

# **2008** IT JOB MARKET & SALARY SURVEY HIRING MANAGERS' GUIDE

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As a long-standing and respected publisher serving the IT community, IT World Canada enjoys a trusted relationship with, and access to, a large and highly representative IT professional community. This is reflected in the substantial response, resulting in richest available database of information on the Canadian IT job market.

The Survey polled readers of IT World Canada's publications – *ComputerWorld Canada*, *Network World Canada*, *CIO Canada*, *CIO Government Review* and

*Direction Informatique*; and, visitors to [itworldcanada.com](http://itworldcanada.com). The survey reflects the views of IT professionals themselves, and the managers responsible for hiring decisions at the companies that employ them. As such, it is not biased simply to data and opinions of those active in the job market, but is representative of the broad cross section of IT professionals, including job seekers and those stable in their jobs.

**The IT workforce in Canada is ageing rapidly, and entry into the workforce has declined significantly since before the turn of the millennium.**

The average age of the current workforce is 43, and many more are on their way to retirement than in the early years of their career. The situation remains a dangerous one for the industry, as all indications point to a continued increase in the use of information and communication technologies and an attendant increase in the demand for IT professionals.

At the same time, new entrants into the profession fall far below the levels needed to fulfil the forecast in hiring demands. Hiring plans for 2008 would require a 5% increase in the current IT workforce; an unlikely occurrence given that over the last five years the industry attracted less than 7% of its current population.

So the skills shortage reported in previous years continues, but is more acute for specific skill sets, particularly applications development technical skills, which is the largest IT job category and the one presenting the greatest challenge for hiring managers. One consequence of this is the gradual change in the distribution of IT skills between the end-user organizations and the software and IT professional services firms. The computer industry is hiring the greater number of application developers while the end-user organizations – the banks, retailers and manufacturers, etc. – are focused more on project management, business analysis and architecture skills, all of which are identified by hiring managers as difficult to find.

With hiring managers looking for mature skills – 40% of hires are expected to have an exact skills match with job openings – there continues to be a competition among hiring companies for the required staff. Compensation has increased by 3.6% across the industry – a relatively modest increase in light of the continuing

competition for skills – but well ahead of the cost of living index which hovers around 2%.

The booming western economies are driving greater than average compensation increases, with Calgary leading the country in average compensation and average increase over 2007.

As the number and complexity of applications increases, the need for technical support and help desk staff has increased. While this is not identified by hiring managers as difficult to hire, it is the job that has seen the most growth in terms of sheer numbers of staff.

Security specialist and managers are both in demand and considered tough to find; as are project managers and architects, both network and system architects.

New roles are emerging within the profession, such as relationship managers whose role is to manage distributed teams and multiple vendors. Hiring managers are broadening the profiles of required skills across all job categories, to include soft skills such as communication and presentation skills.

Overall the workforce is stable and secure, having an average tenure with present employer of 10 years. Still, the likelihood of losing staff remains high, with half of the respondents reporting that they are either actively searching for a new job (8%) or open to opportunities (43%). Retention strategies are important. Beyond compensation, what makes employees happy in the job are factors such as recognition for their contributions, flexible working arrangements and the opportunity to develop their skills through training.