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TEST 2 READING PART 3 Problems in the IT industry In the information technology industry, it is widely acknowledged that how well IT departments of the future can fulfil their business goals will depend not on the regular updating of technology, which is essential for them to do, #0000ff> but on how well they can hold on to the people skilled at manipulating the newest technology. This is becoming more difficult. Best estimates of the current shortfall in IT staff in the UK are between 30,000 and 50,000, and growing. And there is no end to the problem in sight. #0000ff> A severe industry-wide lack of investment in training means the long-term skills base is both ageing and shrinking. Employers are chasing experienced staff in ever-decreasing circles, and, according to a recent government report, 250,000 new IT jobs will be created over the next decade. Most employers are confining themselves to dealing with the immediate problems. There is little evidence, for example, that #0000ff> they are stepping up their intake of raw recruits for in-house training, or retraining existing staff from other functions. This is the course of action recommended by the Computer Software Services Association, but research shows its members are adopting the short-term measure of bringing in more and more consultants on a contract basis. However, this approach is becoming less and less acceptable as the general shortage of skills, coupled with high

demand, sends contractor rates soaring. An experienced contract programmer, for example, can now earn at least double the current permanent salary. With IT professionals increasingly attracted to the financial rewards and flexibility of consultancy work, average staff turnover rates are estimated to be around 15%. While many companies in the financial services sector are managing to contain their losses by #0000ff> offering skilled IT staff golden handcuffs - deferred loyalty bonuses that tie them in until a certain date - other organisations, like local governments, are unable to match the competitive salaries and perks on offer in the private sector and contractor market, and are suffering turnover rates of up to 60% a year. But while loyalty bonuses have grabbed the headlines, there are other means of holding on to staff. Some companies are doing additional IT pay reviews in the year and paying market premiums. But such measures can create serious employee relations problems among those excluded, both within and outside IT departments. Many industry experts advise employers to link bonuses to performance wherever possible. However, #0000ff> employers are realising that bonuses will only succeed if they are accompanied by other incentives such as attractive career prospects, training, and challenging work that meets the individuals long-term ambitions. This means managers need to allocate assignments more strategically and think about advancing their staff as well as their business. Some employers advocate giving key employees projects that would normally be handled by people with slightly more experience or capability. For many employers, however, the urgency of the

problem demands a more immediate solution, such as recruiting skilled workers from overseas. But even this is not easy, with strict quotas on the number of work permits issued. In addition, opposition to the recruitment of IT people from other countries is growing, as many professionals believe it will lead to even less investment in training and thus a long-term weakening of the UK skills base.

13 According to the first paragraph, the success of iT departments will depend on

A their success at retaining their skilled staff.

B the extent to which they invest in new technology.

C their attempts to recruit staff with the necessary skills.

D the ability of employees to keep up with the latest developments.

14 A problem referred to in the second paragraph is that

A the government needs to create thousands of new IT posts.

B the pool of skilled IT people will get even smaller in the future.

C company budgets for IT training have been decreasing steadily.

D older IT professionals have not had adequate training.

15 What possible solution to the long-term problems in the IT industry is referred to in the third paragraph?

A ensure that permanent staff earn the same as contract staff

B expand company training programmes for new and old employees

C conduct more research into the reasons for staff leaving

D offer top rates to attract the best specialist consultants

16 In some businesses in the financial services sector, the IT staffing problem has led to

A cash promises for skilled staff after a specified period of time.

B more employees seeking alternative employment in the public sector.

C the loss of customers to rival organisations.

D more flexible conditions of work

for their staff. 17 Employers accept that IT professionals are more likely to stay in their present post if they A are set more realistic performance targets. B have a good working relationship with staff in other departments. #0000ff>C are provided with good opportunities for professional development. D receive a remuneration package at top market rates. 18 According to the final paragraph, the UK skills base will be weakened by A changes to managers strategic thinking. B insufficient responsibility being given to IT staff. C the employment of IT staff with too little experience. #0000ff>D the hiring of IT personnel from abroad.   Problems in the IT industry   IT

IT

IT   but   but on how well they can hold on to the people skilled at manipulating the newest technology.

A

A severe industry-wide lack of investment in training means the long-term skills base is both ageing and shrinking

B   IT
            Pool   a pool of skilled labour   supply, common supply, reserve
                IT
                This is the course of action recommended

this is   this
is   they are stepping up their intake of raw
recruits for in-house training, or retraining existing staff from other
functions.

B

IT

While many
companies in the financial services sector are managing to contain
their losses by offering skilled IT staff golden handcuffs - deferred
loyalty bonuses that tie them in until a certain date
"   "

A

Deferred   after a specified period of time   IT

employers are realising that bonuses will only succeed if
they are accompanied by other incentives such as attractive career
prospects, training, and challenging work that meets the individuals
long-term ambitions.

C

opposition to the
recruitment of IT people from other countries is growing, as many
professionals believe it will lead to even less investment in training

and thus a long-term weakening of the UK skills base.

IT

D

IT #0000ff>

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