

Placement 101: How to Fill Hard-to-Fill Accounting Positions

When the economy slows, not everything slows with it.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, accounting positions rank among the top five open positions in the United States and employment of accountants and auditors is expected to grow 27 percent or more through the year 2014.

“The thinking is that a sluggish economy means a larger pool of potential candidates,” said Mary Leddy, Vice Chair of Leddy Group. “While that’s certainly true for many professional segments, it doesn’t apply to accounting, which has perennially hard-to-fill positions.”

Speak Up! You’re invited to take [Leddy Group’s quick survey about your accounting placement needs](#).

Meeting your accounting staffing needs can be a challenge because the demand for accountants and finance staff is high – and doesn’t diminish during a sluggish economy – and the supply isn’t adequate to meet those needs.

Beginning in the 1990s, enrollment in undergraduate accounting programs started to decline. The trend began to reverse earlier this decade – a 2004 American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) survey reports that 6 percent more United States students enrolled in undergraduate accounting programs at colleges and universities in the 2002-2003 school year than the previous year – but that hasn’t yet made it easier to fulfill accounting and finance positions.

Harris Interactive® surveyed 3,106 hiring managers and human resource professionals for its “2008 Job Forecast” report and found that it can take two months or longer to fill open positions and 40 percent of hiring managers and human resource professionals have open positions for which they can’t find qualified candidates.

“You have to explore *every* channel when you’re recruiting an accountant or auditor,” said Leddy. “Simply running an ad in the paper isn’t going to do it.”

- **Be specific:** You might think you need a certified public accountant (CPA) but tasks like bookkeeping and tax preparation can be handled by a general accountant. Figure out exactly what you need and then advertise and hire accordingly.
- **Network:** Go to college fairs, join your local chamber of commerce, and talk to your friends, family, and even neighbors about your open accounting position. A “friend of a friend” might be the perfect fit.
- **Create an environment that appeals to everyone:** You might be looking for a recent graduate *and* a veteran with years of accounting experience. Since those in the accounting field have their pick of employers, make sure you stand out for all the right reasons.
- **Work with a staffing placement agency:** According to the American Staffing Association’s Staffing Client Survey report, “accounting and finance” is the third most popular occupational sector for temporary or contract employees, behind office and industrial. “Leddy Group can assist you in covering short-term and seasonal accounting positions as well as filling immediate full-time vacancies,” said Leddy.

For more information on how Leddy Group can help you fill your accounting and finance staffing needs, please visit www.leddygroup.com or contact your local office below.

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