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ABOUT FREE PINT

FreePint is an online network of information searchers. Members receive this free newsletter twice a month: it is packed with tips on finding quality and reliable business information on the Internet.

Joining is free at <<http://www.freepint.com/>> and provides access to a substantial archive of articles, reviews, jobs & events, with answers to research questions and networking at the FreePint Bar.

Please circulate this newsletter which is best read when printed out. To receive a fully formatted version as an attachment or a brief notification when it's online, visit <<http://web.freepint.com/>>.



The knowledge economy is much smaller than previously thought, according to a new book to be published this autumn. The Mismanagement of Talent by political economists Phillip Brown and Anthony Hesketh, argues that the UK Government's prediction of a 70-80 percent growth in the knowledge economy over the next few years is over-exaggerated. In their study of more than 28 million UK jobs it found that only 32 percent were in fact knowledge

based, traditionally requiring a university graduate. The study also looked at 145 million jobs across the US economy and found only 1 in 5 roles were knowledge based. Read the full report and the press reactions and debate at <<http://www.lums.lancs.ac.uk/news/268>>.

Understanding trends and issues in employment is crucial for employers and job seekers alike, and our FreePint Jobs Update in the future will contain not only jobs listings but will also now include tips and observations from two expert recruitment consultants in the UK and Australia. If you want to stay one step ahead, you can subscribe or advertise to this community of over 1,900 active job seekers <<http://www.freepint.com/jobs>>.

This week, in Beverley Saunders' article, we look at the trend for an increasing number of older workers and the impact this has on employers and on the growth of specialised recruitment agencies for older people.

The Government says it is trying to encourage the growth in small businesses. Back in January, I was invited to a focus group commissioned by the Central Office of Information to discuss the information demands of small business start-ups. One of the themes we discussed at length was the challenge of marketing for the newly independent consultant or freelancer. In today's article by Mary Ellen Bates "Marketing for the Info-entrepreneur" she takes a very readable and refreshing approach to marketing techniques for the independent information consultant. How, for example, to address the "Its all on the Web for free" factor and crucially how to "out-Google Google" by selling the benefits of information analysis, synthesis, summary and presentation to clients. If you like Mary Ellen's approach and tips then you should consider purchasing her full report which is published today by FreePint <<http://www.freepint.com/shop>>. Her techniques can be applied to corporate information centres as well as independents.

Mary Ellen Bates is this year's chair of the Association of Independent Information Professionals (AIIP) <<http://www.aiip.com>>. FreePint's Managing Editor, William Hann, has just returned from their annual conference in Austin, Texas, USA, where he has been listening to the needs of the independent sector and spreading the word about the benefits and features of Willco community hosting technology <<http://www.willco.com/>>. Willco is FreePint's newsletter and forum host and is used by a wide range of other publishers in the information industry.

So, keep on top of current and future employment trends in the information/knowledge economy by continuing to read and contribute to the FreePint Newsletter and Bar. I also urge you to start exploring our growing range of subscription products and publications. VIP reviews business information products <<http://www.vivaVIP.com/>> and we publish specially commissioned reports and training products through the FreePint Shop <<http://www.freepint.com/shop/>>.

Best wishes

Annabel Colley
Editor, FreePint <annabel.colley@freepint.com>

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The FreePint Jobs Update is being circulated widely every two weeks. This free newsletter now has 1,100 direct subscribers and is posted at the Bar and in the Bar Digest (circulation 11,000).

To see the Jobs Update No.72 visit <http://www.freepint.com/go/b28557> and to subscribe, modify your account at <http://web.freepint.com>.

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

Data Integrity Manager

<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3150>
Put your knowledge of data feeds and financial information to use to ensure top quality content for this information vendor.
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

Market Analyst (to be based out of London)

<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3163>
To be based in one of the regional offices of a Professional Services client based to the North, West or South of London.
Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

NB: There are 36 other jobs in the current edition of the Jobs Update
<http://www.freepint.com/go/b28557>.

VIP No.5 Now Available

The latest issue of VIP reviews WorldData (from the EIU, EcoWin and Alacra) and Advanced Country Analysis & Forecast (an integrated intelligence service from WMRC).

<http://www.freepint.com/go/b28563>

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**"Marketing for the Info-Entrepreneur: Top Techniques to Build Your Business"
ISBN 1-904769-05-5**

This new report by Mary Ellen Bates provides techniques to build the profile of your information services within your client base, whether you are a new info-entrepreneur, someone who has been in business for several years, or even someone who is working within an information centre and needs to promote your services within your organisation.

Published by FreePint, May 2004
<http://www.freepint.com/shop/report/>

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MY FAVOURITE TIPPLESby **Barbara Sen**

Barbara is a senior lecturer at Liverpool John Moores University in competitive intelligence, business information, strategic information management, and health information. She has a background of working within both the public and private sector including business libraries, the NHS, government and academic libraries. Research interests include strategic development in information services, research governance and health information.

Submit your top five favourite Web sites. See the guidelines at <<http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>>.

- <http://www.quickmba.com/> - A great site for brushing up your management skills. A life-saver for all busy business professionals. Covers a wide range of topics within the fields of strategy, accounting, economics, entrepreneurship, management, statistics and marketing and finance.
- <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/> - Competitive intelligence has in the past had a bad name and been misunderstood for spying and espionage. Ironically this CIA site is great for business and CI. It has a fantastic range of country profiles that are useful for import/export business. This site is great for the kids' geography homework too. Includes flags of the nations and a maps database.
- <http://www.bigwales.com/> - One of my favourite business information gateways. Don't be misled by the name it doesn't just focus on Wales. Lots of good directories, advice and key business information sites.
- <http://www.nelh.nhs.uk/> - National electronic Library for Health. Looks simple but you can get lost in the complexity of this one. Good for patients and professionals alike with lots more development on the way.
- <http://www.archive.org/> - One of my favourite sites. Especially the old movie collection in the Prelinger Archive. Search for "librarian" - check out the 1947 "Work of the librarian film".

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Keep up to date on Factiva and information industry trends by signing up for the free InfoPro Alliance newsletter. This monthly email will provide you with tips on how to better use Factiva, more information about Factiva sources, and link you to other items of interest to global information professionals. Go to <http://www.factiva.com/infopro/register> and sign up today!

FREE PINT BARIn Association with **Factiva**
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As you know, we monitor discussion at the FreePint Bar pretty much 24/7. However, it's really nice sometimes to get out and about and actually meet FreePinters face-to-face. I've been out of the office for the last couple of weeks at two conferences which were very different, but with surprising similarities.

The first week was with the Factiva Advisory Board (FAB '04) here in London, and was valuable time spent with a group of senior information professionals. Last week I was in Austin, Texas, USA, at the conference of the Association of Independent Information Professionals (AIIP), a group of self-employed info pros. I feel a lot of connection with both groups and it's nice to receive feedback about FreePint and to gauge the level of knowledge about our other offerings: VIP seems to be successfully providing in-depth business information product reviews to experienced information managers, whilst Willco newsletter hosting technology serves the self-publicising self-employed.

With these smaller conferences you feel much more a part of the proceedings, and I particularly liked the way both conferences gave all participants a short time to introduce themselves to the whole group. This makes it much easier to justify the expense of attending (financially and time-wise) since you can promote what you do *and* identify people you'd like to talk to. Other conference organisers: take note.

Issues concerning information professionals have also dominated the Bar during my travels. Someone is seeking experiences of outsourcing library services

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/b28554>> and there are various suggestions for providing training to library assistants
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/b28520>>.

Probably the most popular topic recently is about software for managing a library (or 'LMS' - Library Management Software). Perhaps you can help someone looking for LMS reviews and costs
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/b28513>>.

Corporate libraries are often called 'special libraries' by those in the industry, but is there a directory with opening hours, acquisition policies, etc. <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b28512>>?

What about benchmarking/accreditation resources for a demoralised department wanting to demonstrate what a good service they provide
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/b28484>>?

If you want to monitor information issues at the FreePint Bar then don't forget about the 'Bar Browser'

<<http://www.freepint.com/bar/browser/>>. Choose category '3 - Information Issues' and browse by month.

William Hann <william.hann@freepint.com>
Managing Editor, FreePint

The FreePint Bar is where you can get help with your tricky research questions, for free!
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Twice-weekly email digests of the latest postings can be requested at
<<http://web.freepint.com/>>.

EVENTS**United Kingdom:**

- Picture Buyers Fair 12th - 13th May <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e233>>
- Critical Skills for Knowledge Workers: Gurteen Learning Event 12th May <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e318>>
- From data to delivery - Electronic Public Information 2004 (epi2004) 21st May <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e289>>
- Web Services and the Grid Conference 24th - 25th May <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e315>>
- Building Knowledge-Based Relationships: Gurteen Learning Event 8th June <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e319>>
- The LMS Debate 8th June <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e320>>

Czech Republic:

- INFORUM 2004 - 10th Annual Conference on Professional Information Resources 25th - 27th May <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e299>>

Australia:

- Project Management for Government 25th - 28th May <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e309>>
- Building successful and durable Foundations for Intranet and Website Development 27th - 28th May <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e322>>

FEATURE ARTICLE

"Marketing for the Info-Entrepreneur"
By Mary Ellen Bates

Mary Ellen Bates is the owner of Bates Information Services Inc., providing business research to business professionals and consulting services to the information industry. She founded her business in 1991, after having worked in specialised libraries and research centres for over a decade.

Mary Ellen is the 2004-2005 President of the Association of Independent Information Professionals <<http://www.aiip.org>>. This article does not represent the official opinion of AIIP.

She has written innumerable articles and six books on the information industry, including: Building and Running a Successful Research Business: a guide for the independent information professional (Information Today, 2003). She is a frequent international keynote speaker on the information industry.

Mary Ellen writes two free email newsletters, Search Tip of the Month and Info-Entrepreneur Tip of the Month. To subscribe to either newsletter, go to <<http://www.BatesInfo.com/subscribe.html>>.

This article is a sample of the new report "Marketing for the Info- Entrepreneur: Top Techniques to Build Your Business" by Mary Ellen Bates. Published by FreePint, May 2004, ISBN 1-904769-05-5

<<http://www.freepint.com/shop/report/>>

Welcome to the wonderful world of info-entrepreneurship. We are people who run our own (often one-person) information businesses. As a profession we provide a wide range of services to our clients - looking for information on the web and in fee-based online services, searching public records, conducting interviews, providing information management services, giving workshops on advanced web search techniques, among other things. See "What is an Independent Information Professional?" at <<http://www.aiip.org/Resources/IIPWhitePaper.html>>, a white paper of the Association of Independent Information Professionals, for more discussion of the types of services info-entrepreneurs provide.

All librarians and information professionals battle the perception that "it's all on the web for free", and many of us struggle to raise the perception and understanding of the incredible value we bring to our organisations - or, in the case of info-entrepreneurs, to our clients. In this article, I briefly examine a half dozen techniques to help build the profile of your information services within your client base, whether you are a new info-entrepreneur, someone who has been in business for several years, or even someone who is working within an information centre and needs to promote your services within your organisation.

1. Sell Benefits, Not Features

There are two primary ways to describe what you do to a prospective client. You could say "I have access to hundreds of online sources not available on the web, and my staff have an average of 15 years experience as researchers." Or you could say "I help my clients make better business decisions by providing them with the information they need, quickly and cost-effectively". Which of those is the more compelling marketing statement?

One way of articulating benefits rather than features is to use the following formula: You know how [describe typical client's information problem]? Well, I [solve problem] by [doing this].

For example, "You know how frustrating it is when you spend an hour looking for market research on the Web and never find what you're looking for? Well, my company helps you solve business problems by providing in-depth information that doesn't even appear on the Web". Or, "You know how hard it is to find 'soft' information about your industry or your competitors? Well, as a telephone researcher, I can gather the insights of the industry leaders for my clients and, since my clients' names are never associated with the research, I can put my finger on information they couldn't have obtained themselves".

Sharpening Skills and Virtual Copyright Workshop

- "Sharpening Skills; Acquiring Knowledge" ISBN 1-904769-04-7: This report looks at the skills to acquire during a career in information and research services.

- Virtual workshop on the new copyright laws: This package includes an audio recording of the presentation plus supporting documentation and links.

<<http://www.freepint.com/shop/>>

2. Build a Niche

New info-entrepreneurs often assume that they will gain more clients by offering to do anything for anyone - "no project too big or too small, on any subject!". Ironically, this makes them less memorable to their prospects, hence diminishing their chances for gaining new clients. Most prospective clients will file that contact away as "um, someone who is kind of like a library, or like the web, I guess" and will not have a grasp of when to call the info-entrepreneur. On the other hand, if the prospect met someone who specialises in providing telephone research for competitive intelligence professionals, he will remember the contact and is far more likely to both call when he needs phone research and to refer colleagues to that phone researcher.

In a sense, having a memorable niche turns everyone you meet into part of your sales force. For example, a colleague of mine specialises in the aviation industry. I do not get many calls for this type of research, but when I do, I refer the callers on to Tom. And since he is the only AIIP member with both this specialisation and close to 20 years of experience in the aviation industry, he receives referrals from many fellow AIIP members. He has a sales force 700-people strong; not bad for a one-person business.

3. Address the IAOTWFF Factor

IAOTWFF probably is not as familiar an acronym as ASAP or IMO, but it should be. It stands for It's All On The Web For Free, and all info-entrepreneurs - as well as most librarians and info pros - have to battle this misperception daily.

There are a number of approaches for handling the IAOTWFF objection. Some of the issues that you can mention to your IAOTWFF clients include:

- The problem of the invisible web - the content that search engines will not crawl
- Timeliness of search engine indexes - anything added to the web within the last month probably is not searchable yet
- Depth - the Web does not have much of a memory, and something from six months ago, while still tremendously valuable to your client, may have been removed without a trace
- Quality - unlike published content, which has been vetted by an editor, anyone can post anything on the web, regardless of truthfulness or accuracy
- Time vs. money - often, it is far more cost-effective to pay an info-entrepreneur to conduct

Related FreePint links:

- "Marketing for the Info-Entrepreneur: Top Techniques to Build Your Business" by Mary Ellen Bates. Published by FreePint May 2004, ISBN 1-904769-05-5 <<http://www.freepint.com/shop/report/>>
- 'Information and Libraries' articles in the FreePint Portal <<http://www.freepint.com/go/p69>>
- Post a message to the author, Mary Ellen Bates, or suggest further resources at the FreePint Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>>
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research, on both the web and the value-added online services, than for the client to conduct the research herself.

SearchDay <http://www.SearchEngineWatch.com/searchday> is a good source of news and information on the current state of the search engine industry

4. Think "Value-Adding": When Great Research Isn't Enough

A "value-adding" info-entrepreneur is someone who provides answers, not just information. The more you can make your deliverables plug-and-play for your customers, the more obvious, quantifiable value you provide, and the easier it is for you to address the issue of IAOTWFF.

What is often challenging is that info-entrepreneurs are immersed in information -- we are accustomed to swimming in oceans of data, so we do not think twice about going through 50 or 100 pages of material, particularly if we know it is high-quality information. Our clients, on the other hand, could sometimes be described as "data-intolerant"; unlike us, they don't spend all day looking for information, and they usually do not appreciate getting a data dump, when most of the other information they receive is in distilled format.

In addition to summarisation and synthesis of the information, consider providing a visual display of the material. It may be as simple as generating a bar chart from the statistics you retrieved, or it may involve some analysis of your research results. Anything that helps the client absorb and digest the information will be viewed as added value, and that is what enables you to always out-Google Google.

5. Warm Calls, not Cold Calling

Info-entrepreneurs are selling something that is inherently intangible - our research skills. We usually provide a tangible deliverable in the form of a report, but what we are really offering is our expertise in finding the information, analysing it, distilling it down to the crucial heart, and then summarising it for the client.

While cold calling does not work, "warm calling" can be an effective way of contacting prospective clients. One approach is to arrange an introduction before you make a call. We often forget to ask our clients and contacts to recommend others who might use our services. People appreciate the chance to spread the word about someone they enjoy working with, but they often need a reminder. I include one in my newsletter and marketing postcards: "Spread the word! Do you know anyone who might want to hear about Bates Information Services? Send me their address, and I'll send them a one-time mailing to let them know about my research services". Note that I assure my clients that I am not going to put their colleague or friend on a junk-mail list, nor will I call them with a sales pitch. When I do send out that mailing, I include the name of the client who referred me, which gives me instant credibility by saying, in essence, "This isn't a random sales pitch ... your colleague Robin recommended that I contact you".

"The Consultant's Calling: Bringing Who You Are to What You Do" by Geoffrey M. Bellman (Jossey-

Keeping Legal

<<http://www.KeepingLegal.com>>

Weblog covering key legal issues affecting information professionals. Subscribe to the regular newsletter for the latest on copyright, data protection, freedom of information and other legal topics.

Bass, 2001), ISBN: 0787958476 includes a good discussion of other techniques for conducting "warm calling".

6. Build a Marketing Kit

What do you do when a prospective client asks you to send her some information on your company? Your marketing kit can be as simple or as elaborate as you want; think about what your client base would expect. At the least, it should include the following:

- A good-looking two-pocket folder (sometimes called a portfolio folder) in a colour that coordinates with your logo. Make sure it has slots where you can insert your business card
- Your brochure or fact sheet describing your services
- A reprint of a recent article you have written or that has been written about you
- A page of client testimonials (do not be shy about soliciting testimonials from satisfied clients)
- A short biographical profile - not a resume (you are not looking for a job!), but a brief sketch that highlights your expertise as an information professional
- Your business card and Rolodex card
- A cover letter addressed to the prospect, thanking him by name for contacting you, and highlighting how you can best meet his needs

Word processing makes it easy to tailor every package you send to the information needs of the individual prospect. By taking time to understand each prospect's business and what is going on in their industry, you can customise your cover letter to that person's concerns.

This article is a sample of the new report "Marketing for the Info- Entrepreneur: Top Techniques to Build Your Business" by Mary Ellen Bates. Published by FreePint, May 2004, ISBN 1-904769-05-5 <<http://www.freepint.com/shop/report/>>

VIP Eye No.8

The current issue of VIP Eye examines how two major information players are helping companies comply with new legislation requiring them to run stringent checks on their clients. Other industry stories look at why D&B is shedding jobs; how Telerate is increasing the competition by implementing a new distribution strategy; and more.

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/b28568>>



Alison Ross-Dow is the Information Manager at the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, responsible for co-ordinating Data Protection activities at a corporate level and for implementing a council-wide strategy on Freedom of Information. This work forms part of the council's Information and Knowledge Management strategy.

Regularly attending conferences, Alison is involved with Workstream 1 of the KM National Project and sits on the BSI Editorial Boards for Data Protection and Freedom of Information.

She previously worked as the Information Resource Manager at Aslib- IMI, where her five years gave her a good understanding of IM and KM; she is also a member of Aslib's KIMNET special interest group <<http://www.kimnet.org.uk>>.

Related links:

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"Public Sector - Public Knowledge The KM Contribution to Better Government" By David Skyrme, Edited by Simon Lelic Reviewed by Alison Ross-Dow

Not "re-inventing the wheel" can often be difficult for those working in the public sector where the culture tends to favour silos rather than sharing. This report, part of the Knowledge Insight Series by Ark Group, written by David Skyrme, of David Skyrme Associates <<http://www.skyrme.com>>, aims to provide "insights" into current and future KM developments in the public sector and to provide practical guidance, using examples from round the world. It costs GBP345.

Divided into seven chapters, the report begins by discussing the difference between KM in the public and private sectors making reference to various KM surveys, including Ark Group's own from 2003. It goes on to cover policy making, knowledge-enhanced government, joined-up services, improving KM capabilities and how to succeed; the final chapter is a concise conclusion. There is an appendix of useful resources which is certainly "useful", but it might have been good to include more UK examples, like the National KM Project <<http://www.knowledgemanagement.org.uk/>>, or IDEa Knowledge <<http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/>>.

The report stresses that it is not an introduction to KM and that its primary audience is those with some responsibility for this area, although others should also find something of value. Its easily readable style should certainly make it appeal to anyone with an interest in KM in the public sector as it provides a good introduction to the key areas (e.g. joined-up government) and avoids the academic debates about KM definitions which can be found in other sources.

It is well organised, enabling you to focus on sections of interest, without the need to read from cover to cover. Chapters are written with short paragraphs, making use of bullets to highlight benefits and good practice, and accompanied by longer sections of case studies that are easily identifiable allowing you to refer back to them later. I counted 31 case studies in the report coupled with quotations from "experts", both including a good split between UK and overseas examples; public sector focussed diagrams further enhance the text. Each chapter ends with a ten point Action Checklist, which

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<<http://www.willco.com/>>

could form the basis of a KM strategy.

The report argues that sharing good practice between the public and private sector can be helpful, but ultimately the former needs strong leadership if KM is to be adopted as a corporate strategy. Conversations with colleagues in other local authorities indicate many of us already have in place some of the initiatives described (e.g. Intranet, Internet, customer focus). We are beginning to seriously acknowledge the need for a corporate IM and KM strategy to achieve E-Government targets and compliance with legislation and standards.

This report could be considered expensive for the public sector, but "beg, borrow or steal" a copy: I feel that its 146 pages present a well researched synthesis of the current state of KM in the public sector and its contribution to better government. All this coupled with practical ways of proceeding in the future provide a good way to avoid "re-inventing the wheel!"

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If you have a suggestion for an article topic or would like to write for Free Pint then please contact <penny@freepint.com> or sign up for the Author Update at <<http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>>.

FREE PINT

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TIPS ARTICLE

"Working in Older Age"

By Beverley Saunders



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Nearly one million people currently work beyond retirement age - and it is the fastest growing area of employment. This can be explained by the change in demographics and economics. The over 50s were once considered 'over the hill', but people are now living healthier, longer lives. The number of people of pensionable age is due to increase by nearly 50 percent over the next 30 years; already for the first time we have more over-sixties than under-sixteens.

This is forcing a change of attitude by employers. There is currently pressure on them to keep people employed beyond retirement age and as from 2006, there will be legislation that will make it illegal to let age-prejudice enter the recruitment process. A Pensions Green Paper will follow which contains a raft of tax and pension changes to encourage people to work longer. Additionally, the House of Lords economic affairs committee - whose ages range from 50 to 95 - has recently published a report with regard to the best way forward. It wants normal retirement ages to be scrapped and would also like to see specific areas of discrimination outlawed, e.g. where student loans are unavailable for the over 54s.

Recent American research shows that older workers are rated more highly on attributes such as experience, work ethic, judgement, commitment to quality; their attendance and punctuality are better and their rate of turnover is low. The Independent Institute echoes this in a recent UK report for Employment Studies:

'Quite aside from their experience, older workers are more committed and reliable, have better customer-facing skills, understand business better, and take less short-term sickness absence. Moreover, with few younger workers to pick from in the future, organizations are going to have to become better employers of these older workers, more able to attract them for their benefits, and accommodate them for their needs.' (The Fifties Revival, J. Kodz, B. Kersley, P. Bates. IES Report 359, 1999.)

There are a number of excellent agencies that can help mature job seekers find work and enhance their prospects of finding work. In the training field learndirect at <<http://www.learndirect.co.uk>> offers hundreds of specially created online courses in computing, office skills and self-development, for people to learn at a time, place and pace to suit to their needs. The Third Age Employment Network (TAEN) <<http://www.taen.org.uk>> has a network of 240 organisations across the country that work with the media, employers and government to change attitudes and public policies. The organisation is 'committed to better opportunities for mature people to continue to learn, work and earn, helping them to overcome barriers of discrimination and to realise their aims and ambitions'. New Deal <<http://www.newdeal.gov.uk>> is a government initiative which helps people of all ages find work by developing skills and gaining work experience. At the same time it is designed to help businesses address skills and staff shortages. Employers are encouraged to offer jobs and work experience. An example of a large company that has taken advantage of the scheme is Tesco. They have taken on thousands of people through

'New Deal' as part of the company's policy of supporting the communities in which it operates.

Free business start-up training is also available from Business Link at <<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk>>. This takes the form of a discussion with a Counsellor who will examine the business idea and a course that addresses all issues related to starting a business, such as employment issues, health and safety, National Insurance, market research, the production of a business and marketing plan etc. There is also the opportunity to join the Chamber of Commerce, which offers business information, support, advice as well as networking opportunities.

A few specialist employment agencies are also available. Amongst these is 'Maturity Works' at <<http://www.maturityworks.co.uk>>. One of the very few, if not the only, national employment agency, is 'Wrinklies Direct' at <<http://www.wrinklies.org>>. This company has just been taken over by Mike Saunders. Mike is himself 66. When asked why he has taken over a business at this age, he replied "And why not at this age? I have the time, can afford to take a few risks and I am enjoying the challenge. Although I wear glasses and hearing aids, I may consider it enough when I need a Zimmer frame!". He adds, "Many people are amused by the name Wrinklies. It reflects a mature sense of humour and our philosophy, which is: There's no need to apologise for age because it comes with a whole host of benefits - and high on the list is experience". "The candidates are easy to find," said Peter, "finding them jobs is more difficult as companies are so often ageist. We have a huge database of people all highly talented and experienced and new people are registering all the time. It's scandalous that all that talent is being wasted, and dispiriting for us when we can't find them work."

According to Wrinklies publicity, we are on the verge of 'the age of experience', and all the signs confirm this.

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