

## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Talkin' 'Bout My Generation (in the Job Market): How to Compete When You're Up Against Your Grandpa, Your Mom, and Your Peers**

*These days, people from all age groups and all areas of expertise are competing against one another for jobs. Maribeth Kuzmeski says the key is knowing your strengths and weaknesses when it comes to connecting with employers.*

**Hoboken, NJ** (November 2009)—It's a scary time for job seekers. With an unemployment rate over 9 percent—a 26-year high—there's no denying the recession has taken a serious toll on the U.S. workforce. And whether you're a 60-year-old grandma seeking part-time work to bolster a decimated retirement account, a laid-off 35-year-old, or a recent college grad, you all face the same pressures. *Will I be able to find a job at all? you wonder. How can I compete with all these other people? And what can I do to make a real connection with potential employers—the kind that inspires those two magic words: “You're hired”?*

Maribeth Kuzmeski says it's this last question that job seekers most fervently need to ponder. Why? Because in a fiercely competitive job market in which youthful energy pits itself against wisdom and experience, how well you leverage your strengths (and downplay your weaknesses) in the “connecting” arena makes all the difference.

“Essentially, there are three generations of job seekers out there looking for work,” says Kuzmeski, author of the new book *The Connectors: How the World's Most Successful Businesspeople Build Relationships and Win Clients for Life* (Wiley, September 2009, ISBN: 978-0-470-48818-8, \$22.95). “They differ dramatically in their approach, in how they connect with others, and in their job search expectations. And to find a job in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they'll each have to compromise a little when it comes to using their preferred methods of connecting.”

In *The Connectors*, Kuzmeski points out that effective communication and positive interactions are critical to getting what we want in business and in life. And naturally, those skills are especially important when searching for jobs.

“Unemployment is higher than it ever has been in most of our lifetimes,” she notes. “The job search is now a full-time job for some. If there is one sales position available at a local manufacturing firm, you may be competing for that job with people older, younger, and the same age as yourself. You need to know what advantage you have. When you know how you can most effectively present yourself, understand how others may be presenting themselves, and take the best strategies from all age groups, you can be the one who wins the job.”

Below Kuzmeski presents an overview of the connecting strengths and weaknesses of different age groups competing for work in today’s job market.

**Generation Y.** “Commonly referred to as Generation Y, today’s 20-somethings are the first generation to grow up in the age of the Internet,” says Kuzmeski. “As a result, they thrive on staying completely connected to one another and to what’s going on around them. Typically, their communications are short and concise. They blog and read blogs, and in general, take in information in very short bursts. They are most comfortable conversing through text and email.”

**Strength: Masters of social media.** Most in Generation Y are involved with some aspect of social media. They are active users of sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook and are adept at keeping up with all the latest ways to use the medium. Because of their general familiarity with the Internet and the best ways to use it to communicate, when it comes to maximizing the medium’s potential, they have a huge advantage over their older counterparts.

**Weakness: Communication informality.** This group prefers succinct communication. Regardless, in job interviews your communication style should cater to your interviewer. Just because you’re up on the latest slang and know how to get your point across using acronyms, such as LOL and TTYL, or single letters and numbers, doesn’t mean you should when you are searching for a job. It might be okay to follow up after an interview via email, but if you do so, you absolutely must communicate clearly and formally.

**Generation X.** “When it comes to overall communication skills and working knowledge of technology, members of Generation X fall squarely between their 20- and 50- to 60-year-old counterparts,” says Kuzmeski. “They are used to online job searches, emailing resumes, and following up via both email and handwritten notes.”

**Strength: Well-rounded expertise.** Generation Xers have excellent technology skills that by and large aren’t dominated by the informalities that can trip up 20-somethings. In addition, they are well-established enough in the professional world to have good business communication skills and a thriving network. And for that reason, they may be the best equipped group for finding a job in today’s market.

**Weakness: Failure to plan.** Generation Xers must be careful not to underestimate their older and younger counterparts. Though they are familiar with technology, the 20-

something crowd is still more versed in social media and they are likely to learn and master a new technology more quickly than Generation Xers. Because they've had more time for practice, the 50-60 crowd is likely better at interviewing. It's important that 30- to 40-somethings remember to carefully plan out their communication and interviewing strategies and not take any of their skills for granted.

**Baby Boomers.** “These 50- to 60-year-olds probably searched for their first jobs in a newspaper and mailed their first resume in to potential employers,” says Kuzmeski. “Though they prefer face-to-face communication, most have become familiar with emailing and texting, and they are rapidly becoming more adept at using social media.”

**Strength: Professionalism.** Job seekers in this age group are known for their high-level of professionalism. They've had years to hone their communication and relationship building skills, and as a result, they have a huge advantage in face-to-face interview situations.

**Weakness: Lack of awareness of all the options.** Though Baby Boomers are great in interviews, the trick for them is actually getting an interview. When searching for a job, simply looking in the newspaper's classified section will no longer cut it. Many members of this generation simply aren't as informed as younger job seekers about the wide variety of places to search for open positions.

In today's crowded market, Baby Boomers need to know how to adequately use sites such as Craigslist and online job search engines such as Monster.com. Baby Boomers must also be aware of the sham jobs that sometimes pop up on these sites, posts that younger generations might more quickly recognize as being spam, unviable opportunities, or just plain fake.

“No matter what means of communication you prefer, relationships are the real secret to success,” says Kuzmeski. “If you can build strong relationships and connect with employers, you will get your piece of the proverbial pie. If you can't, you'll be scrambling for crumbs.

“Use your communication skills to push you toward success,” she concludes. “Don't let yourself settle for a less-than-favorable job when you could use your connecting strengths to find an opportunity that puts you back on the path to productivity and success!”

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### **About the Author:**

Maribeth Kuzmeski is the founder of Red Zone Marketing, LLC, which consults to Fortune 500 firms on strategic marketing planning and business growth. Maribeth has personally consulted with some of the world's most successful CEOs, entrepreneurs, and professionals. An internationally recognized speaker, she shares the tactics that businesspeople use today to create more sustainable business relationships, sales, and marketing successes.

Maribeth is the author of four books, including *The Connectors: How the World's Most Successful Businesspeople Build Relationships and Win Clients for Life*. She has frequently appeared on TV and radio, and has written articles on marketing strategies for hundreds of publications including *BusinessWeek* and *Entrepreneur*. She regularly speaks to audiences on topics relating to business development, marketing, and sales strategies.

Maribeth graduated with a degree in journalism from Syracuse University and has an MBA from George Washington University. She lives in the Chicago, Illinois, area with her husband and two teenagers.

### **About the Book:**

*The Connectors: How the World's Most Successful Businesspeople Build Relationships and Win Clients for Life* (Wiley, September 2009, ISBN: 978-0-470-48818-8, \$22.95) is available at bookstores nationwide, major online booksellers, or directly from the publisher by calling 800-225-5945. In Canada, call 800-567-4797.

**For more information, please visit [www.redzonemarketing.com](http://www.redzonemarketing.com) and [www.theconnectorsbook.com](http://www.theconnectorsbook.com).**

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