

Sapphire/IBM Survey Shows Demand for IT Professionals Expected to Grow Over the Next Two Quarters

TORONTO, Ontario, August 25, 2009 — Job prospects for Canadian IT professionals appear to be brightening as 87 per cent of employers say they plan to maintain or grow their current staffing levels over the next quarter, according to a recent survey of 300 Canadian business decision-makers by Sapphire and IBM. Below are a few highlights from the study.

- **Hiring intentions are optimistic** – the highest seen by both companies since 2007. Eighty-seven per cent of respondents (largely CIOs, VPs, and Directors) said their IT staffing levels would stay the same or grow over the next quarter.
- **This demand is driven by a number of positive developments.** These include: the installation of new enterprise-wide applications (26 per cent); increased workload (23 per cent); increased customer/end user support (16 per cent) and organizational growth (15 per cent).
- **Demand for permanent employees is increasing.** Of those companies planning to increase IT staff, 37 per cent of respondents expect to hire IT professionals for full time positions over the next quarter. Forty-three per cent expect to increase permanent hires over the next 12 months.
- **Contract resources are also in the hiring mix,** with 21 per cent of those planning to hire opting for contract resources and a further 37 per cent a combination of contractors and permanent staff.
- **Key Roles:** Project Managers and Business Analysts. The growth in the demand for these roles suggests organizations are once again ramping up projects and need managers and analysts to assist with the front-end process.
- **Key Skills:** Application development tops the list, with 33 per cent of respondents expecting IT staff increases citing it as a skill they will be looking for over the next quarter and into the following 12 months. Applications that will attract the most attention include: .net (27 per cent) and Java (25 per cent). Infrastructure technology skills were also popular, with 26 per cent looking for those skills, and 34 per cent planning increases in a combination of application development and infrastructure skills.
- **Talent requirements vary according to size of organization.** Web development/design skills are greater among small to mid-sized companies as well as desktop support skills. In mid-sized companies, network administration is the most sought-after skill, while larger companies see more value in IT security and telecommunication support.
- **Offshoring and nearshoring are most pronounced among large corporations and in Quebec,** where incidences approach or exceed the 50 per cent mark. In fact, Quebec-based companies are twice as likely to offshore and nearshore as the rest of the country.

- **Current users are generally satisfied** and 12 per cent of non-users report their companies are considering using offshore/near shore staffing services during the next year.

About the Survey: The online survey was conducted from June 22nd to July 6th 2009 by The Verde Group on behalf of Sapphire and IBM with more than 300 Canadian business decision-makers – from Director level to VPs and CIOs – responding.

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About Sapphire Canada

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