bell Canada Inc.
- Bombardier Inc.

Canada's technology companies will soon face a shortage of workers that could cripple the sector and deal a harsh blow to the Canadian economy, according to a report published by a coalition of industry professionals.

More than 90,000 jobs in the information technology sector will need to be filled in the next three to five years and could potentially impact the Canadian economy to the tune of $10.6-billion, said Conference Board of Canada vice-president of organizational effectiveness, Dr. Michael Bloom.

"The problem is much bigger than any of us at the Conference Board has identified," said Mr. Bloom.

A "perfect storm" of socio-demographic factors, negative perceptions of the tech sector following the bubble burst of 2002 and a significant drop in university enrolment in IT programs across Canada has all come together to create this dire scenario, said Mr. Bloom.

The Conference Board's report says that while more than 600,000 Canadians are employed in the IT sector, 31,000 of those will soon retire and another 58,000 will be needed to plug in forthcoming productivity gaps. Furthermore, the report found that each vacant position represents an average cost to the Canadian economy of $120,000 per year.

To combat that problem, more than three dozen companies that span the gamut of the technology industry have formed together under the "Canadian Coalition for Tomorrow's IT Skills" moniker. Some of the companies include cable giant Rogers Communications Inc., Internet hardware maker Nortel Networks Corp., transportation manufacturer Bombardier Inc. and retailer Canadian Tire Corp.

"If you don't do anything about it, everyone [will] chase after the same talent," said Stéphane Boisvert, president of Bell Canada Inc.' enterprise group, who is leading the coalition group.

Some of the solutions the coalition intends on focusing on is marketing tech to high schools in hopes that more students will enroll in tech-specific post-secondary fields and convincing the federal government to loosen immigration regulations to easily allow more highly-educated workers to enter and work in Canada.

Still, any efforts to inject new blood into the sector won't happen overnight. According to Statistics Canada, tech employees earn 45% more than the average Canadian and any move to offer a higher premium to attract untapped workers may force companies to offshore their workforce, said Paul Swinwood, president and CEO of the Information and Communications Technology Council.

Yesterday's announcement was only the beginning of what Mr. Boisvert hopes will convince industry and government officials to swiftly act to fix the alarming issue. Monte Solberg, the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, has already been briefed on the report as well as members of the Ontario and Quebec governments.

"The government is waiting to see what the industry can absorb," said Mr. Boisvert. "[But] it's a mistake for us to wait for them. We need to act now."

Reference: http://www.canada.com/nationalpost/financialpost/story.html?id=c6854bee-359b-4f96-9f42-bdee448be16d&k=87776

Alberta economy to slow: TD economists

Paul Vieira, Financial Post Published: Thursday, September 27, 2007

OTTAWA -- Too much growth is about to slow down the main engine of an Alberta economy that has largely powered Canada's robust economic performance, says a report from senior economists at Toronto-Dominion Bank.

Growth in the so-called Calgary-Edmonton corridor is set to drop to roughly 2.5% to 3% in the next two years, the TD study said. In the 2002 to 2006 period, growth was roughly 5% per annum.

Nevertheless, "growth can be a double-edged sword," write Don Drummond and Derek Burleton, chief economist and director of economic studies, respectively, at the bank.

"A fast rate of growth is desirable, but if an economy generates too much gusto -- which has been the case in Alberta -- labour, housing and materials shortages soon develop, rents and prices are bid up and enormous strains are placed on infrastructure."

As a result, cost pressures, most acute in Calgary and Edmonton, will be the "No. 1 culprit" in dragging down growth in the Alberta economy. Nevertheless, the economists say they believe the province will avert a so-called hard landing as the price of crude oil is expected to average about US$70 during the next few years.

Statistics suggest economic growth in the Calgary-Edmonton corridor, of 5% between 2002 and 2006, outperformed the rest of the country. For example, Canadian economic growth during 2003 to 2006 was 2.5% a year, with expansion in the two biggest cities, Toronto and Montreal, at 2.5% and 1.8%

respectively. Economic growth per capita in Alberta stood at $70,000 in 2006, a whopping 60% above the rest of Canada.

"Alberta's growth and inflation numbers have been so strong that they've skewed the national figures upward," the report said.

But a number of warning signs have suggested Alberta's growth spurt is set for a slowdown, among them: falling natural gas prices; softer drilling activity; drop in government revenue from the sale of exploration rights; plunge in interprovincial migration to Alberta; retreat in housing sales and starts in Calgary; and tapering off of vehicle sales.

The TD economists still expect growth in the Calgary-Edmonton corridor this year of 4.3% before it starts to drop below 3% in 2008-09.

For the country as a whole, the Bank of Canada has projected annual national growth of 2.5% in both 2008 and 2009.

"If natural gas prices continue to fall, the crude oil market sputters and the global [credit crunch] leads to both a U.S. recession and a major tightening in credit conditions across Canada, then the region could be in for a rough ride in 2008," Messrs. Drummond and Burleton warn.

Moreover, the economists don't project any "meaningful relief" on the cost side until 2009 at the earliest. That's because of the province's shortage of labour, which will continue to drive up wages.

Financial Post
pvieira@nationalpost.com

Reference: http://www.thestar.com/Business/article/254071

Pay hikes in GTA lagging

SALARY INCREASE LIST

Workers in the West and in major U.S. cities enjoying better wage gains, global survey finds

Sep 07, 2007 04:30 AM
MICHAEL BABAD
BUSINESS REPORTER

Average pay increases among employers in the Greater Toronto Area are lagging salary and wage hikes in many major Canadian and U.S. cities this year, and the same disparity is expected again in 2008, a survey released yesterday shows.

Notable in the study by Hewitt Associates is the gap between average increases in the GTA, as well as Montreal, and those in the West.

It's not that Toronto employers are miserly – average base salary increases in the GTA were still at 3.3 per cent this year – but tight labour and housing markets are pushing up pay packages in western centres such as Calgary and Vancouver.

"Out west, the labour shortage and the housing costs are what's largely driving increases," said Keri Humber, senior consultant at Hewitt.

"In Toronto, organizations are still giving meaningful increases because they're still higher than the inflation rate."

The inflation rate is about 2.2 per cent, according to the latest figures from Statistics Canada.

Local employers are being more cautious with costs but still looking at incentives other than money, such as benefits, retirement plans and flexible work arrangements, he said.

The Hewitt survey of 314 Canadian employers in June and July, part of a global study, looked at company budgets for general salary and merit pay increases. So, for example, the 3.3 per cent figure for the GTA represents the average increase in the budgets of those employers surveyed.

More than 100 organizations in the GTA were included.

The survey by Hewitt, a global human resources services company, showed the average increase in the GTA compared to 5.3 per cent in Calgary, 3.7 per cent in Vancouver and 3.4 per cent in Montreal.

Next year, a projected average 3.4 per cent increase in the GTA would compare to 5.2 per cent in Calgary, 3.7 per cent in Vancouver and 3.5 per cent in Montreal.

Among U.S. cities, Hewitt found as part of its global study, average increases in New York were 3.8 per cent this year and are projected at 3.9 per cent in 2008.

Houston was pegged at 4.5 per cent and 4.6 per cent, and Atlanta at 3.6 per cent in both years. Detroit, the hub of the auto industry, was at a lower range, 3.2 per cent and 3.4 per cent.

In both Canada and the United States, government centres are doing well, with average 2007 increases of 4 per cent in Ottawa and 4.7 per cent in Washington. Next year, projected increases are 3.9 per cent in Ottawa and 4.9 per cent in Washington.

In Calgary, whose growth is being driven by the oil industry, increased demand for labour is attracting workers from outside the province, fuelling a housing shortage.

"The oil companies have a lot of money, and they pay what they have to pay," Humber said.

Statistics Canada's latest reading put Ontario's unemployment rate at 6.6 per cent in July, compared to 3.3 per cent in Alberta and 4.1 per cent in British Columbia.

Hewitt's survey found average increases across all industries in 2007 ranged from 3.2 per cent for unionized workers to 4.1 per cent for executives, and are projected in 2008 at 3.1 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively.

The biggest increases are expected in the oil and gas industry, government, construction/engineering and aerospace, with the auto industry, hospitality/restaurants, printing and forestry products in the lower range.

While Humber could not address this, a question for Bay Street will be how the volatility in financial markets might affect bonuses.

Some observers expect the number of lucrative takeover deals to slow because of the troubles that began with the mess in U.S. subprime mortgages and spread to other credit markets. Indeed, some Bay Street deals have already been put on hold, although players in the mergers and acquisitions area are watching to see how the next few weeks play out.

In a recent report, BMO Capital Markets senior economists Robert Hogue and Kenrick Jordan cited investment banking as one of the areas at risk in a prolonged crunch. And a hit to bonuses could be a first-round impact, Hogue said in an interview this week.

"If things were to deteriorate, that could be the first line of casualties."

> From: Tess van Straaten [mailto:tvtess@hotmail.
> <mailto:tvtess%40hotmail.com> com]
> Sent: Thursday, April 17, 2008 4:19 PM
> To: david@headleyconsul <mailto:david%40headleyconsultants.com>
tants.com
> Subject: RE: Skilled IT worker shortage a major concern
>
> Hi David,
>
> Here's a link to the reports page of Sapphire Canada's website
where you can
> request a copy of the IT staffing report:
> http://www.sapphire
> <http://www.sapphireca.com/employers/Trends_and_Research.asp>
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End of sources cited in Ottawahitech posting