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new work of work

For all intents and purposes, the business community at large has moved on from Covid-19. The infection rates in the DC area still fluctuate wildly but people seem to be mostly oblivious to them now – perhaps it's because it's summer and we haven't been able to fully enjoy the past couple of summers. At any rate, businesses are booming, and restaurants are full.

Our recruiters are continuing to see a very tight labor market – an issue that is not going to go away any time soon. We have a systemic issue with the employment market which has been coming for decades - the pandemic exacerbated it but did not cause it.

Here are some of the more significant drivers of the talent shortage:

- The United States hasn't been at replacement birth rate since 1972
- 70 million Baby Boomers are recently retired – or are retiring
- The US has had no cohesive immigration policy for 40 years
- Millions of people, primarily women stepped out of the workforce during Covid (although we are now seeing them trickle back in)

So we are retiring, not replacing ourselves or bringing in new people. And then add a global pandemic and we have a perfect storm. Economies cannot grow without people (not matter what the robots think:)

Finding great candidates is definitely a big challenge but we are up to it. We will continue to do the frustrating work of recruiting quality candidates so you don't have to:)

a glimpse into how the DMV is positioned for the new world of work...

the federal government powers the dc metro economic engine

The business world continues to wend its way through the new challenges brought on by the pandemic – remote, hybrid, on site – increased salaries – higher demand for better benefits – fewer talented people available – the great resignation – the great return – and on and on.

We are lucky to be situated in DC where the federal government (the largest customer on the planet) and the significant number of government contractors that support it dominate the labor market.

Our jobs and economic recovery are in *full full swing* if such a thing exists. Business can't keep up with demand. We are all busy and that's a good place to be.

Maryland is a national leader in high tech employment

One market sector that remains continues to grow is the technology sector, a sector where Maryland remains one of the most robust markets.

Here are the numbers!

Maryland ranks in the top 5 among all states in the U.S. on a variety of prestigious advanced technology indicators. These include:

- The Milken Institute's State Technology and Science Index for its ability to foster and sustain a technology sector, a major indicator in determining a state's economic health.
- Concentration of tech industry employment in the total workforce,
- The Information Technology and Innovation Foundation's State New Economy Index, which evaluates state economies on 25 factors, including globalization and innovation.
- The Bloomberg U.S. Innovation Index. The Index evaluates states in six categories, including patent activity and research and development.

Maryland also ranked in the Top 10 of "Innovation Champions" by the Consumer Technology Association.

Federal agencies located in Maryland have been a catalyst for the State's technology base. These include:

- National Institutes of Health
- National Institute of Standards and Technology
- NASA, Goddard Space Flight Center
- Department of Defense Operations. Advanced Technology Enterprise

The coronavirus elevated the need for innovation and support from the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries, areas in which Maryland has invested heavily and remains a national leader. As home to the National Institutes of Health, the Food & Drug Administration and Walter Reed Medical Center, it's obvious why the Maryland job market remains relatively more active than other regions of the U.S.

Northern Virginia continues to be a sustainable business center

Northern Virginia, like Maryland, is seeing a robust economy and a high demand for talent. The reason, as you may have surmised, is that it too has tied its fortunes to the unceasing need for technological advancement and support.

Northern Virginia is the economic engine of the Commonwealth of Virginia as well as the entire Washington Metropolitan Area. It boasts a large, diverse business community with a highly educated workforce. Known for its entrepreneurial spirit and technology-based companies, it's no surprise that nearly 70% of all Internet traffic flows through Northern Virginia.

Professional, scientific and technical services account for 28 percent of employment in the region (four times the national average). Employers rely on a large pool of executive, management, technical and financial professionals. And it is a young workforce: one-third of the region's professional and technical jobs are held by young adults ages 19 to 34. It's no news flash that a youthful workforce is key to growing successful companies.

Northern Virginia is home to more than 400 companies from 46 nations. These companies bring fresh new ideas and perspectives from around the world. Companies are attracted to NOVA because the area boasts:

- One of the world's largest clusters of technology firms and related services

- A state-of-the-art technology infrastructure
- Access to a regional market of more than 6 million people
- Proximity to the U.S. federal government which continues to need staff at all levels
- Proximity to international financial institutions, the diplomatic community, and embassies
- The largest market for data center space in the U.S., home to 4.7 million square feet (SF) of commissioned data center space, representing 955 megawatts (MW) of commissioned power.

Today, Northern Virginia is poised to continue as a significant economic driver for the region.

DC is more than just the federal government. Consider these facts

After the Federal Government, the professional services industry is the largest employer in the District, with almost 125,000 jobs. While the professional services sector encompasses a diverse range of specialties, the four largest subsectors in the District by employment are:

- Administrative and support services (47,500 jobs)
- Consulting and research (31,500)
- Legal services (29,000). DC has nine times more lawyers per capita than New York City!
- Accounting, architecture & design (9,000)
- The hospitality and tourism industry, which has historically been one of DC's strongest sectors, supporting almost 75,000 jobs in the District, is still recovering from the effects of the dramatic downturn in travel and tourism. The three main sub-sectors of this industry are:
 - Accommodations (15,000 jobs)
 - Food services such as restaurants (52,000 jobs)
 - Arts and entertainment (8,200 jobs).

As with its neighbors, Maryland and Virginia, technology is also a major driver of employment and innovation in DC. According to the Census Bureau's classifications, the technology sector accounts for 31,000 jobs in DC, a figure that underestimates the influence of the industry, given that technology is also an important part of other industries such as consulting and life sciences. The Nation's Capital continues to attract millennials, who bring a vibrant, diverse workforce to the area, which will help grow the DC economy as we move out of the pandemic era.

Looking for great new employees? Use this [handy form](#) to learn more about our Temporary, Temp-to-Hire and Direct Hire processes. Or email/call Nicole Hayes-Grim, VP, Client Services (Nicole@elitepersonnel.com - 301.951.3333)

[Keep reading: Our blog on retaining great employees follows](#)

It's a Good Time to Conduct a "Stay Interview"

"Good morning! Do you have a minute?" That's a phrase many managers and HR representatives dread hearing at the start of their day. Why? The answer is simple: It's usually a tell-tale sign that an employee is about to give their notice. Within the next two weeks, management and HR will be conducting a series of interviews for a new hire - and one last interview for the resigned employee: The exit interview.

Many businesses focus their attention on exit interviews and for good reason. It's important to understand the reasons why employees choose to leave. While this is useful information that

can inform company culture and policy moving forward, it's also the essence of the phrase "hindsight is 20/20". Instead of analyzing and evaluating the past to help the company successfully move forward, businesses should focus on the here and now. That's where stay interviews can help.

The Importance of Stay Interviews

While exit interviews are extremely common with most HR policies and procedures, stay interviews are less so, which is unfortunate. Stay interviews can help an organization gain valuable insight from its employees by giving them the opportunity to: speak confidentially and truthfully about their reasons for continuing to work with the company, what they enjoy most about being a part of the team, and share, without fear of repercussions, any concerns they may have about the company's culture and policies.

By giving employees a platform to speak openly and honestly, they feel more valued which in turn helps them build trust within the company. Stay interviews are beneficial for organizations as they give them the opportunity to identify problems and begin the process to improve these issues before they result in higher turnover rates or disciplinary action.

When To Conduct Stay Interviews

"When should we conduct stay interviews?" For most businesses the answer is "As soon as you can!" - especially if the business has never executed this practice before. Just because it's all quiet on the work front doesn't mean everything is great. It could be the calm before the storm. Quiet times may provide the perfect opportunity for businesses to identify any impending issues and resolve them before they become long-term problems.

Another great opportunity to conduct a stay interview is several months after a policy change or new policy implementation. For example, businesses that switched to temporary remote work arrangements due to recent events may wish to conduct a stay interview to learn more about the employees' experiences. What did they like about remote working? What was problematic about it? Would a hybrid arrangement work better? The answers to these questions may help businesses make positive changes to its culture and policies.

Stay Interview Missteps to Avoid

There are periods of time when it's unwise to conduct stay interviews. Case in point: if an organization is experiencing high turnover and is fully engaged in exit interviews, then conducting stay interviews would be futile. If employees are resigning in large numbers, then the company needs to address the issues that caused these departures before they can expect the remaining employees to trust management.

Businesses should also avoid blending performance reviews and stay interviews. Although the idea of performing these two tasks at the same time seems efficient and practical, they are two different practices, and they should remain as such. Employer trust will shatter if employees feel that their pay increases or other benefits are tied to their view of the company and not their actual performance.

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