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DON'T BE LEFT OUTSIDE THE insider

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Plano author shares job interviewing tips

By Liz McGathay
Staff writer

With a limited number of jobs available and millions young and old out of work, Americans need all the help they can get to land a position and prevent the bills from piling up. When it comes to finding a job, the interview process is critical.

Sherri Elliott, senior professional in human resources, HR consultant and author, stresses the importance of knowing your interviewer and considering their generational personality. The four generations in the workforce currently range from Millennials (ages 9 to 23), Gen Xers (30 to mid-40s), Baby Boomers (late 40s to 50s) and Traditionalists (60 and up).

In her book, "Ties to Tattoos: Turning Generational Differences into a Competitive Advantage," Elliott's goal is to bring awareness to people and organizations on how to communicate within the generations and accepting the differences and embracing them.

With years of experience under her belt as an HR professional and owner of two Plano-based businesses, Optinance Workforce Strategies and Geninsyght, Elliott offers some tips on the best way to put your best foot forward in a job interview.

Looks do matter

Elliott said you have to not only dress for the job you're interviewing for, but you have to think about who is on the other end of the phone.

"You don't know if the voice sounds like a Millennial, or if the voice sounds like you could be interviewing with a Traditionalist," she said. "You could have three people at the interview, so you have to actually dress in a business dress. Even if they say business casual, I think slacks and a blazer is appropriate for everything. I think you have to remember this person could be biased about this thing, this person could be biased about this."

In "Ties to Tattoos," one illustration shows a recruiter looking at a magazine with 'Executive



of the Year' on the front cover. The pictured executive sports earrings and a wild hairdo. The recruiter is lamenting the fact he didn't hire the man simply because of his appearance.

"Why? Because he had a personal bias against that guy's earring and purple hair," Elliott said. "So, not only should the recruiter put their personal biases aside and remember to look for the best qualified candidate, but the candidates also need to go in and remember they're interviewing for a job and to go in and just wear traditional clothes." She said to remember you may be up against numerous other candidates so present your best possible self.

Be yourself

Job hunters need to be true, honest and respect-

ful and be careful with confidence level. "I think people that don't show enough confidence make it look like they don't really have the skills and abilities," Elliott said. "But I think that when they're overconfident, it shows that maybe they're not telling the truth about their resume."

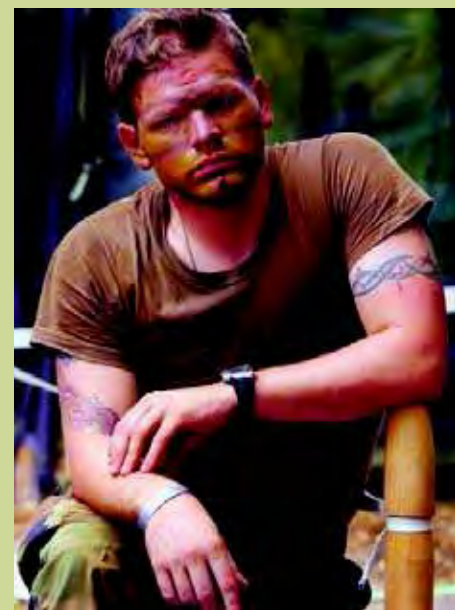
Elliott said the way you act in front of the recruiter should depend on their generation, not yours. Someone who grew up in the Depression is not going to respond well to inquiries about company technology — phones, laptops, etc. A member of a younger generation may see enthusiasm while a Traditionalist may see a waste of precious funds.

"Now, if you're talking to a Boomer or a Gen Xer, they would understand you need to have the best pieces of technology to do your job and to stay active and on top of your task 24/7," she said. "But if you said that to a Traditionalist, they'd already mark you off and think 'you're spending the company money already? You don't understand how tight resources are? Next.' So you have to gauge and understand who you're sitting across the table from to know how to interview with them. You kind of need to understand each of the generations."

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IRON WILL

70-year-old Ironman competes to honor grandson



By Kim Nguyen
Staff Writer

Plano's George Amundson was one of 200 people selected in a lottery to participate in the 2009 Ford Ironman World Championship in October.

Amundson, who turns 70 in August, was selected out of a non-qualifying pool of nearly 7,000 entrants and was one of seven Texans to be chosen. The Ironman competition selects 150 athletes from the United States and 50 athletes from around the world.

The Ironman Triathlon is one of a series of long-distance triathlon races organized by the World Triathlon Corporation. It consists of a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride and a 26-mile run.

Amundson has competed in the Ford Ironman World Championship twice and completed eight total Ironman events.

"[Ironman] is a long, tough day of hard, hard work and a lot of people are surprised to find out that I've

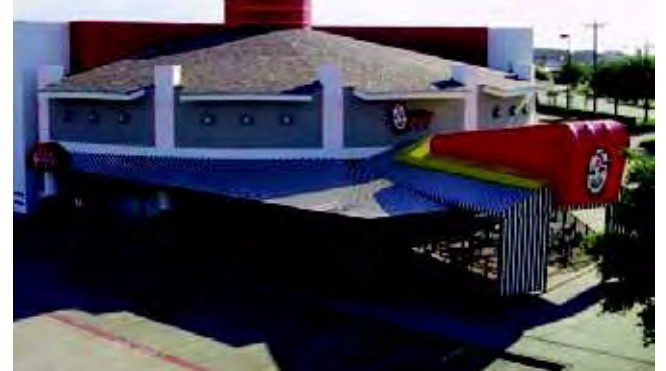
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SUBMITTED PHOTO

George Amundson runs during the third leg of the 2007 Ironman competition in Canada. He has been competing in triathlons since 1999 and trains year-round. Amundson will compete in honor of his grandson, William Amundson (top), who died in Afghanistan in 2004.

Poodle skirts to Hula Hoops

New Plano restaurant brings back the 50s family diner



By Liz McGathay
Staff writer

The "Best Burger" in Salem, Ore. has come to Plano.

Rock-N-Rogers, a 50s style diner, set up shop at 6509 W. Park Blvd. at Midway less than two months ago and is quickly becoming part of the eatery rotation for many area families.

Rock-N-Rogers will celebrate its grand opening from 6 a.m.-11 p.m. on June 6 with several activities and contests for all ages, kicked off by a Hula Hoop contest at 9 a.m. and a 10 a.m. bubble gum blowing contest. From 11 a.m.-1 p.m., a Marilyn Monroe imperson-

ator will stop in for photo opportunities followed by an appearance by an Elvis Presley impersonator at 5 p.m. From 6-9 p.m. a DJ will be on hand to spin some old favorites while couples compete to be chosen for their best 50s attire.

Rogers' first 100 customers the morning of the event will receive a free hamburger every week for a year. (Rumor has it some patrons plan to spend the night outside the door.)

The diner's décor is a step back in time with walls plastered in vintage memorabilia, checkered floors, slick red dining furniture and — the crown jewel of the establish-

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Jobs

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Gauge your qualifications

Zero in on what you're interviewing for to save your time and energy. "We used to tell people 'never leave a job until you have a job,' and you can't do that anymore," Elliott said.

"One of my very best friends was a head of HR and she got laid off Jan. 5 of this year. Here we are at the end of May and she's still without a job, so her desperation is very high right now."

If you're applying for jobs that you're overqualified for, most companies will most likely not want to hire you if they realize you'll get another job once the economy changes. Elliott said job hunters with an advanced skill set may be better off working somewhere with a high turnover rate until higher standard jobs become available.

"Realistically, as a recruiter, you know when your looking at somebody who's probably made double and you ask them that question — 'why do you want to come work here?' — the real answer is 'because I need a job.' Then the second real answer is 'I'm going to go get a job somewhere else as soon as the economy shifts and I can go back and make \$100,000 instead of \$50,000,'" she said. "They're going to spend their time and energy training you so you have to be ready to answer that question honestly and truthfully."

position, which doesn't include the soft cost of time and energy.

Be memorable

The follow-up is just as important as getting to the interview because so few people even get to that point. In following with generational consideration, three methods should be utilized: voicemail, e-mail and a handwritten note.

"It's as important to send the e-mail for the people who are into the technology and you need to send them a voicemail," Elliott said. "But just as importantly, send them a thank you note. That is really critical. There are so many people who still enjoy the thank you note."

It doesn't need to be fancy or expensive — just a handwritten thank you note conveying appreciation for the interview and the information that was given and gratitude for the time and consideration of the interviewer.

Via those three methods, the employer has seen your name three times since the interview.

"Ties to Tattoos: Turning Generation Differences into a Competitive Advantage," released March 1, is available at www.tiestotattoos.com.

The bottom line

Elliott said because of the state of the economy, professionals have lowered their standards when it comes to the salaries they request. They're saying 'I'll take whatever you're offering,' she said.

"What that does is it creates warning bells for a lot of employers because they know that you're going to leave as soon as you find a job," she said.

Some companies will take what they can, but the majority won't take the risk because the cost of turnover isn't worth it. Department of Labor statistics say turnover costs at least 30 percent of an employee's salary per

Diner

Continued from Page 1A

ment — a life-sized statue of the King himself in his heyday.

Owner Jamie Hawley said he scoured flea markets and antique stores to give the restaurant its distinctive feel.

Hawley said in 1987 his father, original owner Roger Hawley, set out to open a family-oriented restaurant that would hearken back to a bygone era to recreate the memories from his childhood.

"His mind was of a memorable time and they were just coming off of warm-torn years; it was a prosperous time and a very innocent time period," Hawley said. "Given the pressures people have today, in this atmosphere you can come in and immediately leave your worries at the doorstep and that's what we're trying to create."

The Plano location is the third in the chain and the first outside of Oregon. Hawley bought the original diner from his father in 1991 and opened a second in '93. Once he decided to plant his family's roots in Plano, Hawley was ready to bring a touch of Salem to his new home. Hawley said his father was excited to see his idea grow into the next generation.

"We would get out of church on Sunday and the kids would say 'we need a Rock-N-Rogers so we can go eat breakfast,'" he said. "I like the community feel of the area in Plano and it ties in for a nice indoor concept."

Hawley hopes to pass on the family business on to his own children, not just for the benefit of his family but as a way to keep traditional values in the community. In keeping with the nature of Rogers' history, Hawley has worked hard to keep his burger joint 100 percent family-friendly — down to the last detail, such as a stock of Hula Hoops for the kids just inside the door.

If its atmosphere and background aren't enough to bring in nostalgic patrons, the food should do the trick.

"Food was pretty simple then [in the 1950s]. Burgers, shakes and fries were the most popular food products," Hawley said.

In addition to the old favorites — hand-pattied burgers, fresh-cut fries and hand-dipped milkshakes — Rogers' menu boasts a meal for every taste. For 'brinner' fans, breakfast is served all day. For those who can't choose, the Rock-N-Rogers Favorite Burger, the restaurant's most popular item, packs a punch with a healthy portion of beef topped with ham, bacon, a fried egg and all the fixings. Hawley said the handmade onion rings are also a hit.

Rock-N-Rogers offers a large outdoor seating area under an awning and a separate party room. Hours of operation are 6 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 6 a.m.-11 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 7 a.m.-10 p.m. on Sundays. Over the next several months, Rock-N-Rogers will feature 50s car shows and 50s band concerts.

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