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Newsline

New “War for Talent” May Emerge as Economy Recovers

Feb. 26, 2010 — As the recession begins to unravel, a new “war for talent” may emerge and the job market may see a shift in power from employer to employee, a new survey finds.

The American Workplace Insights Survey from [Adecco Group North America](#) found that attitudes have shifted from a year ago as fewer U.S. workers (1) (72%) love their job just as much or more now than they did in 2009 (78%). In fact, only 39% feel the economic situation has caused them to appreciate their jobs more — a significant dip compared to more than half (55%) of workers feeling this way a year ago. In addition, workers' acceptance to work harder to avoid layoffs (17%) and willingness to work longer hours (19%) are slightly fading compared to 2009 (20% and 21% respectively).

Key survey findings:

- **Gen Y is Nervous and Falling Out of Love with their Jobs:** More than one-quarter (26%) of Gen Y workers are nervous about the instability of their job and 27% love their job less than last year, nearly a 10% jump over the 16% who felt this way last year.
- **Younger Generations are Inclined to Go Back to School:** Gen X and Gen Y workers impacted by the economic situation feel that loving their job is less important to them today than it was a year ago (17% and 18% this year versus 14% and 21% in 2009, respectively). In fact, 20% of Gen X and 17% of Gen Y workers are thinking about going back to school.
- **Monday Brings More Indifference than Excitement:** Keeping with 2009 trends, only a small percent (11%) of workers dread the beginning of the work week while 19% say that they are excited to get going. Workers do, however, appear closely divided between an appreciation to have a job at the start of the week (38%) versus a general indifference (31%).
- **Gen X Most Likely to “Do Over” their Career if They Could:** If workers had the option to start their careers over again, about half (51%) would change their current profession, particularly Gen X workers. Fifty-six percent of them said they would start over compared to only 38% of older adults in the Silent Generation.
- **Less Appreciation and Confidence in Management:** Similarly to 2009, workers' perception of company leadership continued to wane as only 7% of workers noted the economic situation had positively impacted their confidence in their executive team versus 90% in 2009. Additionally, there's less appreciation for bosses as only 10% of workers appreciate their boss more in 2010 as a result of the economic situation versus 16% feeling this way last year.

"As America recovers from a tough economic climate in 2009, those who survived the recession may be questioning if they still want the same job or career when employment opportunities rebound," said Joanie Ruge, Adecco Group North America senior vice president. "In 2010, I think we're going to see business leaders start to get a little more aggressive — thinking about and consciously deciding when to shift to a more optimistic, opportunistic employment stance. That shift is going to be critical for employers who want to attract and retain the best, strongest talent. Likewise, for candidates today who may be looking to shift careers or experience, they may want to consider applying for temporary and project-based jobs that can shift their career in the direction of higher growth opportunities."

Adecco Group North America provides the following tips for employers as they prepare for a potential shift in the job marketplace:

- **Open the Door to Communicating with Employees:** Employees may have less confidence in leadership because they don't feel like they have a voice into the C-suite. This is demonstrated when an organization's leadership creates a collaborative work environment and regularly solicit for both formal and informal feedback which help to inform operational shifts and changes. The best employers keep their staff informed and embrace an open door policy through forums such as town hall meetings, open conference calls, regular e-mail communication, newsletters, etc. — helping to drive employee confidence and productivity.
- **Make Retention a Top Priority Now:** Behind the scenes, managers may be doing what they can to retain their employees, but staff won't feel valued if these efforts aren't visible to them. Retention efforts begin through mutual dialogue and building trust. Managers should engage their employees in the realities of the business challenges to foster employees' understanding of the market and competition. Employers should also consider mapping out a growth plan for employees and communicate it to their teams. Employees will then understand that managers are invested in their future

and they'll be more confident in investing their time and career with the organization.

- **Explore Opportunities to Recognize and Reward:** Employees' feelings may be waning about their employers because many companies have experienced salary freezing or asking their workforce to work harder with fewer staff support. Companies should explore ways to creatively recognize and reward employees through alternative means — potentially either through an awards program or team contest. Improving morale just by recognizing good work can help ease compensation complaints. In addition, gestures of appreciation — a thank you e-mail/note, recognition during meetings, a small gift card or surprise pizza lunch, can be impactful and effectively demonstrate appreciation for hard work and dedication. Being more creative with these sorts of rewards can help improve employee morale while continuing to be financially responsible.

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