

CAREER CONNECTIONS ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

WELCOME!

Welcome to the first edition of our alumni newsletter. Over the course of the last 19 years, Career Connections has had the honor of employing and placing thousands of really wonderful people, some with whom we have maintained contact and some for whom we've had the pleasure of providing service after they became our clients. Regrettably, we have long since lost track of a great many others and we apologize for that.

To better maintain these valuable relationships in the future, we have decided to launch the Career Connections Alumni Association, open to anybody who has ever worked for or been placed by us -- past, present, or future. We intend to publish a quarterly e-newsletter that will include information we hope will be of interest and use to you as well as some valuable deals and discounts we have negotiated on behalf of the group.

We have gathered as many e-mail addresses as possible to produce the mailing list for this first edition, and we will be diligent about adding to it into the future, but we know we are missing a great many more, and we apologize for that. If you know of people we left off, feel free to forward the newsletter to them. If they want to send us their e-mail addresses, we'll be sure to include them in the future.

If you are not interested in receiving the newsletter, just respond to this e-mail with a request to be removed from the mailing list, and we will do so immediately with our apologies for the intrusion.



"I don't have any references, but 4 out of 5 phone psychics say I'm destined for greatness."



HELP WANTED!

WE NEED A BETTER NAME

We would like your help to come up with a catchy name for the group and newsletter. If you have any clever ideas, please send them. (Don't underestimate yourself: *anything* is more exciting than the Career Connections Alumni Newsletter (CCAN) – the stuttering acronym alone is reason enough to rethink it). We will give a \$50 Visa Gift Card and publish a thank-you in the next newsletter (with the winning suggester's permission, of course) to the maker of the winning suggestion.

Please submit your suggestions to info@careerconnections.info with the subject line of "CCAN name contest entry."

CAREER CONNECTIONS CURRENT EVENTS

OUR NEW STAFFING SOFTWARE MAKES SEARCHING FOR SKILLS MORE EFFICIENT

One of the more exciting pieces of news we have had around here lately has been our conversion to a new, state-of-the-art staffing software. Those of you who have worked in our office or know us very well are aware that we shopped for a new software for about *eight years*. That shows how difficult the decision was. Once the choice was made and the system installed, we soon learned that the conversion to it was even more difficult. But thanks to our patient staff and the assistance of a handful of awesome temps (that's right: we practice what we preach), we survived. Turns out the old saying is true – that which does not kill us makes us stronger – and we are better than ever.

The new system is quite amazing in some respects, making it much easier to match applicants to jobs based on relevant experience, education, and skills. It operates by searching for skill codes, like our old system did, but also by searching the actual content of all the resumes we have on file. The speed and accuracy of the new system are incredible. This is a functionality common to all good HR recruiting software, by the way -- if not yet, then certainly in the near future.

If you know people who are looking for jobs elsewhere, let them know that the content of their resumes has never been more important. These days most managers don't even see an applicant's resume until after a machine has identified it as relevant. Making sure that all the important key words are included and spelled correctly, regardless of graphics or fancy paper, may be the difference between being noticed or not. If you know people who are looking for jobs in Southeast Ohio, of course, just send them to us.

REFERRAL REWARDS PROGRAM

KNOW ANYONE WHO IS LOOKING FOR A NEW OR BETTER JOB?

Refer your friends, relatives, neighbors, even strangers if you want, to Career Connections to apply, and after he/she completes one full week of employment (temp or perm), we will reward you with a **\$20 gas card!**

Important Policies:

- The reward is payable only to people who have completed an application at CC.
- The reward is payable only for referring persons who have not applied at CC within the last three years.
- Be sure to tell the people you refer to call first. We do not take walk-in applications.

Tell applicants to call 740-594-4941, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Mon.-Fri., and be sure to mention your name.

Exclusive Alumni Benefit!



FREE 4-Hour Training Topics are available to you as an exclusive benefit for being a part of our alumni.

10 topics to choose from!
Check the attached/enclosed flyer for details.

Current Job Postings

The details on all of the openings we are working to fill are available for viewing on our Website at any time. Feel free to visit or refer job seekers to:

www.careerconnections.info

CCAN EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Stacie Rainey

GENERAL MANAGER AT CC

Stacie Rainey has been a staple at Career Connections for a little over eight years. She has worked diligently for our mission and goals and, like all our staff, is passionate about the services we bring to the employers in Southeastern Ohio. She was born and raised in Nelsonville and now raises her three kids there.

Stacie started out working for Rocky Shoes & Boots in Nelsonville as a sales team assistant and then moved along to a large nursing and rehabilitation facility in Lancaster as the payroll/benefits manager. After some time, she took a job with a staffing agency based out of the Columbus area and eventually opened a branch location for them in the Athens area. After a few years, however, she decided she'd rather work for Career Connections than compete with us, so she joined our staff.

Stacie's favorite thing about working with Career Connections is the relationships she builds with her clients. She considers them her good friends and enjoys the fact that they feel they can count on her.

Stacie believes that Career Connections is set apart from other staffing agencies by its careful screening process. "Every agency claims it screens, but we really do. It can be time-consuming and costly, but I have worked for another agency and I've seen the difference our process makes in the quality of placements," she says.



In each issue we will spotlight a hardworking Career Connections alumnus, a favorite client company, or a member of our staff here at Career Connections.

If you are aware of any CC alums or clients who you would like us to feature, please let us know!



OUR CONTACT INFO:

P: 740-594-4941

F: 740-592-6289

E: info@careerconnections.info

A: 35 Elliott St., Athens, OH 45701

W: www.careerconnections.info

HR TIP: REFERENCE CHECKING

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHECKING REFERENCES

By Valerie Kinnard

We thought it would be a good idea to include some sort of HR wisdom in each newsletter. It is our area of expertise and the issues affect everybody in an organization, from one perspective or another. Once decided, there was no question what the first subject matter would be -- our collective pet peeve -- the importance and difficulty of checking references.

We are aware that many employers don't bother checking references, and we think that is a big mistake on their part, but we know why -- because it can be so difficult. Career Connections requires a minimum of two positive employment references. While this does occasionally prevent our being able to place some perfectly lovely people, through no fault of their own, we hold strong to the policy because of the countless times it has saved us from errors in hiring. And while difficult, it is not impossible. We know -- we successfully gather references on 700-800 applicants per year.

By references, by the way, I mean useful information about the applicants' previous employment. We ask questions about attendance, attitude, work ethic, skill level, reason for leaving, etc. This practice of verifying only dates of employment is a waste of a phone call or fax, if you ask me, and I know that's what most so-called background screening agencies collect because I fill out a half-dozen of their forms a week about our previous employees. I'm perfectly willing to answer additional questions, but they don't even ask.

There is no better screening tool than the experience of a previous employer. Why not invest the few minutes it takes to dial the phone? You sometimes have to be persistent, and you sometimes have to take the information with a grain of salt. A positive reference doesn't always mean the employee did a great job, because some employers are afraid to divulge negative information, but you can usually count on either a glowing reference or a negative one.

On the subject of giving inaccurate information for fear of retribution, or company policies preventing the disclosure of anything but dates of employment, please be aware that the laws in the state of Ohio provide employers with protection. Encourage your policy makers to reconsider. The passage of R.C. § 4113.71 by the Ohio General Assembly "provides that a former employer may disclose to a prospective employer information pertaining to the job performance of the employee, without risk of liability to the

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"Gerald works very well with others and functions cooperatively in a group setting. Got any references more recent than your third grade report card?"

former employer, the prospective employer, or any other person for harm sustained as a result of making the disclosure."¹ The statute further protects the employer by putting the burden of attorney fees and court costs on the plaintiff in the case of frivolous lawsuits in this regard.² As long as the information you are giving is accurate and documented, you are protected, and you are also either assisting a deserving ex-employee with finding a new job or saving a fellow employer from making a bad mistake -- a good turn that you can hope someone may make on your behalf some day.

It is also wise to get a signed release from applicants in which they give you permission to contact previous employers and warrant that they won't pursue you or the reference provider for damages.

For those of you who have ever worked for Career Connections, keep us in mind the next time you need an employment reference. We have detailed personnel records and we keep them forever. My contact information is:

Valerie Kinnard, President/Owner
35 Elliott Street, Athens, OH
740-594-4941, valerie@careerconnections.info

¹ *Employment Law e-Newsletter*, "Guidelines for Giving Employment References," Mahjabeen Qadir, Asst. Attorney General, April 20, 2009. www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov
² R.C. § 4113.71(C).