



Triad Honor Flight's mission: Thanking veterans for their service

Organizer's flight with her father inspired a passion to honor other vets

After a full day touring the memorials in the nation's capital, John Passmore was unprepared for the welcome he and other veterans received at Piedmont Triad International Airport.

Hundreds of people jammed the main terminal. Passmore, a GMA member who served during the Vietnam War, and other veterans exited the concourse to cheers and applause.

A bagpiper in full Scottish regalia led the nearly 100 veterans through the crowd of family and friends. Children held up handmade signs saying "Thank You, Grandpa." There were smiles all around, and more than a few misty eyes.

"It was a huge experience," Passmore says of that day and the welcome home. "A great, great event."

That day last spring marked the second Triad Honor Flight. Another is scheduled for October 12, when another group of vet-

erans who served in World War II, the Korean War, or Vietnam will be honored.

A familiar feeling overcomes the executive director of Triad Honor Flight as she thinks ahead to that event and recalls her experiences with veterans over the past four years.

"I get goose bumps," says Alison Huber.

She laughs when she describes Triad Honor Flight as "my other fulltime job," explaining that it's the one she does for free. A longtime GMA member, she is an account executive at Dynamic Quest.

The October 12 trip will cost around \$125,000. That covers the flight from Greensboro to Washington, charter buses, commemorative hats and jackets for the veterans, meals and other expenses. The volunteers (called guardians) who go along to assist the veterans,

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Veterans on the second Triad Honor Flight to Washington, which took place April 27.

Left: Willie Johnson at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Photos by Derrick Brady of bcookmedia

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Trends is a publication of the Guilford Merchants Association.

What if a disability is invisible? Internship program matches job seekers and employers for win-win results

An internship is a great way for an employer to check out the talents and skills of a prospective hire, and the intern gets a chance to hone those skills in a professional environment. Win-win, right?

Small businesses, however, often don't have internship programs. Interns usually require a little more guidance than an experienced worker, and time is in

short supply at most small businesses. There's also the matter of paying the intern's salary, which might be an obstacle.

But what if it were possible to benefit from an intern program without the expense of a salary? It's possible through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services in the N.C. Department of

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Finding the right fit: Choosing between marketing firms and freelancers

BY ADRIENNE CREGAR JANDLER

In today's fast-paced, under-staffed business climate, it is more apparent than ever that you can't do everything in-house. When time is slipping away, and your marketing efforts are getting pushed to the bottom of your to-do list, it's time to hire some help.

With so many options for marketing services, it can be hard to know where to start.



Jandler

Here are four quick, practical considerations for evaluating whether you would be best served working with a creative agency or a freelancer.

Scope of Work

Freelance graphic designers can be a great option if you need help with occasional projects such as designing a flyer, print ad, mailer, business cards, or a logo. If you do not have an established marketing budget and participate in limited marketing activities, freelancers en-



able you to get professional design work done on an as-needed basis.

Creative firms are a better fit if you have a regular, ongoing need for marketing help, need a variety of professionals (designers, writers, content creators, web developers, media buyers, etc.), or have larger-scale projects.

While you could engage several freelancers with specializations in the different areas, you would need to manage them; an agency will have project managers to ensure that the work is done according to your strategy, budget, and timeline.

Strategy and Oversight

When it comes to marketing, strategy is key to whether (and how well) you achieve results. All marketing activities should be driven by that strategy.

If you are lacking a strategy you

will want to engage a creative agency. Agencies are accustomed to developing marketing strategies and delivering the services needed to achieve them.

Because agencies employ teams of people, they can pull in the needed resources and coordinate all the schedules to keep your projects moving to successful completion. In addition, they have established systems, processes, and provide documentation so that communication about your projects and their statuses are streamlined.

If you have a strategy and need it implemented, freelancers can be an excellent choice for having individual components completed.

Freelancers often partner with other freelancers to jointly tackle projects and likely can recommend people to perform aspects of your plan that involve services outside their areas of expertise.

Budget

When it comes to budget, freelancers and agencies will typically provide an hourly rate for smaller projects or a quote for larger ones.

If you have an established budget, both are generally open to proposing services in a way that can work for you provided your budget is realistic.

In addition, agencies usually offer the option of an ongoing monthly retainer, which enables you to contract them for clearly defined monthly services at a set rate.

While freelancers are gener-

ally considered to be more budget-friendly, that isn't always the case — especially if multiple revisions are needed.

As with anything, the cheaper the rate, the less experienced the provider may be, which translates into a lesser likelihood of achieving your vision quickly. You can end up spending more (time and money) by hiring an inexperienced person at a lower rate than a more experienced person at a higher rate. This is true of agencies as well as freelancers.

Timeline

If you are working on a short timeline, you may find that agencies are better able to accommodate you since they have more staff at their disposal. However, you may also have to pay a premium for expedited service. Some agencies will not do project work on a short timeline if you are not already a client.

Freelancers are often willing to work nights and weekends to accommodate clients' needs but may also become bottlenecked depending on how well they are able to manage their time and workloads. As solo entrepreneurs, freelancers' timelines may be derailed by problems, illness, or other unavoidable interruptions.

Adrienne Cregar Jandler is president of Atlantic Webworks. 336-855-8572 www.atlanticwebworks.com



Interaction

GMA's Teach Me Tuesday educational sessions also feature lunch and time to chat. Above, Mark Podolle of Wireless Ventures focuses on the conversation with another GMA member.



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The Guilford Merchants Association is a nonprofit organization founded in 1906. The Association is a business membership organization focused on supporting member companies with educational programming, lead generation activities, marketing opportunities, and overall enrichment while serving as a catalyst for community growth and prosperity.



Getting oriented

GMA helps new members quickly become familiar with the organization's many programs and member benefits through orientation programs designed just for them. New members attending these sessions learn from veteran GMA members as well as from GMA staff. Pictured at a recent new member orientation are (seated, from left) Alexa McHale (Graham Personnel Services),

Holly Holliday (Holliday Creative Marketing), Sassy Howard (FirstLight Home Care of Guilford), Marian Ragsdale (Habitat for Humanity of Greater Greensboro). Standing (from left) are Troy Chavez (N.C. DHHS), Amanda Whitfield (Graham Personnel Services), Dave Parkhurst (Lumos), Lindsey Hellsten (Hilton Garden Inn Airport), and Stewart Milliken (Amplified Electronic Design).

Target marketing firm specializes in social crowd at restaurants, bars

Advertisers love a captive audience. There's value in knowing you have the undivided attention of your target market. That's what makes Super Bowl commercials so expensive, for instance.

It's also the premise behind advertising placed in restrooms. Because – let's be honest – men's room etiquette means eyes forward and mind your own business.

Could there be a more prominent place to advertise than above the porcelain in a popular restaurant's men's room?

The ladies' room is an equally important venue, where advertising is often placed adjacent to mirrors or touchless hand dryers.

Tapping the captive audience in what polite society once called "the necessary room" is the premise behind William Conley's franchise business, Social Indoor.

Conley has been a GMA member since 2007, when his franchise was known as All Over Media.

The premise then was the same, although the delivery medium was less sophisticated. The advertising consisted of printed placards, which were placed in frames hung on restroom walls.

Today's ads often are delivered in 21st century style. Social Indoor specializes in state-of-the-art messaging, displayed on 22-inch custom monitors. Print, however, remains an option.

GMA, Conley says, has been critical to his business. His general membership in GMA and participation in one of GMA's organized networking groups helps generate the fuel of sales success. In other words, leads.

Sales, as salespeople know, is a numbers game. A certain percentage of appointments or calls will result in sales. "So to make that happen," he explains, "you have to make cold calls, walk-ins, phone calls – whatever you've decided you have to do – to create enough leads to make it work."

For Conley, GMA networking is one of the most efficient ways to generate leads.

Eight hours of cold calling might generate 10 prospects and lead to two appointments. One of those might result in a sale.

Networking via GMA, he explains, generates solid leads more quickly. "If I spend four hours networking and get four leads, and one of them

**LOYAL
MEMBER**



William Conley of Social Indoor, which places advertising in restrooms.

generates a sale," he says, "it's just a lot quicker."

Networking through GMA associates builds trust, Conley says. "And people tend to do business with people they know, like, and trust. That's just the nature of the world."

Conley is a member of GMA's Competitive Advantage Networking (CAN) group, which meets at GMA headquarters on Friday mornings.

Social Indoor serves "a wide variety of venues," he says, from high-end resorts to family-friendly destinations. Most are bars and restaurants.

Advertisers who choose to distribute their message via Social Indoor tend to be insurance agents, real estate people, and "anything that makes people look pretty," Conley says. "Hair restoration, gyms, liposuction," for example.

"If you think about people who go to a bar, it's usually people who want to look good," Conley says.

Sooner or later, they'll venture to the necessary room and encounter Social Indoor.

Social Indoor
Socialindoor.com
336-510-0775



The low-down on The Steelhouse Project

Lisa Hazlett, vice president of The Nussbaum Center for Entrepreneurship, discusses The Steelhouse Project in East Greensboro. As part of the Nussbaum Center, the Steelhouse is a re-imagining of the former Carolina Steel fabrication plant to become a center of urban manu-

facturing and innovation. The project, which spans 15 acres, will house small businesses and create high-paying jobs. Hazlett spoke at GMA's August 9 Center City AM Briefing, held at Elm & Bain event center. Center City AM Briefings are open to all GMA members.

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Danielle Sowell, American Cancer Society; Amanda Whitfield, Graham Personnel Services.



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Event volunteers Colleen Biedny of Carolina Cookie Co. (left) and Teresa Class of Pinnacle Financial Partners.

Gene Dolan, Culinary Visions Catering; Adrienne Cregar Jandler, Atlantic Webworks.



Tinker Clayton and Maribel Tapia of Stitch FX, an event sponsor.



Volunteer Joan Rogers of Compass Financial Partners passes out door prize tickets and stickers for the networking game.

VR internship program

Continued from page 1

ment of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

The program places Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) clients with companies where they can develop the in-demand skills needed to achieve their career goals. DHHS pays the salary for up to 28 hours a week for 18 weeks.

A VR client is a person with a medically verified disability, says Ronda Green, a business relations representative with DHHS in High Point. DHHS is a GMA member.

Disabilities are often invisible, she explains. A diag-

nosis of diabetes or cancer is considered a disability. Learning disabilities, which affect about 1 in 5 students, according to the National Center for Learning Disabilities, also are invisible. Depression, too.

Green calls these “hidden disabilities, things that you don’t see. You would never know they had a disability. It’s not just people in wheelchairs, which is what most people think of.”

VR has partnered with companies large and small to create internships in a variety of positions, ranging from data entry to accounting to manufacturing and

sales, to name a few.

According to a VR publication, the program allows businesses access “to a new pipeline of talented and motivated job seekers.”

VR, of course, also helps match its clients with employers hiring for regular positions. Employers who hire a VR-referred applicant may qualify for one or more tax breaks.

The internship program is just one of many available through DHHS to assist clients and businesses. More information is available at ncdhs.gov or by calling Ronda Green at 336-943-6015.



FirstPoint/GMA President & CEO Mark Prince (right) with John Thomas, a FirstPoint/GMA board member and owner of IDeACOM of Central N.C.

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GMA helped in her transition into a new job, in a new community

Beth Foshie was a brand-new resident of the Piedmont Triad, in a brand-new job, when her employer whisked her off to a GMA After Work Network.

“It was a fun event,” Foshie recalls. “I got to meet a lot of people and, me being from Tennessee, I didn’t know anybody here.

“It was very cool,” she says, “just to talk to people, to get to know what they do, and tell them what we do.”

Foshie, a business development manager at the staffing firm KCA Recruiting, had no way of knowing that the business world was about to be turned upside down. It was late 2019, shortly before the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In spring 2020, as Foshie describes it, “Things got kind of sideways for a bit.”

In-person meetings ceased. Businesses, non-profits, and service providers nationwide faced a crash-course in

working remotely.

GMA rapidly navigated the transi-

tion from live events to online Zoom sessions, providing services and invaluable social contact for isolated members conducting business from their homes.



Beth Foshie is a business development manager with KCA Recruiting.

Even so, Foshie had a foothold in her new community and the beginnings of a personal business network. She’s grateful to Kelly Reaves,

she ran a preschool. A promotion at his trucking firm led the couple to move to that company’s home office in High Point.

Foshie was just beginning her job search when someone at her husband’s workplace suggested she check out KCA Recruiting. Foshie had hopes that the staffing firm might find a place for her at a Triad firm. To her surprise, Reaves offered her a position with KCA.

“She brought me on, and ever since, I’ve been helping her” find workers for open positions at KCA’s client companies.

**PARTICIPATION
= SUCCESS**

“We focus on accounting, finance, IT operations, human resources, and administrative positions,” Foshie says.

Foshie became a member of GMA’s BIZ-Links networking group when it was meeting virtually during the pandemic. The opportunity to build relationships during the group’s meetings each Thursday has helped Foshie develop new business for her company.

“I’ve gotten some really good leads” through BIZ-Links, she says. “That’s happened several times.”

Foshie says being an active GMA member has had multiple benefits as her family continues to get settled in North Carolina.

“When you’re new to an area, it’s kind of difficult to meet people,” Foshie says. “GMA has gotten me out and about, meeting people.” As a result, she’s finding success in her new career as well as new friendships.

“It happened pretty quick,” she says, “because Kelly started taking me to GMA right away.”

KCA Recruiting
kcarecruiting.com
423-794-7517

‘When you’re new to an area, it’s kind of difficult to meet people. GMA has gotten me out and about, meeting people!’

– Beth Foshie
KCA Recruiting

managing director at KCA Recruiting, for introducing her to GMA and helping her launch a new career.

In Greeneville, Tenn., where she and her husband previously lived,



Name: Anisah C. Ferrell
Hometown: Danville, Va.
Residence: Greensboro
Age: 25
Business: Carter Bank & Trust
Role: Assistant Branch Manager
Responsibilities:
I manage other associates and get to know my customers to

provide excellent customer service. We discuss their current needs and help them plan for a stronger financial future. I also open accounts and do everything that a financial services representative would.

On GMA & Risers:

I learned about GMA through my manager, Chris Babcock. He took me to my first Noontime Network, and that’s



how I got started. It was actually really fun. GMA has allowed me to grow out of my comfort zone, to meet new people and create some new friendships.

Personal:

I am into decorating and event planning. I like a lot of

arts and crafts, like making wreaths. I usually just do it with friends or if we have an event at the bank.

Anisah C. Ferrell
Carter Bank & Trust
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Three strategies leaders can use to manage the talent crisis

BY MERIDITH ELLIOTT POWELL

Walk into any Main Street business or sit in any boardroom across the world these days, and you will hear about one challenge concerning every company, leader and industry – talent. Where to find it, how to keep it, and how to engage it.

Finding and retaining talented people seems to be the biggest problem confronting leaders today. And let's face it – without talent you can't serve customers, you can't grow, and you certainly can't create the innovation needed to thrive in an uncertain marketplace.

According to the polling firm Gallup, 55 percent of CEOs identified finding and developing next-level leaders as one of their top challenges. And only 11 percent of human resource leaders feel they have a strong bench that can take over leadership positions.

Leaders today face the tightest labor market in years. To solve the challenge, leaders need to first

understand why they are losing talent. They then need to adopt new and innovative strategies to solve the problem.

So why are you losing talent? First, it's because you are not in charge anymore. Like it or not, employees have a choice.



Powell

If at any time they do not like their job, their boss, or the workplace environment, they can leave and they know it.

Secondly, companies lose talent because leadership may be out of touch with what today's employees want and need in order to commit and engage. And lastly, companies face a talent crisis because the strategies currently used to attract, retain, and engage talent are out of date.

Once you understand the root causes of the talent

BUSINESS GROWTH

crisis, it's possible to implement strategies to counteract the problem.

Here are three strategies to attract and retain employees. As you'll see, it is possible to come out on the winning side of this challenge.

Build Your Bench

More than 63 percent of Millennials believe they aren't being tapped for opportunity or being fully developed as leaders by their managers. More than half of the workforce from age 22 to 40 doesn't feel as though their employer is invested in them. The management consulting firm McKinsey & Company reports that 40 percent of workers leave their jobs because they are unhappy with their career opportunity.

Business leaders ask employees to invest in the company; leaders must ask themselves if they are in-

vesting in their employees. Career opportunity does not have to be a massive strategic plan. It can be as simple as giving them new skills, ensuring they have a mentor, or allowing them to shadow other roles in the company – even the CEO.

Give Them Ownership

I believe that employees want to feel like they are a part of something, that they have some skin in the game, and that they have a voice. If leaders want employees to stay, employees must be invited to be a part of what you are doing. Leaders need to give their employees ownership. This means asking them for their ideas and opinions. It means including them in projects, solving problems, and coming up with new ideas. When you give employees ownership, you invite them to be a part of something bigger than themselves.

Cull The Herd

It is better to have fewer employees who are committed and engaged than a full team of slackers. Why? Be-

cause allowing team members who are not pulling their weight to stay actually pushes your best employees out the door. By not holding everyone accountable, you ride your strong employees too hard and indirectly ask them to do more. This implies that you are not a leader who is willing to do what is necessary to ensure that the company and its employees are successful.

Finding talent today is not easy, and holding on to it is even harder. The reason that 41 million people left their jobs voluntarily in 2021 is because they were looking for something. That something is a leader and company that understands their value and is willing to invest in them. Be that leader, and you will have cracked the code on the crisis talent.

Meridith Elliott Powell is an author, sales strategist and leadership expert. She has been a featured speaker in GMA's Workplace Workshop series.

Creative pro develops digital tools aimed to help small businesses soar

Holly Holliday believes that two of the most important tasks for business success in the digital age are lead generation (no explanation needed) and reputation management (think Amazon reviews, LinkedIn, Yelp, etc.).

But Holliday also knows these tasks can be a major challenge for someone running a small business, someone like herself. Serving clients is more likely to be their first concern.

So Holliday, who has made her career as a marketing and design professional, put her mind to

NEW MEMBER PROFILE

work. The results are dragonflyleads.net and buzzclicks.net, digital products that streamline lead generation and reputation management for small businesses.

The two products are designed "to help businesses grow, to make them stand out through their reputation," says Holliday.

Early in her career, after graduating from the famed Parsons School of Design,



Holly Holliday of Holliday Creative Marketing.

Holliday worked in the Big Leagues of marketing and design, doing stints with Spin magazine, Donna Karan, and Calvin Klein.

Her mother's illness caused her to return to her native Greensboro, where she established herself as a design entrepreneur.

When her business was slammed by the Great Recession, she went to work for one of her clients and became design director at U.S. Airways Magazine, produced by Pace Communications.

Fast forward a few more years, and she's once again

doing what she enjoys most – working directly with clients to solve their design and marketing needs.

"I am focused and passionate about building businesses in my hometown and community of Greensboro," she says.

Holliday, who has joined GMA's BIZ-Links networking group, says most of her clients came to her via referrals, or word-of-mouth. "Your reputation is the most important thing," she says.

"I'm a people person who loves helping others build their businesses and succeed," she adds. "I think GMA is that as well."

*Holly Holliday Creative Marketing
Hollyhollidaycreative.com
336-253-3971*

Triad Honor Flight

Continued from page 1

some of whom will be in wheelchairs, pay their own way.

Huber created Triad Honor Flight, a non-profit organization, and is its chief cheerleader and fund-raiser. She embraces the challenge with the same enthusiasm that GMA members associate with her as a dedicated volunteer, just turned up a few notches.

Eight World War II veterans will be among the veterans on the October flight, and next spring's flight is already on the calendar.

“Our goal is to fly twice a year, spring and fall,” Huber says, “and we go by age, unless there’s a terminal illness.” World War II veterans, who are rapidly passing from the scene, are a priority.

Each honor flight follows the same schedule and, without fail, produces the same waves of emotion.

Veterans arrive at Arlington National Cemetery to witness the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Next are visits to the the World War II Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. There’s also a visit to the Lincoln Memorial and memorials of the various services branches.

Huber, daughter of a Cold

War-era Green Beret, accompanied her father on an honor flight from Ohio to Washington in 2018. Once she learned what that experience meant to him and his fellow veterans, she was hooked.

Goosebumps and teary eyes are a common side effect. “We call those honor flight allergies,” Huber says.

Rotary District 7690, made up of 49 Rotary Clubs in Piedmont North Carolina, sponsored honor flights from 2009 to 2011, sending some 1,300 World War II veterans to Washington.



Alison Huber, founder and executive director of Triad Honor Flight.

Huber was unaware of that effort when she organized Triad Honor Flight. The independent non-profit is affiliated with Honor Flight Network, a national organization.

The honor flight experience can heal wounds. “We’ve had Vietnam vet-

erans in tears, saying ‘The first time I came home, I couldn’t even acknowledge I was a veteran.’ One said the first time he was proud to be a veteran was walking through that gate” at the airport.

Huber makes weekly visits to two World War II vets she met on previous Triad Honor Flights.

“If you knew what it meant to the veterans,” she says, “you can’t walk away. Everybody who participates seems to find another way

to volunteer. To raise funds, or speak at upcoming events, or collect letters of thanks for the veterans. It’s just so meaningful.”

She often tells about Dallas, a World War II vet she met on the first Triad Honor Flight. A photo of him ran as part of a Sunday newspaper feature story a few days after the flight.

Dallas saw his photo in the News & Record, Huber says, and that afternoon, he passed away.

She later learned that

Dallas was buried wearing his Triad Honor Flight jacket and cap. It’s a story Huber often shares while drumming up support for the organization.

“So, you really know how much it means to the families,” she says. She pauses, feeling another bout of honor flight allergies coming on. “I’ll continue to do this as long as I can.”

Triad Honor Flight
triadhonorflight.org
 336-306-8710



Bagpiper Bill Whitfield leads the welcoming procession for veterans returning from last April's honor flight.



U.S. Rep. Kathy Manning chats with veteran Bob Gobble.

Photos by Derrick Brady of bcookmedia



The U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial is one of several sites visited by veterans on each honor flight.



Families and friends greet returning veterans at Piedmont Triad International Airport.

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