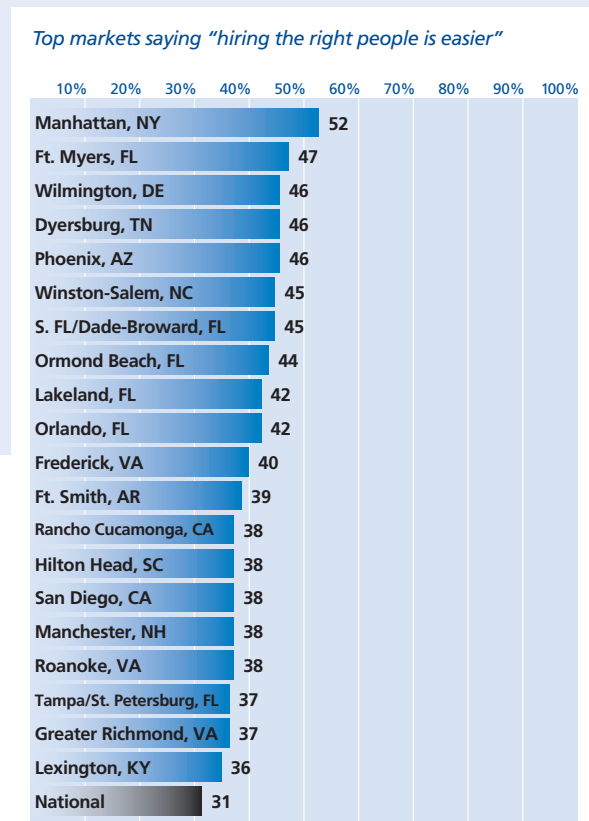




In order to gauge the effect of the economy on the workplace, Randstad recently asked over 22,000 employers across the United States for their opinion on current workplace and hiring issues this year compared to one year ago.

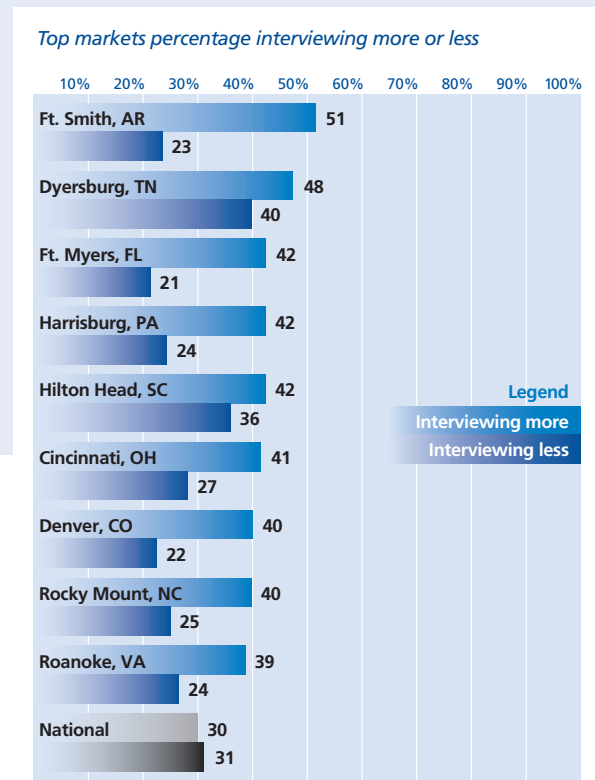
First, we asked: **Has the ease of hiring the right people with the right skills today increased, decreased, or remained the same compared to a year ago?**



Nationally, 50% of those responding said ease of hiring had remained the same, 31% said it had increased and 19% said it had decreased. According to the markets surveyed, hiring the right people has become the most difficult in Chattanooga, Tennessee (36%), Roanoke, Virginia (34%), and San Antonio, Texas (33%). Hiring the right people is easiest in New York City (52%), followed by Fort Myers, Florida (47%), and Wilmington, Delaware (46%).

Why? There are several possibilities. It could be a low inventory of highly qualified people for specific jobs, or highly skilled people may have opted for another occupation in order to have a job of any kind. Don't be lulled into a false sense of security that you can always find plenty of people in the current hiring environment. Whether the recruiting environment is easier or harder is actually not the core issue. The bottom line is identifying the right people with the right skills for your needs at any point in time. A smart company recognizes the need to adapt their hiring needs, no matter what they have done in the past.

Then we asked: **Per job offer, are you interviewing more, less, or the same number of candidates compared to a year ago?**

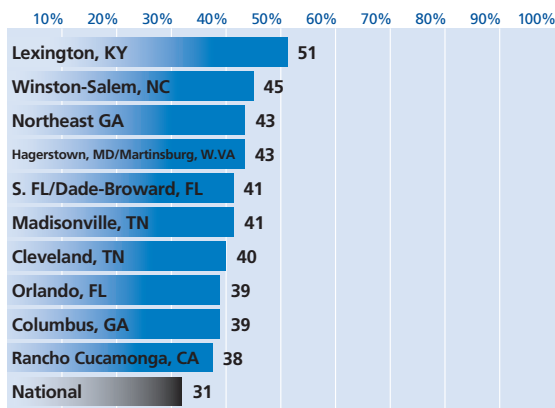


Nationally, the responses were about evenly split. Thirty-nine percent said they were interviewing the same number of candidates, 31% said less and 30% said more. However, 55% of the individual markets surveyed said they are interviewing more people than last year. In any economy, employers are constantly looking for high-quality people and will continue to advertise for, and interview, qualified applicants. In addition, highly skilled employees continue to look for better employment even if it means waiting until the economy turns around to be hired.



**We asked: Has employee turnover increased, decreased or remained the same compared to a year ago?**

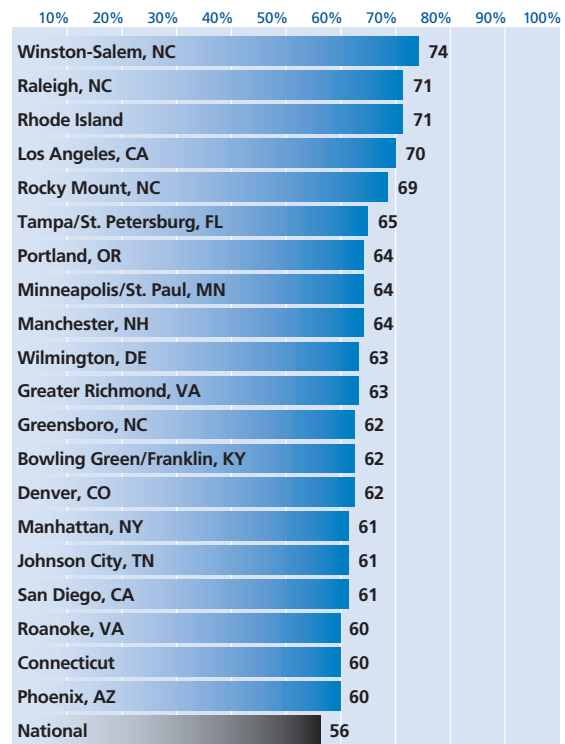
*Top markets saying "turnover has decreased"*



Nationally, 31% of the markets surveyed reported that employee turnover had decreased, 18% said it had increased, and 52% reported that turnover had remained the same. Areas that we surveyed with the highest increases in turnover are Wilmington, Delaware (35%), Portland, Oregon (32%), and New York City (29%). It's no surprise that, in these unstable economic times, workers are more likely to keep the jobs they have.

**Finally: Have productivity expectations increased, decreased, or remained the same compared to a year ago?**

*Top markets saying "productivity expectations have increased"*



Nationally 5% of the markets said that expectations have decreased, 56% said expectations have increased, and 39% said they have remained the same.

Interestingly, 41 markets of the 86 total markets surveyed were above the national average in saying productivity expectations had increased. These markets represent 48% of all markets surveyed. In today's economy, a slowdown in sales results in cutbacks in production and new services. This triggers possible layoffs, with the remaining employees picking up the workload in order for the company to remain competitive and profitable.

### Keeping the best people.

These are challenging times for every business. Your bottom line is a moving target because your competition has grown stiffer, money is definitely tighter, and the need for high-quality employees is more important than ever. The good news is that the talent is available. Unfortunately, just because more people are on the job market than last year does not mean it will be easier to find the right people for your company. There is a definite difference between having more available talent and having a supply of the right people.

### Lessons from the last recession.

For the past ten years, Randstad has published an annual *Employee Review/World of Work*, a nationally-recognized major research study that captures and analyzes attitudes of both employers and employees about issues in the workplace. We took a look at our studies from the last recession/downturn to see if we could find some lessons that we could apply today. Our research gave us insights into ways employers should approach hiring high-quality people, as well as an in-depth look at employee retention in a period of economic challenges. Here are just a few of our findings from those studies.

### *Right skills, right time.*

It is no secret to any successful leader that it is imperative to have stronger, smarter and more flexible employees. Employees may have to take on additional duties, and many of these duties could be unfamiliar. Only the best will be able to meet the challenge. The health of your company — and your bottom line — will depend on these people. The good news is that weathering the storm doesn't have to be a matter of trial and error; there are proven techniques for getting the most out of workers.

Remember that you'll find the best people by taking the time to hire more carefully. Look for the very best, screen them carefully, and be sure to evaluate their skills. Are they really the right people for you? Be very prudent in evaluating potential new-hires. Good new hires must fit the job, fit the boss and fit the company and its culture.



*In this economy,  
finding the right  
people is critical.  
Keeping them  
can be even more  
challenging.  
But finding and  
keeping the right  
people today may  
not be as easy as  
you think.*



### *Communicate.*

In addition to hiring more carefully, keeping the people you have is obviously of critical importance. Our research gave us valuable insight into employees' attitudes towards their jobs, their work and their company.

One of the biggest factors in keeping high-quality employees is good communication.

- Make sure that you communicate early and often, whether you have good news or bad. Employees are far more likely to accept bad news when they hear it directly from the top.
- Your messages should be easy to understand. Don't talk down to your employees or be intentionally vague.
- Tell the entire story. All the facts WILL get out. Make sure your employees get the correct ones.
- Keep everybody up-to-date. For example, this means making sure every employee understands the reasons for any layoffs.
- Squelch rumors before they get a life of their own. Get the facts out immediately.
- Always be honest with your employees, even if the truth is difficult.
- Share financial results as much as possible. It will make employees feel like part of the family.

No matter what the employment market may be, employees are always looking for new opportunities. Communicating regularly will go a long way toward keeping employees from bolting at the first sign of economic improvement.

### *The motivators for commitment.*

Open and honest communication is just part of the formula to build a happy and productive workforce. Even in good economic times, leaders want to retain their best workers and build the company on their skills. Through our research and experience we have discovered several key motivators that go a long way in keeping employees committed. It should be quickly pointed out that money is certainly important, but it's not going to buy the loyalty and enthusiasm you need.

Employees want to feel like they are part of something bigger, of an enterprise that matters.

They want:

- to feel good about their work
- to take pride in their company
- to feel like they are part of an enterprise that is admired and respected
- to be a part of a winning organization and to be part of a turnaround
- to feel like their role contributes to a larger cause.

Leaders who take to heart the lessons of the past, practice good communications and bring employees into a viable "work family" may find that some workplace issues in these turbulent times just might not be as challenging as once thought.

