

# Ian M. Berkowitz

## It's time for employers, workers to evaluate jobs

We are now in full swing for 2007 and January is almost behind us. If you are a business owner like me, you have already paid your employees year-end bonuses and are now receiving the benefits from your diligent, loyal and dedicated employees. If you did not show your employees how much you value their hard work throughout the year by rewarding them with a nice end of the year bonus, chances are that you might have lost an employee or two after they realized that they were not getting what they thought was coming to them. Either way, the New Year is often a time when both employees and employers evaluate their situations and either decide to make changes or keep the status quo. Some of the recent statistics may give you an indication of how many candidates will be knocking on your door and what type of future employees will be available for you to consider as you begin to search for some new talent to add to your business team. These statistics should also be a wake-up call for employers to try to keep your well-trained, loyal and dedicated workers happy so they don't begin to stray off and explore the greener grass of your competitors. The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, has completed their statistics for the year and they are quite good for some industries and not so good for others. Job gains occurred in several service related industries, including professional and business services, health care, and food services. The number of lawyers, doctors and accountants continues to grow, as did some additional

specialty and technical professionals. Professional and business services employment continued to expand in December with a gain of 50,000. Management and technical consulting services in addition to architectural and engineering services and in computer systems design and related services all are continuing to trend upwards. Let's not forget the bankers, brokers and analysts as employment in financial activities was up by 153,000 over the year, with job gains occurring in insurance by 46,000 and in credit intermediation by 62,000, which includes commercial banking.

Two major industries in Florida, health care and construction, were definitely at each end of the spectrum. No surprises with annual increases in the health care industry as health care employment increased by 324,000, with gains spread throughout the component industries for the year. However, even with the real estate market having moved downward over the year, gains in nonresidential specialty trades and in heavy construction were largely offset by a decline in residential specialty trades. Overall, after increasing by 295,000 in 2005, construction employment was little changed for 2006.

For you restaurateurs and bar owners, job growth continued in food services and drinking places. In the past 12 months, food services added 304,000 jobs, accounting for most of the over-the-year increase in leisure and hospitality employment. This will mean that you need to keep your good employees happy as positions are opening constantly, and the best employees will get the pick of the litter.

Some other interesting facts should not really come as such a surprise. Over the year, employment in transportation and warehousing continued to trend



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up as the industry added 106,000 jobs. Over the year, retail trade employment edged down, which I believe is also partly due to light holiday season spending as reported by some of the largest retailers.

And finally, it is no surprise that over the year, manufacturing employment fell by 72,000 with declines widespread throughout the component industries as more manufacturing continues to move overseas.

Despite these workforce trends, it's still possible to attract solid and reliable talent. Consider Southwest Airlines, which, according to one company insider, recently received more than 50,000 applications for 500 available positions! It is your job as a business owner to establish and continue to maintain a "best place" to work attitude and make sure that your most talented employees will continue to thrive and contribute to the success of your business each and every day. How do you do that? ... Stay tuned.

Ian M. Berkowitz is a former attorney/advisor with the United States Small Business Administration in Washington D.C. During his tenure with the Federal Government he specifically worked in the areas of disaster relief for homeowners and businesses and government contracting. He is currently a practicing business and real estate attorney in Boca Raton. In addition to his law degree, Ian also holds a Masters Degree in Government from The John Hopkins University.