

# IT Worker Confidence a Mixed Bag

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Two recruiting companies find different results when they poll IT workers about their confidence in the economy, their jobs and finances.

Are IT workers confident about the economy, their jobs and finances? It depends who you ask.

New York-based Hudson Talent Management, a recruiting firm, reported May 2 that confidence among IT professionals hit a record high in April, as Hudson's Index jumped 12.9 points to 122.6, driven by an increase in expected hiring, a decrease in expected layoffs and greater job satisfaction.

Thirty-eight percent of IT workers said they believed that their companies would be hiring in the coming months, up seven points from the month prior. April also found a 4 percent drop in the number of IT pros who expected their companies to reduce headcount, bringing the number to a record low of 13 percent.

IT workers expressed more satisfaction with their jobs in April than they did in March, up 8 percent to 78 percent. Finally, more technology professionals rated their finances as "excellent" or "good" in April than had in March, up 8 percent to 60 percent.

The April 2007 reading was also higher than that of April 2006, by 12.7 points. Hudson's national Index, monitoring professionals across all occupations, fell 1.5 points to 107.5 in April.

"After appearing unaffected by rising energy prices for the past couple of months, U.S. workers are beginning to reveal the toll that paying \$3 for a gallon of gas has taken on their wallets," said Robert Morgan, president of Hudson Talent Management.

"On the other hand, job growth and low unemployment persist and continue to sustain worker sentiment."

Meanwhile an IT Employment Report released May 2 by Fort Lauderdale, Fla.-based Spherion, a recruiting and staffing firm, noted a drop in IT worker confidence in the first quarter of 2007, based on fewer workers believing in both the strength of the economy and job availability.

Just over one-third (34 percent) of technology workers reported that they were likely to look for a job in the next 12 months, down 12 percentage points from the fourth quarter of 2006.

Nearly one-quarter (24 percent) of IT workers believed that the economy was getting stronger in the first quarter of the year, down 8 percent from the previous quarter.

"The U.S. is experiencing a measurable shortage of domestic IT talent, causing technology companies to go as far as to lobby Congress to grant more H-1B visas to temporary foreign IT workers," said Brendan Courtney, senior vice president of Spherion Professional Services Group.

Yet, it wasn't all dismal news for IT workers in the beginning of 2007. Three-quarters (75 percent) of responding tech professionals said that they believed it was unlikely that they would be laid off, up 1 percent from the end of 2006.

"More high-tech employers are offering existing employees retention incentives to remain competitive, so it is not surprising to see IT workers feeling confident about their job security," said Courtney.

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