



Matching talent with available jobs

Engineers are among the most sought after employees in Australia, according to Manpower Australia's fourth annual talent shortage survey. Despite the economic downturn, many employers in Australia still struggle to find qualified job candidates. The results from this survey were part of Manpower's global survey where 11,500 employers were interviewed.

"Despite high levels of unemployment in many markets, this year's talent survey suggests a mismatch between the type of individuals available for work and the specific skills that employers are looking for," said Lincoln Crawley, managing director of Manpower Australia and New Zealand.

"In an environment where companies are pressured to shift their mindset to think more strategically and creatively about how to do more with less, the same approach is being applied to how they manage their talent. Employers are looking for ways to accelerate their business strategy with fewer people. It's this specificity of skills required in the individuals that employers are now seeking that is creating a sense of talent shortage amidst an overabundant pool of available workers. This conundrum is frustrating both employers and individuals."

Currently the top 10 talent shortages in Australia are:

- skilled manual trades
- sales representatives
- engineers
- management/executive (management/corporate)
- accounting and finance staff
- technicians
- customer service representatives and customer support
- machinist/machine operator
- production operators
- drivers.

While there has been some movement in ranking, the top three remained the same as last year. The continuing difficulty in recruiting engineers and skilled manual trades reflects the severity of the talent shortages which exist in the resources and infrastructure segments.

In the Asia Pacific region, 32% of employers struggle to fill positions available. Compared to Australia, Taiwan and Japan have a higher percentage of employers indicating a difficulty in recruiting talent while China is faring better at filling positions with suitable candidates.

Even as employers have been generally reducing their hiring, they have trouble filling critical positions in the company with people who have the precise combination of skills and experience. As an example, information technology (IT) professionals that are sought after not only have IT degrees, certifications and programming skills but also the right managerial skills and business domain knowledge.

Manpower emphasised the importance of employer branding as a way to overcome talent shortages.

Employer branding must be everyone's responsibility in the company, starting with the organisation's leadership. More than



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slogans and symbols, the employer's brand has to accurately capture the reality of the work experience, the company said. Each touch-point between employer and employee presents an opportunity to reinforce the employer's brand.

Examples are leadership and management communications, reward and recognition events, career development opportunities and even routine human resource processes and communications can drive employee engagement, it said. ■

Many employers in Australia still struggle to find qualified job candidates.