

## Recruiters Share Strategies at Fairchester Summit

By Crystal Kang

Appeared on November 20, 2014



From left, Greg Karanastasis, vice president of global talent acquisition at Pitney Bowes; Jill Leonard Tavello, executive vice president of culture and communication at Stew Leonard's; and Jenna Mucha, digital media planner and social media strategist at Findly.com. Photo by Crystal Kang

A hail of Tweets, friend requests and LinkedIn connections were exchanged at the University of Connecticut's Stamford campus recently during an event that served as a breeding ground for networking and learning from experts in the human resources industry.

The inaugural Fairchester Recruiting Summit & Awards on Nov. 18, an all-day affair, catered to everyone from a small-business owner in Norwalk to the senior leadership of global talent acquisition at Pitney Bowes Inc.

David Lewis, founder of Norwalk-based human resources company Operations Inc., and his staff organized the educational summit for recruiters in Fairfield and Westchester counties as well as Manhattan to share strategies that have helped them attract and retain the best talent. More than 100 recruiting professionals and business leaders, in industries ranging from retail to software manufacturing, attended.

The event opened with remarks from guest panelists Jill Leonard Tavello, executive vice president of culture and communication at Stew Leonard's, based in Norwalk; Jim Bertoluzzi, director of human resources at Norwalk-based Tauck; Greg Karanastasis, vice president of global talent acquisition at Stamford-based Pitney Bowes; and Bruce Ennis, vice president of human resources at Bigelow Tea Co. in Fairfield.

The panelists and others at the summit said the demographics of the labor market are gradually changing, and recruiters are faced with the challenge of being relevant with social media and up to date with new strategies to attract millennials while also retaining the leadership of soon-retiring baby boomers and Generation X employees.



Gerry Crispin, principal and co-founder of CareerXroads, gives the final educational presentation at the event. Photo by Crystal Kang

Tavello said most of the sales associates at her company are younger than 25 but that Stew Leonard's also recently hired a team member in her early 70s.

"You can get the hires great pay and benefits, but you won't be able to retain them if you don't appreciate them, give them opportunities to move forward, communicate with them, aren't flexible and they don't have a sense of pride for the company," Tavello said.

One of the major ways companies can attract talent in today's labor market is to have a conversation with recruiters about being transparent to their candidates, Karanastasis said.

"Compared to five to 10 years ago where we could see the candidates' resumes and we had all their transparency, now candidates can see everything about us through Glassdoor and LinkedIn. Employee referral should be the number one source of hire. We need to leverage that to build a strong brand for your business and connect it with social media."

Other human resources leaders gave seminars on topics ranging from social recruiting strategies and recruiting high-caliber candidates to the onboarding process and connecting with Gen Yers. Speakers included Jenna Mucha, digital media planner and social media strategist at Findly.com; Marc Halpert, LinkedIn trainer at Connect2Collaborate in Fairfield; Jody Ordioni, chief brand officer at Brandemix; Peter Weddle, executive director of the International Association of Employment Web Sites; Giselle Kovary, managing partner of n-gen People Performance Inc.; and Lawrence Peikes, partner at Wiggin & Dana LLP, with offices in Stamford and Greenwich. Gerry Crispin, principal and co-founder of CareerXroads, closed the seminars with a presentation.

One of the main takeaways from the perspective of a small-business owner in Norwalk was that social media tools such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter are essential for taking her business to the next level. Simone Morris said she wants to use Jobvite, a platform that helps track talented applicants, for her consulting business.

"I have a social media strategy, so what I was really interested in learning about was the different platforms and what works better," Morris said. "I use Hootsuite, but there are others I haven't heard about like Advocate, SocialChorus and EveryoneSocial. I'm mainly listening to seminars for nuggets that I might not be using and how I can apply it."