



Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.
The original outplacement company



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Will Retailers Ramp Up Hiring For The Holidays?

RECENT HIRING ANNOUNCEMENTS COULD SIGNAL BETTER SEASONAL JOBS MARKET

CHICAGO, September 14, 2017 – While pivoting in the retail sector has caused thousands of store closures, price cuts on merchandise, and consolidation within the industry, retailers are signaling that there might be high demand for seasonal jobs, according to a forecast released Thursday from global outplacement and executive coaching firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

Yesterday, Target announced it was hiring 100,000 seasonal positions for the holidays, up from the 70,000 in-store workers and 7,500 fulfillment and warehouse workers announced last year. Target also indicated they were lowering prices in all stores, a response to Amazon and Walmart's price-slashing practices.

"The competition among major big-box retailers will incentivize consumers to spend more this holiday season. These stores will need to add staff in order to meet demand," said John Challenger, Chief Executive Officer of Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

Last year, seasonal retail employment increased by 641,000 during the final three months of the year, the lowest number since the 495,800 retail hires announced in the final months of 2009. Last year's job gains were 9.6 percent lower than the previous year, when retailers added 708,800 jobs, according to employment data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Last year, BLS data showed that transportation and warehousing employment increased by a non-seasonally adjusted 246,700 workers in the final quarter of the year, 8 percent higher than the 228,400 workers hired in this sector in the final three months of 2015. In 2007, the seasonal job gains for this sector measured just 24,300.

“As holiday shopping habits turn virtual, retailers are responding by hiring more warehouse and transport workers. While retail hiring has fallen over the last couple years, major announcements indicate workers will still be needed for customer-facing positions, as retailers attempt to give consumers an experience they cannot receive online,” said Challenger.

In addition to Target’s announcement, Michaels has announced 15,000 holiday workers, and 1-800-Flowers will staff an additional 8,000 workers for the holidays.

According to Challenger tracking, retailers have announced over 6,000 store closures and 67,000 job cuts in the first eight months of the year. However, despite these numbers, retailers projected the highest number of hiring announcements for any industry, with over 248,000.

“Most of those hiring announcements came early in the year, as retailers like Walmart and Dollar General expanded. The Home Depot announced plans to hire 80,000 workers for the summer season in March. Meanwhile, Amazon has been steadily boosting employment rolls after a January announcement of over 100,000 hires in the next 18 months,” said Challenger.

Since 2012, holiday hiring announcements have averaged 604,000 per year, according to Challenger tracking. Some of those announcements are from non-retailers, such as FedEx and UPS. The bulk of those hiring announcements occur in September. In fact, between 2011 and 2016, hiring announcements in September have averaged over 415,000.

ANNOUNCED HIRING PLANS

All Industries

	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Monthly Average
January	136,501	8,362	8,774	6,312	60,585	7,568	29,492	20,182
February	25,765	7,539	14,574	11,054	92,372	10,720	72,581	34,807
March	127,006	10,997	6,412	6,860	8,115	12,390	10,869	9,274
April	61,537	11,557	13,898	11,145	9,322	11,794	59,648	19,561
May	77,447	24,732	12,598	10,141	9,618	7,722	10,248	12,510
June	40,095	13,564	11,176	15,530	8,774	12,314	15,498	12,809
July	88,142	16,051	11,637	16,544	9,728	10,350	10,706	12,503
August	14,530	9,101	11,778	9,657	7,662	12,079	15,201	10,913
September		487,075	492,306	567,705	445,617	425,683	76,551	415,823
October		135,532	86,107	147,935	87,874	75,065	159,177	115,282
November		108,994	10,026	11,291	14,177	28,526	63,527	39,424
December		35,198	11,465	7,332	11,362	16,266	14,074	15,950
TOTAL	571,023	868,702	690,751	821,506	765,206	630,477	537,572	

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

JOBS ADDED IN RETAIL TRADE

October, November, December, 2005-2017

	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	% Change
2005	122,300	392,700	196,600	711,600	0.20%
2006	150,600	427,300	169,000	746,900	5.00%
2007	87,900	465,400	167,600	720,900	-3.50%
2008	38,600	213,600	72,700	324,900	-54.90%
2009	45,100	317,100	133,600	495,800	52.60%
2010	149,800	339,200	158,600	647,600	30.60%
2011	134,200	390,600	154,500	679,300	4.90%
2012	138,700	485,400	99,600	723,700	6.50%
2013	159,600	443,100	184,100	786,800	8.70%
2014	182,800	412,200	154,100	749,100	-4.80%
2015	183,300	399,300	125,700	708,800	-5.38%
2016	149,400	359,400	132,200	641,000	-9.57%
2017	??	??	??	??	
AVERAGE	127,673	390,555	147,718	665,945	

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc., with data provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

SEASONAL HIRING ANNOUNCEMENTS

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Michaels						15,000
1-800-Flowers						8,000
Williams-Sonoma						2,000
Plow & Hearth						400
Amazon	50,000	70,000	80,000	100,000	120,000	
UPS	55,000	55,000	95,000	95,000	95,000	
Macy's	80,000	83,000	86,000	85,000	83,000	
Kohl's	52,700	53,000	76,970	79,160	69,000	
Target	88,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	77,500	100,000
Walmart	50,000	55,000	60,000	60,000		
FedEx (Transportation)	20,000	20,000	50,000	55,000	50,000	
Toys“R”Us	45,000	45,000	45,000	40,000		
JCPenney	40,000	35,000	35,000	30,000	40,000	
GameStop	17,000	17,000	25,000	28,000		
Nordstrom				11,800	11,400	
Sports Authority				3,500		
Best Buy	14,000					
Meijer	12,000	9,000	10,000			
Radial					20,000	
Party City					35,000	
Bon-Ton Stores					13,500	
Gap			63,000			
Versant Supply Chain					2,000	
Opryland					300	
L Brands					4,000	
Hickory Farms (Food)	5,225	6,000				
TOTAL	528,925	518,000	695,970	657,460	620,700	125,400

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.