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Local IT staffing and budgets growing in 2010, survey shows

South Florida Business Journal - by [Bill Frogameni](#)

South Florida's technology sector is seeing the green shoots of the recovery.

According to a survey of 681 local technology executives, IT budgets and staffing are growing in 2010. The annual South Florida Tech Leadership Survey, conducted by **Protech**, a Boca Raton-based technology staffing firm, found that the average IT budget increased 6 percent for 2010, compared with 2 percent last year. Also, 30 percent of tech executives plan to increase staff this year, versus 24 percent who planned to do so in 2009.

"With everything I read and everyone I talk to, I agree that the IT spending will increase this year," said Mark Wyllie, CEO of Flagship Solutions Group, a value-added reseller in Boca Raton. "I can definitely feel things easing up."

Though Wyllie started his business early last year, he said he's keeping very busy and has seen a definite pickup this year.

Hiring has picked up at Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. By the end of the year, the Miami-based cruise operator (NYSE: RCL) plans to add six to 10 full-time workers to its 400-strong IT department, Chief Information Officer Bill Martin said.

"Percentage-wise, it's not that much, but it is more people," he said. "We are hiring and we're replacing the people who leave."

That was not the case last year, he noted.

The Protech study also found that the number of firms using temporary IT workers, or those doing contract work, more than doubled to 29 percent this year from 14 percent in 2009. While hiring has picked up, the increased use of temp workers indicates that businesses are still sensitive about cost containment, Protech CEO Deborah Vazquez said.

Currently, a little more than 100 of Royal Caribbean's 400 IT workers are temporary staff, Martin said. But, the company could easily hire an additional 30 temporary staffers if a needed project is approved, he noted.

Though Broward Health's full-time IT staff has remained flat, at about 150, the hospital system is using more temporary help this year. Last year, Broward Health used three contract workers, but it now has 10 to 15 contract workers, Chief Information Officer Doris Crain said.

The budget rose about 2 percent, too, she noted. The modest gains were driven partly by the need to update systems for electronic medical records, she said.