Bust a Move

The hiring game wasn't supposed to be this heated; sub-par job growth, modest economic expansion and wavering confidence should have given companies time to find talent. Slow and steady has never been tolerated in technology and the colliding forces of strong demand, talent shortages, and restless employees have sparked a frenzy that hiring managers and recruiters say will only get more intense this year.

In a recent Dice study, more than half (54%) of hiring managers and recruiters anticipate that tech talent poaching will get more aggressive this year, while, just three percent of respondents expect a let-up. That expectation is amplified when you look at hiring managers toiling in the technology or consulting industries, with 62 percent saying talent skirmishes will get more aggressive, against one percent in the less aggressive camp.

Companies still want what they need to move projects ahead quickly: multi-skilled, experienced technology professionals with industry-specific experience. Hiring managers believe these traits help diminish the potential risk around making a poor hiring decision. And the likelihood that the requirement for industry experience will be relaxed in 2011? Nearly three-quarters of corporate respondents are doubtful, saying that relaxing the requirement would be unlikely, or there would be no change.

Hiring managers claim their companies are taking frequent steps to keep technology talent from departing to the competition. The most popular tactics: accommodating flexible work hours, offering work on new or emerging technologies, and increasing salaries. Still, a majority of hiring managers (54%) believe they can tell when a technology professional is about to exit. The most frequent sign is a change in habits related to work or a noticeable lack of engagement with colleagues or projects. Other signals: employees taking large numbers of single-day absences, changing to more formal dress, and getting up-to-date on expense accounts.

Meanwhile, there are few consequences for technology professionals should they decide to jump to a competitor. Only 11 percent of hiring managers said they would not allow a former employee to return after being poached, while one-third indicated the opposite. Most hiring managers say it would depend on the individual employee.

Alice Hill
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Dice by the Numbers

As of March 1, 2011*

Available Tech Jobs	75,648
Full-time Positions	45,366
Contract Positions	34,289
Part-time Positions	1,592

Top Tech Metro Areas

Based on the number of jobs posted by zip code on Dice as of March 1, 2011 and the change as compared to the same period a year ago.

Metro Area	Jobs	Change
New York/New Jersey	8,714	+24%
Washington DC/Baltimore	8,161	+25%
Silicon Valley	5,034	+41%
Chicago	3,275	+31%
Los Angeles	2,899	+20%
Atlanta	2,694	+53%
Boston	2,679	+26%
Dallas	2,494	+42%
Seattle	2,354	+47%
Philadelphia	2,040	+22%

In 2011, what do you expect to happen with regards to poaching of technology employees in comparison to 2010?

More aggressive	54%
Same	33%
Less aggressive	3%
I don't know	10%

Dice report

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* A single job posting may reflect more than one skill, location or type of position; therefore total figures for those attributes may be greater than total jobs posted.