

# Unemployment Stigma Fades, IT Hiring in New England to Rise

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Call it a sign of the times. Being unemployed, while still an obstacle to overcome when looking for work, doesn't necessarily damage a reputation the way it once did. Executives in human resources and IT from New England and the broader United States are more accepting of the economic realities of job hunting in 2009, shows a study.

It seems the stigma of unemployment isn't what it used to be, given the economy, reduced hiring and increased layoffs in the worst recession seen in generations. New research from a Boston-based staffing company shows over 40 percent of executives don't put a lot of weight on whether an IT job candidate has been unemployed or not.

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From [Veritude's statement](#) about its survey of 195 executives, 72 from New England:

"[W]hen it came to examining the acceptable length of time for a candidate to be unemployed, 36 percent of responding executives said they did not believe it mattered how long a candidate was unemployed given the recessionary conditions, with 36 percent indicating that six months or less was their ideal length of unemployment. The survey also revealed that when making hiring decisions, 44 percent of executives have no preference for a candidate's employment status. In addition, one-third of New England hiring managers and human resources professionals are considering rehiring information technology (IT) employees whom they had laid off."

This should be welcome news to unemployed IT professionals looking for work. It's a reminder to focus on skills, strengths, teaming and management experience rather than having lost a job through a work force reduction and cost cutting.

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"With half of employers looking to hire back a portion of their laid-off IT workers either as full-time employees or contractors and employers accepting the economic downturn as a reason for an extended unemployment, IT job candidates should take heart that their employment status will not significantly bias a potential employer," Joe Collins, senior vice president of Veritude, said in a statement Dec. 2.

There is still some preference, however, for hiring those who are already employed. Around 19 percent, or one-fifth, of human resources and IT hiring managers polled said they preferred hiring current full-time employees, according to the report. In a similar vein, 22 percent said they preferred hiring candidates currently employed either full-time or with temporary or contract work. Another 17 percent of those polled said they prefer job candidates who were not let go in the first round of layoffs, while over half—53 percent—did not care when candidates had been cut.

In more good regional news, Veritude said it expects an [increase in hiring](#) in New England for IT professionals in the coming year.

"According to our survey results, it appears that 2010 will be a better year for IT job seekers in New England," Collins said.

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