



### ROUNDUP

# Job market still keeps the press busy

BY DAVID WARD

**THE BUSINESS MEDIA** may currently be focused on fears of a potential economic slowdown, but one area where a slump is not being felt is in the coverage of employment and the job market.

"We may be in a slight recession, but the job market is still robust, and a big reason for that is you've got 77 million baby boomers who are beginning to retire en masse," explains Barry Lawrence, director of PR for Job Fox, a new online company that combines traditional job boards with professional social networking and matchmaking. "It's still a very tight labor market for the employer," he adds, "and it's going to stay that way for a couple of decades."

The media has picked up on this talent crunch, and as a consequence has increased their focus

on the myriad choices available to many of today's workers.

"We've noticed an uptick in job-market stories in recent months, and now reporters are very interested in getting deeper than [just] the latest employment numbers," says Colin Hutt, president of Milwaukee-based Primum Marketing Communications, whose clients include Manpower. "So you're seeing topics such as how people can best position themselves in the quickly changing world of work."

Hutt adds that print – most notably local newspaper and HR trade magazines – is still the best opportunity for work and workplace stories, but notes,

"Radio is also a good place for some of the high-level information on employment," he says, "and you can often find interest from national television."

Lawrence also points out the increasing impact of Web sites within the assortment of media categories, including such work-

place-centric blogs as Penelope Trunk's Brazen Careerist. "We're seeing a lot of success online, so we're spending more time with

bloggers who have become very influential," Lawrence says.

Elizabeth Owens, manager of Bernard Hodes Group's human resources PR practice, says that with so many companies scrambling to attract talent, you're seeing a lot more stories focused on the work-life benefits offered by many companies.

But she cautions that journalists are growing skeptical of many benefit claims, adding that one way to overcome that is by getting your clients included in "Best Places to Work" surveys that many local and national outlets put out on a regular basis.

"We help our clients apply for a lot of those award listings," Owens says. "It's become a nice way to gather and share information on what you have to offer employees." ■

### PITCHING... EMPLOYMENT



■ The US Bureau of Labor Statistics releases unemployment figures the first Friday of each month – a great opportunity to reach out to job market journalists with experts who can add perspective to the numbers

■ Stress the fact that people spend so much time at work that workplace-related stories are as much about lifestyle as they are about business. That will enable you to expand your work-life pitch beyond financial writers

■ Work with clients on ideas and pitches that help journalists localize national employment trends for their readers