

For Immediate Release

Contact: Jennifer Bernhart
Director of Market Research
Hudson
(813) 890-7379
jennifer.bernhart@hudson.com

Nathan Friedman
Account Supervisor
Ogilvy Public Relations
(312) 397-6009
nathan.friedman@ogilvypr.com

U.S. Workers' Outlook on Employment Continues to Improve according to *Hudson Employment Index*SM

A majority feel their next job will be better than their current one

New York, March 3, 2004 – U.S. workers reported greater optimism regarding the employment outlook in February with the *Hudson Employment Index*SM rising 1.5 points to 106.9. The increase is attributed to the number of employed respondents indicating their next job will be better, which rose to 52 percent from 43 percent in January. Hiring plan and job loss indicators showed little movement from last month.

Supplemental Hudson research also reveals that two-thirds (68 percent) of unemployed respondents believe they are somewhat or very likely to find a job in the relatively near future. In fact, those who are unemployed have views on the overall economy that are as or *more* positive than individuals in firms expecting layoffs. Forty-seven (47) percent of those unemployed say the U.S. economy is in a recession, compared to 61 percent among those working at companies reducing their workforce. In contrast, only 23 percent of workers at organizations that are hiring feel a recession exists.

“Cautious optimism continues to be the prevailing feeling about the employment market, even among unemployed Americans,” according to Jeffrey Anderson, senior vice president, Hudson

North America. “The exception is among firms who are laying off workers, where employees are more likely to feel their own personal finances as well as the U.S. economy are deteriorating.”

Selected data was available for the eight most populous states, with Texas and Florida posting the highest overall indices at 114.5 and 112.1, respectively. The Illinois and New York indices came in lowest, at 88.1 and 88.4 respectively. Respondents from Illinois and New York were also more pessimistic about their next job, with only 37 percent and 45 percent, respectively, indicating it would be better.

Each month, on a quarterly rotation, the *Hudson Employment Index* survey examines a particular workplace issue in more depth. The theme this month was workplace performance, measuring views on employee motivation, contributions and understanding of expectations and organizational goals.

Generally speaking, U.S. employees are quite positive regarding their working environment, with 91 percent indicating that they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and 88 percent feeling they make a personal and direct contribution to their organization’s success. Of those who do not believe they make a personal contribution, only 29 percent are happy with their job, compared to 75 percent of those who believe they do.

Further, 70 percent are happy in their current job and 75 percent expressed that they are very or somewhat confident in their organization’s leadership. Nearly two thirds of employees feel their work environment motivates them to do more than is required (65 percent) and believe that they have a clear understanding of the strategies and goals of their organization (63 percent).

“Our data suggests that most employees feel valued and invested in their organization, although there is room for improvement linking personal accomplishments to organizational goals,” indicated Anderson. “However, people are still willing to look for new jobs. Job satisfaction does not necessarily equate to retention in an environment of diminished employee loyalty.”

The number of respondents indicating they are looking for a job has stayed relatively consistent this year, coming in at 29 percent this month. The percentage of those who would be somewhat or very likely to entertain another job if offered dropped to 55 percent, down from 61 percent in February.

Hudson, one of the world's leading professional staffing, outsourcing and human capital solution providers, publishes the *Hudson Employment Index*, the first monthly measure of employee attitudes on critical work issues, including career opportunities, job satisfaction and workplace performance. Next month's *Hudson Employment Index* will be released on March 31, 2004.

The Hudson Employment Index

The *Hudson Employment Index* (Hudson-Index.com) measures employee attitudes on critical work issues, including career opportunities, job satisfaction and workplace performance. The *Index* is compiled each month by Rasmussen Reports, LLC, an independent research firm, based upon telephone interviews and survey responses from approximately 9,000 U.S. workers (RasmussenReports.com).

Data reported in this release is based upon a national telephone survey of 9,262 working Americans during the month of February. The margin of sampling error for a survey based upon this many interviews is approximately 1 percent with a 95 percent level of confidence. The *Hudson Employment Index* is a service mark owned by Hudson Highland Group, Inc.

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