



Cathy Alfandre's E-Letter

Create greater joy and fulfillment in your working life.

January 2009

Greetings!

For this e-letter, I thought it would be helpful to reprint an excellent article by a fellow career coach--Katharine Hansen, Associate Publisher and Creative Director, [Quintessential Careers](#). It was recently published in the [Career Management Alliance](#) newsletter, and I found it chock full of helpful insights about online job search. If you are looking for work, or think you might be sometime in the next year or so, please read on. This article is quite a bit longer than my usual newsletters, but well worth it.

Real-World Recruiting and the Online Future: Implications for Job Seekers

One of my favorite pastimes of late has been to read articles, listen to webinars, and attend conferences that come from the recruiter perspective - and then figure out how the recruiters' message can be flipped around to benefit the job-seeking candidate.

A prominent case in point was the panel entitled "Real-World Recruiting and the Online Future" at the fall 2008 Kennedy Information Recruiting Conference and Expo in Orlando. The panelists, Gerry Crispin of CareerXroads.com, Joel Cheesman of Cheezhead.com, Mitzi Adwell of The Newman Group, Chris Maikisch of the Daytona Beach News-Journal, and moderator Tony Lee of Adicio Inc., offered their audience of corporate recruiters eight points about recruiting and the online future. In this article, I examine the implications of each for candidates:

1. The panelists advised recruiters to **Get Social Online**, citing a statistic that almost 60% of all online users are now members of a social network. Recruiting through social networking was, in fact, a pervasive theme throughout the conference, with nearly every session delving into some aspect of this topic.

Implications for candidates:

- Belonging to some key social networks (such as the big three, Facebook, LinkedIn, and MySpace, plus the micro-blogging platform Twitter) exposes candidates to recruiters and enables them to be "found" online.
- Candidates are increasingly able to find and interact with recruiters online.

2. The panel told the audience that **It's Time to Blog**. They noted that creating two-way communication that "pulls" visitors online is a key method for increasing your visibility, especially to passive candidates. The panelists cited, for example, the blog entries at [Microspotting](#), about what it's like to work at Microsoft, and at [Wirelessjobs.com](#).

Implications for candidates:

- Candidates have increasing opportunities to learn through blogs about prospective employers and recruiters and get a feel for a company's culture and what it would

be like to work for a given employer. Job seekers can also learn who's hiring by reading recruiter blogs.

--Candidates, too, can blog to establish themselves as experts and thought-leaders in their fields, again raising their visibility with hiring decision-makers.

3. The panelists touted that **Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) Really Work**, exhorting recruiters that "making sure your corporate site appears high in search-engine results will pay huge dividends." SEO is usually defined as a subset of SEM, and SEM typically involves paying for high placement in search engines.

Implications for candidates:

--The same is true for candidates, who can optimize online portfolios, resumes, and websites to make themselves "findable" by recruiters and employers. (Paying for search-engine placement, however, would be rather unusual for candidates.)

4. One panel piece of advice was a bit surprising, though driven by the current weak economic climate: **It's All About Local**. The panelists told the audience that "attracting the best recruits within your local market is critical as funding for employee relocations disappears fast." Here, Maikisch of the Daytona Beach News-Journal put in a bid for the value of online newspaper classifieds for job listings.

Implications for candidates:

--Candidates who might have been interested in relocating may be deterred by having to foot their own relocation bills. They may want to shift their focus to local opportunities, especially because they may be seen as especially desirable to local employers.

5. The audience learned that **It's Telecommuting Time**, as the panelists explained that "anytime, anywhere work environments are exploding thanks to online collaborative tools, onerous immigration laws, and rising travel and energy costs."

Implications for candidates:

--Candidates will want to be more attuned to telecommuting opportunities, which they might not have thought about before the current economic meltdown and the emergence of tech tools that make remote work increasingly effective.

--Already employed workers may want to propose telecommuting arrangements to their bosses, given that employers may be more receptive to remote situations because of their cost-saving potential. Those in the job hunt may want to push for telecommuting as they are negotiating job-offer packages.

6. The panelists declared that **Video Is Everywhere**, noting that "video is cheap and easy to produce, and may even have arrived in time to save video resumes . . . or not." The importance of video for recruiters and employers is as a communications medium to show candidates what their organizations are like and what it's like to work there. In fact, the panelists observed that videos are the best way to answer the candidate question, "Why should I work here?" Panelists noted that employer videos are proliferating on sites such as YouTube, company career sites, and sites dedicated to employer videos.

The panelists did not feel video resumes have a future. They cited the[se] reasons: the time it takes for hiring decision-makers to watch video resumes compared to the few seconds it takes to scan a resume, the employment-discrimination concerns that accompany seeing what the candidate looks like before the interview, and government requirements about keeping resume data on file (to comply, employers would need to download and store video resumes). Still, video from the candidate perspective is not entirely dead. Employers are using video interviewing to cut costs. Kevin Wheeler, president and founder of Global Learning Resources, Inc., recently quoted John Younger, president and founder of Accolo, a San Francisco-based RPO provider, "While I don't think videos designed to replace a complete resume will ever take off, short videos where a candidate answers one or two particular questions will become very popular and useful."

Implications for candidates:

- Candidates should probably not rush out and create a video resume but should monitor video resumes as a trend that may or may not take off.
- Job seekers will need to add "camera presence" to their arsenals of interviewing skills.
- Opportunities abound for candidates to learn about employers through online videos.

7. It wasn't exactly news to hear the panel declare that **Niches Make Their Mark**. I felt as though I've been hearing for several years - both from the job-seeker side and the recruiter side - the panel's argument that "targeted niche sites attract qualified, often passive candidates who identify with talent communities." We've been hearing for some time now that the big job boards are declining, while the niche sites remain vibrant. The panel cited two interesting niche sites:

--[Climber.com](#), which helps job seekers "understand yourself and reveal what types of jobs/companies you will best fit." The Climber.com site states that it is "for people who are not necessarily actively looking for a new job, but rather who are open to recruitment by companies." The site enables seekers to "connect anonymously to recruiters, research companies, and salary information, and refer jobs to trusted co-workers and friends."

--[My Perfect Gig](#), "a members-only, private career network for engineering professionals where companies and talented individuals speak a 'common language.'"

Implications for candidates:

- Candidates who are not already using niche sites should consider doing so.

8. The panel told recruiters that **Brand Building Works**. The employer brand, also a strong recurring theme throughout the conference, "is viewed by active and passive candidates" and "will directly affect your ability to attract and retain new hires," the panelists said.

Implications for candidates:

- The flip side of employer branding, of course, is candidate personal branding. Just as well-branded employers will attract talent, candidates with strong brands will attract recruiters and employers.
- Job seekers will likely develop greater awareness of how well employers are branding themselves and may become more discriminating in choosing well-

branded employers.

The panel briefly listed additional trends. Here's a quick look at how these might affect candidates:

- Mobile will drive the next evolution in recruiting. Recruiters and candidates will increasingly interact through cell phones, texting, and other mobile technologies.
- Reference checking gets easier online. Candidates will want to become more careful than ever in whom they list as references. Experts have pointed to an online psychology in which referrals are often more candid and critical in giving references online than they are over the phone.
- Seek alliances that expand your reach with non-traditional venues. Candidates can expect recruiters to reach out to them in such unusual places as airplanes and cinemas.

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I hope you found this article helpful. As always, please contact me with any questions or thoughts. All the best,

Cathy

Upcoming Courses in CT

"Writing a Great Resume": A one-night course that covers 5 key strategies for writing or revising your resume, provides loads of tips, and includes individualized feedback on each participant's resume.

- **Tuesday, February 3**, 7:00-9:00 PM, Fairfield Continuing Education
- **Tuesday, February 24**, 7:00-9:00 PM, Trumbull Continuing Education
- **Thursday, March 5**, 7:00-9:00 PM, Norwalk Continuing Education

"Acing the Interview": A one-night course covering specific techniques you can use before, during, and after the interview to boost your confidence and significantly improve your results. The session includes time for participants to practice what they learn. Please bring a current resume.

- **Tuesday, February 10**, 6:30-9:00 PM, Fairfield Continuing Education
- **Tuesday, March 3**, 7:00-9:00 PM, Trumbull Continuing Education
- **Thursday, March 12**, 7:00-9:00 PM, Norwalk Continuing Education

Please visit [Current Happenings](#) for information on how to register. Please also feel free to mention these seminars to your friends.

This bi-monthly e-letter is intended to offer ideas, tips, resources, and questions to ponder on careers, fulfilling work, and career-life decisions. I welcome your reactions and your suggestions for future topics.

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