

## NEWS

executive. Most opportunities are for seasoned professionals with a wealth of career experience – it's much more suited to a senior executive candidate."

Furthermore, he says, "It has a long hours culture and not the support systems that many are used to. If the photocopier breaks down, then you'll need to fix it. It suits self-reliant, self-starting people who don't mind rolling up their sleeves." As for the forthcoming year, Murphy says the UAE is both focused on absolute growth but also in cost management and efficiency. "We see expertise in lean business processes such as Six Sigma being highly sought after," he says. "While the single biggest driver of growth will be the oil price, with construction, infrastructure, manufacturing, drilling all directly affected by the oil price, nevertheless with Dubai's diversified economy, the future looks pretty rosy."

### CIETT AROUND THE WORLD

#### Addressing the Skills Shortage in America

Richard Wahlquist, president and chief executive officer, American Staffing Association, writes for The Global Recruiter.

As the US economy continues to rebound from the global recession, a challenge has arisen. Businesses



are struggling to find employees with the necessary experience, skills and training to fill open positions. Today, nearly nine million people in the US are looking for work, while nearly five million jobs are going unfilled. This mismatch between employer needs for talent and workforce skills is, of course, referred to as the skills gap. To quantify the skills gap and uncover strategies that businesses can employ to source the talent they need, the American Staffing Association last year established the ASA Skills Gap Index (available for review along with other staffing industry data on [americanstaffing.net](http://americanstaffing.net)). This quarterly index – developed in partnership with CareerBuilder – identifies the hardest-to-fill occupations in the US based on supply and demand. In 2014, the index identified 167 hard-to-fill occupations, ranging

from truck drivers to psychiatrists. Healthcare occupations made up half of the Top 10 hard-to-fill list. How challenging is the skills gap? Here's one example: Data show that 450,000 occupational therapists are in demand, while only 7,500 are seeking work. The underlying contributors to the skills gap are varied, and many are so deeply rooted that it will take years to turn around. And this is by no means just a US problem. The skills gap will negatively impact economic growth and competitiveness in every country where it exists. Unless the private sector, educational institutions, and governments make this a top priority, the skills gap will widen as economies strengthen and labour markets tighten. The US staffing, recruiting, and workforce solutions industry is committed to helping businesses

refine their talent acquisition, deployment, development, and retention strategies in response to the skills gap challenge. ASA would like to learn how others around the world are dealing with this critical workforce issue. Let's start a discussion. Connect with ASA on Twitter (@StaffingTweets). ■

#### ASA Skills Gap Index: 2014 Top10 List of Hardest-to-Fill Jobs in the US.

1. Occupational therapists
2. Truck drivers, heavy and tractor-trailer
3. Psychiatrists
4. Occupational therapy assistants
5. Photographic process workers and processing machine operators
6. Physical therapists
7. Speech-language pathologists
8. Forest and conservation technicians
9. Internists, general
10. Merchandise displayers and window trimmers

#### The American Staffing Association

The American Staffing Association is the voice of the US staffing, recruiting, and workforce solutions industry. ASA and its affiliated chapters advance the interests of the industry across all sectors through advocacy, research, education, and the promotion of high standards of legal, ethical, and professional practices. For more information about ASA, visit [americanstaffing.net](http://americanstaffing.net).