

Help Wanted



It's official: The numbers for January are in and more than 598,000 jobs were slashed in the first month of 2009, bringing the unemployment rate up to 7.6%—the highest it has been since September 1992.

The U.S. Labor Department recently reported that since the recession began in December 2007, the economy has shed 3.6 million jobs—half of them in the last three months alone. And the hemorrhage continues as small businesses—who are usually the first to create jobs and the last to cut them—made significant staff cuts for the 12th consecutive month, according to CNNMoney.com.

All small business owners have been facing challenges lately. With rising energy and materials costs, as well as the current difficulties obtaining financing for customers, it is becoming increasingly tough to maintain a successful business all while keeping and pleasing staff members.

Although these are tough economic times, opportunities do in fact still exist within the water treatment industry. For instance, the reverse osmosis, ultrafiltration and microfiltration membrane markets are expected to be up 3% this year, according to a recent McIlvaine report. The ultraviolet and ozone disinfection markets are also expected to see substantial increases—more than 225% growth in the next eight years.

So with technologies developing, the need for safe drinking water chronically existing and unemployment rates rapidly increasing, is the water treatment industry's job market being pursued aggressively enough?

A reader recently wrote to me, explaining the situation many water treatment professionals find themselves in today: "A lot is happening in the industry right now, especially with unemployment," he wrote. "All of the major manufacturers have cut sales managers, dealer recruiters and trainers, and costs continue to increase as sales decline on the dealer level... The margins of old must be reworked."

The current market situation is unprecedented, and if you find yourself facing these challenges, you know that you are going to have to try harder than ever before in order to succeed. But the technological growth predicted for our industry indicates that the opportunities will be there if they are not already.

If you currently find yourself searching the job market, be sure to utilize absolutely every resource available to you, including electronic ones. And the same goes for employers looking to hire. You may have to rework your old ways of doing things, but job seekers today are more apt to look for available opportunities via the Internet rather than skimming through the printed classified ads. All employment opportunities and résumés should be made available on online job search engines. Many companies and manufacturers even have Career Opportunities sections on their websites that can be useful as long as they are updated regularly.

Water Quality Products offers an online Career Center resource on its website, www.wqpmag.com. This tool allows one to view and post résumés and available job opportunities within the industry, and can be helpful regardless of which end of the employment spectrum you find yourself.

When it comes to successfully navigating the current job market, leave no rock unturned. Whether you are looking to hire or get hired, there are plenty of electronic resources available as well as numerous industry networking opportunities—it is up to you utilize these resources to their full capacity. Industry-focused job resources will likely yield favorable results.

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coming up next month

The April issue of *Water Quality Products* will feature vending and coolers, bottled water, well and groundwater, product liability and certification, resin, ozone, and sales and business tips. Be sure to visit www.wqpmag.com for daily industry news updates.