

This month's "Spotlight" topic:
The Forgotten Generation

Nary a Ripple in Employment Growth Last Month

Unemployment Again Downshifts Below 4.0 Percent

JOB GROWTH: February hiring, though positive at 20,000 new jobs, was unimpressive in comparison to especially strong hiring in the two previous months.

TOP INDUSTRIES: Hiring trended most positively in professional and business services, healthcare and wholesale trade, while construction employment decreased in February.

UNEMPLOYMENT: The unemployment rate, which had been rising in small increments over the past two months, reversed itself in February, dropping back to 3.8 percent.

WAGES: Hourly earnings again trended up, resulting in an increasingly healthy average annual rate of 3.4 percent.

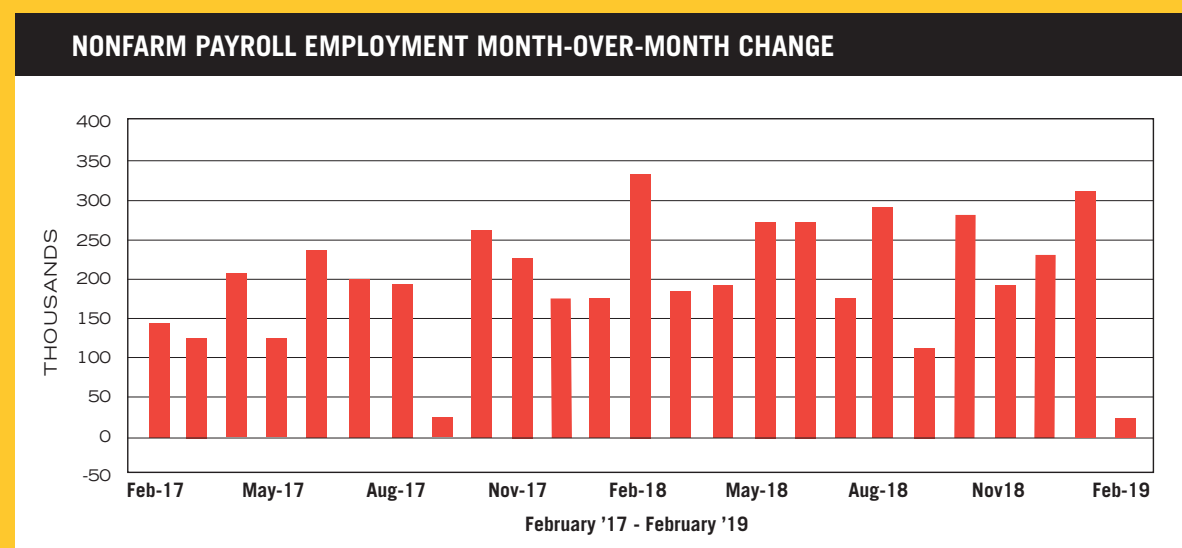
WORK WEEK: The average work week decreased slightly in February to 34.4 hours.

TEMPORARY JOB TRENDS: Modest growth in the temporary jobs sector of 5,800 jobs in February came as good news following revised figures for January that indicated contraction in the sector.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN? Employment activity in the month of February was clearly weak, as though in a state of hibernation. The bright spots: unemployment improved, as did wage growth. Economists note that February stats may reflect some lingering effects from the partial government shutdown as well as severe winter weather. Is this month's jobs report an anomaly or the start of a downward trend? There is no way to tell, without several months of data on hand to form a clearer picture. In the meantime, employers continue to face severe talent shortages and increasing pressure to bolster their employment value proposition with both monetary and other enhancements.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Steinberg Employment Research, CNBC, MSNBC, National Review, Staffing Industry Analysts, Bloomberg, Seeking Alpha, Counterpunch, MarketWatch, The Wall Street Journal, Business Insider, USA Today

CHART 1: EMPLOYMENT NUMBERS / SOURCE: BLS



Employers added a modest 20,000 new jobs in February.



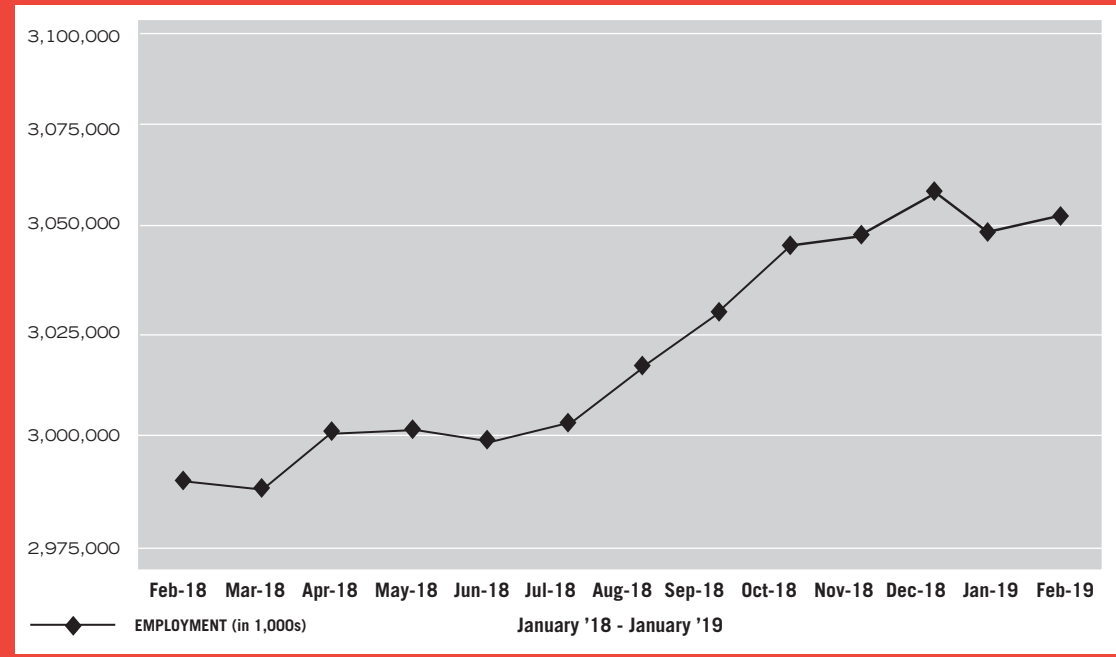
CHART 2: TOP INDUSTRIES / SOURCE: BLS

In a fairly flat February, the strongest growth came from professional & business services.



SECTOR GAINS	JOB INCREASE
Professional & Business Services	+42,000
Healthcare & Social Assistance	+22,500
Manufacturing	+4,000
SECTOR	NO CHANGE
Leisure & Hospitality	0
SECTOR DECLINES	JOB DECREASE
Retail Trade	-3,000
Manufacturing	-6,100

CHART 3: TEMPORARY WORKFORCE / SOURCE: BLS & STEINBERG EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH



Temporary help services made a comeback, adding 5,800 jobs in February.



The Forgotten Generation Caught between the Boomer/Millennial Workforce Divide

Much has been said about the great Boomer exodus and the rise of the Millennial generation, leaving the generation sandwiched between them in the shadows. According to Pew Research, however, Gen X is not as insignificant as many believe. In fact, within the U.S. workforce, it trails Gen Y by a narrow margin of three million. Gen Xers—born between 1965 and 1980—are now in their peak earning years. Their career trajectory is approaching a pinnacle (if it has not already been breached), with Gen Xers increasingly holding the reins of power. Knowing what motivates them and how to engage them is no less important than understanding the generations that surround them. Gen Y may soon dominate the workforce, but Gen X will lead it first.

For nearly 20 years, the Emerging Workforce® Study, sponsored by Spherion, has been exploring shifting trends and changing attitudes in the American workforce. The workplace is undergoing a generational adjustment of values that business leaders need to understand as they craft workforce strategies. For many workers, age matters. It influences how they find jobs, what engages them and how to retain them. Gen X is no different.

In many measures, Gen X tends to align more with Boomers than younger generations but not always. Like other generations, more Gen Xers rely on in-person referrals to find a job. In terms of what is attractive in a potential employer, salary reigns supreme for every generation. Next on the list for Gen X and Boomers is location/commute, while younger workers prioritize company mission. Gen Xers pay close attention to a company's reputation and are strong proponents of diversity, although Millennials are more passionate about this than any other generation. They believe more strongly in the benefits of a blended workforce than Boomers, but not as strongly as Gen Z and Gen Y.

With Boomers delaying retirement and Millennials quickly rising to join them at the executive table, Gen Xers may have little time to dominate the leadership ranks. Whether leading or not, Gen Xers possess a wealth of knowledge and experience critically needed to bridge the transition from Boomers to Millennials. Employers would be wise to keep that in mind as they develop strategies and implement policies to engage and retain their highest performers. Gen Xers are most definitely among them.

CHART 4: WHAT APPEALS TO GEN X / SOURCE: 2018 SPHERION EMERGING WORKFORCE STUDY



CHART 5: WHERE GEN X WANTS TO WORK / SOURCE: 2018 SPHERION EMERGING WORKFORCE STUDY

GEN X supports a diverse and blended workforce.

What else makes for an IDEAL EMPLOYER?



CHART 6: WHAT IT TAKES TO SECURE GEN X LOYALTY / SOURCE: 2018 SPHERION EMERGING WORKFORCE STUDY

GEN X often aligns with GEN Y but not with employers.



Importance	GEN X	GEN Y	Employers
Financial Compensation	#1	#1	#3
Benefits	#2	#2	#1
Growth & Earnings Potential	#3	#4	#6
Time & Flexibility	#5	#3	#8
Supervisor Relationship	#7	#7	#2