JOBS/CAREE

SUNDAY, AUGUST 3, 1997

Are you fit for contracting?

By Sheryl Silver, Career Source

The market for information technology (IT) contractors continues to expand. According to the National Association of Computer Consultant Business, headquartered in Washington, D.C., the demand for temporary computer consultants is growing 20-30 percent annually across the US. In many major business centers-including Los Angeles, New York, Newark, Atlanta, and Washington, firms that place IT professionals on a contract or project basis are reporting an extremely intense demand for talent.

"The demand for IT contractors is huge," says Rick Phillips, president and CEO of American Technical Resources (ATR), a technical staffing firm with offices in McLean, Va. and Atlanta Ga. "Technology changes, coupled with Year 2000 changes and the difficulty companies are having recruiting full time IT professionals, and demand has never been better."

better."

Pam Murray, recruiting manager for the telecommunications business unit of COMSYS Technical Services in Rockville, Md. is equally ebullient. "The market for consultants is hot," she says. So hot, in fact, it's produced a short-

age of qualified contractors. That shortage is severe enough that Cathy Hom, recruiting manager for COMSYS' commercial division in Rockville, asys. We now have to look nationally and internationally as well as locally to find people.

What type of expertise is being sought? Everything from client server to mainframe skills, "asys David Claoys, senior vice president of TENTEK Inc., in Glendale, California. To that broad summary, Phillips of ATR adds, "Poople with communications and Internetionante background, as well as those with SAP, Ornele, and Peoplesoft skills." Also on other companies' most wanted "lists are Ornele programmers and DBA, C++ programmers, testers and Cobal programmers."

As might be expected, the intense demand for contract tatent has lead to sizeably Holdorff, regional manager for Vienna, Varbased Cornell Technical Services Inc., says hourly rates have gotten so high they've proven irresistible for many IT professionals.

look at several factors. "If you have a skill; set that's not readily marketable, you need to be aware there may be down periods. If you have a low tolerance for risk financially or otherwise, then contracting is probably not a good fit," he says. "On the other hand, if you're confident hy our ability to pick up new skills, if your experience and skill set are in mainstream, high demand technologies, then contracting is probably a good fit. This probably also a good match, says Phillips, "if you prefor working primarily on technical tasks and projects rather than getting involved in management or politics." Communication skills can also make a difference. Phillips says people who are outgoing and able to communicate well – verhally had in writing – are generally in greater demand in contractors. The same is true for those who present themselves with a professional image," he says. "Today IT professionals, including contractors, have a lot of face-to-face interaction with clients."

Sheryl Silver may be contacted by writing to her at Career Source, P.O. Box 65754, Washington, D.C. 200035-5744.

Work Wise[®]: Casual dress: effective and uncomplicated to you, they don't indicate what kinds of prob-lems people have, and how they best cope, when their style isn't casual. The growing acceptance of casual dress puts all kinds of workers in a

Hy Mildred L. Culp, Passaga Media
The growing trend toward canual dress benefits the entire workplace, according to a survey of 655 human resource managers pensacred by the Society for Human Resource Management and Levi Strause Company, and it descrit have to compromise Company, and it descrit have to compromise wardrook choice for people who profer formality. A full 3 per cent of companies surveyed that allow casual clothing permit it five days a week, except when employees most with clients.

Casual dress brings a range of benefits, the survey found. Employees morale goes up, and 85 per cent of the managers, while 45 per cent reported that productivity increases. A full 82 per cent of the group believed that employees would view casual dress as a benefit. Only 10 per cent less fielt that employees would view casual dress as a benefit. Only 10 per cent less fielt that employees would view casual dress policy ould be a piley in recruiting employees.

Willia such benefits mer such as each of the managers thought that a casual dress policy would be a piley in recruiting employees.

of casual dress pots an kinds of workers in a quandary.

For example, if you work in a company with a casual dress policy and porform better in stan-dard business clothing, what are you going to day. Risk underperforming by going with the flow? If you don't dress casually, you could appear outlat-de or rigid to coworkers and might reduce your chances for a promotion just because of your rible.

chances for a promeure uses executed to do if you're a salesman dressed in a suit and your potential customers are more casually dressed. Standard business attire could make you appear overhearing before you even speak.

If you're a job seeker, you may know what to wear if the company where you're interviewing encourage casual dress. Should you skip the suit or adulted suit in flower of lendings in? You might

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net recover quickly when you're already nervous if you wralk into an office and feel overdressed. Your discomfort could also sabetage you by making your interviewer uneary.

The interview entire problem is the easiest to solve; Suits and skirted suits or dreases with pinckets are still appropriate when you're interviewing. They're also good for you psychologically. A jacket gives you a feeling of some semblance of centrol when you may be a big lifter.) If they are policy, don't worry about dreasing up a little stip black, which can be an intimidating color. Select a more friendly solen, such as blue or great your way to make a professional friengression.

Salespecople have a slightly more complicated problem. If you're having face-to-face contact with a range of prespects durige the day from a still entire may work for some and bomb with others. Minimize the contrast in what you were. Instead 1893.

stripes, but wear pleasing patterns.

Develop a style that draws attention to you

mines, show was, because grows attention to you what robust comprisionally consumed wardrober. Consider blazers instead of jackste. Think about less dressy shoes than wing tips or heels. Tone down your jewelry by wearing less or wearing less precious pricous leves in less luxurious fabrics. Sik hankerchiefs don't have to peck out of suit breats peckets, and blouses don't have to be silk. Carry understand mood of today's workplace help you do your work better, so that it provides benefit to you and your company. By being cracity, you work have to abolish your high standa. is.

Dr. Mildred Culp, author of Be WorkWise: Retooling Your Work for the 21st Century, is a syndicated columnist and radio commentator. 1997, Pusage Media.

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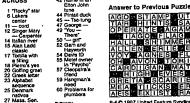
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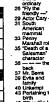
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