

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PERSONNEL SERVICES

Independent Study Course Number 24

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RECRUITING ON THE INTERNET: GROUND SCHOOL!

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The impact of the Internet has often been equated to the invention of the jet plane. The plane changed everything. Because of the jet plane, you can now get your mail delivered overnight, dine on shrimp that were still swimming in warm Gulf waters that morning, and vacation half-way around the world on a long weekend.

However, the early test pilots of the “Jet Age” didn’t know how to fly jet planes. They had only general aviation knowledge, a passion to fly faster, and lots of raw horsepower. Early jet planes were poorly designed and instruction manuals were based purely on theory. As a result, these early test pilots “crashed and burned” often.

As the early pilots learned more about jet flying, engineers designed better jet planes, and together they developed “rules of flying.” These rules led to funny-sounding terms like “ailerons,” “drag,” and “thrust.” The rules and the terms of jet flying evolved over time, and as a result jet flying became easier to learn, much safer, and a whole lot more practical for commercial use.

Are You Ready for the “Net Age”?

Big corporate computers have been talking to one another for decades. But it wasn’t until the introduction of the Personal Computer (PC) that the real computer communications revolution took place. At first, we were happy with a nice word processor for writing letters. The PC allowed us to write more letters and faster – but it wasn’t any faster to send those letters as long as they relied on the postal system for delivery.

Eventually ways were found to connect PCs to each other and electronic mail (e-mail) found its way to our desks. E-mail opened up entirely new avenues for communicating. Universities and hospitals began to share research facilities and results. In response to all the traffic, network engineers built bigger networks and network communication grew exponentially. Initially there were lots of “network crashes.” To make networks “safer,”

end users began to develop formal and informal “rules of the net.” These rules led to funny-sounding terms like “GAQ,” “Firewall,” and “Homepage.” As network reliability increased, network engineers reached out farther and farther. Slowly, the “Internet: began to tie our “islands of communication” together as it linked millions of PCs throughout the world. The “Net Age” had finally begun.

Today, recruiting on the Internet is more art than science. However, the Internet itself is a science and like any science it’s loaded with technical terms. Let’s begin by defining some of those terms:

- **INTERNET** An international network of computers linking universities, government agencies, hospitals, and commercial organizations via high-speed communication links. The Internet uses a combination of computer hardware and software.
- **WORLD WIDE WEB** Also known as www, w3, or just “the web.” A graphical interface that makes the Internet a lot easier. The Web presents Internet information visually with “point and click” features. As an analogy, the Web is to the Internet what Microsoft Windows is to MS-DOS. (*Note: for the remainder of this article, we will use the terms “Internet,” “Net,” and “Web” interchangeably.*)
- **WEB BROWSER** (Or just “browser.”) A PC software program that is required to browse the web. A browser combines Internet text, color pictures, clip art, sounds, etc., onto computer screen or “page.” A browser also provides point and click links to other pages of web information. The two most common web browsers are Microsoft’s Internet Explorer and Netscape’s Navigator.
- **WEB PAGE** A single computer screen or “page” of Internet information. A web page consists of Internet text, color, pictures, clip art, sounds, etc. You must use a web browser to look at a web page.
- **HOME PAGE** The front door, main menu, or first web page of a web site.
- **URL** Uniform Resource Locator. It’s the complete address of a web page. You tell your web browser how to find a web page by entering its URL. A URL looks something like this: <http://www.big-biller.com>. A URL is analogous to a postal mailing address..
- **MODEM** Most people connect their computers to the Internet via a dial up telephone line. A modem is the device that connects a computer to a telephone line. Modems are rated by their speed: 14,400 Baud; 28,800 Baud; 56,000 Baud, etc. The larger the number, the faster the communications.
- **E-MAIL** Electronic Mail. E-mail is used to send messages from one computer to another. You can send e-mail privately to one person (analogous to first class postal mail), semi-privately to a group of people (somewhat like bulk or junk postal mail), or publicly to a newsgroup or forum (sort of like the personal or classified ads you find in most newspapers).
- **FLAME** A negative and often abusive e-mail message.
- **SPAM** The process of sending hundreds or even thousands of worthless e-mail messages to many Internet users or newsgroups.
- **NEWSGROUP** An interactive group of Internet users with a common interest. The group can be almost any size. The common interest can be very broad (for

example, small business owners), somewhat narrow (for example, all small recruiting business owners), or very focused (all small recruiting business owners that specialize in electrical engineers). Newsgroups are great places to meet people with similar interests to yours or to find very specialized pieces of information. Notes:

Newsgroups are very similar in purpose and use two forums, chat areas, and discussion topics. For simplicity, we will use all four of these terms interchangeably.

- **NETIZEN** An active user or “citizen” of the Internet.

Is Your Computer Ready for the “New Age”?

You now have a basic understanding of some of the terminology you’ll run into on the Net. There’s a lot more to learn, but you can learn most of it while you “surf the Net.” But before you head out for that first big wave, you’ll need to take an inventory of your computer hardware and software. Here’s what you’ll need.

- Almost any IBM PC (or compatible computer) with Windows 3.1 or higher and a color monitor will do. Also, any Macintosh is “net ready.”
- The bigger the hard drive the better. You’ll need a minimum of 200 megabytes of free disk space. Don’t cut corners here! You can always use the extra space.
- The more DRAM (dynamic random access memory) the better. You’ll need at least 16 Meg or DRAM, but you’ll be happier with 32 or even 64 Meg. Get all you can afford.
- The faster the modem, the better. A 28,800 Baud modem is the minimum. There are no speed limits on the Net, and the gas is real cheap.
- Any web browser software will do. Both Microsoft and Netscape make excellent web browsers. You can usually get a free copy of the latest web browser directly from the vendor’s web site.
- Any Internet Service Provider (ISP) is fine. You can sign up for Internet access with a national “content rich” service like America Online or CompuServe. You can also choose a national “Internet only” service provider like Netcom or Earthlink. You can even choose from an ever-growing number of local Internet service providers. However, if you can find it, free Internet access is always the best!
- Any telephone line will do. A dedicated line for your Internet access is nice to have, but you don’t need it. Some people surf the Net for several hours a day and may not want their primary telephone line tied up that long. Find out what kind of Internet user you are before you invest in another telephone line.
- Get some anti-virus software. The Net is a real jungle, and like any jungle there are some fairly strange “bugs” out there that have the potential to do harm to your computer. Two popular brands of anti-virus software are McAfee and Symantec.
- 500 MHz Pentiums, 24” monitors, color printers, scanners, sound cards, speakers, microphones, etc. are all optional. Get what you think you need now. You can always add on later.
- Total cost. Expect about \$1000-15000 for a basic, Internet-ready computer system. However, the sky is the limit!

Recruiting on the Net – Lesson 1

E-mail is by far the most powerful weapon in the successful Internet recruiter's arsenal. You can use e-mail to:

- communicate both publicly and privately with both candidates and clients
- receive "word processing ready" resumes and references
- learn about a potential candidate's professional skills and personal needs
- find new clients with hot job orders

When I met with other recruiters and ask them to describe the perfect (but realistic) recruiting environment, most of them say things like, "clients/candidates are easy to find, and they only call me when they really need me," "job orders are easy to get without a need for lots of cold calling," "professional candidate skills are easy to determine without detailed interviews," and "resumes are available when I need them."

While the Internet is NOT a recruiting "silver bullet" – recruiting is a lot of work no matter what tools and technologies you use to do it – it can get recruiters closer to the concept of a "recruiter heaven." And the key to almost every successful Internet recruiter lies in the way they use e-mail.

E-mail is the most common use of the Internet. E-mail is so common in corporate America that it's hard to find an organization that doesn't use it. Some people send and receive e-mail daily, yet still claim that they never use the Internet!

E-mail comes in three basic flavors: private, semi-private, and public (see definition above). E-mail has been available for years. Over time an informal etiquette or NETiquette has evolved. Here are some good e-mail NETiquette rules to follow:

- Always type your e-mail text in both UPPER and lower case. NETizens use ALL CAPS in their e-mails to "shout" or to emphasize a particular point. If you ever get FLAMED, the text of the message will likely be in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS.
- Remove all "recruiter jargon" from your e-mails. "Hot job order," "qualified candidate," "search assignment," and "perm and temp placement" are great when communicating with your peers, but they look and sound terrible in your recruiting e-mails. Recruiting is selling, and the best and highest-producing salespeople don't look, act, or sound like salespeople.
- Be extremely careful what you write in ANY e-mail. No matter how you send your e-mail (private, semi-private, or public), ANY e-mail can be edited and made public by the receiver. A computer-savvy NETizen can even re-mail your e-mail to someone else and actually make that e-mail appear as though you sent it!
- Before you post a public e-mail, read the newsgroup's FAQ (frequently asked questions) posting. Many newsgroups have moderators (the person or persons responsible for keeping order in a Forum). Ask them the rules. Read a few postings to get the theme of things and to make sure your posts "fit in." If you don't see other recruiter postings be careful.
- Find a public newsgroup or forum that attracts your typical candidate or client and read, read, read!

- Get to know the key players in a newsgroup or forum.
- Build an “e-mailing list” of all members.
- Become known as someone who is knowledgeable in your specialty.
- Use private e-mail to respond to a public post when possible.
- If you choose to post your e-mail publicly, remember that everyone has the potential of seeing it.

Wrap Up

The Internet is NOT a recruiting “silver bullet.” Recruiting is a lot of hard work. The Net, like a cellular telephone or a fax machine, is just another “tool of the trade.” And to use this new tool successfully you’ll need to learn lots of new terminology and make a fairly substantial investment in computer hardware and software. You’ll also need to be willing to adjust your highly refined, telephone-based recruiting techniques to a more public, keyboard-based world.

However, recruiting on the Net is a lot of fun and can be extremely profitable. There’s no traffic jam, the view changes daily, the day-to-day costs are minimal, the competition is relatively modest, and absolutely no one cares what you look or sound like...at least not yet! And when you know where and how to look, qualified candidates and clients are literally waiting for your call!

CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT (CEU) REGISTRATION

Complete the registration information below and forward this page, containing the independent study examination and your answers, plus payment to: NAPS, 3133 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22305. The processing fee for the continuing education units for each NAPS independent study course is \$10 for members and \$20 for non-members. Feel free to reproduce the registration and examination page to allow additional individuals to apply for CEUs.

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EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

Multiple-choice questions. Circle the response you believe to be correct.
Be certain to answer all of the questions.

1. **“URL” is an acronym for:**
 - a. Uniform Resource Locator
 - b. Unreliable Research Logistic
 - c. Unidentified Recruiting Linker
 - d. Undefined Remote Logon

2. **“FAQ” stands for:**
 - a. Frequency Allocation Query
 - b. Frequently Asked Questions
 - c. Fast and Quick
 - d. First Aid Quiz

3. **When composing an e-mail, you should:**
 - a. Type the entire message in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS
 - b. Use lots of “recruiter jargon”
 - c. Disclose confidential information since e-mail is a totally private communications system
 - d. None of the above

4. **A modem:**
 - a. Spell checks your e-mail text
 - b. Connects your computer to your telephone line
 - c. Puts you in “Mode M” on the Internet
 - d. Is Internet slang for “more of them”

5. **To access the world wide web, which of the following is not needed:**
 - a. An Internet Service Provider (ISP)
 - b. A web browser

- c. A special telephone line
- d. DRAM

6. E-mail is:

- a. A relatively new form of communication
- b. An automated means of implementing the E-myth
- c. An abbreviation for “electric mail”
- d. A powerful recruiting tool

7. Newsgroups are:

- a. Interactive groups of Internet users with a common interest
- b. Today’s news conveniently grouped into categories
- c. Alphabetical groups of the newest Internet users
- d. New groups of Internet recruiters

8. According to the author, the impact of the Internet has often been equated to the invention of the:

- a. Internal combustion engine
- b. Personal computer
- c. Jet plane
- d. Big Bertha golf club

9. The Internet is:

- a. A recruiting “silver bullet”
- b. A computing phenomena that will no longer be needed after the year 2000
- c. An international network of computers
- d. A place where everyone stores their resumes

10. SPAM is:

- a. A product of Hormel Corporation that is commonly distributed on the Internet
- b. An acronym for Special Purpose Access Method
- c. A common emotional expression used in e-mail text
- d. The process of sending lots of worthless e-mail messages.