Bigger Paychecks to Ring in the New Year in Atlanta, CareerBuilder.com and America Online Survey Finds

- Survey Shows Atlanta Employers Plan to Hire Quicker, Increase Salaries, Diversify Staffs, Rehire Retirees and Offer More Flexible Schedules -

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Atlanta workers may cash in on a bigger, better deal in the New Year, according to a recent study of Atlanta employers by CareerBuilder.com and America Online. Titled "Atlanta Hiring in 2006," the survey reveals Atlanta companies plan to increase salaries on initial offers, raise compensation levels for existing employees and provide more flexible work arrangements. It also provides insights on the skills Atlanta companies say will be most critical to their businesses in the coming year and their plans to shorten hiring cycles, diversify their staffs and postpone retirements in response to an increasingly competitive labor market.

Bigger Paychecks

* 47 percent of Atlanta hiring managers plan to increase salaries on initial offers; 23 percent will raise offers by 3 percent or higher and 17 percent will raise offers by 5 percent or higher.

* 70 percent of Atlanta hiring managers plan to increase pay for existing employees; 53 percent will raise compensation levels by 3 percent or more and 20 percent will raise levels by 5 percent or more.

Tip: Know your value. Check out online salary sites, industry Web sites and the Bureau of Labor Statistics to determine the average salary for your position in your city. Present your research along with career accomplishments to showcase your worth.

Rehiring Retirees

* 18 percent of Atlanta hiring managers expressed concern over a shortage of skilled workers and intellectual capital lost due to the large segment of Baby Boomers approaching retirement.

* An even greater number -- 44 percent -- plan to recruit retirees from other companies or offer incentives for workers at or approaching retirement age to extend their employment.

Tip: If you would like to put off your retirement, inform your supervisor and other departments within your organization and network to identify potential full-time and part-time opportunities.

Diversifying the Workforce

* Recognizing the importance of workforce diversity, four-in-ten Atlanta hiring managers expect diverse candidates to comprise 25 percent or more of their new hires.

* Women and Hispanics ranked highest among the diverse workforce segments Atlanta hiring managers expect to target more aggressively.

Tip: Failing to market yourself as a diverse candidate can work against you. Highlight your diverse background and how your unique perspective and skills contributed to the success of previous employers in your application and during interviews.

Flexible Work Styles

* 53 percent of Atlanta hiring managers say they will be more willing to provide flexible work arrangements such as job sharing and alternate schedules.

* 27 percent of Atlanta hiring managers say they will be more willing to allow employees to telecommute given rising energy costs.

Tip: Present your case. List your professional contributions, explain why you need a flexible work arrangement and propose a schedule that shows how you will be able to perform effectively.

Shorter Hiring Cycles

* While the vast majority of Atlanta hiring managers report they are filling their open positions within six weeks, 31 percent say they will hasten the hiring process.

* 12 percent of Atlanta hiring managers will shorten the recruitment process by two weeks or more and 9 percent will shorten it by three weeks or more.

Tip: Act quickly. Check newspapers classifieds and online job postings on CareerBuilder.com and AOL Find a Job regularly. You can apply to positions in real time, post up to five different versions of your resume and sign up for automatic job alerts.

Critical Skills

* The top three skills Atlanta hiring managers say will be most critical to their businesses and most attractive in potential candidates are: 1) customer service 2) critical-thinking (problem-solving and decision-making) 3) ability to improve productivity.

* 35 percent of Atlanta hiring managers report they will be placing a greater emphasis on recruiting bilingual employees.

Tip: Employers often use electronic scanning devices that search resumes for keywords. Include these critical skills and other keywords as they apply to your experience to show your relevancy.

Survey Methodology

The survey, "Hiring Trends to Watch in 2006," was conducted from November 27 to December 12, 2005. Methodology used to collect survey responses totaling more than 100 Atlanta hiring managers for this study involved selecting a random sample of comScore Networks panel members. These Web Panel members were approached via an e-mail invitation, which asked them to participate in a short online survey. The results of this survey are statistically accurate to within +/- 9.8 percentage points (19 times out of 20).

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