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Press Release

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Competition for talent heating up in the Norwegian labor market: ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey 4Q 2018

Employers forecast modest hiring opportunities in the final quarter of 2018, as the labor market heads into a squeeze. Employers in seven out of nine surveyed sectors expect to increase staffing levels the next three months, according to ManpowerGroup's quarterly survey of hiring plans.

“Although the growth slows down from last quarter, we’re seeing a continued demand for talent across Norway, with competition among employers growing ever more challenging,” says Managing Director in ManpowerGroup Norway, Maalfrid Brath.

Norwegian employers report limited hiring prospects for the final quarter of 2018, with a seasonally adjusted Net Employment Outlook of +5%. Hiring plans have been increasing steadily for the past two years, however the hiring intentions for the upcoming quarter are 3 percentage points weaker in comparison with the previous quarter, while remaining unchanged when compared with this time one year ago.

Among employers surveyed, nearly one in ten (9%) are planning to staff up. 84 percent plan to retain the size of their current staff, while only six percent are planning to downsize.

“Across several sectors, the competition for talent is heating up. As skills demands are rapidly changing, employers need to think and act differently to ensure that they find the people they need. Looking beyond the requirements their organizations face today, they need to identify adjacent skills and facilitate continuous learning and development to become a relevant destination for the right talent,” says Maalfrid Brath, Managing Director in Manpower Group Norway.

Electric outlooks for appliances

Norway's Electricity, Gas & Water sector employers anticipate the strongest labor market in 10 years during the next three months and report the strongest hiring intentions with a Net Employment Outlook of +13%. Hiring plans remain relatively stable in comparison with 3Q 2018 but improve by a considerable margin of 14 percentage points year-over-year.

In seven of nine industry sectors surveyed, employers expect to increase staffing levels during 4Q 2018. With Wholesale, Retail, Restaurants & Hotels, Mining & Quarrying and Finance & Business Services standing out with double digit Outlooks, when adjusting for seasonal variation. Hiring prospects improve in three sectors compared with 3Q 2018 and strengthen in six of the nine industry sectors when compared with this time one year ago.



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“Over the past months, companies in several sectors have prepared to increase investments in new projects, as indicated by Norwegian corporate debt reaching a six-year high in April. As companies do not invest in empty buildings and dead projects, increased corporate debt indicate that jobs will follow,” says Brath.

Strong Mid region

Employers in four of the five regions anticipate an increase in staffing levels during 4Q 2018. The strongest hiring plans are reported in Mid Norway, where the Outlook stands at +17%, an improvement by 6 and 10 percentage points from 3Q 2018 and 4Q 2017, respectively. South/West employers expect the weakest – and first negative – Outlook in more than seven years during the coming quarter. The Outlook stands at -2%, a decline by 17 percentage points quarter-over-quarter and 4 percentage points year-over-year. However, the decline of the South/West follows a quarter where the region saw the strongest hiring plans in more than nine years.

“Great regional differences in employers’ demand for skilled talent could cause imbalances, where parts of the workforce find that job opportunities are scarce, while employers elsewhere are struggling to acquire the right people,” says Maalfrid Brath.

Greater Oslo employers expect the weakest labor market in more than two years and report a cautious Outlook of +1%, remaining relatively stable in comparison with 3Q 2018, but declining by 8 percentage points when compared with this time one year ago.

Large employers require most talent

Employers across all four organization size categories expect payrolls to increase during 4Q 2018. The most optimistic Outlooks of +13% are reported in both the Large- and Medium-size categories, while Micro employers report the most cautious Outlook of +5%.

The ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey for the fourth quarter 2018 was conducted by interviewing a representative sample of 750 employers in Norway. All survey participants were asked, “How do you anticipate total employment at your location to change in the three months to the end of December 2018 as compared to the current quarter?” The Net Employment Outlook is derived by taking the percentage of employers anticipating an increase in hiring activity and subtracting from this the percentage of employers expecting a decrease in hiring activity.

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