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**FINANCIAL LEADERS ADDRESS CHALLENGES FACING ACCOUNTING,
FINANCE AND AUDIT PROFESSIONS**

**New Report Documents Strategies for Increasing Number of Finance Practitioners,
Preparing Workforce for the Future**

MENLO PARK, CA -- The future of the accounting, finance and audit professions will be largely determined by their response to escalating talent shortages and other challenges of the post-regulatory-reform era, says a distinguished group of leaders in these fields. The Robert Half International Financial Leadership Council, which includes many of the top financial minds in the United States and Canada, has recommended a number of strategies for addressing these issues. Their suggestions have been collected in a new report, *Charting the Future of the Accounting, Finance and Audit Professions*.

The council represents a well-respected and diverse membership, including leaders from the corporate world, public accounting firms, industry associations, and top accounting and finance universities in the United States and Canada. The group met in early 2007 to discuss the impact of changing workforce demographics on today's accounting landscape, and the recruitment and retention challenges associated with these shifts. The council also addressed new skills that will be required of practitioners as the professions evolve to support the global business community.

“During a two-day summit, the council examined the key issues confronting the accounting, finance and audit professions, and produced a visionary set of recommendations,” said Max Messmer, chairman and CEO of Robert Half International. “Notable among these are a call for rethinking traditional recruitment and retention strategies, and improving collaboration between business and academia.”



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Messmer continued, “To help businesses respond to these challenges, we are pleased to make available the proposals of this esteemed group of financial leaders in a comprehensive, forward-looking report.”

Following are some of the key findings and recommended solutions presented in

Charting the Future of the Accounting, Finance and Audit Professions:

Recruitment and Retention in the Post-Reform Era

- Competition for the most skilled accounting, finance and audit professionals is growing at a time when the pool of candidates in many areas is shrinking or expected to soon. This requires new approaches for locating and retaining these individuals.
- New recruiting strategies could range from enhancing the branding of the accounting, finance and audit professions in the media and on college campuses to showcasing professionals who have achieved a good balance between career and family.
- A particular challenge for employers is adapting to the attitudes, expectations and values of Generation Y. Strategies to counteract career dissatisfaction among entry-level professionals and enhance retention could include offering more career guidance, projects that involve continual learning, and a better balance between routine and challenging assignments.

Preparing the Workforce for the Future

- To succeed in tomorrow’s accounting, finance and audit environments, professionals need a wider range of skills than ever before. This goes for practitioners at all levels, not just students.
- The ability to communicate effectively is one of the most essential interpersonal skills for both seasoned professionals and new entrants to accounting, finance and auditing. Technologies such as instant messaging and e-mail have actually increased, rather than decreased, the need for strong communication skills.
- As financial professionals assume more strategic roles, they will need to become more analytical. They must be able to not only produce financial reports and perform complex calculations, but also identify and explain what is meaningful in their data or findings. They need to be able to answer the “why” behind the numbers.



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Adapting to Today's Global Business Environment

- Professionals can improve their ability to operate in today's more global business world by increasing their cultural literacy, professional judgment and familiarity with new financial reporting models.
- Global talent sourcing is not yet widely used by U.S. businesses, but the urgent need for professionals with the right skills -- wherever they may be located -- may drive more companies to seek talent globally in the years ahead.

Following the summit, council members committed to ongoing collaboration and leadership to address additional emerging issues. Robert Half will continue to play a role in facilitating further discussions.

For a full list of council members, see www.financialleadershipcouncil.com.

About Robert Half International

Robert Half International was founded in 1948 and is traded on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE: RHI). Its financial staffing divisions include Robert Half® Finance & Accounting, Accountemps® and Robert Half® Management Resources, for full-time, temporary and senior-level project professionals, respectively. The company has more than 350 offices throughout North America, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region, and offers online job search services on its divisional websites, all of which can be accessed at www.rhi.com.

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