



Temp Jobs for CEOs

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Sept. 29, 2003 issue - In the past few years, 47-year-old Mark Paul of Portland, Ore., has spent two months as CEO of an Internet company, six months as vice president of marketing and sales for a software firm, six months as business manager of a tech school and two years as COO of an automotive information-technology shop. But he's hardly a guy who can't hold a job. Since 1989, Paul has been an "interim executive," a high-class temp hired for big bucks to solve big problems—and then disappear.

THIS NEW MARKET, valued by one researcher's estimate in the hundreds of millions of dollars, took off during the dot-com boom, when techies were forming companies so fast they couldn't find enough employees to handle the business side. Now companies like Exelon Corp., a Chicago energy-services firm worth roughly \$19 billion, are hiring temps to handle discrete information-technology projects without having to commit to permanent employees. There's been a big recent demand for temp CFOs to guide companies through new post-Enron corporate-governance and reporting requirements. Salaries can start at \$150,000 and pass the \$1 million mark. Not bad for fill-in work.

—L.S.

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