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July 17, 2009

## Playbook: Six Ways to Help Your Laid-off Employees

When small businesses decide to lay off workers, they often can't afford generous severance packages or access to professional outplacement services; but employers strapped for cash can still help their departing workers.

- Tap your network. Reach out clients, vendors, competitors, and others in your network to see if anyone wants to recruit workers you have to cut.
- Start an online forum to pool talent. Some companies are using groups on [LinkedIn](#) or [Facebook](#) to connect workers they're laying off with potential jobs.
- Give workers ample notice. Giving employees a month's notice before they have to leave, instead of two weeks or less, will give them a bit more wiggle room. During that time, be flexible about giving employees time for interviews.
- Direct employees to local resources. Career centers run by local colleges or government agencies often have résumé writing workshops, career counseling, job fairs, retraining help and other resources for the unemployed.
- Give employees an honest reference. Other potential employers may think you laid off workers because of poor performance. Often the biggest thing you can do is offer to write a glowing letter. Explain why workers were cut and vouch for their experience.
- Keep in touch. Business may pick up sooner than expected. If you maintain a relationship with laid-off workers, you may be able to offer them work which could benefit both sides.

## Six Ways Businesses Can Retain Customers

When times get tough, grabbing new business becomes the focus. That approach couldn't be more wrong! It costs twice as much to gain a new customer as it does to hold on to an existing one. Six actions any small business can take to retain customers:

- Meet face to face. Meeting in person says you are interested in your client's business and gives you an opportunity to literally see things that you can help address.
- Avoid jargon. Use terms the customer can readily understand. He or she will feel more comfortable and sense you're working together as a team.
- Ask for feedback. Throughout the work process, show the customer by word and deed that comments are taken seriously.
- Tune your offering. As proud as you may be of your product, remember it's being made for the customer. Make certain you know exactly what your customer wants.
- Be open to change. For any number of reasons, customers' needs change. Customers know they are valued if you show a willingness to work with them.

## Congratulations to VIA Marketing!

VIA Marketing was recently honored with two APEX Awards of Excellence for creative work on behalf of clients, one a poster campaign designed for St. Catherine's Hospital and the other for Region Pool's Web site.

"Region Pools, based in Hammond, came to us after finding out that Web design was not their forte," Julie Olthoff, president of VIA Marketing, said.

"We're proud of the site. It's inviting, easy to navigate and comes up well in searches." The poster campaign is a series of four that capitalize on thank you notes from St. Catherine's patients including titles such as "Our Patients Bee-lieve We're Special" and "Our Patients Call Us Angels."

Based in Merrillville, VIA Marketing provides online and offline marketing solutions that include research, marketing plans, Web sites, graphic design, and public relations. For more information, [WWW.VIAMARKETING.NET/AWARDS/AWARDS.HTML](http://WWW.VIAMARKETING.NET/AWARDS/AWARDS.HTML).

### General Membership Luncheon

Wednesday, July 29, 2009

Topic: Legislative Review

Guest Speakers: Local Area Legislators

11:30 am Networking/ 12:00 Lunch

Location: Dynasty

Cost \$15.00

July 17, 2009



## Calendar of Events

Additional information can be viewed on our website at [www.lakeshorechamber.com](http://www.lakeshorechamber.com)

**JULY 14-19**

### **Sixth Annual Festival of the Lakes**

Some highlights include Mayor McDermott's Dinner Cruise and many musical Acts including Boyz II Men, Randy Travis, Los Lonely Boys, Black Crowes, Nicole Jamrose, and more. For more info visit: [www.festivalofthelakes.com](http://www.festivalofthelakes.com)

**JULY 20**

### **Carnegie Visual and Performing Arts Center – Preconstruction Tour**

3601 Grand Blvd, East Chicago; RSVP at [laurenbukovac@comcast.net](mailto:laurenbukovac@comcast.net)

**JULY 20**

### **White Sox vs Tampa Bay Rays**

Tickets Only \$20 or Beer, Bus, & Brats w/ ticket Only \$40  
Centerfield Seats Sections 101 and 102– Please call 931-1000 to reserve.

**JULY 22**

### **Downtown Hammond Strategic Plan Workshop**

5205 Hohman Ave, Hammond; 6 pm Questions: call 219.853.6509 ext.335

**JULY 23**

### **Lakeshore Public Television's Lakeshore Productions: Meet the Trucks!**

8625 Indiana Place, Merrillville; 5-7pm; RSVP call Julia 219.756.5656

**JULY 23-30**

### **Wicker Memorial Park Summer Concerts**

Social Center Gazebo Bands; 7:30-10:30 pm; For info call 219.932.2530 ext.327  
JULY 23 Wedding Banned and JULY 30 Nicole Jamrose

**JULY 24**

### **Puerto Rican Parade & Cultural Organization's Lunch Fundraising Special**

1607 E Columbus Dr, East Chicago; 11-2pm; For orders: call 219.397.1217

**JULY 24-25**

### **Our Family Center's Yard Sale and Car Wash+Fundraiser**

Yard Sale JULY 24-25 9-3pm; JULY 25 Car Wash 171st & Woodlawn 10-3 pm

**JULY 25**

### **Paul Henry's Art Gallery announces New Exhibit!**

416-418 Sibley St., Hammond; 11-8 pm Questions: call 219.932.0165

**JULY 25-26**

### **28th Annual Puerto Rican Parade and 2-Day Festival**

Festival at Tod Park East Chicago (McShane and Indianapolis Blvd) JULY 25th 4-10 pm & JULY 26th 11-10 pm; JULY 26 EC Harbor Parade at 12 pm

**AUGUST 5**

### **Black Industrial Supply Corporation hosts Vendor Fair**

3600 Calumet Ave, Hammond; 10-4 pm  
Some vendors include: DeWalt, Greenlee, Gojo, Metabo and over 30 more.

### **Upcoming Lakeshore Chamber Committee Meetings**

*Ambassador Committee* July 22, 2009 12:00 pm

*Special Events* August 5, 2009 8:00 am