

services to makers of drugs, medical instruments and diagnostic equipment.

Even in the Northeast, "where it's difficult to find a job area that's up," positions are open in the health-care field, says William Morin, chairman of Drake Beam Morin, a New York outplacement and management-consulting firm.

Information technology is another promising area. While the financial-services community has been battered by cutbacks, it has consistently been hiring trained computer professionals with a working knowledge of the banking and brokerage industries, says William Ayers, president of Ayers Group Inc., another New York outplacement-consulting firm.

And while the number of consultants has surged since heavy corporate layoffs began in the mid-1980s, the consulting business continues to be an attractive option. One reason: More companies are contracting out various services—accounting, say, or advertising—to cut costs. Many employers are contracting with former executives to perform the same services they previously provided.

### **Wanted: Electrical Engineers**

Consider Robert Spiel, a 20-year veteran of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He opted to set up shop in Chicago as a consultant specializing in investigating art thefts and forgeries. Essentially, it's the same work he did at the FBI, and recently he even did some work for his former employer. "The government is much more receptive to contracting out such assignments," Mr. Spiel says. "Ten years ago, that kind of thing was unthinkable."

Other professionals still in demand are electrical engineers, environmental-health and safety professionals, tax experts and

marketing specialists. In addition, "if you can raise money or put on programs, you're very much in demand in the non-profit sector," says Peter R. Abeson, an Ayers Group executive vice president.

Willingness to relocate is also a plus these days. "Companies want good people, and many are willing to pay to make relocation worthwhile," says the Ayers Group's Mr. Abeson. "It may also become a necessity. Lots of people are going to have to go where the jobs are."

Geographically, the Pacific Northwest is considered by several employment consultants to be the region offering the most employment openings, even taking into account the recent defense-industry cutbacks. In addition to health care, the region's strength comes from the aerospace, computer, retail and manufacturing industries, says Drake Beam Morin.

Witness the heavy migration recently to this part of the country. Atlas Van Lines data, tracking the moves it handled during the first nine months of 1991, shows that more people moved into Washington state and Oregon than moved out. And the trend continues, says J. Stephen Mumma, an Atlas executive. That contrasts with states such as California, Massachusetts and New York, which registered more outbound migration in the same period, he says.

Atlas data also indicates that there was migration into the Southeast and Gulf states, including Texas, during the same time period. Atlanta, in particular, is one city "where there's a lot of hiring going on," notes Laura House Herring, president of the Impact Group, a St. Louis human-resources management firm specializing in relocation and outplacement.

As one example, she notes that Equifax Inc., a provider of information for insur-

ance claims and credit evaluation based in Atlanta, recently opened a customer-service center in that city employing about 400 people. The company hired locally in addition to transferring employees from other divisions, Ms. Herring explains.

The Midwest, meanwhile, appears to be holding its own. Food concerns, like Con-Agra Inc. in Omaha, continue to create new markets, while a wholesaler like Super Valu Stores Inc., based in Eden Prairie, Minn., is a "juggernaut for growth and stability," asserts Mr. Polson, the Minneapolis executive recruiter. Another Midwest job market: electric, gas and water utilities. "These businesses may not be the most dynamic, but they tend to be almost recession-proof," Mr. Polson explains.

In the current tight job environment, employment counselors advise out-of-work executives to broaden their search substantially. "Discharged managers are finding they greatly expand their options and chances of winning a new job when they think in terms of their functional abilities and search out job opportunities in other industries," says James E. Challenger, a Chicago employment consultant.

That's what Richard Barrett did. Having lost his job as a banker in Washington, D.C., he parlayed 35 years of financial experience into a fund-raising position at Georgetown University. "Because I'd been a banker, I thought I still had to be a banker," he says. "It was extremely counterproductive. . . . It was only when I started concentrating on my skills in marketing and considering various alternatives, like the not-for-profit world, that I found there was a greater need for fund-raisers than there was for bankers. And that's when it clicked."