

employmentEdge

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Tips for Job-Hunting During the Holidays

by Susan Johnston, www.hotjobs.yahoo.com

While the holidays might seem like a slow period for hiring, career experts say the season also presents an opportunity for job applicants to make an impression.

“Around the holidays, many job seekers are pre-occupied with family gatherings and other distractions that keep them away from their searches,” says Shawn Graham, author of “Courting Your Career” and director of MBA career services at the University of Pittsburgh. “As a result, the volume of applications for non-seasonal work is often lighter -- and that gives you, as a candidate, a greater chance of being seen.”

Adds Mary Rosenbaum, a career coach and personal branding strategist at Your Career by Design, “Most companies work on their strategic plans during the fourth quarter and tend to be more open to a variety of potential hires that might fit with their strategic goals for the coming year.”

Industries that use a bonus structure, like legal or financial firms, also anticipate turnover during the first quarter, because some employees leave after collecting their annual bonus.

So, how can job seekers stand out during the holiday season? Here are four ways to start:

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opportunity Spotlight

52190 - Construction Accounting Specialist - Temporary position in Virginia Beach. Scheduled for remainder of 2009 - could go into January 2010. Must have construction/contractor/sub-contractor experience. Multi-entity accounting, A/P, A/R, time & material billing, job costing, journal entries, reconciliation, payroll & payroll tax for 35+ employees, cash reports, post vendor invoices. Timberline or Sage Master Builder Construction software experience is strongly desired. Ability to use QuickBooks is a plus. This is a temporary job that can start within 24 hours of selection. Contact Liza Parker at 757-518-8600 for more information.

52180 - Medical Biller - Seasoned professional to handle medical billing for this Norfolk based not for profit organization. The right candidate must have at least 3-5 years experience working with Medicare & Medicaid. Must have aggressive practice with collections when working with insurance companies. Proven track record of effective oversight, claims and appeals a must. Supervisory experience a plus. Contact Brenda Bigelow at 757-518-8600 for more information.



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Southside
757-518-8600
Norfolk

DonRichardAssociates
Your Staffing & Recruiting Partner in Hampton Roads

Peninsula
757-873-0447
Newport News

opportunity, continued from page 1

52178 - Legal Secretary - Reputable firm in search of a seasoned litigation Legal Secretary for a hiring need in January 2010. Must have strong litigation experience and a diverse legal background including experience in some of the following practice areas: medical malpractice, family law, and/or real estate, traffic or criminal defense or personal injury. Top-notch skills and writing ability required. Ideal candidate will offer local court and state experience and strong professional references. Seeking candidate with stable work history and a positive attitude. Apply today! Contact Joyce Diaz at 757-518-8600 for more information.

37200 - CP Accounting Specialist - Large national company is looking for accounting professionals with strong reconciliations and accounts payable knowledge and experience. Responsibilities include reviewing payables and processing payments, completing cash advance reports, processing premium financing contracts, preparing month-end reconciliations and research discrepancies and assisting in resolving outstanding balances. Must have at least an Associates degree in Accounting and a minimum of 2 years of actual A/P and/or accounting work experience. Company offers excellent benefits package. Contact Liza Parker at 757-518-8600 for more information.

52142 - Purchasing/Inside Sales Support - Firm on Peninsula in need of experienced purchasing clerk with excellent communication skills. Must be detail oriented, extremely proficient with Excel, possess prior experience doing purchasing and have knowledge of construction industry. Successful applicant will be a strong negotiator and ability to develop strong rapport with clients. Some light accounting work may be required. Contact Sam Morton at 757-873-0447 for more information.

37252 - Flash Programmer - Experienced Flash Programmer needed for a company in the Chesapeake area. Must have 5+ years experience in Flash as well as Action Script. Scorm compliance helpful. Military experience or Clearance helpful. Contact Brenda Bigelow at 757-518-8600 for more information.

52144 - Paralegal/Legal Secretary - Local law firm seeking experienced Family Law paralegal to handle a combo role with legal secretarial duties. If you can support two attorneys and have minimum of 5 years family law experience, please apply! Great benefits, business casual work environment and reputable firm. Strong communication skills and ability to work well with Microsoft Office is a must. Timematters experience a plus! A great position working for great attorneys! Contact Joyce Diaz at 757-518-8600 for more information.

51878 - Full-Charge Bookkeeper - Property asset management company is looking for a full-charge bookkeeper to handle A/P, A/R, journal entries, billing, general ledger, reconciliations, and financial statement preparation. Must have strong QuickBooks Pro 2007 knowledge and experience. Qualified candidates must have at least 5 plus years of working as a full-charge bookkeeper for company with multiple entities. Strong inter-personal skills, analytical abilities and "big picture" thinker is required. Excellent work environment. Contact Liza Parker at 757-518-8600 for more information.

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Employee of the Month

Congratulations *Barbara Shipp*! You have been chosen as Don Richard Associates' December Employee of the Month for doing such a great job at *VMD Systems Integrators, Inc.* as a *Financial Analyst*.

opportunity, continued from page 2

52141 - Legal Assistant - Stable law firm in Norfolk is seeking an entry-level Legal Assistant/Receptionist with strong written communication skills interested in growing with a firm. Must have a 4 year degree and transcripts. Looking for an upbeat, customer service driven individual who enjoys administrative tasks and communicating with clients. Attention to detail and ability to follow instructions a must! Prior legal document preparation experience is necessary and should have strong Word skills. Hours 9 am to 5:30 pm, occasionally until 6:00 pm. Free parking, non-smoking environment. Contact Joyce Diaz at 757-518-8600 for more information.

37187 - Senior Accountant - Virginia Beach financial company seeks a Senior Accountant to join their team. The ideal candidate must be sharp, dynamic and able to function in a fast-paced environment. Duties include A/P, A/R, general ledger, reconciliations, financial analysis, financial statement preparation and research. Some overtime will be required. Must be proficient in Microsoft Excel and familiar with QuickBooks. The position requires a BA/BS in Accounting or related field and a minimum of 5 years of accounting-related work experience. Contact Liza Parker at 757-518-8600 for more information.

52179 - Paralegal - Prestigious law firm on Peninsula in need of experienced Paralegal to provide support in working closely with both General District and Circuit Courts. Must have excellent writing and communication skills, ability to prioritize and work under tight schedules, in depth knowledge of legal terminology and principles and ability to analyze legal documents for accuracy. Contact Sam Morton at 757-873-0447 for more information.

52140 - Family Law Paralegal - Peninsula law firm seeks a Family Law Paralegal. Must have knowledge of contested and uncontested divorces. Must be extremely organized and have strong computer skills. Will support 2 attorneys. Contact Sam Morton at 757-873-0447 for more information.

If you or anyone you know are interested in these positions, please contact the appropriate recruiter. Please visit www.donrichard.com for **additional** career opportunities.

Saving Money During the Christmas Season

By Jon Ferraro, www.ezinearticles.com

If you are like many other families this year, your budget is a little tight this year. You know where every penny goes, you know what things cost and you know exactly what you spend. Even if you have managed to stick to a budget all year, you are about to face a time when this might change. Christmas is a wonderful time of the year but it does stretch our budgets.

The extra expense might even cause you to dread Christmas. But there are things that you can do to help make this time of year easier on your wallet. Look for Sales: This seems obvious but you need to have a plan. Don't purchase items just because they are on sale, know what you want before you go shopping. Research your purchases so you can find the best deals and save the maximum amount of money.

See Saving Money, page 5

Call during office hours.

“As the holidays approach, people are in and out of the office, and those who are at work often use that time to play catch up,” says Graham. “Recruiters could use that time to give applicants of interest a longer look.”

Since support staff may be out of the office, job seekers have a better chance of reaching an actual hiring manager or recruiter. One of the ways Graham suggests reaching managers when they aren't running in and out of meetings is to call before the start of the business day or after 5 pm.

Avoid holiday gimmicks.

Some job seekers use cutesy ideas like sending a plate of Christmas cookies along with a cover letter or printing their resumes on holiday paper in the hopes that they'll get noticed. But Graham and Rosenbaum warn that these gimmicks can backfire.

“I'm not a fan of the holiday-inspired gimmick ploys,” says Graham. “It's better to be more conservative. Make sure the content of your email is written persuasively and impactfully.” By focusing on your skills rather than gimmicks, you also won't have to worry about offending people who celebrate different holidays.

Use events to build relationships, not beg for a job.

Holiday parties, end-of-the-year conferences, and other events all afford opportunities for networking. But job seekers can also organize holiday drinks with people they want to connect or reconnect with, since people tend to be more open to socializing during this time of year.

“Get people together for holiday drinks at Joe's Pub or something,” suggests Rosenbaum. “The idea right now is to have more face time and build a relationship. What you should be doing now during the holiday time is contacting them in a way that puts them on a more equal footing.” She adds that if you're unsure about someone's holiday traditions, you can simply offer their family your best.

Don't lose focus.

Staying motivated during the holidays could give you edge over those applicants who put their search on hold. According to Graham, “The biggest thing is to keep at it. Around the holidays, it's easy to get caught up in all the distractions. Set aside that time every day and continue to look for opportunities.”

Says Rosenbaum, “The idea is for people not to assume that because it's the holiday season that they shouldn't redouble their efforts. This is a really good time of year. People are much more willing to go out for drinks and spend a little more time. Use this time to forge relationships, not just look for the job.



Try to make your gift purchase decisions based on the deals you find instead of trying to find the best deal on what you want. This way you save time and money. Stay out of Gift Exchanges: You might have to explain to a few of your coworkers that you are sticking to a budget this year, especially if you have participated in gift exchanges in the past. Most people will understand this.

The drawback is that you won't get a gift either. If you can't opt out, consider regifting what you get and passing it on to someone else. Organize a Gift Game: It is a given that you will be buying gifts for your parents and for your children, but you might be able to cut back on your extended family gift giving. If your family has a tradition of giving gifts to all the aunts, uncles and cousins, suggest starting a new tradition.

Try a Christmas gift game. Everyone brings a wrapped gift to the party, puts them all in a pile, have everyone draw a number and the person who draws the lowest number picks a gift and opens it. The second person opens a gift. Now that person can either keep the gift or trade with someone else.

This game saves money but also adds a lot of fun to a Christmas party. There are many ways you can save money and still celebrate Christmas. These ideas are just the beginning of the suggestions. With a little creativity, you can find many other ways to reduce the money you spend during this meaningful but sometimes expensive holiday.

Ghirardelli® Peppermint Brownies

www.allrecipes.com

Ingredients:

4 oz Ghirardelli 100% Cacao Unsweetened Chocolate baking bar, broken or chopped into 1 inch pieces
1 cup unsalted butter
3 large eggs
2 cups granulated white sugar
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon peppermint extract
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 (5.32 oz) bag Ghirardelli Dark Chocolate with White Mint Filling Squares™, unwrapped
4 small candy canes, crushed



Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 9-inch square baking pan with cooking spray and dust with flour, tapping out any excess.
2. In the top of a double boiler or in a heatproof bowl over barely simmering water, melt the unsweetened chocolate and butter, stirring occasionally until smooth. Cool to room temperature.
3. In a large bowl with an electric mixer or whisk, beat the eggs, sugar, vanilla, peppermint extract and salt until combined. Beat in the chocolate mixture. Gently stir in the flour. Pour the batter into the prepared pan.
4. Bake for about 45 minutes, or until a tester inserted into the brownies comes out clean. Arrange the mint squares on top in one layer and return the brownies to the oven until they are just melted, about 1 minute. Evenly spread the chocolate with a spatula and sprinkle with the crushed candy canes. Cool completely before cutting into 2-inch squares.

December Events in Hampton Roads

A Colonial Christmas - December 1- January 3
Jamestown Settlement & Yorktown Victory Center

A Christmas Carol - December 4 - December 24
The Wells Theatre

Christmas Town at Busch Gardens -
December 4 - December 6

Breakfast with Santa - December 5
Virginia Air & Space Center

Care-A-Lot Santa Paws Photos -
December 5 - December 6
Care-A-Lot Pets in Virginia Beach

Holiday Parade at the Beach - December 5

Grand Illumination in Colonial Williamsburg -
December 6

A Founders Inn Evening with Santa -
December 22 - December 23
The Founders Inn



Payroll Notice

Don Richard Associates' will be closed on Friday, December 25, 2009 in observance of the Christmas holiday. Our offices will reopen on Monday, December 28th.

It is imperative that we receive your timecard by 9:00 AM on Monday, December 21, 2009. If your manager is not available to sign the timecard on Monday, please send the unsigned copy for payroll processing, bearing in mind that we will need the signed copy of the timecard in order to release your paycheck. Paychecks will be available for pick up on December 24, 2009 from 7:30 AM - 2:30 PM.

Please scan and email your timecard to payroll@donrichard.com or fax it to your local DRA office: 757-518-9436 on the Southside or 757-873-8294 on the Peninsula. While you may receive a confirmation of transmission from your fax location, that is not a guarantee that the transmission was successful at our location. We strongly advise that you call your local DRA office 757-518-8600 on the Southside or 757-873-0447 on the Peninsula to confirm that the fax was received without errors.

You may be eligible for holiday pay for December 25, 2009. Please refer to pages 10 & 11 in your policy and procedures manual for eligibility requirements.