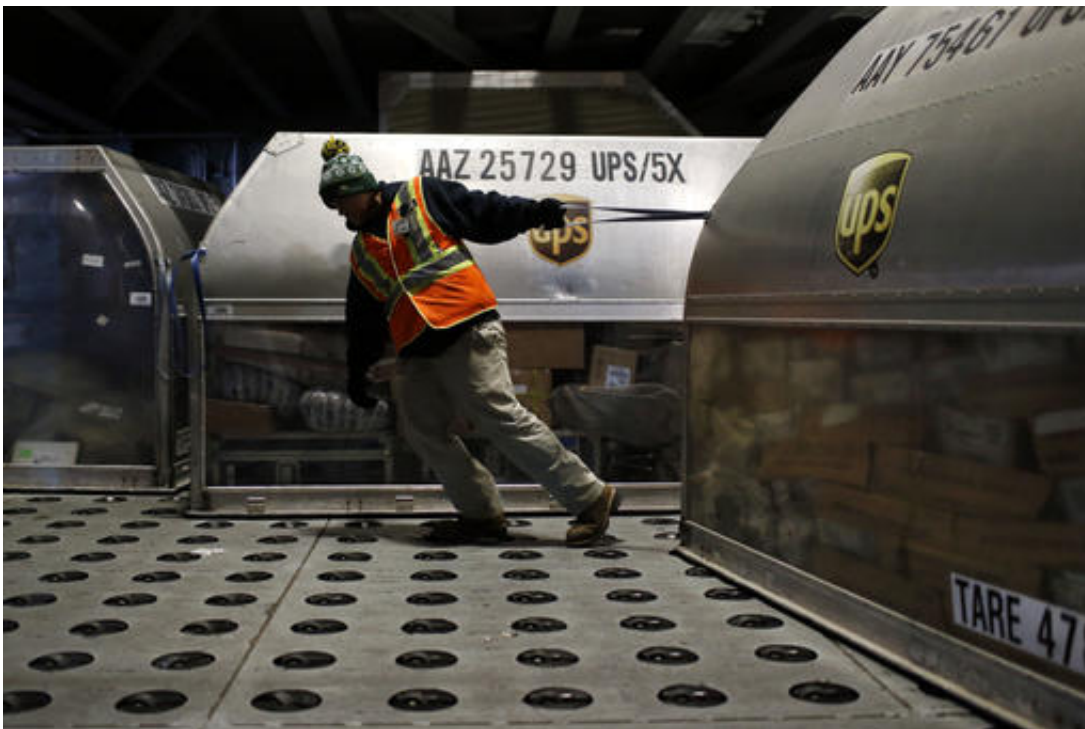


UPS to hire 95,000 seasonal workers for upcoming holidays

September 14 2016, by David Koenig



In this Nov. 20, 2015, file photo, a UPS worker pulls a container full of packages across a floor embedded with casters at Worldport in Louisville, Ky. UPS plans to add 95,000 workers to meet the 2016 holiday-season demand from online shopping, the company announced Wednesday, Sept. 14, 2016. That's about the same as in 2015. (AP Photo/Patrick Semansky, File)

The calendar says it's not even fall yet, but delivery companies and retailers are making their hiring lists for the holiday season.

It looks like short-term employment in stores may be flat with last year, but more people will be needed to deliver gifts bought online.

UPS said Wednesday it will add about 95,000 seasonal workers, mostly package handlers and drivers. That's close to last year's pace, when United Parcel Service Inc. hired 93,000 workers for a busy stretch that starts in late November and runs through the gift-return season in early January.

Delivery rival FedEx Corp. has not yet announced its plans.

Toys R Us also said Wednesday it has begun taking applications for part-time seasonal jobs in stores and distribution centers. A spokeswoman declined to give a nationwide figure but said the retailer expects to add at least 10,900 workers in five of its biggest markets: New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Chicago and Washington, D.C.

Earlier this week, Target Corp. said it would hire more than 70,000 seasonal store workers—about the same as last year.

Government figures indicate that about 2.5 million more Americans had jobs in August than a year earlier. John Challenger, CEO of workplace consultant Challenger, Gray & Christmas, said that kind of growth would ordinarily suggest more consumer spending and more seasonal hiring by retailers.



In this Friday, Nov. 27, 2015, file photo, Cinnamon Boffa, right, from Bensalem, Pa., checks out a "Chubby Puppies" toy for her daughter Serenity, left, at a Toys R Us, in New York. Toys R Us said Wednesday, Sept. 14, 2016, it has begun taking applications for part-time seasonal jobs in stores and distribution centers. A spokeswoman declined to give a nationwide figure but said the retailer expects to add at least 10,900 workers in five of its biggest markets: New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Chicago and Washington. (AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews, File)

"But retailers are continuing to look for ways to be more efficient, and the continuing shift to online (shopping) allows them to be comfortable that they can manage with the same number of employees they had last year," Challenger said in an interview.

Challenger expects overall holiday hiring by retailers to be unchanged from last year, when retailers added about 738,800 seasonal jobs, down

1.4 percent from the year before.

The National Retail Federation expects a 3.4 percent increase in total retail sales this year—but a jump of 7 percent to 10 percent in online shopping.

While holiday hiring has been flat to down in stores, it is rising for transportation and warehousing services as consumers do more of their shopping online. Target, for example, said it would add 7,500 people in distribution centers.

Peter Harrison, CEO of Snagajob.com, a site on which employers post and applicants browse job listings, said the tight labor market is pushing many employers to lock up seasonal workers earlier each year. And they are often forced to be more flexible with hours and other working conditions because they must compete with outfits like Uber.

Younger workers are more accustomed than their parents were to patching together their income with multiple jobs, temporary gigs, and seasonal jobs. But the latter can also serve as a bridge to a more traditional job.

UPS says that about one-third of seasonal hires eventually land year-round jobs at the company, and its CEO, David Abney, started as a part-time package loader while in college. Toys R Us estimates that 15 percent to 20 percent of its seasonal workers catch on permanently.

"It's definitely an opportunity to get your foot in the door and prove yourself," Harrison said.

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Citation: UPS to hire 95,000 seasonal workers for upcoming holidays (2016, September 14)

retrieved 24 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2016-09-ups-hire-seasonal-workers-upcoming.html>

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