



Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.
The original outplacement company



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2021 Seasonal Retail Hiring Outlook

FEW LARGE-SCALE SEASONAL HIRING ANNOUNCEMENTS AS EMPLOYERS WORRY ABOUT FINDING PERMANENT WORKERS

September 14, 2021 – Ahead of the 2021 holiday season, retailers and other seasonal employers find themselves in the midst of a difficult labor shortage, raising wages and offering previously unheard-of benefits such as tuition assistance, child care offerings, and signing bonuses to attract applicants. Despite the challenges, global outplacement and business and executive coaching firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. predicts Retailers will add 700,000 workers during the 2021 holiday season.

According to non-seasonally adjusted data in the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), there were 1.2 million job openings and 732,000 quits in Retail in July. That’s up from 876,000 job openings and 558,000 quits in Retail in the same month last year.

“With just a few short weeks from the start of the holiday shopping season, Retailers are announcing permanent hiring plans rather than seasonal ones,” said Andrew Challenger, Senior Vice President of Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

Indeed, Walmart recently announced hiring plans for 20,000 supply chain workers, but has yet to announce seasonal holiday hiring plans. Amazon, which since 2012 has announced an average of over 104,000 seasonal jobs each year, according to Challenger tracking, recently announced plans to hire 55,000 permanent workers. The company hired 500,000 people in 2020, according to an article on ABC News.

Retail employment has not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels. August employment in the sector is down 64,400 jobs from July, according to the latest BLS numbers. It is down 67,800 jobs from February 2020 and 278,100 jobs from the 15,564,200 employed in the industry in August 2019.

For the 2020 holiday season, Retailers added 736,300 jobs—adjusted down from 788,600—a 10% increase from the 672,300 jobs added in October through December 2019. It is the highest number of jobs added during the holiday season since 2014, when 749,100 jobs were added, according to the BLS.

Transportation and Warehousing, which has seen employment explode over the last five years as consumers increasingly went online to shop, added 493,000 jobs in October through December 2020, the highest on record, and up 67% from the 295,000 jobs added in the same period in 2019. Employment in this sector at 5,747,700 is up 140,700 jobs from August 2019 and up 1,800 from February 2020.

US-based companies have announced 190,000 seasonal hiring plans, according to Challenger tracking. This is down from 301,700 hiring plans companies announced at this point last year.

So far this season, UPS announced it would add 100,000 jobs for the holiday season, matching last year's announcement. Michaels Stores announced 20,000 seasonal workers, up from 16,000 last season. Aldi also announced it would hire 20,000 workers for the holiday season. 1-800-FLOWERS.COM, Inc. will hire 10,000 seasonal workers, same as in 2020. The United States Postal Service announced 40,000 workers to tackle the holiday season.

"We will likely see more holiday hiring plans announced over the next month, but with the trouble Retailers and Transportation companies are having attracting workers for normal business periods, it will be interesting to see how many workers these companies will be able to hire," said Andrew Challenger, Vice President of Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

"The end of the expanded unemployment benefits may spur some workers to take these positions. However, myriad other issues could keep them from filling these roles, such as COVID concerns, vaccination statuses, child care issues, and burnout," said Challenger.

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JOBS ADDED IN RETAIL TRADE					
October, November, December 2005-Present					
	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	% Change
2005	122,300	392,700	196,600	711,600	0.20%
2006	150,600	427,300	169,000	746,900	5.00%
2007	87,900	465,400	167,600	720,900	-3.50%
2008	38,600	213,600	72,700	324,900	-54.90%
2009	45,100	317,100	133,600	495,800	52.60%
2010	149,800	339,200	158,600	647,600	30.60%
2011	134,200	390,600	154,500	679,300	4.90%
2012	138,700	485,400	99,600	723,700	6.50%
2013	159,600	443,100	184,100	786,800	8.70%
2014	182,800	412,200	154,100	749,100	-4.80%
2015	183,300	399,300	125,700	708,800	-5.38%
2016	149,400	359,400	132,200	641,000	-9.57%
2017	146,400	462,700	59,300	668,400	4.27%
2018	115,900	494,800	14,900	625,600	-6.40%
2019	160,900	431,900	79,500	672,300	7.47%
2020	239,200	356,800	140,300	736,300	9.52%
2021					
Average*	137,794	399,469	126,800	662,160	
<i>*Since 2005</i>					
JOBS ADDED IN TRANSPORTATION & WAREHOUSING					
October, November, December 2011-Present					
	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	% Change
2011	11,200	25,900	62,200	99,300	-2.93%
2012	14,000	28,300	103,900	146,200	47.20%
2013	11,300	57,500	96,300	165,100	12.39%
2014	39,100	56,800	135,800	231,700	40.34%
2015	13,900	70,600	144,000	228,500	-1.38%
2016	28,000	85,500	152,800	266,300	16.54%
2017	41,400	88,600	135,200	265,200	-0.41%
2018	52,900	111,200	95,400	259,500	-2.15%
2019	36,300	119,400	139,300	295,000	13.68%
2020	117,900	254,200	121,700	493,800	67.39%
2021					
AVERAGE*	36,600	89,800	118,660	245,060	
<i>*Since 2011</i>					
<i>Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc., with non-seasonally adjusted data provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics</i>					

Company	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target	88,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	77,500	100,000	120,000	133,000	130,000	
Amazon	50,000	70,000	80,000	100,000	120,000	120,000	100,000	200,000	100,000	
UPS	55,000	55,000	95,000	95,000	95,000	95,000	100,000	95,000	100,000	100,000
Shipt									100,000	
FedEx	20,000	20,000	50,000	55,000	50,000	50,000	55,000	55,000	70,000	
Macy's	80,000	83,000	86,000	85,000	83,000	87,000	80,000	80,000	25,000	
Dollar Tree								25,000	25,000	
Radial					20,000	23,000	20,000	12,581	25,000	
Kroger						14,000	10,000		20,000	
Walmart	50,000	55,000	60,000	60,000					20,000	
Party City					35,000			25,000	20,000	
Lowe's									20,000	
Michaels						15,000	15,000	15,000	16,000	20,000
Cherry Hill Programs									11,000	
1-800-FLOWERS.COM Inc.						8,000	8,000	8,000	10,000	10,000
Gap			63,000				65,000	30,000	10,000	
Hy-Vee									10,000	
Dick's Sporting Goods									9,000	
DHL Supply Chain									7,000	
Bass Pro Shop								7,000	7,000	
L Brands					4,000		4,000		4,000	
Kings Dominion									4,000	
Office Depot									3,000	
Sheetz									3,000	
Omaha Steaks									3,000	
Williams-Sonoma						2,000			2,500	
JCPenney	40,000	35,000	35,000	30,000	40,000	40,000	39,000	37,000	1,700	
Fresh Market									1,500	
Giant Eagle									1,300	
Meijer	12,000	9,000	10,000						200	
Legoland Florida									150	
Nordstrom				11,800	11,400	13,650				
Toys"R"Us	45,000	45,000	45,000	40,000		12,500				
Burlington Stores						12,000				
The Bon-Ton Stores					13,500	10,000				
McDonald's						3,179				
Fanatics						2,000				
Plow & Hearth						400				
Opryland					300	400				
Kohl's	52,700	53,000	76,970	79,160	69,000		90,000	90,000		
GameStop	17,000	17,000	25,000	28,000						
Sports Authority				3,500						
Best Buy	14,000									
Versant Supply Chain					2,000					
XPO Logistics						6,000	8,000			
Hickory Farms (Food)	5,225	6,000								
Alter'd State								1,200		
Aldis										20,000
USPS										40,000
Total	528,925	518,000	695,970	657,460	620,700	614,129	714,000	813,781	759,350	190,000

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. ©