

## Businesses in Need of More Computer Help

### TECHNOLOGY: A Quarter of Positions Go to Out-of-Town Hires

By [Mike Allen](#)

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Although it still feels like a recession for many industries, people with information technology skills are finding lots of job openings as more companies upgrade outmoded equipment and software and resume postponed projects.

“Companies have been making higher net profits, and their sales are increasing. They’ve cut their costs in the last 18-24 months, and now they’ve got money to do these projects,” said Brian Brown, executive vice president of SkillStorm, a San Diego staffing firm specializing in IT and engineering jobs.

In the past three months, business has been so brisk at SkillStorm, the company had to implement an express training program for its recruiters, who are increasing by four to five a month.

Since the beginning of the year, the staffing firm has been placing about 65 workers a month in technology positions, many of them from out of state because qualified workers aren’t here, Brown said.

“About a quarter of the placements we’ve done in IT are people that we’ve had to bring in from other cities,” he said, with Dallas and the Washington, D.C., area being two major sources.

Nationally, the demand for technology talent is increasing exponentially.

#### Job Postings Rise 42 Percent

According to Dice, an Iowa-based IT job Web site, as of May, there were 1,029 job postings for the San Diego area, which was up 42 percent from the same month in 2009. The region ranked 15th in terms of open positions. The Washington/Baltimore metro area was No. 1 with nearly 8,000 job postings.

The industries seeking the tech workers are across the board but the most active hiring is coming from telecommunications, software development and life sciences, Brown said.

The most common jobs the firm is filling are those connected to business intelligence, data warehousing, SAP support and software engineering with a Microsoft emphasis, he said.

During the past year, some growing local technology firms have been expanding their network engineering staffs as they attempt to keep pace with their increased customer base.

At Mir3 Inc., a San Diego software firm specializing in real-time message notification, the company has doubled its engineering software department over the past year to 40 people, said Chief Executive Officer Amir Moussavian.

While Mir3 doesn’t reveal sales figures, it was ranked No. 111 on the 2009 Deloitte list of the fastest-growing tech firms, with fiscal year revenue growth of 1,516 percent from 2004 to 2008. In 2007, the company acquired a \$6 million firm, TeleAlert.

“We have more than 5,000 clients including 80 of the Fortune 100 corporations. We have about 100 employees with most of them working here in San Diego,” said Moussavian from the company’s Carmel Mountain headquarters.

#### Ratcheting Up

Island Staffing is another placement firm specializing in IT and engineering that is seeing a dramatic surge in orders because more of its clients are looking for skilled technology workers.

In the first quarter, Island, based in Oceanside, increased the number of placements by 18 above what it was doing in the first quarter of 2009, said CEO E.J. Conrad.

Among the more active Island clients are companies in retail, automotive software and defense. Many of the job placements are for three- to six-month projects, he said.

The job classifications range from low-level support jobs to senior-level programmers and database administrators. At the top level, salaries are at or near \$100,000.

Because of the increased IT hiring, Conrad has more than doubled his own staff to seven people, including adding two new business development people last month.

The demand for experienced IT workers isn’t quite as intense as it was earlier in the decade before the 2001 recession but it seems to be ratcheting up, say staffing industry sources.

Most of SkillStorm’s clients are hiring people for short-term contracts that may last four to nine months, rather than hiring permanent employees, said Brown.

“Many aren’t willing to bring in permanent workers to add to their full-time head count, but are more willing to bring in people for a fixed amount of time that doesn’t increase their permanent staffing,” he said.

In its most recent report, Dice found nationally the reverse is true — full-time, permanent job postings overall had increased 20 percent in May, while contract positions were flat. Also, the survey found that more than two-thirds of employed technology workers have been approached at least once by headhunters.



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