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## Job Offers Rising as Economy Warms Up

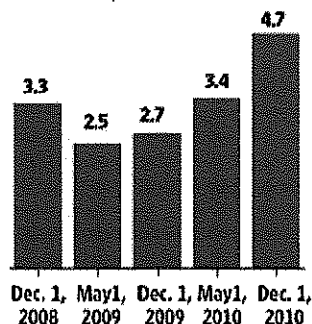
By JAMES R. HAGERTY And JOE LIGHT

As the economy gradually recovers, some big U.S. companies are cranking up their recruiting and advertising thousands of job openings, ranging from retail clerks and nurses to bank tellers and experts in cloud computing.

Many of the new jobs are in retailing, accounting, consulting, health care, telecommunications and defense-related industries, according to data collected for The Wall Street Journal by Indeed Inc., which runs one the largest employment websites. It said the number of U.S. job postings on the Internet rose to 4.7 million on Dec. 1, up from 2.7 million a year earlier. The company daily collects listings from corporate and job-posting websites, removing duplicates.

### Jobs Rebound

Total number of U.S. online job postings as reported by Indeed.com, in millions



Note: Measured daily with duplicates removed  
Source: Indeed.com

Its figures may undercount available jobs because some companies don't post all listings online, an Indeed spokesman said. Farming, manufacturing and construction jobs tend to be under-represented in online postings, while skilled computer and mathematical jobs are overrepresented, said June Shelp, an economist and vice president for the Conference Board, a private research group.

To be sure, the postings data offer only a partial and unofficial look at the labor market. Job losses in the recent recession have been much worse relative to output declines than in previous slumps, and official payroll data so far haven't shown signs of a big rebound in hiring. While some big companies are expanding, others are merely replacing workers who are retiring or otherwise moving on. And many of the available jobs require experience and technical expertise that few job seekers can muster. Jobs that don't are still seeing a flood of applicants for each opening.

New claims for unemployment benefits fell just 3,000 last week to 420,000, indicating a slight slowing of job losses. A Wall Street Journal survey of 55

economists in early December showed they expect only moderate job growth in 2011, enough to reduce the unemployment rate to a still-high 9% at the end of 2011 from 9.8% last month.

But companies are racking up profits and now have built strong cash positions, and may be ready to hire again. As consumer confidence revives, the economy should continue a gradual recovery that encourages more companies to hire, says Robert A. Dye, a senior economist at PNC Financial Services Group Inc. in Pittsburgh. There is still a lot of spare capacity in the economy, so "some companies, particularly auto makers, can continue to see increasing sales without hiring many more workers," he says.

Government data show a rising trend in openings. There were 3.2 million private-sector job openings at the end of October, up from 2.3 million a year earlier but well below the 3.7 million in October 2007, before the recession, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Among firms expanding their payrolls are accounting and consulting giants Deloitte and PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. As the economy revives, more companies are seeking their services.

Since June 30, PwC has hired 2,500 people, excluding college students, nearly four times more than it hired in the year-earlier period, says Holly Paul, U.S. recruiting leader for the firm. Ms. Paul first noticed the pickup in March, and by May hiring was in full swing. The most-needed professionals will have six to eight years' experience, she says.

"It's really hard to convince those people to leave [their existing jobs]," Ms. Paul says.

Deloitte's U.S. work force numbers about 50,100, up from 45,730 a year ago, says Jim Wall, global managing director of talent. He says the firm has a growing need for seasoned people who can provide advice to clients in such areas as mergers and acquisitions, health care and information technology.

AT&T's work force at the end of the third quarter was 272,450, down 3.6% from the end of 2009, partly because of the shrinkage of the land-line phone business. But AT&T is scouring for highly technical workers and retail sales people.

"We're looking for very skilled folks" in such areas as network engineering and cloud computing, which allows smartphones and computers to tap applications via the Internet, says Scott Smith, vice president for staffing at AT&T Inc. in Dallas. "There are not many of them out there."

It also is hiring briskly to maintain staff levels at its 2,300 U.S. stores selling cell phones and other gadgets. The retail sales openings pay between \$30,000 and \$45,000 a year, including commissions. AT&T also regularly hires heavily for call centers that deal with customer inquiries and people who sell products and services to companies.

For simpler jobs, such as in retail sales and call-center work, applicants still far outnumber positions. AT&T is getting about 50,000 applications a month, or around 30 for each person it hires on average, Mr. Smith says.

WellPoint Inc., an Indianapolis-based health insurer, mostly is seeking information-technology specialists, registered nurses to advise policy holders over the phone, actuaries, insurance-policy underwriters, salespeople and call-center employees, says Randy Brown, who heads human resources for WellPoint.

The call-center jobs generally don't require a college degree, but WellPoint does put candidates through simulations to see whether they are patient and good at solving problems. "There are a lot of people who want those jobs," Mr. Brown says.

Science Applications International Corp. of McLean, Va., has openings for intelligence analysts, including translators and people who analyze data; engineers; cyber-security experts, and project managers. The jobs are nearly all full-time and the vast majority require at least a four-year college degree. More than half the jobs require U.S. government security clearance because of the sensitive nature of work the company does for the military and other agencies.

Health-care companies have major needs in information technology as they upgrade electronic-record systems. Tracie Grant, director of recruitment at Catholic Health Initiatives, a Denver-based operator of hospitals and long-term care facilities, believes competition for application analysts and software developers specializing in medical records will be acute in 2011. CHI may need to raise salaries by as much as 10% for such people, who typically earn \$70,000 to \$90,000 a year, she says.

Wells Fargo & Co. has a wide variety of openings. In Medford, Ore., the bank holding company needs a part-time teller with computer skills and at least a year of experience "interacting with people or customers." In downtown Los Angeles, Wells is seeking a 24-hour-a-week assistant for a Wells Fargo museum, with at least six months of customer-service experience, computer skills, an ability to "think on your feet" and a "basic understanding of U.S. history."

Big defense contractors are also scrambling for people with information technology skills. At Lockheed Martin Corp., "more than 80 percent of our skill needs are for technical talent in IT and engineering, specifically

computer science and cyber security, systems engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, and aerospace engineering," says spokesman Christopher Williams.

**Write to James R. Hagerty** at [bob.hagerty@wsj.com](mailto:bob.hagerty@wsj.com)

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