

SOLUTIONS

a resource journal for businesses and organizations that help support, prepare, build, and grow our nation's businesses and their workforce in support of a global economy

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presented by  ProfessionalEdge

from the editors

It's spring and time to get out and start enjoying the beautiful weather with our favorite furry (and non-furry) friends. It's also time to take a fresh look at your business plans and efforts to be sure they are in line with your organization's current goals and vision. This issue of Solutions includes some great articles to help you stop and think about the services your business provides and what others are doing.

The National Resource Directory includes a great article about job resources for our returning veterans and the Veteran's Job Bank in **Veterans and Jobs: Making the Perfect Match**.

The San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board tells us how they

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Veterans and Jobs: Making the Perfect Match

The year 2011 was an eventful one for America's military community. With the drawdown of troops in Iraq, as well as the expected gradual reduction in force in Afghanistan, the need for support and access to resources has only grown and will grow even more in the coming months and years.

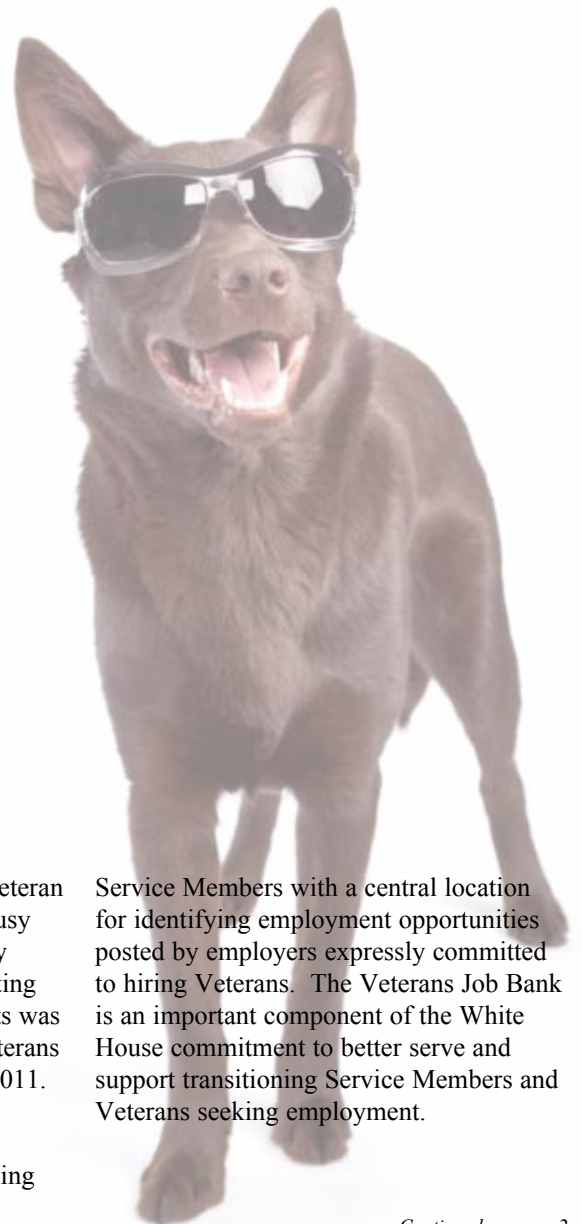
The National Resource Directory (NRD), a

Federal government website for the Veteran and military communities, has been busy preparing for this challenge, especially concerning the employment of separating Service Members. Key to these efforts was the creation of the first-of-its-kind Veterans Job Bank, launched in November of 2011.

Housed on the NRD.gov website, the Veterans Job Bank provides transitioning

Service Members with a central location for identifying employment opportunities posted by employers expressly committed to hiring Veterans. The Veterans Job Bank is an important component of the White House commitment to better serve and support transitioning Service Members and Veterans seeking employment.

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San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board Takes Business Education Online

By Sandy Harmsen, Executive Director of the Workforce Investment Board and Director of the County of San Bernardino Workforce Development Department

In February 2012, the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board hosted its first interactive, online webinar for businesses with Michael Mollenhauer, President of 1to1Network. More than 40 attendees participated online as Mollenhauer walked them through the steps of creating a Facebook Business Page, explained tips and resources to generate "likes" and the best way to utilize the platform's advertising program. Like all of its business workshops that take place within San Bernardino County, this event was available at no-cost to participants.

"Businesses that succeed on Facebook utilize it to build awareness and generate credibility that will lead customers to purchase a product or service," said Mollenhauer. "I'm very grateful to be a partner with the Workforce Investment Board because they work really hard to help employers turn a profit in today's difficult marketplace."

Cary Harwin, President and CEO of Catalyst Development has been in the computer software business since the early 1980's. When he attended a social media workshop hosted by the Workforce Investment Board in August 2011, he became amazed at the possibilities. "I lost some sleep that evening as I ended up spending several hours on the Internet exploring and expanding my knowledge on several items Michael had presented," Harwin said.

Organized and hosted by the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board's Business Resource Team, the webinar format is a great way to expand services and resources to business owners and staff that may not have the time to travel during busy workdays. A computer, an Internet connection, and a phone line are all that are needed to listen and observe the live instruction and demonstration. Participants can also easily ask questions through the "live chat" feature on the webinar's module screen.

In addition to hosting business workshops around the county, the Workforce Investment Board offers additional online marketing webinars, as well as a 12-part online Business Excellence Training Program. The program is designed for small businesses to teach business basics, problem solving and quality management principles. Participants can choose the specific learning modules and receive a Certificate of Business Excellence Module Completion. Participants who attend more than 75% of the modules will receive a Certificate of Program Completion.

"The business workshops introduce local firms to the many great resources and services the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board offers," said Josie Gonzales, Chair and County of San Bernardino Fifth District Supervisor. "Employers

Editors... Continued from front page

are helping local businesses with online learning opportunities in **San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board Takes Business Education Online.**

JobLinks enlightens us about creative transportation options for health care workers in **Connecting Health Care Workers to Jobs and Training Opportunities.**

And, you can learn about how marketing has changed dramatically over the past decade in **Marketing in the 90s, 2000s, and Today** by ProfessionalEdge.

This edition proudly features the **Made in America Store** in our America Proud section.

Please feel free to forward Solutions to your friends and colleagues, and if you would like to submit an article or case study, contact us at info@gettheprofessionaledge.com, or visit our web site at www.gettheprofessionaledge.com for readership and advertising information, and a Call for Articles.

And, be sure to sign up for our new blog, The EDGE – a blog that gets down to business!

Enjoy!

Kim Luedke and Kerry Brooks,
Editors



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America Proud

The Made in America Store was opened by Mark Andol on April 3, 2010. Located just 20 minutes from downtown Buffalo, NY, it is the only general merchandise store in the country that sells 100% American Made Products, down to the packaging. Our mission is to restore U.S. manufacturing jobs by giving Americans a brick & mortar store and e-commerce site that guarantees that each product sold is entirely American Made down to the components and packaging.

The idea grew out of Andol's other business, General Welding & Fabricating, which he began in his father's garage in 1985. The business expanded to a four-location manufacturing operation before losing a major account to a Chinese competitor and seeing sales drop off in the recession. While closing two facilities, laying off workers (including family), and reading up on overseas competition, Andol saw the appeal of an entirely U.S.-centered business. "I feel for the blue-collar worker," Andol said.

In addition to requiring that all products sold are 100% American Made, the Made in America Store insists on top quality at comparable pricing. "Our customers know they are helping to feed an American family when they shop at our store." Andol said. And, each manufacturing job has a positive economic impact of providing four additional jobs for the U.S. economy.

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The challenges Veterans face during the employment search are daunting. The unemployment rate among Veterans is currently 13 percent, which is higher than the national average for the general population. Some experts predict that the unemployment rate for young combat veterans — particularly National Guard and reserve members ages 18-24 — could reach as high as 50 percent in the next two years. One of the most pressing issues facing these transitioning Service Members is how to match their military skills to civilian jobs. This is where the Veterans Job Bank can help.

Here's how it works: The Veterans Job Bank returns job opportunities based on search criteria entered by the user. Powered by a Google Custom Search, jobs are drawn from various job boards that have specifically tagged jobs for Veterans, at companies that understand the value they bring to the workplace.

A highlight of the tool's job search function is a military occupational code (MOC) translator that converts the user's military experience into related civilian job skills — which can then be used to match specific employment openings. In addition, users can search by keyword and location.

For instance, if you were a 29E in the Army, which is an Electronic Warfare Specialist, and were searching for jobs in Arlington, Virginia, you would enter that MOC code, which can correspond to Systems Engineering in a civilian job. You would then receive a list of private and public sector jobs suited to those skills acquired in the military.

In support of this initiative, the NRD developed a Veterans Job Bank Widget, which gives access to the Veterans Job Bank directly from other websites. (A widget is an online application built to be displayed on any website, and can also be placed on a personalized home page or blog.) An easy to implement feature that any individual or organization can use, the Veterans Job Bank Widget allows Veterans to quickly and easily conduct a targeted job search without leaving the website they are visiting. It requires no maintenance; as jobs are added to the Veterans Job Bank, the widget automatically updates.

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Connecting Health Care Workers to Jobs and Training Opportunities

This article describes steps that health care-sector leaders and allied workforce professionals can take to anticipate and create solutions to the transportation needs of the health care workforce. Information on meeting the transportation needs of other emerging sectors can be found on the Joblinks Employment Transportation Center website at www.SolutionsToGetThere.org.

Despite a steep decline in work opportunities nationwide in the wake of the recession, employment in the health care sector has continued to grow. For example, in early 2012, salaries in the Mid-Atlantic region for registered nurses' jobs are averaging \$49,000 per year and those for orderlies, nursing aides, and nursing attendants are averaging \$24,000 per year.¹

Health care workers at lower salary levels may not have much disposable income to spend on getting to work. Besides the question of affordability is the question of whether, given the nature and location of health care work shifts, existing transportation options can meet these workers' transportation needs. For example, health care workers:

- probably work shift times and durations that require commuting during off-peak hours;
- may have to travel to locations in rural or suburban areas with limited public transportation or to dispersed campus locations;
- may need to combine work trips with travel to off-site training locations, such as community colleges;
- may need to travel to multiple locations on large facility sites; and
- may need to combine travel to child care and other destinations with work trips.

Creative Solutions by Health Care Employers and Partners

- Overlake Hospital and Medical Center (Bellevue, Wash.) employs an on-site employee transportation coordinator to encourage ridesharing (i.e., carpooling and vanpooling) among hospital employees. The center also subsidizes bus passes and provides reserved parking for carpoolers.
- Loop Through University City, a partnership between the University City District and Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority, provides shuttle services among a Philadelphia transit hub, numerous medical facilities and other employers. The shuttle is supported by various area employers, whose employees ride for free.
- Swedish Medical Center (Seattle, Wash.) pays for Zipcars to facilitate employee travel among its campuses. It also allows employees to use the cars during business hours for short personal trips. The use of Zipcars reduces the need for employees to drive to and park on campus.
- University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics (Madison) offer hourly workers free bus passes and free taxi rides home during an emergency.
- Scottsdale Health Care (SHC) in Arizona provides free bus passes as a company benefit. The passes have enabled many low-wage employees, such as those in housekeeping and food services, to keep their jobs. SHC also designed its vanpool program to accommodate shift workers. A guaranteed ride home program, offered through Valley Metro, provides up to two free rides home per year in case of emergency.
- Mercy General Hospital (Sacramento, Calif.) provides ridesharing incentives such as preferred parking and gas reimbursement cards and subsidizes public transit and vanpool costs for regular riders. Those who bike or walk to work receive free meal tickets for use in the hospital cafeteria.

¹ Mid-Atlantic Regional Collaborative, MARC Regional Green Jobs portal, <https://www.marcgreenworks.com/> (accessed February 8, 2012).



How can you as a health care-sector leader promote transportation solutions for health care workers?

- Become the voice of health care workers by expressing their transportation needs during local planning processes.
- Share labor market information on available and projected jobs with area transportation providers, the local rural planning agency, or the metropolitan planning organization. This information can be used to influence the design of future transportation services to proposed new job sites and training facilities.

- Share information from the National Association of Community Health Center's state websites, which pinpoint the location of existing and proposed community health centers within each state. Incorporate that information with data provided by local economic development and transportation provider agencies to ensure appropriate services are in place prior to the opening of new centers.
- Reach out to local community colleges to create transportation strategies for health care-sector students with combined work and training schedules.
- Speak to local health care staffing agencies to identify the access needs of their temporary-to-permanent workers once they have been placed.
- Survey new hires to identify their commuting patterns and share those findings with transportation providers and local rural and metropolitan planning organizations.
- Speak to your local transit agency or Transportation Management Association to identify various rideshare options available to workers within your community.

How can you as a workforce development professional promote transportation solutions for health care workers?

- Integrate standard questions on transportation needs into the initial customer intake process.
- Post local transit maps and schedules, including information on free and reduced fares for which customers may qualify.
- Encourage health care staffing agencies to provide employers with information on Internal Revenue Service Commuter Choice tax benefits and share that information with customers.

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In addition, a mobile version of the Veterans Job Bank is now available. Simply enter NRD.gov into the browser of any smartphone, tablet or mobile device to access the job search tool on the go.

Companies interested in hiring Veterans can tag their job postings as "Veteran Committed" to ensure that they'll be picked up by the Veterans Job Bank search engine. Detailed instructions for employers can be found on the NRD's Instructions for Employer Participation page.

Besides housing the Veterans Job Bank, the NRD also provides direct access to other helpful employment-related resources, such as career exploration tools and information about apprenticeships, training, Veterans' preference and more.

The Veterans Job Bank is an important tool to support transitioning Service Members as they return from combat zones in the upcoming months and years, and begin their re-entry into their communities and the civilian workforce. For more information on the Veterans Job Bank, visit NRD.gov.

To learn how to add the Veterans Job Bank Widget to your website, please go to the Job Search Widget page or contact info@NRD.gov.

About the National Resource Directory

The National Resource Directory (NRD) is a Federal government website that provides access to thousands of services and programs that support wounded warriors, Service Members, Veterans, their families and caregivers. Visitors can find information on topics such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, military and Veterans' benefits, health care, educational opportunities, homeless assistance, employment and more. Other NRD features include a mobile version, social media, widgets that can be embedded into any third-party website, and the Veterans Job Bank employment search tool, launched in November 2011. The NRD is managed collaboratively by the U.S. Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs. For more information, visit NRD.gov.

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- Invite transportation providers, including rideshare agencies, to share route and scheduling information at job fairs.
- Provide bus passes to qualifying new hires for an initial period (e.g., three months).
- Facilitate travel training workshops that teach workers about purchasing fare cards, reading schedules, planning trips and riding safely. For workers unfamiliar with public transit, the information will increase their comfort in using transit services to get to work.

By taking a proactive role in understanding and responding to the transportation access needs of current and future health care workers, sector leaders and workforce agency staff can maximize worker access to jobs and training opportunities.

About the Joblinks Employment Transportation Center. Joblinks, supported by Federal Transit Administration and Employment and Training Administration funds, promotes affordable, reliable and accessible employment transportation options across the country. For more information, or to sign up for a free e-newsletter, please visit www.SolutionsToGetThere.org, or contact Pamela Friedman at 1-800-891-0590, ext. 720, or friedman@ctaa.org.



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who have attended these workshops later take advantage of other WIB programs and services, such as On-the-Job Training and process improvement consulting to hire new employees and streamline operations."

Success Story: Microdyne Plastics, Inc.

Judy Lopez, Director of Business Development at Microdyne Plastics, Inc., has witnessed many changes since she joined the company in 1975. The recent recession demonstrated the need for a major cultural shift in order to succeed in this new climate.



"As competition grew, we didn't want to lose jobs because we bid half a cent more than the company down the street," Lopez said. "We needed to reevaluate our suppliers and our pricing structure, cut costs, and look at ways to aggressively market ourselves rather than rely entirely on word-of-mouth."

Lopez learned about the LEAN Manufacturing Program after attending a marketing seminar hosted by the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board. This program provides local manufacturers an opportunity to receive process improvement services in cost cutting and marketing with California Manufacturing Technology Consulting (CMTCC®). In May 2011, Microdyne began an intensive audit of their processes and began designing a new website with the assistance of Ron Stark of Voice Marketing.

"Employers that struggled most in this recession shared a common trait. They could not easily shift production into different market segments," said Michael Goblowsky, Account Manager for CMTCC. "We showed Microdyne where they could cut costs and streamline operations and how they could expand and diversify to create new market opportunities."

Microdyne completed the program in September 2011 and recently launched their new website at www.MicrodynePlastics.com.

"Our company is leaner and more efficient and we are ready to take on new opportunities as well as create them with our new marketing plan and our website," Lopez said proudly.

In 2011, the San Bernardino County's Workforce Investment Board's Process Improvement Program helped employers retain 902 jobs and create 204 new jobs. Through no-cost business workshops, many of which are delivered online, county employers can receive support and resources to grow and diversify.

Happy Spring!

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Marketing in the 90s, 2000s, and Today

By Kerry Brooks, ProfessionalEdge Associates

My, how marketing has changed! Even in the years we've been in business, we have seen a tremendous change in the way we help our customers market their products and services. It's challenging to keep up with the changes and to keep ahead of what's to come.

Marketing in the 90s

In the 1990s, marketing was costly. If you had money, and you knew where to spend it wisely, it usually worked for you. The more you spent, the more it worked.

Most small local businesses used the yellow pages as their primary marketing source in the 90s. If you weren't in the yellow pages, you didn't exist. Each year you'd sit down with your yellow pages rep and determine how big of an ad you wanted to place (read: how much money you wanted to spend) in order to stand out more than your competition.



Local businesses also used billboards, signage, and newspaper advertising to gain as much exposure as possible. With a little extra money, you could purchase space in a local advertorial and hope to get on the front page.

A little more money bought you radio, television, and magazine marketing.

And, of course, everyone was using direct mail. We mailed post cards, brochures, letters, and more, and they actually got people's attention.

In the 90s, most companies had a designated PR/press relations staffer who regularly

communicated with local media to gain the most exposure. We spent tens of thousands of dollars in hopes of building our brand recognition.

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Marketing in the 2000s

The 2000s saw a big swing in how we spent our marketing dollars. With the Internet in full bloom, we concentrated on building web sites and e-commerce sites that would draw people in and give them an opportunity to hang around awhile. We added web site banner ads and Google pay per click ads, and made sure our press releases were published on major web sites.

Email marketing was a weekly or more often occurrence and we added email newsletters to the mix. We dabbled with Internet radio and YouTube in the early 2000s, wrote as many case studies and white papers as possible, and made sure to incorporate customer testimonials into everything.

Marketing Today

Today newspapers are a dying breed, magazines are now ezines, and the PR job title and press releases are becoming extinct. Why do they even print yellow pages and drop them at our doorsteps each year? They go straight to the recycle bin!

For the most part, email replaced direct mail a few years ago, although hand-written notes are making a big comeback, and the post office is making an awkward attempt to re-invent direct mail. We are beginning to see video streaming replace traditional TV and mobile is everything, including advertising on apps for every device. Even trade show attendance is going virtual and Twitter and event apps are adding to sponsorship exposure opportunities at conferences.

Social networks have become THE source for news and information, as well as for meeting new clients and keeping in touch. Your smartest marketing investment now is finding the best way to build and continue to reach your audience. And the investment of time is the most critical investment you can make. The more you put in (strategically of course), the better your return on investment.

Marketing and media strategies for businesses will only continue to change and change at a more rapid rate over the coming years (weeks, days, minutes?). Can you even imagine what your organization's marketing will look like by 2020?

ProfessionalEdge offers a wide range of marketing and support services to those who want to increase their business success, but are not in a position to add to their staff. They write a regular blog to help businesses navigate the world of marketing and social media along with many other helpful business topics. Connect with ProfessionalEdge at <http://www.gettheprofessionaledge.com>, follow their blog at <http://professionaledgeblog.blogspot.com/>, follow them on Twitter @profedge, or connect with them on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google+.



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LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

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The Made in America Store also honors our active duty members of the U.S. military and all veterans by offering a 10% discount on every purchase, every day.

The recession, the trade imbalance and unfair trade practices have met their match in Mark Andol, owner of the Made in America Store. He does what he does "for country, for soldier and for the American worker."

Please support our mission to bring back U.S. manufacturing jobs, "Because China is a Long Drive to Work." While you're making plans to visit our store, please help us save and create American jobs by shopping online at www.MadeInAmericaStore.com.



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"Our County Workforce Investment Board's Business Resource Team empowers local employers to sustain and expand their operations through the use of a wide array of services and resources, such as the Layoff Aversion Rapid Response and educational forums on labor law updates and other business topics," said Gonzales. "Our Business Resource Team is one of many great reasons why companies 'seize the advantage' to do business in San Bernardino County."

About the Workforce Investment Board of San Bernardino County

The Workforce Investment Board of San Bernardino County is comprised of private business representatives and public partners appointed by the County of San Bernardino Board of Supervisors. The WIB strives to strengthen the skills of the County's workforce through partnerships with business, education and community-based organizations. The County of San Bernardino Board of Supervisors is committed to providing County resources which generate jobs and investment. For more information, visit <http://www.sbcounty.gov/wib/>. The Workforce Investment Board, through the County of San Bernardino's Economic Development Agency and Workforce Development Department, operates the County of San Bernardino's Employment Resource Centers (ERCs) and Business Resource Centers (BRCs). The ERCs provide individuals with job training, placement and the tools to strengthen their skills to achieve a higher quality of life. The BRCs support and provide services to the County's businesses including employee recruitment.