

TALENTED HUDSON VALLEY

TRAINING & RETAINING THE REGION'S TOP TALENT



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A Message from our President

It's been estimated that 7.6 million Americans will be working in the "gig economy" by 2020, doubling the current 3.2 million-strong, gig workforce comprised of many talented, motivated and skilled individuals. In light of this continuing trend, Hudson Valley Talentbase is a new, regionally focused website that is quickly becoming a go-to for gigging professionals, assisting them with marketing, networking, matching skills to needs and fostering collaboration on activities ranging from finding investors to developing apps to even baking bread.

From gig we move to green, as the demand for employees in the environmentally conscious field of green certification continues to grow as well. Westchester Green Business has established its *Green Business Internship & Training Program* to help meet that need by teaching college interns the skills needed to lead private companies and public entities through the certification process, while also enhancing the marketability of these new workers in a competitive hiring environment.

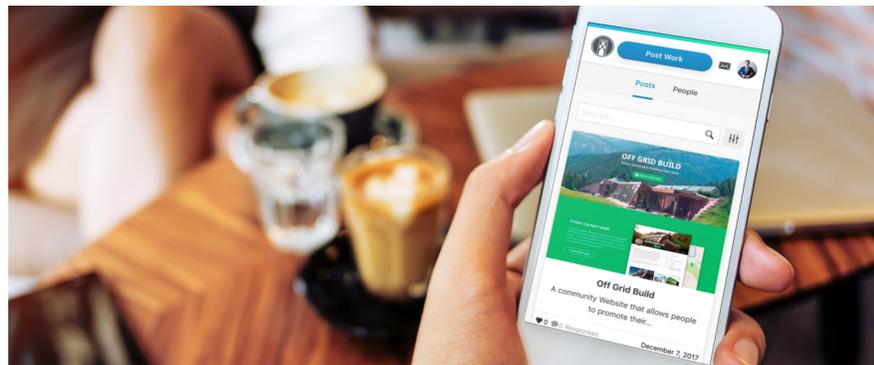
You might say that this edition of TalentED examines how people's passions play into workforce development. More and more, employees and prospective employees say they are looking for greater purpose in their work. These two examples illustrate how workforce development is addressing that by providing opportunities for people to make meaningful contributions that align their ideals with their career and financial goals.

Enjoy!



Laurence P. Gottlieb
President and CEO
Hudson Valley Economic
Development Corp.

New Site Spotlights Hudson Valley Creatives



Hudson Valley Talentbase has been called "an index of interesting people doing interesting projects."

That's a compelling, yet modest, assessment of a website that has tremendous potential for connecting people with new projects, companies searching for talent and supporting local collaboration from home offices to boardrooms and everything in between. Since its wide launch in November 2017, Hudson Valley Talentbase has already begun facilitating and inspiring projects of all kinds in the Hudson Valley.

The description comes from the site's founder and creator Jordan Koschei, a lifelong Hudson Valley resident and self-proclaimed "Hudson Valley geek." Hudson Valley Talentbase is his response to the incredible creative talent and energy he recognizes and appreciates in the region. As a firm believer that interesting things result from unexpected connections, he has often pondered the endless possibilities of what could happen if Hudson Valley creators, especially those with complimentary skills, could find one another.

"If you live in New York City and you have an idea for an app, you can walk into any Starbucks, throw a rock and hit your co-founder," said Koschei. "But, that's not always the case here. In Poughkeepsie, Kingston, New Paltz, maybe; but in our more rural areas, not so much."

That is why Koschei built a virtual place for those people to find one another, discover each other's ideas and turn those connections into collaborative, mutually beneficial work.

Hudson Valley Talentbase is open to anyone with a Hudson Valley zip code. The "getting-to-know-you" basics of each profile are kept to a user's name, location, a single photo and a 255-character bio. However, where Talentbase really shines is when it spotlights skills and projects. Skills can be tagged as part of a profile to

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From “Green” Interns to Green-Ready

Westchester Green Business (WGB) has partnered with the Greenburgh Nature Center to create the Green Business Internship & Training Program, a workforce development initiative designed to provide additional manpower to local businesses in their efforts to achieve Green Business Certification.

At a time when more and more companies are looking to establish themselves as responsible environmental stewards, the program is an effective and efficient way for businesses to advance their green goals and integrate sustainability practices.

There are approximately 90 companies that are active members of Westchester Green Business, a program of the Business Council of Westchester that has been administered in partnership with Westchester County since 2009. Of those companies, only 30 percent are presently Green Business Certified. This is, in part, due to the rigorous process certification entails.

“Many of the companies we work with mentioned that they want to be green certified, but just don’t have the in-house resources to manage all the pieces of the certification process,” said Scott Fernqvist, co-founder and program director of Westchester Green Business.

The training program equips people do just that, and pairs them with Westchester Green Business members looking to gain their certification. While the program does accept and train people already within an organization, its participants are primarily traditional college-aged interns.

“There’s a big need in the community for young people who are interested in green careers,” said Fernqvist. “This is an excellent way for college students to learn more about careers in sustainability and the green jobs that are now found across all industries.”

The program markets itself to local colleges and universities to identify students interested in becoming interns and pairs them with members businesses that have expressed the need.

Interestingly, participants do not need to be environmental studies majors.

“If an accounting firm is looking for an intern, an accounting major can absolutely go through our training program,” said Nicole Virgona, a Green Business associate who coordinates the matchmaking. “They may be minoring in environmental studies, or it may just be a passion that someone wants to take further.”

The two-day training is part classroom session, part hands-on experience, and focuses on the four steps to certification: conducting the employee survey; addressing the 90 action items; completing the greenhouse gas emissions inventory; and, preparing the final presentation. The curriculum addresses the qualitative actions toward sustainability, as well as how to use the quantitative greenhouse gas emissions inventory tool developed by WGB. A total of 11 Interns have already graduated from the program.

“They develop real-world skills that are in demand today, especially on the technical side,” said Fernqvist. “It’s a comprehensive program that exposes them to many different areas – understanding data, purchasing, energy, water and land use. It covers all aspects of how to run an environmentally sustainable business.”



Graduates of the inaugural Westchester Green Business internship program have assisted regional businesses in their eco-friendly efforts: (Top row, from the left) Tina Michell, Bright Energy Services; Macaiah Gross, Greater Hudson Bank; Dana Goldstein, Strauss Paper; Katie Goldenberg, Pell Wealth Partners; Ilana Weinstein, Greenburgh Nature Center; and Melissa Gleave, Berlin Productions; (Bottom row, from the left) Steve Hyland, Aris; Kyle Hoffman, The Blue Book Building and Construction Network; Jevian Douglas, Greenburgh Nature Center; Michaela Bonaforte, Hilltop Hanover; Cheryl Fladung, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals; and Michael Matos, Montefiore Medical Center

One participant, Sustainable Westchester, welcomed Stephen Bodie, a Mercy College student who was excited to help affect policy change for the company.

“The employees at Sustainable Westchester made my experience better,” said Bodie. “They kept open minds and worked to make their business operations more sustainable. The holistic process of Westchester Green Business makes it easy to implement green policies in any facility.”

Other regional companies who have worked with the program include Aris Renewable Energy, The Blue Book Building & Construction Network, Bright Energy Services, Hilltop Hanover Farm, Montefiore, Regeneron, Strauss Paper and WhiffAway, among others. Since recently receiving a grant from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, WGB is extending its unique and progressive program to service businesses statewide.

“We’ve primarily worked with Westchester businesses, but we’re scaling up to partner with companies across New York,” said Fernqvist. “And, I can’t wait to get more of our grads out there. They enter these companies with a high level of knowledge about the certification process, and really help move them forward. It’s been very successful.”

To learn how your business could benefit from partnering with the Green Business Internship & Training Program, visit www.westchestergreenbusinesscertified.org.

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indicate core competencies, the things other users may be looking for in a partner or sounding board. Projects can include anything a user is working on, even if "...it's something from your day job, a hobby/side project, or even just a doodle or idea."

Tagged skills also connect profiles with similar skill sets and complementary needs. Projects currently uploaded to the site range from software and programming projects to start-up investors, writing projects and even networking events.

"You can list the skills you have, the things you're working on, and you have the ability to search," said Koschei. "Say, you're a designer in New Paltz and you're looking for a programmer in Ulster County. You can search 'programmers in Ulster County,' or find programmers right in your own zip code."

Talentbase also makes it easy to post media-rich projects by automatically pulling in images, video and audio from links to platforms such as YouTube, Vimeo, SoundCloud and others. Users are urged to share ongoing and even proposed projects, and to keep posting in-progress updates.

"If you're an artist, a brewer or distiller, a bread maker – any creative project you're working on can go here," said Koschei. "Show the world what you're working on. You can gather feedback and even find partners or contributors."

In early 2018, Hudson Valley Talentbase will be unveiling more features. As with many platforms that operate with a social component, appropriate data and insights collected and generated by Talentbase will be accessible for its users. Koschei and early adopters of the platform are also looking forward to the rollout of refined collaboration and matchmaking features.

"You're a filmmaker in Rhinebeck and your next movie is almost done, you just need a composer," said Koschei. "You will be able to flag your project as 'need a composer' and if someone with that skill has flagged your profile or is searching projects for a collaboration, Talentbase will tell you, 'Hey, you two should know each other.'"

Job- and employee-finder functionalities are coming as well, which will utilize a job board approach similar to LinkedIn, but with a Hudson Valley-centric direction. Koschei says this feature will be perfect for companies like the location-based social media platform Foursquare, whose founder Dennis Crowley recently announced that he is looking to possibly establish a Hudson Valley office. Rather than solicit resumes from people far afield, who could potentially decide not to relocate after an interview process, an HR office like Foursquare's will be able to collect resumes from qualified candidates already living in the region.

Koschei has long heard the idea that the Hudson Valley could become the next Silicon Valley, or that migration trends out of the city would lead to this region becoming the next Manhattan Tech District. He doesn't disagree, but with the wealth of creative talent and entrepreneurship already here, and not just its growing community of tech savvy professionals, he sees much more potential here.

"We have a different set of interests and a different set of people here," said Koschei. "We're not the next Silicon Valley, we're the first Hudson Valley. And, that's something for us to cherish."

After a sneak peek of the website at HVEDC's October 2017 board meeting, Hudson Valley Talentbase had its wide launch at the December 14 meeting of the Hudson Valley Tech Meet-Up, after a few months of building its community of contributors through an invitation-only membership period. With expanded functionalities and site enhancements slated to roll out in the first half of 2018, Hudson Valley Talentbase is set to become a launching pad for a regional workforce that's always searching for its next gig. You can visit the site, and even create your free Talentbase account profile if you live in the Hudson Valley, at www.hvtalentbase.com.



New Jobs in Sullivan? Bet On It!



The development of Resorts World Catskills continues to progress. It is anticipated the opening of the resort casino will occur slightly earlier than planned, in time to herald in the Lunar New Year, with celebrations commencing in mid-February 2018. The highly-anticipated resort casino has been designed to meet 5-star and 5-diamond industry standards, and is poised to become the next great Catskills destination, and a leading job creator.

Resorts World Catskills closed out 2017 with December job fairs in Orange and Sullivan counties, to fill some of its 1,400 remaining positions.

"The dream of a resort casino in the Catskills is finally coming to fruition, and nothing makes it more real than 1,400 new jobs coming to the Hudson Valley," said Charles A. Degliomini, Executive Vice President of Resorts World Catskills. "These are good paying positions with benefits. Anyone exhibiting talent and dedication can make a great career for themselves in this exciting industry."

Resorts World Catskills has also continued to develop its specialized workforce through its Casino Dealer Schools, which launched last summer in Sullivan, Orange and Ulster Counties. Hundreds of job seekers have enrolled in the free training program, to learn the specialized gaming skills necessary to pursue one of the approximately 600 dealer jobs the casino will create.

It is expected that Resorts World Catskills will continue its recruitment efforts up to and beyond its grand opening. Interested job seekers can view current open positions at the resort casino's career page, <https://rwcatskills.com/careers.html>.