

# Summary of Recruiting Trends 1979-80

A Study of 471 Businesses, Industries, Governmental Agencies, and **Educational Institutions and Employing New College Graduates** 

#### By John D. Singleton and L. Patrick Scheetz Ph.D.

This report is a summary of the Ninth Annual RECRUITING TRENDS SUR-VEY conducted by Placement Services at Michigan State University for 1979-80. Four-hundred and seventy-one employers from a cross-section of business, industry, government, and education were surveyed for this study. The results include information pertaining to trends in hiring new college graduates, anticipated starting salaries, campus recruiting activities, and other related topics of interest to college recruiters, placement officers, educators, career counselors, and students.

#### JOB OUTLOOK FOR GRADUATING **CLASS OF 1979-80**

According to many observers, our country is currently in a recession or on the threshold of one. Judging from the information received from employers in this study, however, the overall employment picture for new college graduates will not be affected by this condition. In fact, a slight increase (1-2%) is anticipated in the

the employment picture is expected to remain about the same as last year. The number of campus visits by prospective employers is expected to remain the same, or there will be a slight increase of 1-2 percent at the most. Since last year was a good year for the placement of college graduates, the job market this year promises to still be good in light of this survey. Currently, certain industrial and business groups are expected to recruit more heavily while other groups expect to remain the same or even decline. Those expecting to recruit the heaviest are accounting, aerospace, electronics, merchandising/retailing, military and the petroleum industries. Electric equipment/machinery, food and beverage processing, hospitals and health services, hotels and motels, metals and metal products, utilities and research and consulting firms are expected to increase their hiring slightly (1-4%). While this forecast speaks to the demand nationally, there is evidence of some soft spots. The most glaring example of this is in the automotive industry where a decrease is expected in the hiring of college graduates this year.

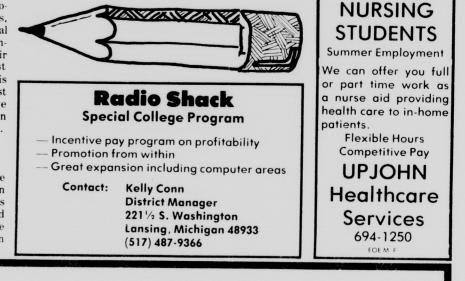
#### AVERAGE STARTING SALARIES

Starting salaries are expected to increase approximately 7-8 percent for graduates in the highest demand areas, such as electrical, mechanical, chemical, and number of college graduates hired this petroleum engineers and computer science year over last year. For MBA graduates majors. An increase of 5-6 percent in

starting salaries is forecasted for metal- their organizations. lurgical, and civil engineers; MBA's; marketing/sales; chemistry, accounting, agriculture, math, and general business. The lowest increases in starting salaries are expected for human ecology, social science, liberal arts, and education majors. An interesting sidelight reveals that most employers establish starting salary categories for all new graduates for particular degree levels and academic majors. This represents 65.4 percent of the employers. Thirty-four percent of the employers indicated that starting salaries are negotiable during the interviewing process in (continued on page 3)

#### **DEGREE LEVELS REQUIRED OF** NEW HIRES

Of all the professional positions in the surveyed organizations, the bachelor's degree was the level of education in most demand. Approximately 1-10 percent of the positions require an associate's degree, 51-60 percent a bachelor's degree, 1-10 percent a master's degree, and 1-10 percent a doctoral degree. In these organizations, approximately 41-50 per-



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(continued from page 2)

cent of all salaried employees hold at least a bachelor's degree.

#### ACADEMIC MAJORS IN DEMAND

The most significant increases (3-4%) in demand for new college graduates are expected for petroleum engineering, computer science, electrical engineering, and mechanical engineering. The majors in lowest demand (in relation to supply) are social science, education, human ecology, and liberal arts. Employers summarize the outlook for college graduates as especially good for individuals with degrees in technical areas or those with saleable skills.

#### ACADEMIC TRAINING REQUIRED BY EMPLOYERS

An ability to write and speak effectively is cited by employers as the greatest need of college graduates for entry into full-time work. Other requirements of college graduates are: an ability to accept more responsibility and to follow through on an assigned task, a greater concern for productivity, and more emphasis on

quality of work performed. These are followed closely by a need for more ambition/motivation, desire to get ahead, better work habits, and greater dependability. Employers are generally asking that graduates have a better understanding and awareness of the business world in a practical sense and more effective interpersonal skills. Business and industry employers indicated that they would like to see more technically trained graduates leaving our institutions of higher learning. Education employers indicated that they would like to see more graduates in the fields of industrial arts, math, science and special education.

#### MORE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING DEMANDED

The experiences of most employers with cooperative education programs and internships has been excellent. Employers look very favorably upon students who have participated in work experience programs. Employers stress that practical work experiences are helpful and enhance the chances of employment for college graduates. According to employers, these students are better adjusted to the real world and better able to look into a career from personal experiences. Employers are also using co-op and internship programs for recruiting full-time personnel after graduation.

#### FACTORS AFFECTING WHO IS HIRED

When recruiting new college graduates for employment, the ability to get things done, initiative, honesty, and integrity were rated as the most important factors to employers. Next on their list and rated important were dependability, common sense, oral communication skills, interpersonal skills, and adaptability. Factors almost always leading to negative employment decisions include little interest/poor reason for wanting job, indication of poor/undesirable work habits, and unsatisfactory verbal skills.

According to the surveyed employers, approximately 51-60 percent of all candidates are rejected during or immediately following the campus interviews. Of the candidates interviewed on campus by the surveyed employers, only 1-10 percent eventually begin work within that organization.

#### FREQUENCY OF CAMPUS VISITS

Most employers visit their primary colleges and universities for recruiting about twice each year. Of the surveyed em-

#### Friday, May 23, 1980 3

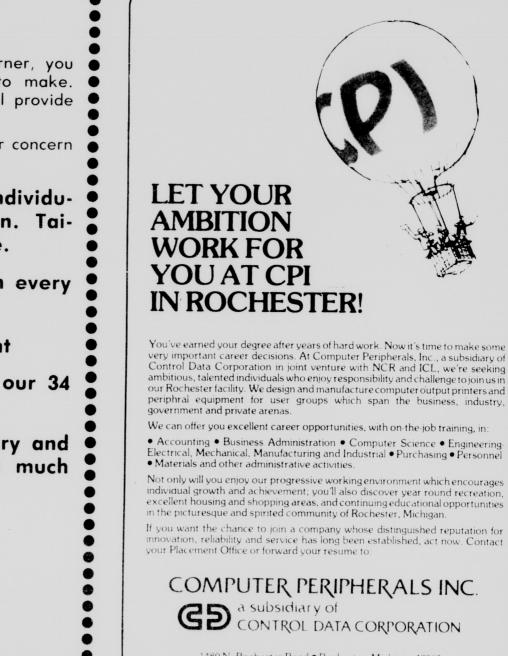
ployers, 9.4 percent visit their primary schools more often and 32.3 percent visit only once each year.

#### EFFECTIVENESS OF PLACEMENT SERVICES

When seeking the best advice for planning their careers, college students were encouraged by prospective employers to use their college placement offices. In the opinions of employers, the college placement office is the best place to seek career advice. The second best source was employers themselves. The importance of college placement offices was further highlighted when employers reported that approximately 41-50 percent of their new college graduates generally come from on-campus interviewing. Responses to want ads, write-ins, job listings with placement offices, and walk-ins were cited as the next most productive sources of new college hires. Many employers (68.8%) want lists of courses in credential files of placement offices, and some employers (38.9%) use pre-screening services available through placement offices. Placement offices are encouraged by the surveyed employers to become more familiar with the problems of employers.

#### **IMPORTANCE OF GOOD GRADES**

Participating employers ranked 51 factors (continued on page 4)



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## Recruiting

#### (continued from page 3)

in order of importance in the employment decision. Contrary to popular belief that grades are first in importance, grades rank 28 in that list of factors. Several factors like "the ability to get things done" rate higher. Most employers do not have a minimum grade point average for hiring college graduates, although 20.6 percent do require a minimum. Of those employers with a minimum grade point average requirement, 58.4 percent required a GPA of 2.5 or higher and 22.4 percent required a 3.0 or higher.



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# **Recruiting Trends 79-80**

#### (continued from page 4) **REFERENCE CHECKS IN** SELECTION PROCESS

Most employers (84.1%) check references when considering new college graduates for employment in their organizations. References are checked most often (64.6%) before the job offer is made. Other employers check references after the initial interview, after the second interview, and after the site interview. Some employers (12.7%) check references after the individual has been given a job offer. Nine employers check references after the job offer is accepted or after the individual

#### has started on the job. Most reference checks are done by telephone (70.1%), some by letter, and a few by credit bureaus Most employers are pleased with the and personal visits.

#### VOCATIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING

Vocational and psychological testing for employment purposes is declining. Only 13.4 percent of the surveyed employers used vocational and psychological testing when considering new college graduates for employment. Of those 63 employers, only 26 use vocational and psychological testing more today than they did 5 years

ago. Generally, tests of this type are designed specifically for the employer's needs

#### PREPARING FOR CAMPUS INTERVIEWS

interviewing preparation displayed by college students. Employers recommend that students read the employers' literature available in their placement office libraries, be ready to describe their career goals, present a well-prepared resume at the interview, and ask good questions.

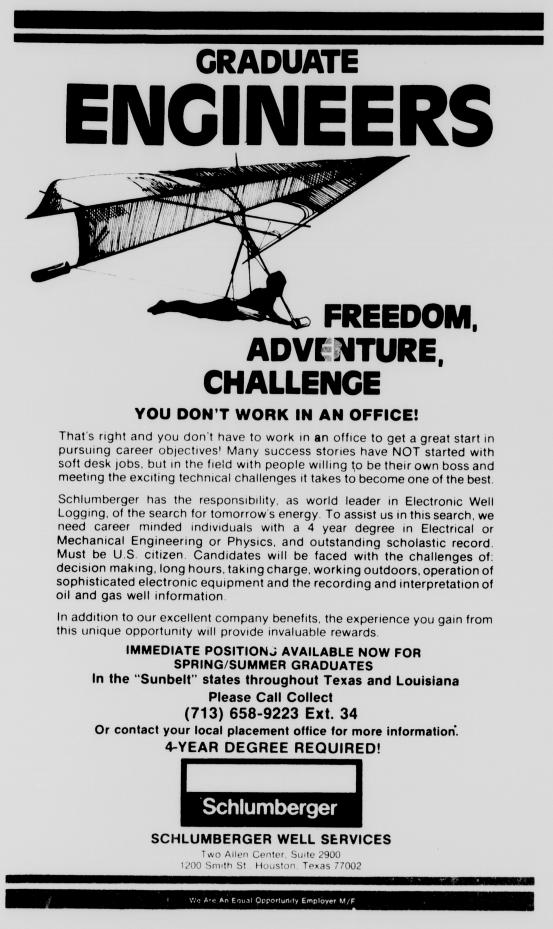
> **EMPLOYERS' TOUGHEST RECRUITING PROBLEMS**

This year the toughest recruiting problem was convincing individuals to relocate to

the organizations geographical location, according to employers. The next problem most frequently cited was finding enough qualified minorities and women, and hiring qualified graduates within the starting compensation constraints. Competition between firms and competition for the outstanding candidates were also mentioned often. In recent years, employers have noticed an increase competition from other employers, constant increases in salaries resulting in a compression problem with established employees, more emphasis on college recruiting, and increased competition and demand for technical graduates.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR** JOB SEEKERS

(continued on page 6)





# Summary of Recruiting Trends 79-80

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Employers have the following recommendations for new college graduates on how to get a job with their organizations: prepare for interviews, research any organization you are interviewing or visiting, submit job applications, sign up for campus interviews, use your Place-ment Services, earn good GPA's, set realistic career goals, show a genuine interest in work for an organization, gain prior work experiences (summer employment, part-time, co-op), have a wellprepared resume, be enthusiastic, sell yourself, be aggressive/persistent/assertive, enroll in a high demand academic

major, present a good appearance, be willing to work hard/have a good work attitude, and demonstrate good communication skills

#### TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR NEW HIRES

Most employers (96.1%) have training programs for new hires. On the average, these training programs included 9-10 hours of training each week during the first 6 months on the job. By far the most prevelant type of training is on-the-job training (OJT); 418 employers have this. A distant second is orientation training.

Classes, formal training, and written able to adapt. training are used less frequently.

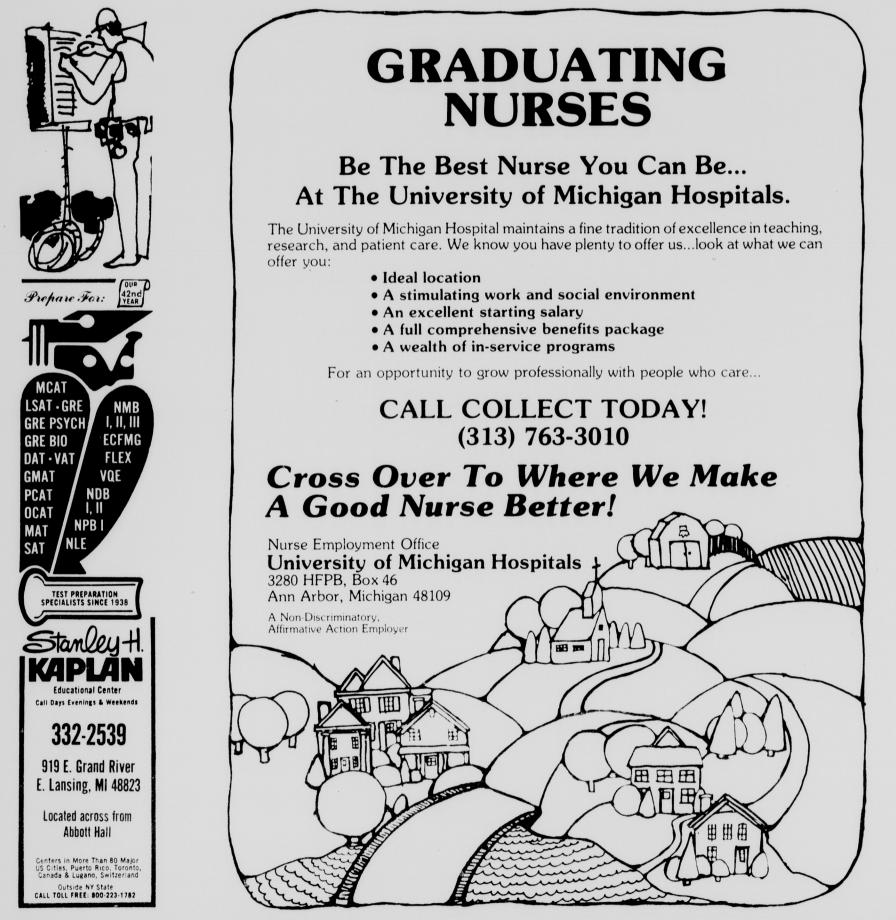
#### TURNOVER OF NEW COLLEGE HIRES

New college hires leave at the rate of 5-6 percent during the first year, according to the surveyed employers. A few employers (34.9%) stated that 7 percent or more of their new hires left during the first year. Turnover rates vary greatly depending upon employer type too. Most new college graduates leave their first organization during the first two years because they receive a better job offer. As a second reason, they leave because they are not

#### MANPOWER FORECASTING

Many employers (68.2%) use manpower forecasting when establishing quotas for new college hires. One year is the usual time span for these projections (48.5%). Approximately 22.4 percent of the employers use 5 years as the time projection. Some employers (8.9%) are not using manpower forecasting because they have not found an acceptable system.

(continued on page 7)



#### (continued from page 6) MOTIVATING NEW COLLEGE HIRES

Motivating new college graduates is most readily accomplished by providing them with interesting work, promotion, and growth within the organization, according to employers. To a lesser extent, they are motivated by a full appreciation of work done, good wages, a feeling of being in on things, and good working conditions.

### GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS WITH MOST JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Almost one third of the surveyed employers (29.9%) did not know which geographical region in the United States would be the easiest for new college graduates to find jobs. Of those employers who rated the regions, Southcentral (Texas, Oklahoma, Iowa, Kansas, Loui-siana, etc.), Northcentral (Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois, North Dakota, South Dakota, etc.), and Southwest (California, Nevada, Hawaii, New Mexico, Arizona, etc.) were rated highest. Those regions with the lowest ratings were Southeast, Northeast, and Northwest.

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## **Resume importance stressed**

"A resume is an advertising promotional piece that touches on all things that influence your qualifications and that is geared to represent your best interests," said Edwin B. Fitzpatrick, of MSU Placement Services.

The Placement Services offers a manual which deals with these considerations.

This manual says that for the best appeal to a prospective employer, a resume should be a summary of background, experience and ambitions. In addition, the candidate for a job must give the impression that he knows what he wants.

The resume should be constructed in a logical easy to follow sequence. Everything should fall into place.

The employment candidate should also have a clear employment objective. But the candidate should not overwhelm the employer with this statement.

For the best results, the resume should be no longer than one page. Employers react negatively to a multipage resume, on the whole. Most employers have stacks and stacks of resumes to look through, and can only scan them. It is important to get the most pertinent information on one page.

The resume should also be visually attractive. It should be appealing to the eye.

Fitzpatrick also said that professional copy services should be used.

The most problem areas in student resumes are usually past employment and education description. These are the most important parts of the resume. Most students tend to

underwrite their educational background. Education is a major qualifier for employers, said Fitzpatrick.

A good resume can often be ruined by a bad cover letter. Just as much thought should be given to the cover letter as was given to the resume.

Advice and counselling on questions pertaining to resume difficulties is available in Placement Services from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.



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