

A Newsletter From Edwards Consulting Firm, Inc. Helping Business Leaders Manage Their Careers and Their Resources

Welcome to our New Year Edition!

“Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.”

-Pablo Picasso

Conscious Communication is dedicated to quarterly providing our clients, career seekers and professional networks with valuable human capital management strategies and career tips.

The great thing about the beginning of a new year is that it encourages us to “start over”. We resolve to discard old habits and replace them with better ones. This is an excellent time to examine your career, whether you are looking for a promotion or wish to make a change.



We start with an interview with Michael Thurmond, Georgia’s Commissioner of Labor, who shares insights into the local employment landscape and tips for the displaced worker. Leigh Moore provides a simple, step-by-step plan to kick off a career search, whether you are employed or have been laid off. This issue wraps up with Connie Glaser’s advice for achieving more balance in our lives by taking our personal goals as seriously as those of our career.

You are invited to share this newsletter with your colleagues and friends. Your and their registration at www.edwardsconsultingfirm.com leads to benefiting from our executive search and contract services.

Happy New Year, and . . . , as always, we welcome your feedback and ideas for future issues of *Conscious Communication*.

Best regards,



Damali Edwards
Founder and CEO

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One-on-One

Georgia Employment Landscape

Michael Thurmond, a native Georgian, is our state’s Labor Commissioner, first elected in 1998. His education includes degrees in philosophy, religion and law, as well as the political executives program of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He practiced law in Athens prior to entering politics with his 1986 election to the Georgia General Assembly.



During his work as Georgia’s Labor Commissioner, Michael Thurmond has worked to cut employer taxes by over \$1 billion and increase the maximum weekly unemployment benefit to \$300; he has initiated transformation of Georgia’s unemployment offices to state-of-the-art “career centers”, enhanced the department’s productivity through technological innovation and managed the successful merger of the Department of Labor with the state’s 2,000-employee Division of Rehabilitative Services.

Conscious Communication: Has your election to Commissioner of Labor been all you dreamed it would be?

Thurmond: Yes, it has. I’ve always enjoyed serving the people of Georgia, particularly in my present position. I have a passion for helping people find and get jobs and fulfill their career goals and ambitions. Although it has been difficult the last three years, from an economic perspective, I have enjoyed the challenge and opportunity to serve people in need of new employment opportunities.

Conscious Communication: What has been your biggest challenge to date and what have you done to overcome it?

Thurmond: First, I had to retrofit the internal operations of the Department of Labor. When I arrived, we were basically providing services like we were in 1933, using paper and pencils. We shifted to a technology-based arena, so that we can provide better and more efficient service.

Conscious Communication: What has been the most surprising aspect of your job?

Thurmond: The dramatic way in which the landscape shifted. When I was first elected, in 1998, there was a labor shortage. Then, after 9/11 and with the start of a recession, there came a shortage of jobs. Tens of thousands of people have been thrown out of work, with people from all walks of life, from Ph.D.s to high school drop outs, impacted.

Conscious Communication: What still must be done, what is your current plan?

Thurmond: My greatest challenge is to find jobs. We have approximately 200,000 people who are unemployed, looking for work as we speak. Our motto is: "There is a job for every Georgian and a Georgian for every job". My goal is to provide employment for every Georgian who wants and needs to work.

Conscious Communication: That's a great motto! Many of our readers are business decision makers and leaders, so for that readership let me ask you how employers benefit from working with the Department of Labor.

Thurmond: The first thing employers benefit from is a fair and reasonable unemployment insurance tax rate. Beyond that, we assist employers in finding workers; we are a public search facility. We also help them define job descriptions and provide training for disabled workers, all at no cost.

Conscious Communication: What's new for employers in 2005?

Thurmond: "Georgia Works" is our newest initiative. Because there are not enough new jobs being created, we have started this initiative for unemployed workers who are receiving benefits to audition with prospective employers for up to 8 weeks and receive on-the-job training at no cost to the employer. During this time, the business assesses whether the worker has the skills and temperament to do the job. After 8 weeks, the employer can then offer a job or offer a certificate of completion.

Conscious Communication: What has been the impact of outsourcing in Georgia?

Thurmond: No part of the job market has been harder hit by outsourcing than the manufacturing sector, due to cheap foreign labor, which places American workers at a disadvantage. This has a tremendously negative economic impact, but also a cultural impact. Look at the different parts of Georgia where average folks in manufacturing were working hard and playing by the rules, where they could move up the ladder and generate enough income to be middle class with a high school or college education. With the loss of these jobs, the legs are cut off the middle class. That is part of the reason for the middle class squeeze in this country, the loss of manufacturing jobs.

Conscious Communication: What employment trends should we watch for in Georgia in 2005, and what are business leaders telling you?

Thurmond: There is a growing need for professionals in public and private education and in real estate and mortgage lending, if mortgage rates remain low.

Small business owners are optimistic, they appear to be more flexible in the marketplace and job seekers should follow the news and look at business mergers, etc., to see where they may fit in.

Conscious Communication: The *Atlanta Journal & Constitution* has described you as "one of the brightest, most competent and honest people in Georgia politics"; how do you define leadership, what makes a leader?

Thurmond: First, you have to have a clear vision of what you would like to accomplish and how to do it. You have to be able to rally people to share that vision, and you have to be able to deal with failure and disappointment while not giving up on your vision.

Connect Your Career

It's 2005 - Kick off your Career Plan!

by Leigh Moore



A cousin who had been laid off recently contacted me, after the family grapevine had informed her that I was a recruiter. When my true identity as a Career Coach was revealed, her interest in me cooled. When I inquired what companies she was targeting, I never heard from her again.

Every day, I see bright and capable people needlessly mismanaging their careers. Since we spend about 35% of our lives at work, shouldn't we all have a career development plan?

Here are some suggestions for your New Year's Resolutions:

Set a direction. Is your current position a training ground for the next step in your career? Can you volunteer for projects in your company to get the experience you need? Avoid being a boat without a captain, or you will end up wherever the wind blows you.

Training. Current skills – the skills the workplace demands – are your greatest job security. Don't wait for your employer to provide training; find it yourself and know that it is an investment in your future.

Networking. Is your current network strong enough to support you in a job search? Join professional associations, do volunteer work, give talks at conferences, contact former co-workers. This is your safety net.

Build a Bridge. About two years ago, I worked with an IT client who had been laid off and was going through a divorce. George's programming skills were outdated and jobs in his industry were being eliminated due to technology advancements. With my help, he set a direction and decided on a new career path, using IT as the bridge to his goal. He

studied and obtained new certifications. Networking was not easy for him, but he did it. His new job required a security clearance. With this clearance he has become a more attractive prospective employee for other companies in his industry, thus immediately enhancing his career prospects.

Happy New Year, and may the journey to your goal be joyous!

Leigh Moore is a Career Coach, Certified Professional Résumé Writer and Certified Federal Résumé Writer & Coach with more than 15 years' experience in human resources, career counseling, coaching, training, outplacement and pre-employment testing. She has appeared on WGST Radio's Job Talk program and been quoted in Atlanta Magazine.

author and TV talk show host Dr. Phil McGraw has urged people to evaluate their own lives by asking themselves: "If I were the manager of my own life, would I give myself a raise or would I fire myself?" Promoting ourselves from manager to CEO is just a simple task of upgrading our expectations, discipline and education.

Best-selling author and syndicated columnist Connie Glaser is one of the country's leading authorities on the changing workplace. Her books include "Swim with the Dolphins" and the recently published "What Queen Esther Knew: Business Strategies from a Biblical Sage". A sought-after media guest and speaker at corporate and business events, she can be reached at www.connieglaser.com. Please note this original article has been edited. Reprint of this article permission granted by Connie Glaser.

A Balanced Life

Promote Yourself to CEO of Your Life Inc.

by **Connie Glaser**



Most of us, regardless of where our careers currently are, have great plans for the future. The newly hired lawyer hopes to some day be partner, the assistant vice president dreams of being a senior vice president, the sales associate imagines what it would be like to be a district sales manager.

A new book by Herman Cain, titled "CEO of Self", focuses on the concept of viewing your life as you would view corporate stepping stones, applying the same improvement techniques to yourself as you would to your career.

Cain insists that taking charge of your life is essential to achieving and enjoying success. And he believes that every day gives you a chance to get or keep your life going in the right direction. Here are his guidelines for being the CEO of self:

- C** Communicate. Talk to people who can help you learn and improve your skills.
- E** Evaluate. Don't be afraid to ask questions. That's how you learn.
- O** Opportunities. Opportunities are everywhere, if you will just look for them and pursue them.
- S** Strategy. Everyone needs a life strategy. It starts with a dream and education, followed by searching for ways to reach your destination.
- E** Execution. Work is essential, because success doesn't happen without effort. You're the one who has to make good things happen.
- L** Learning. Education doesn't stop on graduation day. It's a continuous process throughout life.
- F** Fun. Don't forget that winning in life is fun. It helps to learn to enjoy the process as well as the destination.

Being successful and being happy go hand in hand. In Herman Cain's opinion, one of the reasons why people are unhappy is because they don't have something to hope for. Learning to develop a strategic plan for your life can provide a greater sense of control and hope. Best-selling



The Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce Small Business Council recently elected Damali Edwards, founder and CEO of Edwards Consulting Firm, Inc., to their 2005 council. The goal of the Small Business Council (SBC) is to add values to small and emerging businesses in the Metro Atlanta area, to provide new business opportunities, advocacy services, access to information and direct benefit programs to smaller companies, to ensure that the challenges of the small and emerging business are represented and reflected in the activities, programs and policies of the Chamber. For more information on the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce and the SBC, visit www.metroatlantachamber.com.

RECOMMENDED LINKS

Career Journal from the Wall Street Journal
<http://www.careerjournal.com/>

Georgia Department of Labor
<http://www.dol.state.ga.us/>

Goal-Setting
<http://www.mygoals.com/>

Relocation, Salary Surveys and more...
<http://www.cityrating.com/>

U.S. Department of Labor Bureau Statistics
<http://www.bls.gov/>



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Conscious Communication

Mission



To provide valuable human capital management strategies and career tips to our clients, career seekers and professional networks.

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