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For Immediate Release

IS IT TIME TO SWITCH INDUSTRIES?

CHICAGO, July 28, 2015 -- A new survey shows that, on average, three in ten job seekers finding employment in the first half of 2015 changed industries. While that was down slightly from a year ago, the fact that nearly one-third of successful job seekers switched industries indicates that this is a viable strategy for those who continue to seek employment.

Between January 1 and June 30, an average of 29.9 percent of those finding new positions changed industries, according to a survey by global outplacement and executive coaching firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. The quarterly survey is conducted among approximately 1,000 successful job seekers, representing a broad range of occupations and industries across the country.

The industry-switching rate in the first half of 2015 was down about three percentage points from the same period a year ago, when an average of 32.7 percent of job winners changed industries.

“The key to a successful job search is casting the widest net possible. That means searching beyond the help wanted ads, looking outside of your local job market, and searching for opportunities in industries other than the one in which you were previously employed,” said John A. Challenger, chief executive officer of Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

“This recovery in particular has seen certain industries expand more quickly than others. Furthermore, we are reaching a point in our economy when certain industries are going through significant changes, and in many cases, simply are not producing as many jobs as in the past. This means that job seekers have to get more creative and think outside the box when it comes to selling their skills in industries where they might not have experience,” he added.

The pharmaceutical sector is a prime example of an industry in flux. While demand for new drugs remains strong, mergers, government regulations and the internet have dramatically changed the way companies get their latest drugs into the market. As a result, the armies of pharmaceutical sales reps that were once typical have shrunk by nearly 40 percent since 2005.

“If you are a sales rep in the pharmaceutical industry, you can still find well-paying jobs. However, the opportunities have significantly declined and are likely to continue to do so in the future. So, if you are a job seeker in this industry, it may be wise to seek opportunities in closely related industries such as medical devices or biotech, or leave the health care industry entirely,” advised Challenger.

“Too many job seekers believe that working for a long time in a specific industry means that they must remain there even though the outlook is bleak for getting a new job. That is a self-imposed limitation which tends to consign the person to a sometimes depleted job market,” he concluded.

While job seekers can attempt to transfer their skills into well-established industries that may be burgeoning, others may want to go a more unconventional route. Challenger experts offer these under-the-radar industries for consideration.

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5 UNDER-THE-RADAR INDUSTRIES TO CONSIDER IN JOB SEARCH

Craft Anything

Artisan cheeses, craft beer, craft Bourbon, etc., are growing in popularity and the number of producers of these goods are expanding rapidly. Approximately 1,250 craft breweries opened between 2009 and 2014, according to one estimate. The number of cheese-making establishments increased by 13 percent between 2007 and 2012, according to the Census Bureau. You don't necessarily need special knowledge about making these products. In addition to the people who create the products, all of these newcomers to the burgeoning "craft" industry need IT people, accountants, marketing and sales professionals, logistics and operations managers, as well as numerous other support workers.

The Internet of Things

There has been talk of internet-connected refrigerators, cars and security systems for many years, but the technology and accessibility appear to be hitting critical mass and adoption is beginning to soar even among the least tech-savvy consumers. This is opening up a growing industry of companies developing, marketing and supporting new applications for an expanding universe of internet-connected goods. While tech professionals will be the biggest beneficiaries of this explosion of connectedness, firms will continue to need administrators, marketing professionals, sales representatives, public relations, etc.

Legalization Nation

Four states (Colorado, Alaska, Oregon and Washington) and the District of Columbia have legalized recreational use of marijuana. Several others have decriminalized it and dozens allow for the medicinal use of the drug. Several states are exploring full legalization. Regardless of where you stand on the policy, the fact is the rapidly changing laws are opening myriad employment opportunities for those wanting to get in on the ground floor of a growth industry. From legal growing operations to retail and every step in between, companies and businesses are looking for manpower.

Re-educated Education

There will always be a need for qualified and inspiring educators and administrators. However, one need not limit his search to traditional school districts or even charter schools. In every state across the country, it is possible to find examples of individuals and organizations trying to break the mold of an education system that no longer appears to be working to its fullest potential. From pre-school through the highest level of education, there are growing opportunities to teach in new ways. While much of the growth is in online coursework, ranging from the free-to-all-users Kahn Academy to the low-cost-anywhere-anytime model of Udemy,

there are also a growing number of face-to-face education opportunities that exist outside of the norm, such as private tutoring providers and home-school environments. Furthermore, education jobs are not by any means limited to teachers. As education becomes more technology-dependent, it opens up opportunities for consultants, software designers, curriculum developers and even game designers.

The Odd-Job Industry

If you need a ride to the airport, you can now use Uber or Lyft. If you need someone to build that new Ikea bed, you can find someone through Amazon's Handy app. If you need a place to stay for a week in New York, you can use AirBnB to arrange to stay in someone's home. Over the last five years, there has been steady growth in services designed to connect consumers with independent providers of goods and services, both on a national and local level. While some might make a decent living as a provider of these goods and services, the best opportunities are likely to find in connecting users and providers. These services need people to vet and manage the contractors, develop apps and provide support.