

Foundations—a Pedestal Group Publication

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FOUNDATIONS

The Pedestal Group

Unemployment and Small Business

Special points of interest:

- *Browser Wars*
- *The Power of Words*
- *Ecosystems*
- *Net Neutrality*
- *Capture Your Screen*
- *AND MORE!*

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Everyone is concerned about unemployment. People who don't have jobs don't have money to spend putting pressure on everyone to cut back. Periodically, we like to do a survey on how things are going on the unemployment front as we find when our customers have information, they can do a better job planning and helping their customers.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, individuals with less than a high school diploma are unemployed at a rate of 13.8%. Contrasted with individuals holding a bachelor's degree or higher at 4.5%, and we can see those with a degree, and (in theory) higher level positions, are employed at a greater rate currently.

Overall for those with a bachelor's degree or higher unemployment is down from its high point in March / April of 4.9%.

Reviewing occupations, Office and Administrative Support people have been out of work the longest at a median duration of 26.7 weeks. In contrast Management and

Professionals have been out of work 25.7 weeks. Service Occupations are running at 22.5 weeks currently.

Looking at industries, those in the Financial industry have been out 28.5 weeks while those in mining, quarrying and oil / gas extraction have been out of work for 19.9 weeks.

Professionals have been out 24.4 weeks and Manufacturing have been out for 25.9 weeks. Nondurable Goods Manufacturing is 27.6 weeks vs. Durable Good at 25.1 weeks and Wholesale and Retail Manufacturing at 25.2 weeks.

Outplacement firm Challenger, Gray and Christmas, Inc. released a survey of job seekers showing that people opting to start their own business in the first half of 2010 was down just shy of 50% compared to first half of 2009.

Historically, CG&C reports that the lowest point for new start ups is when recovery begins although the economy is still fragile.

"Since reaching 9.1million in December, the number of self-employed has steadily declined through the first six months of 2010" said John A.



Unemployment among those with a bachelor's degree is 4.5%.

Challenger, CEO. "During the same period, payroll employment grew by 899,000 jobs in the first stretch of steady job-creation since the recovery began."

According to CBS News, a recent survey found 22% of American businesses say they are ready to hire if they find the right people. They also report that by the year 2012, it is estimated the US will be 3 million skilled workers short of the need.

With many signs of economic recovery giving mixed signals, looking to the employment situation may be one way to focus on what appear to be positive signs for all of us.

Browser Wars

Lately many people have asked us about web browsers and what they should use. Each has its strengths and weaknesses, so here is a run down of what we have found.

Internet Explorer:

Still the default and what most people are using. The biggest benefit is it is compatible with EVERYTHING. All web developers test their pages in IE. The downside is all security and virus writers write for IE because it is what everyone is using so it has the most security concerns.

(To reinstall, go to Control Panel, add and remove programs and select Windows Features.)

Firefox—www.firefox.com

Firefox is the second most-common browser and very popular with users. Its greatest strength is its greatest weakness—it is written and supported by a community of programmers who work on it for fun. This means it is used in many applications but also means it has more updates and can be buggy.

Opera—www.opera.com

A newer browser, Opera is a great tool

for people doing more advanced work on the web. With a great search capability on web pages, Opera is unique in that you can find specific names, text or information on a page once you get there. They also have a neat “speed dial” feature where you set up your favorite sites on a home page. The big downside with Opera is many sites aren’t compatible.

Google Chrome—

www.google.com/chrome

Part of the Google suite of applications and easily integrates with iGoogle, Gmail, etc. Chrome is gaining in popularity and is being used more and more. It offers a “frequently used” site page that allows for one-click access of most commonly-visited sites. Chrome features strong security measures.

Safari—Installs with iTunes and Quicktime

Safari was put out by Apple to be used in OS X and has swiftly gained popularity on PCs as well. Because it is Apple software it has been written very differently than other browsers so

it is a great choice when troubleshooting web browsing problems (i.e. speed issues, access of sites, etc.). There are some sites that are not compatible but more and more are working well with Safari every day. Safari is also much less susceptible to malware attacks.

It is generally a good idea to have more than one browser on your computer at any given time. Most people have Internet Explorer pre-installed when their computer arrives so adding another browser just requires navigating to the website for the browser and downloading. Each browser will want to be the primary so be sure to set your primary browser and then uncheck the box asking if you want the browser to check if it is the default.

If you are having internet problems in terms of speed or accessing sites, it is often a good idea to try going to the same site through a different browser. You may also find that you will like different browsers for different tasks. For instance, Opera may be what you use for research but Firefox is your every-day tool.

The Power of Words

Sales messages are crafted, tag lines discussed for hours, and website text written and rewritten. But what about the words we use in every day discussions? So many can be made more powerful when you think about what you say.

What do you sign with clients to start working together? An engagement is much different than a contract. An agreement has a different tone than an “EUL” (end user license). How can you convey your goals of the document through the name of it?

Do you discuss “price” or “cost” with clients? Or do you provide “value”

and “investments”? It doesn’t really matter what word the client uses as you will get to educate them on what it should be.

Do you have clients, customers, partners, or some other descriptive term for the people that engage your services? What you call them dictates a lot about your relationship.

Recently, an article came out where the author “opened a sale” rather than closed it. It wasn’t the end of something, it was the beginning of the relationship. How do you talk about your sales process—does it sound like it has a beginning, middle and end and if so,

does it then start over? Or do you discuss it as a way to start something and then continue on long-term?

Think about the words you use to describe your every-day transactions and then choose what you want to use to convey the right messages. Choose words that match your marketing messages so it becomes obvious to prospects you live your messages—not just sell them. Be sure to practice these words so they become part of your vernacular and use them in all situations—with vendors, prospects, family and friends. When someone uses them back, you know you’ve gotten it right!

Hot Topic In Marketing—Ecosystems

An ecosystem is, “a system formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their physical environment” wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn. Recently, more and more marketers are using this term when discussing interacting with your prospects and customers (or your “organisms”). But what does that mean?

In the past, marketing was done through messaging in advertising and pounding it. Hard. Today, we have so many options for where to put messages, and in many cases different messages for different groups of

“organisms”, that it is tough to get one’s head around it when thinking about advertising.

Good companies interact with their organisms providing value and offering solutions. In that way the company must be in the environment with their organisms—not existing in its own environment as it did in the past.

In addition, companies have to provide something in the environment that is of value. The community of organisms must have a reason to interact, just as biological organisms do in an ecosystem.

Today, it is more important where your organisms are doing the interacting than even who they are as your message must get to the right people.

If your organisms are on social media, you need to be there as well. If they are reading newspapers, then that is the right vehicle for you. Determining where your clients/prospects are and interacting with them has taken on a biological feel which has led to the use of the term ecosystems.



Net Neutrality—What’s It About and Why Do You Care?

This month Google and Verizon jointly submitted a “net neutrality proposal” and brought this issue back to the forefront. But for many, this issue isn’t clear and people don’t understand how this will affect them one way or another.

The concept of “net neutrality” goes back to the early 2000’s and fundamentally means internet service providers have to provide service regardless of content. If two users pay for the same level of service and one is a gamer while the other is checking email, they both get the same level of service.

Recently, the discussion has reopened giving rise to concerns there will be two internets. One will be the same World Wide Web we know today. The other would be the “private” web where companies could pay to have their content delivered faster to users. This premium service is seen as potentially hurting small business in that they wouldn’t have the resources to compete with the likes of Amazon, Google, etc. and their content would

naturally be slower. As the internet has allowed so many to innovate and create new businesses, products and services, anything that would throttle it is something many would like to avoid.

The other concern with the proposal is that it specifically addresses wireless networks having the option for the slow lanes and fast lanes for data. While getting content faster is always a good thing, companies having the option to restrict traffic or slow it down to the point of becoming unusable means an ISP would be dictating content.

But, ISPs feel that while they would gain from this type of structure, it would give them the opportunity to customize service more and offer customers options. Many have called the concern about discriminating based on content “preposterous” and would not consider that as an option.

In addition, there is great concern over allowing the FCC to regulate net neutrality. With claims that the

“decency police” and others would be able to change how the internet is used, it is no wonder Google and Verizon proposed very specific guidelines the FCC would enforce.

According to Inc. Magazine, “The chief executives of Google and Verizon said their proposal does not represent a business arrangement between them, and that they hope the proposal could be used as a model for possible congressional legislation.”

With so much of what we do dependent on the web, this is an important issue for everyone to follow and understand how it comes out. It is vital users continue to be able to access the content they want and to create their own content as needed.

REGARDLESS OF WHAT YOU WANT TO DO ON THE WEB, NET NEUTRALITY SAYS YOU GET THE SAME SERVICE LEVEL AS SOMEONE ELSE PAYING THE SAME AMOUNT

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Putting our clients where they belong.

The Pedestal Group was founded to answer a need we saw in small businesses to have a source for help. That could be how to find and integrate the right technology, how to better hire and manage people, how to set goals and create a strategic plan, or really attack and own your marketplace.

Our team has worked in a variety of industries including staffing, recruiting and executive search, retail, technology, healthcare software / IT, higher education and franchising and the consistent theme we have found it is very hard to see the forest for the trees. In small business, that is compounded by the number of resources available.

Our approach is unique in that we don't just say it is all about the customer, it really is. The Pedestal Group puts our customers on a pedestal – right where they belong. That isn't to say the customer is always right because that is an adversarial relationship – in our case, we always come to agreement. We are always in a partnership with our clients but also remember who's the most important – YOU.

The Pedestal Group - Putting our clients where they belong.

Capture Your Screen

We've all been there—you are talking to someone on the phone and you need them to see what you are doing. Sometimes you need them to see the screen you have up. Others you need to show them step by step how you are doing something. And times you



**Jing and
SnagIt—
Great Tools!**

just both need to be looking at the same screen to facilitate the discussion. But how do you capture that activity without a big expensive program? Download Jing

(www.jingproject.com). With Jing, a user can record a screen, piece of a screen, or series of actions and even add commentary.

Once you install Jing, it sits on your desktop and allows you to capture files any time. Creating a capture is as easy as clicking a button. Once you create your capture, it uploads to screen-cast.com and provides you with a link to send through chat programs, email, FaceBook, LinkedIn, etc. You can post the video or image on a website or blog, and can even add additional elements like arrows and text to the capture.

Screen captures like this are great

when trying to collaborate. Everyone in the conversation can view your information and in turn, share their own. And the best? Jing is free!

This is also a great way to help with tech support problems. Share an error message, or a series of steps to duplicate a problem, or show someone else how to do something correctly. It is all possible with Jing!

TechSmith, the creators of Jing, also created SnagIt, a more robust screen capture tool. This \$45 option allows you to create as well as capture screen images, enhance, and modify them. Both tools can be great productivity boosters!