

Insights into the VMS World Today
How Businesses Compete for Your Skills

Vendor management systems (VMS) started as a means of centralizing procurement and therefore, as a way to control spending. However, organizations today realize that **they need to expand efficiencies far beyond cost control measures.** They are focused on new areas of effectiveness, such as establishing business process efficiency, central security checks and workforce management best practices.

As businesses expand their efficiency strategies, they also need to expand their VMS strategy. **Companies can lose direction if their VMS approach is focused solely on cost, especially if it is used for procuring labor and contractors.** Quality will be lost when the sole hiring goal is to achieve the lowest cost.

In today's tight IT labor market, organizations need to realize that when **securing IT contractors simply based upon costs, they risk not having access to top quality IT talent.**

Although there is a trend for VMS to be "run by people who buy paperclips, **procurement people need to look at labor differently,**" according to Karen Wilson, co-founder of VMS professionals, a national association of companies that focuses on best practices in the acquisition and management of contingent labor. A successful VMS program is one that is "more collaborative and less 'whip-and-chair'," says Wilson.

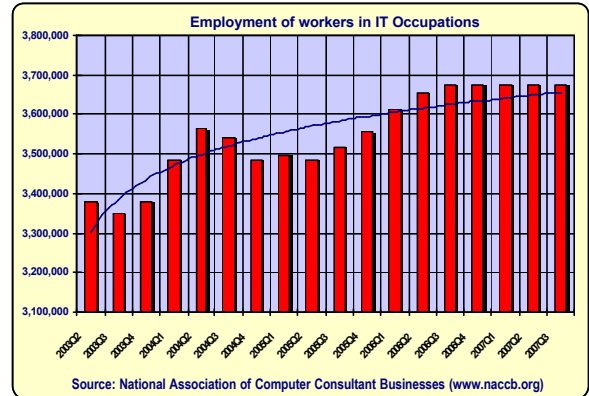
Although IT consultants/contractors may not need staffing companies to locate suitable gigs in such a tight IT labor market, most of corporate America no longer has direct contact with contractors due to the rise of VMS. Therefore, staffing companies are competing (by way of paying faster, increased pay rates, etc.) for IT consultants/contractors. According to Wilson, **"When there is short supply, consultants have choices and they vote with their feet."**

Taking a similar approach, without an outside VMS vendor, is Naperville, Illinois-based OfficeMax. The program manager for Contingent Labor Contracts and Controls for OfficeMax is Amy McGraner, who accepts that some of her managers may have previously employed or worked with a contractor. At OfficeMax, managers can engage contractors directly, **as long as the independent contractor is comfortable being paid through an outside payroll vendor.**

Let Stress Work for You
By Pat Boer, Monster Contributing Writer

Even in a booming economy, people suffer stress. Causes include excessive workloads, tension between coworkers, disrespectful bosses and missed opportunities. Rapid change creates new jobs and more stress. So, what to do?

Don't fight it. Make stress work for you by recognizing it. When we do that, it's called becoming resilient. Resilience is what happens as a result of coping well or recovering from losses. It's more than bouncing back, it means taking risks, learning to live with uncertainty and solving problems creatively. We do this in three ways:



Name It – Identify what is stressful and solve the problem creatively. For example, launching a career is stressful for young adults, who fail to realize that workforce stress is hardest on them. It's a myth that the youth have it easy. By recognizing this, you can stop suffering more than you need to.

Work for a Company that Matches Your Values – Find companies committed to training and development. Continue your education. Learning is one of the best strategies to make stress work for you and help you become resilient.

Follow an Individualized Plan of Action – When you feel stressed, stop what you are doing and breathe deeply, relax your mind and body, and then visualize your goal and see yourself achieving it.

Restate every negative thought with a positive statement about your strengths. Set mini-behavioral goals – actions you can take now, such as, "Today I will find three networking leads or volunteer somewhere; etc."

Making stress work for you and becoming resilient takes practice. You'll have your setbacks, but resilient people are those who take action, solve problems and reserve time for renewal. So start making stress work for you. Identify your stress, find employers who value resilience and follow an action plan. Soon you'll be headed in the right direction!

Occupation	3Q2007 Unemployment rate %
Computer and information systems managers	1.1
Computer, automated teller and office machine repairers	3.9
Computer programmers	2.0
Computer scientists and systems analysts	1.8
Computer software engineers	2.8
Computer support specialists	4.7

Network and computer systems administrators	0.7
Network systems and data communications analysts	0.6
<i>Source: unpublished tabulations of Current Population Survey data furnished by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.</i>	

A Look at IT Budgets for 2008

Assessing where IT departments are planning to spend their IT dollars is a good way to **ensure your skills as an IT professional continue to be relevant in the years ahead**. *eWeek* magazine reports that although IT security and disaster recovery will continue to have an important role in IT, three new areas are gaining in recognition and budget importance: 1) **going "green,"** 2) **data analytics** and 3) **Knowledge transfer**.

The trend to "go green" is driven in part by bottom-line electricity costs and also by the desire to be seen by customers as environmentally supportive. **Contributing to efforts that reduce global warming is quickly becoming an important part of good corporate citizenship.**

As far as data analytics goes, management teams want greater understanding of markets, customers and what drives both. Businesses are therefore expected to make **further investments in data warehousing in order to boost their ability to analyze business and marketplace trends.**

Finally, to facilitate the exchange of employee knowledge and ensure institutional knowledge doesn't "walk out the door," businesses are looking to technology to improve knowledge transfer processes. While the **science doesn't exist for downloading the entire contents of a human's brain**, tools like Enterprise 2.0, blogs, wikis, social networking and other emerging technologies offer some exciting opportunities for accessing and retaining critical business knowledge.

Tips & Tricks Corner

Give Your Second Monitor Some Style

Now that two monitor set-ups are more commonplace (and not just for executives demanding the added status), it's time to dress up that second monitor.

Here's an easy trick to give your second monitor different wallpaper and its very own personality!

What's the process? Basically, you are going to trick your second monitor into displaying what it thinks is a Web page but is in fact only a local image.

The Steps

- ◆ Right-click on any open area of the desktop and select "Properties."
- ◆ Go to the "Desktop" tab, which is where the current wallpaper is selected, and at the bottom select the "Customize Desktop" tab.
- ◆ Choose the "Web" tab, and select the "New" button, and hit the "Browse" button on the bottom "To add a picture or HTML document."
- ◆ Navigate to the image you want, select it and hit the "Open" button, then "OK" in the "New Desktop Item" window after making sure it is checked in the "Desktop Items" page, "OK" back to the "Desktop" tab in "Display Properties," and choose "Apply" and "OK."
- ◆ The image may or may not appear on the second monitor at first; just move the cursor to the top of the image and a window bar will appear.
- ◆ Drag the image to the second monitor and click on the full window icon. And there you have it. A bit of variety to add to your desktops and your busy day.