

# OUTSOURCING: Law firms have concerns about confidentiality and quality control

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Onshore vendors are a more established option for discovery work. Marc Zamsky runs the Philadelphia office for onshore vendor Excelerate Discovery and has worked in the industry since 1996. He said outsourcing has changed the landscape for document review and other commoditized legal work. Its main selling points are the cost and the fact that the Indian lawyers are permanent employees familiar with that type of work. But he thinks offshore agencies are best suited for repetitive assignments where little retraining is

required.

"If one of our U.S. contract attorneys is charging \$45 an hour and getting 100 documents reviewed, that is more efficient than an Indian lawyer charging \$30 an hour and only getting 50 documents reviewed per hour," Zamsky said.

Klehr Harrison Harvey Branzberg, a 100-lawyer firm based in Philadelphia, uses Indian outsourcing agencies for document review.

"They can review 100 leases and extract information and post it into a useable format," real estate partner Gregory Gosfield said. "That saves me or one of our associ-

ates about four hours where we can be billing clients for more important matters. But if you don't provide them with the exact right information, that can create problems. You have to give them precise instructions."

Gosfield said American vendors provide the same service, but the pricing is too rich.

"But the quality is better so I would use them for higher-level work," Gosfield said.

Tom Molchan, senior vice president and associate general counsel at Aramark Corp., said the general perception in the in-house legal world is that more U.S. law-

yers are becoming more open to offshore outsourcing but confidentiality and quality still remain concerns.

"You really have to do your homework because there are some quality vendors and some that are not," Molchan said.

Goldstein spends much of his time trying to convert skeptics. Pangea3 was acquired last month by Thompson Reuters, which Goldstein said gives it additional credibility and makes a statement that offshore outsourcing is "a permanent piece of the legal ecosystem."

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## ON TOPIC

Q: What is the state of the job market for accountants right now?



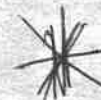
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**BECAUSE OF** our continued growth, we hired throughout the downturn and currently are actively hiring experienced auditors and tax professionals for many of our practice areas. But we're finding that while more high-quality candidates are beginning to step into the market as the economy begins to improve, the general and pervasive feeling of uncertainty about the economy has greatly affected the way in which candidates are searching. Good people are no longer interested in mass marketing themselves through job boards and recruiters — the risk is too high. The best candidates today are learning about and pursuing new positions through people they know and trust — which is why so many of our recent hires have been referrals.



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**WE ARE HIRING.** We continue to look for those professionals that are able to bring a skill set that matches the industries and niches we serve. In addition, we have a co-op program in which we invite college students to intern with our firm and we usually hire six to eight. We offer co-ops the first opportunity for jobs once they graduate from college and hire one to two a year from the program. We have experienced a significant increase in applications from entry-level people this past year — more than double the amount compared to previous years. This may be due to the increase of students majoring in accounting in college and the weak economic climate. Overall, although there is great uncertainty, many clients are experiencing more sales and revenues but are still cautiously optimistic. Tax planning is an important aspect of business especially with the change in the congressional landscape. With clients doing better and the increased need for tax planning, there will likely be an upswing with accountants being hired in private industry and public accounting.



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**THE STATE OF THE JOB MARKET** is definitely improving. We are seeing companies hiring accountants again, after experiencing a weak job market the past few years. At EisnerAmper, we are hiring in specific targeted growth areas, such as tax and financial services. The main factor influencing the job market is pent-up demand. Many accounting departments are understaffed due to the lack of hiring in the recent past.