



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

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Job Seekers More Confident in New Survey

1 IN 4 FEEL NEW JOB IS WITHIN 3 MONTHS; BUT JOB-SEARCH CHALLENGES PERSIST

CHICAGO, January 7, 2014 — As the economy and job market continue to regain strength, job seekers are slowly becoming more confident, as evidenced by a survey of callers to an annual job-search advice hotline, 63 percent of whom believed they would find new employment in under six months. That was up from 55 percent who said the same a year ago.

While confidence is on the rise, the problem of long-term unemployment persists. More than one-third (36 percent) of callers said they had been out of work for a year or longer. That was down only slightly from a year ago when 39 percent of callers were jobless for over a year. Furthermore, 44 percent of this year's employed callers characterized themselves as being underemployed, compared to 39 percent who said so in 2012.

The survey results are based on a random sampling of approximately 1,000 callers to a job-search advice helpline offered annually by global outplacement and executive coaching firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. The percentage of unemployed callers was virtually unchanged from a year ago, with 68 percent saying they were currently out of work.

“The government's monthly employment report indicated strong employment gains in the last half of the year, with private sector payrolls expanding by an average of about 196,000 new workers per month. Moreover, 45 states saw their unemployment rates decline in November. However, job search confidence is typically based on one's personal experience. So, these callers are likely seeing more friends and family finding new jobs and believe that they can do the same,” said John A. Challenger, chief executive officer of Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

“The fact that more callers described themselves as underemployed could be an indication that long-term unemployed are settling for lesser positions in the hopes that moving to a more desirable job will be easier when employed. Nationally, we are also seeing a decline in the long-term unemployed, which could be a sign that some are dropping out of the labor market or settling for part-time or lower-paying, lower-skilled jobs,” said Challenger.

According to the latest data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of Americans unemployed for 27 weeks or longer in November declined 15 percent to 4,066,000 from 4,784,000 in November 2012. The latest total is down significantly from the peak, when more than 6.6 million Americans were out of work for at least six months. However, the number experiencing prolonged unemployment remains well above a pre-recession low of 1,132,000, recorded in May 2007.

More than half (54.5 percent) of callers to this year’s call-in have been job less for more than six months. Of those, 61 percent have been out of work for at least one year. Thirty percent have been unemployed for more than two years.

“Unfortunately, it is an uphill battle for those suffering long-term unemployment. The longer you are out, the harder it becomes to get employers to even consider you a viable candidate. Some employers are in fact limiting their recruiting to candidates who are currently employed.

Despite the challenges facing the long-term unemployed, this group of callers remained somewhat optimistic about their chances for job-search success. Among callers unemployed for at least a year, nearly 40 percent felt they would find a new position in one to six months.

However, after a year or more of unemployment, many callers were frustrated with a job-search environment that seemed to be working against them. About 20 percent thought it would take another seven to nine months to find employment and 12 percent were hoping to find a job within nine to 12 months. More than one-in-four (26 percent) anticipated that their job search would last longer than a year.

Among all callers, 23 percent felt they could find a new job within one to three months. That was unchanged from a year earlier. Another 40 percent believed they would find a new position in four to six months, which was up from 32 percent who said the same in 2012. Meanwhile, just under 11 percent thought a new job was more than a year away. That was down from 15 percent in 2012, but still serves as a stark reminder that many Americans remain very pessimistic about their job prospects.

“Overall, the majority of callers – 63 percent – felt they would find a job in six months or less. That is a pretty realistic assessment. In a healthy economy, a successful job search might take two to three months. In a tight job market, such as the one we are in now, it is not unusual to see even high- quality candidates take four to six months,” said Challenger.

“During the annual call-in, our coaches attempt to restore hope to frustrated job seekers by providing some new strategies to jump-start their job search. And there is plenty of reason for hope. It is important to keep some of that frustration at bay in order to have a fruitful and productive job search,” said Challenger.

In fact, the latest monthly survey of employers by the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the economy had more than 3.9 million job openings at the end of October 2013. In addition to the job openings, more than 4.5 million workers were hired in October.

“This survey has shown that employers have been hiring about four million new workers per month for several months running. Many of these hires are to replace retirees, former workers who quit or those terminated for cause. Whatever the reason, it is imperative that job seekers believe that they can be among the next four million people hired,” said Challenger.

“There are a lot of things people can do to improve their chances of being among those four million new hires. The one thing they should not do is simply sit at a computer all day, responding to online help-wanted ads,” Challenger advised.

“Answering ads is just one part of the job search; and it is probably the least effective. Classified ads, whether online or in the newspaper, represent a small fraction of the available jobs out there – perhaps as small as 20 percent. The hidden job market, representing as much as 80 percent of the available jobs, can only be accessed through aggressive networking, cold-calling and persistence,” said Challenger.

The hidden job market is the hardest to uncover, a frustration felt by many callers, nearly 30 percent of whom said the most difficult part of the job search is finding openings. In the same vein, another 31 percent said the biggest challenge is getting interviews.

“A big part of a successful job search is being in the right place, at the right time. To do this, you have to cast the widest net possible. Advertise your job loss to your network, which should include friends, family, former business associates, former college professors, fellow college alumni, etc. You basically need to broadcast to your entire universe of acquaintances that you are looking for a job,” said Challenger.



2013 CHALLENGER CALL-IN SURVEY RESULTS

Gender	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Female	61.3%	56.8%	54%	53.3%	50%
Male	37.8%	43.2%	46%	46.7%	50%

Are you unemployed?	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Yes	68.2%	67.9%	77%	80.8%	81%
No	31.7%	32.1%	23%	19.2%	19%

If employed, are you underemployed?	2013	2012
Yes	44%	37.8%
No	56%	62.2%

If unemployed, how long have you been out of work	2013	2012	2011	2010
1 – 3 Months	23.8%	22.6%	20.1%	19.1%
4 – 6 Months	21.5%	17.5%	16.6%	18.4%
7 – 9 Months	8.6%	9.4%	5.1%	8.1%
10 – 12 Months	9.6%	11.2%	8.6%	6.9%
More than a year	36.3%	39.2%	49.6%	47.5%

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.



2013 CHALLENGER CALL-IN SURVEY RESULTS

How long do you think it will take to find new position?	2013	2012	2011	2010
1 – 3 Months	23.3%	23.0%	28%	18.4%
4 – 6 Months	39.5%	31.9%	37%	21.1%
7 – 9 Months	16.2%	18.6%	14%	5.7%
10 – 12 Months	10.2%	11.6%	12%	2.4%
More than a year	10.8%	15.0%	10%	4.3%

Top Most Difficult Part of the Job Search*	2013	2012	2011
Preparing the resume	8.7%	9.7%	5%
Networking	13.8%	17.2%	12%
Getting interviews	31%	28.0%	24%
Finding job openings	29.4%	30.2%	27%
Performing well in the interview	10.5%	7.5%	6%
Dealing with rejection	4.0%	4.7%	4%
Filling out applications	2.4%	1.3%	2%

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.