

# HIRING IN SAN DIEGO IS ON THE RISE

Survey says local firms also plan fewer layoffs, matching national trend

JONATHAN HORN • U-T

More San Diego companies will hire and fewer will lay off workers in 2013's fourth quarter, said a study released Tuesday.

The forward-looking Manpower Employment Outlook survey asks the same 120 San Diego companies each quarter whether they plan to increase, decrease or maintain staff levels in the coming months.

For 2013's fourth quarter, 22 percent of the companies said they plan to hire by year's end, up from 16 percent last year. Layoff plans had a big drop, going from 14 percent planned in the fourth quarter of 2012 to 6 percent this year. The survey reported that

growth would come in a variety of fields, including manufacturing, transportation, retail, financial activities and professional services.

"It was very broad, and I think that's always a really good sign," said Phil Blair, CEO of Manpower San Diego.

San Diego's unemployment rate is currently at 7.8 percent, but it's not adjusted for seasonal factors like retail hiring for the holiday season. The Manpower survey compares the same time periods year over year, so the increase in hiring and decrease in layoff plans for identical quarters bodes well, said Alan Gin, economist at the University of San Diego.

"I think everybody knows that the economy is positive at this point but it's been relatively weak," he said. "Based on this and based on other forecasts it looks like things are going to

pick up some in the second half of 2013."

Manpower does the same employment outlook study for 100 metropolitan statistical areas around the country, surveying 18,000 employers. It also releases a national average, which equaled San Diego's in hiring plans, 22 percent, and layoff plans, at 6 percent.

The study computes a Net Employment Outlook, which subtracts the percentage of companies with planned layoffs from those that plan to hire. For San Diego, the outlook increased from 2 percent in the fourth quarter of 2012 to 16 percent this year.

"I thought it was really good news," Blair said. "I don't know that we can ask for much better than this."

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