

HOME BREW

Organizing the World, One Room at a Time Huntington Woods mom turns passion into profit.

By Stefani E. Barner

Andrea Wolf knew her career in the mortgage industry wasn't working. Struggling to meet the needs of her employer intersected sharply with her struggle to meet the needs of her family and, in the end, she felt she was not adequately meeting anyone's needs — including her own.

She knew she needed a change, but wasn't sure what, when friends asked this married, Huntington Woods mother of three if she could help organize their home after some renovations. Shortly thereafter, her inner-meticulousness combined with entrepreneurial gusto to ask: how could she make money by through clearing clutter and sorting trash from treasure?

"I started to realize what I was really good at. Something that I found fun was very debilitating to others and they needed help." Thus, "Needs Everything Away and Tidy, or NEAT, her home-based personal organization service, was born.

"Sometimes the client is heavily involved, and at others I'm comfortable handling things on my own," she says. "I have three kids and if I'm working on a child's space, I know what I can keep and what can go; 99 percent of the time, when kids come back into their room ... they are sure that there's more stuff there and not less."

With projects ranging from packing up a household, organizing storage rooms, mudrooms, basements and closets to offering team coaching for managers seeking to improve their staff member's organization skills, every day brings something new.

As Wolf explained, one of her company's operating principles is making life easier for her clients — including taking great care to assure confidentiality.

"Many of the people I work with are afraid that I'm going to judge them. But one of the great things about bringing me in to help is that I don't have the emotional investment

that they do," she explained. "That means I can ask honest, non-judgmental questions, and help them really sort out what they want to keep and what they feel okay about letting go."

Larry Frommer, Vice President of Frommer and Associates in Farmington Hills says that he called Wolf after he saw the difference she made in the office of a business associate.

"My office had been out of control for years, and I realized that I would never do something about it myself," Frommer says. "I can find things much easier now; I was one of those people who would search through mountains of files and piles of papers ... now everything has its place."

In addition to these paid projects, Wolf frequently donates her skills to area nonprofits.

"I love to donate my services for a good cause," she says, "It's a good way to get my name out while also helping. I am especially interested in sharing my services with Jewish organizations."

Wolf isn't just passionate about sharing her expertise as an organizer;

she's also a very enthusiastic advocate for others interested in working from home. Her best advice is to figure out what makes you happiest, research the hell out of it, and find the best way to execute it.

"You've gotta do something you love. Your best marketing [tool] is yourself and your passion needs to come through," she says, citing an example from her childhood days of missing school to reconfigure her parents' cabinets.

This ad hoc approach to entrepreneurship seems to have worked well for Wolf, who relies solely on word-of-mouth and social media advertising to drive business.

"I am very thankful that people allow me to come into their homes and help them, because often people are embarrassed and there's no reason to be," she says. "The process is fun and the end result is so great that the embarrassment doesn't last." **Rt**



Before



After

GIGS

Our barometer of employer demand, the GIGS department is a regional composite of companies and industries that are in hiring mode. While December is traditionally a slow hiring month, it seems things are more upbeat than at the same time last year. No marathon of employment recruiting events through — everyone must be busy attending Christmas parties. Happy hunting!

AUTOMOTIVE

Automotive supplier **EDAG** in Auburn Hills recently landed two new programs, one for a military vehicle and one for a sports car from an American Original Equipment Manufacturer. "We're just ramping up on those programs, and we need people," said Tim Meyer, director of staffing solutions. Meyer said the company has about 150 openings.

"We're going to be hiring about 15 people a week for the next several months," he said.

EDAG is looking for body, chassis and interior engineers with military experience as well as unigraphic designers. On the manufacturing side, the company is hiring industrial and manufacturing process engineers. Designer applicants should have at least seven years of experience. Engineering applicants should have five to 15 years of experience. Candidates can send their resumes to Meyer at Tim.Meyer@edag-us.com.

Gary Kopp, engineering manager at **Magna Powertrain** in Troy, is looking for experienced powertrain engineers familiar with testing, validation and design of powertrain components, including NVH and durability testing.

"The company recently relocated its engineering center from Syracuse, N.Y., to Troy. We've got new business, and we're growing," Kopp said. Magna Powertrain also is looking for project leads and purchasing and commodity managers with engineering backgrounds.

The company is requesting applicants have eight to 10 years of experience in powertrain engineering. All open positions pay \$60,000 and up. You can apply online at Magna's career page at magna.com

FINANCE

Quicken Loans has many jobs available, many of which don't require lending experience, according to senior recruiter Amanda Huizenga. "We have non-sales jobs available in everything from HR and IT to customer service and marketing," she said. "We're also looking to hire mortgage bankers."

The company prefers that candidates for mortgage banker positions have sales experience, but no lending experience is required. "We have a very intense training program," Huizenga said. "We've had people who used to be pilots that are now successful mortgage bankers." Candidates should be performance-based and highly motivated, she added. You can upload your resume to the company's career site at quickenloans.com.

Met Life is looking for people with outside sales experience to work as financial advisors selling Met Life products such as insurance and investment opportunities.

"If you know what it's like to prospect, we would like to meet you," said Dennis Koczara, recruiting manager for the company. He added they also are interested in people with financial services experience.

The company has openings in Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids and Troy. The performance-based positions feature unlimited income potential as well as a training subsidy for the first five months of employment. You can email your resume to Koczara at dkoczara@metlife.com.

GOVERNMENT

Up to 25 percent of the **state of Michigan's** government work force is eligible for retirement by the end of the year, and that

could mean the state is on the verge of a hiring surge, according to Angela Shelby, recruitment coordinator for the state.

Specifically, the state needs assistance payment workers and master-level social workers. Shelby advises job seekers to submit their resumes to mdcs-eicps@michigan.gov to see what state government positions they qualify for. You can also check the state's job site, michigan.gov, for positions as they become available.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

IT consulting company **Pillar Technology** in Brighton has 30 open positions. It is looking for .Net architects and developers as well as business analysts and project managers. Open positions can be found online at www.pillartechology.com.

Plex Systems Inc., provider of manufacturing ERP software in Auburn Hills, announced record financial results for its third quarter last month. Increased demand for its manufacturing software as well as new clients has spurred hiring. The company plans to hire 10 to 15 people by the end of the year, according to a company spokesman. Open positions can be found online at plex.com.

STAFFING COMPANIES

Crossfire Group, a professional staffing firm in Auburn Hills, has its help wanted sign out. The company, which provides support for OEMs and Tier One suppliers, has about 300 positions it is looking to fill.

"Right now we have 200 open positions just for engineers," said account executive Bryan St. Onge. "We also need IT people, HR, purchasing and auto technicians."

The company has a searchable database on its website where job seekers can upload their resumes to xfiregroup.com.

Matthew Karrantja, sales manager for staffing firm **Trialon Corporation** in Troy, says the company is recruiting for 400 open positions for designers, engineers and technicians.

"Good news for the unemployed is that Michigan is hiring again," Karrantja said, citing his own company as an example. The headcount at Trialon is up 180 percent in 2010. To apply for one of their open positions, head to the company's career page at trialon.com.

"New jobs come in to us daily," said J.D. Droska from **Delta Staffing** in Clarkston, a technical staffing company that works with clients in the automotive, aerospace and defense industries.

Most of the 40 positions the company is recruiting for are in Metro Detroit. The company is looking for quality and process engineers, powertrain designers and engineers, chassis design engineers and JAVA developers. Candidates can log on to the Delta Staffing website at delta-staffing.com to view open positions, set up a profile and connect with a recruiter. **Rt**

— By Jackie Headapohl

MORE THAN MY CV

Tweet Yourself into a Job

Micro-babble soapbox Twitter is but one more tool in your personal branding arsenal.

By Jackie Headapohl

Twitter, the micro blogging platform that exploded onto the social networking scene in 2007, currently has 175 million users — many of whom are using this social networking platform to land new jobs, 140 characters at a time.

It's a must-have to establish a personal brand, according to personal branding guru Dan Schwabel, managing partner of **Millennial Branding LLC** and author of the bestselling career book, *Me 2.0: 4 Steps to Building Your Future* (Kaplan Publishing). He defines "personal branding" as establishing yourself as an expert in your field and demonstrating your relevance to potential employers.

"Stay relevant or stay unemployed," is Schwabel's advice. "You need to be an expert at something, and Twitter can help you do that. It helps you connect to the right people and build a positive reputation."

But, Schwabel cautions, Twitter is only one prong in an online strategy to build your personal brand. You need a personal website too.

"If you're just on Twitter and you don't have a website, you're in trouble," says Schwabel. "You need to bring the people you engage with Twitter back to a place online that you fully control, where you can post a video resume or showcase your projects."

After you've set up your Twitter account, go to www.twellow.com, where you can search for people to "follow." Look for specific job titles that reflect your career aspirations — such as financial analyst or marketing manager — or the names of companies where you want to work. Create a list of these people on your Twitter account, called "People I need to network with."

"Then begin reaching out to these people," Schwabel says. How? Ask them questions. Retweet their posts. "You'll come across as passionate about your field and competent at what you do," he adds. **Rt**

Events

Dec. 15: Jewish B2B Networking Group Meeting; 5:30-7 p.m.; Embassy Suites, Southfield; www.jewishb2bnetworking.com.

Dec. 29: JobsFairGiant.com New Year! New Job! Career Expo; 9 a.m.-noon and 1-3 p.m.; Embassy Suites, Southfield; (734) 956-4550.