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Global Manpower Employment Outlook Survey Reveals Strong Hiring Outlook for the First Quarter of 2008 in India, France, Italy and Netherlands; Slight Softening Trend in the U.S.

December 11, 2007

MILWAUKEE, Dec 11, 2007 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ -- The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey released today revealed that employer optimism in the global labor market is varied, with employers in 16 of 27 countries and territories indicating softer hiring plans compared to one year ago, but improved job prospects quarter-over-quarter in 12 countries and territories. In the U.S., the outlook is relatively stable from the fourth quarter, but slightly softer than one year ago, reflecting the economic concerns that continue to weigh on the minds of employers. German and Indian employers anticipate a continued positive hiring pace, although slightly slower than three months ago.

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The strongest first quarter hiring prospects reported globally were in Peru, Singapore, India, Argentina, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, South Africa, Australia, Japan and Norway. Meanwhile, Irish employers reported the weakest hiring plans globally. The quarterly survey by Manpower Inc. is the world's most extensive forward-looking employment survey, with interviews of nearly 52,000 employers worldwide. All reports are based on seasonally adjusted data, where available.

"The continuation of business challenges in the U.S. real estate sector, in particular, is contributing to a slightly more cautious first quarter hiring climate as employers evaluate conditions in their respective industries. However, our data indicates that the global labor market continues to experience strong demand in many markets like India, France, Italy and the Netherlands, with many markets more impacted by talent shortages than by any carry-over effects from what is occurring in the U.S.," said Jeffrey A. Joerres, Chairman & CEO of Manpower Inc. "While we have seen a slight softening trend in U.S. hiring plans over the past year and a half, employers are not panicking, but rather, they are keeping a watchful eye on conditions and adjusting according to their business needs."

Joerres added, "In Europe, employers in Italy, the Netherlands and France are reporting their most optimistic hiring plans since the survey began in these countries in 2003. Meanwhile, in Asia, hiring expectations are strongest in Singapore and India, where difficulty recruiting and retaining talent continues to be a key issue for employers due to persistent talent shortages."

Of the countries surveyed in Europe, employers in Norway, the Netherlands, Spain, Germany, Sweden and the UK are forecasting the brightest first quarter hiring plans. Conversely, employers in Ireland are forecasting the weakest hiring pace in four years.

"The continued strength in Norway is being fuelled by solid hiring plans in the Wholesale & Retail Trade and Manufacturing sectors. In France, job seekers should ring in the new year with solid prospects in the Manufacturing and Public & Social sectors, where employers are reporting their strongest hiring expectations since the survey began in the country," said Joerres. "German job prospects are being bolstered by notable strength in the Finance/Insurance/Real Estate/Business Services and Construction sectors, and the newfound optimism in the Italian labor market is due, in part, to improved expectations in Manufacturing."

With the exceptions of Argentina and Canada, hiring activity is expected to slow slightly in the first quarter among the countries surveyed in the Americas. Employers in Peru, Argentina and Costa Rica are most optimistic about hiring in the next three months. Mexican employers continue to report a healthy Outlook, similar to that of the first quarter 2007, while the pace of hiring in the U.S. is expected to be slightly weaker compared to one year ago. Interestingly, Canadian employers anticipate the strongest first quarter hiring activity in seven years.

"Given the current business climate in the U.S., it should be no surprise that first quarter hiring expectations are weakest in the Finance/Insurance/Real Estate and Construction sectors. On the other hand, employment prospects in the Canadian Construction sector are the strongest in decades," said Joerres. "The optimism in the Argentinean labor market looks set to continue with the strongest activity expected in the Transportation & Utilities and Mining & Construction sectors."

Although hiring activity in the eight countries and territories surveyed across the Asia Pacific region is expected to be positive, employers in Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore and Taiwan indicate they will slow the pace of hiring compared to last year at this time. However, Net Employment Outlooks improved from three months ago in China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan. The strongest hiring plans were reported in Singapore and India, while employers in Taiwan and China reported the weakest hiring expectations in the region.

"In India, strong job prospects should continue in the Construction sector, as the country continues to make infrastructure improvements to support future growth. At the same time, employers in the Services sector are telling us they will ratchet down the pace of hiring as the busy holiday retail season ends in the U.S. and UK and the demand for call center services lessens," said Joerres. "Not surprisingly, hiring plans declined year-over-year across all industry sectors in China, as many employers are pausing to determine what impact the new national labor contract law will have on their businesses."

The next Manpower Employment Outlook Survey will be released on the 11th of March 2008 to report hiring expectations for the second quarter of 2008. The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey is available free of charge to the public through their local Manpower representative in participating countries. To receive e-mail notification when the survey is available each quarter, interested individuals are invited to complete an online subscription form at <http://investor.manpower.com/investors/alerts.cfm>.

About the Survey

The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey is conducted quarterly to measure employers' intentions to increase or decrease the number of employees in their workforce during the next quarter. It is the most extensive forward-looking survey of its kind, unparalleled in its size, scope, longevity and area of focus. The Survey has been running for more than 40 years and is one of the most trusted surveys of employment activity in the world. The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey is based on interviews with nearly 52,000 public and private employers worldwide and is considered a highly respected economic indicator.

The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey is currently available for 27 countries and territories: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Costa Rica, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Singapore, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, the United Kingdom and the United States. The program began in the United States and Canada in 1962, and the United Kingdom was added in 1966. Mexico and Ireland launched the survey in 2002, and 13 additional countries were added to the program in 2003. New Zealand joined the program in 2004, China, India, Switzerland and Taiwan were added in 2005, and Argentina, Peru, Costa Rica and South Africa joined in 2006. For more information, visit the Manpower Inc. Web site at <http://www.manpower.com> and enter the Research Center.

About Manpower Inc.

Manpower Inc. (NYSE: MAN) is a world leader in the employment services industry; creating and delivering services that enable its clients to win in the changing world of work. The \$18 billion company offers employers a range of services for the entire employment and business cycle including permanent, temporary and contract recruitment; employee assessment and selection; training; outplacement; outsourcing and consulting. Manpower's worldwide network of 4,400 offices in 73 countries and territories enables the company to meet the needs of its 400,000 clients per year, including small and medium size enterprises in all industry sectors, as well as the world's largest multinational corporations. The focus of Manpower's work is on raising productivity through improved quality, efficiency and cost-reduction across their total workforce, enabling clients to concentrate on their core business activities. Manpower Inc. operates under five brands: Manpower, Manpower Professional, Elan, Jefferson Wells and Right Management. More information on Manpower Inc. is available at <http://www.manpower.com>.

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