

PHOENIX

# FOCUS

Alumni Magazine | Fall 2014

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Are you social  
media savvy?  
Take our quiz.

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The social media  
guidebook

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10 ways to grow  
your professional  
network

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Advocate  
for hope

Vivienne Keli, BSP '10  
Program Director, The Hope of Survivors  
Bedford, Iowa



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**PHOENIX FOCUS**

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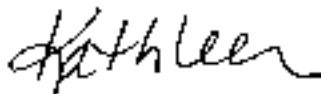
## What you know can determine who you know

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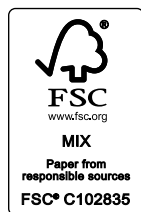
When it comes to being successful, we've probably all heard the line "It's who you know, not what you know, that matters." While that can be true to some extent, I've also found that it's a lot harder to get to know the right people if you don't possess the knowledge required to communicate or connect with them.

I prefer the line "Be a lifelong learner." Whether it's through school, books, workshops, webinars or even just trial and error, you're bound to gain insight and information that can help you get where you want to go, and better yet, help you connect with the people you need to get there. In this issue, we offer plenty of useful knowledge: tips on creating a career plan, a quiz to help you measure your social media savvy, a social media guidebook to help you improve your score, and 10 ways to grow your professional network—all fantastic ways to help you grow what (and who) you know.

Happy reading!



**Kathleen Fern**  
MBA, Class of 1999  
Vice President, Alumni Relations  
University of Phoenix





# The 2014 Alumni Business Directory

Check out alumni businesses.  
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# Ask Jenifer

Jenifer King  
Senior Director  
MBA, Class of 2011

Careers are a hot topic. Whether it's people searching for a job, considering a new career, or just wanting to stay current on career trends and tips, just about everyone brings up the subject. Here are some career questions I recently received.

**Q:** Does the university provide job placement or a way to search for jobs?

**A:** The University provides a job search site where alumni can access thousands of openings across the country. Job titles, keywords and company names can all be used as entry points for your search. Start your job search now, or visit the news page on the Alumni Association website to learn more about using the site. I encourage everyone to check it out; it's pretty cool. Visit [alumni.phoenix.edu/job-search.html](http://alumni.phoenix.edu/job-search.html) to get started.

**Q:** Do you have experts who can offer career tips and advice?

**A:** Each issue of *Phoenix Focus* offers three career articles with advice from a range of renowned experts in a variety of fields. You can search them using the search feature at the top right of the page on [alumni.phoenix.edu](http://alumni.phoenix.edu). Also, you can visit Phoenix Career Corner for blogs and videos featuring tips from some of today's hottest names in networking, personal branding and more: [alumni.phoenix.edu/news/phoenixcareercorner.html](http://alumni.phoenix.edu/news/phoenixcareercorner.html).

## Results from our recent online polls

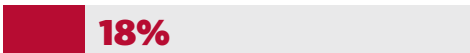
If you're a business owner, how much would you say social media has helped you succeed?



My business couldn't survive without it.



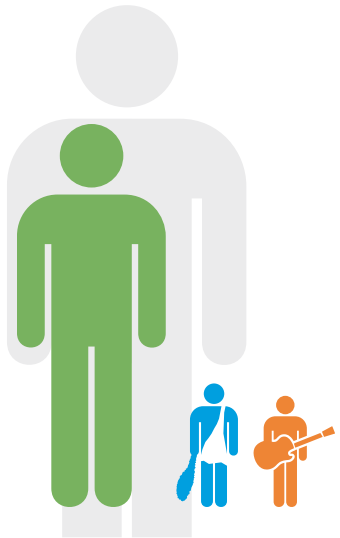
It's useful, but I'd be OK without it.



I don't use social media to promote my business.

When it comes to social media savvy, I consider myself to be:

- Average **62%**
- A cave person **20%**
- A total rock star **18%**



## Editorial team



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Dana Anthony  
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Bruce Racine  
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Are you one of those who log on to social media accounts and find you have no idea how it all works? Or maybe you have some idea, but some things still elude you. This guide will help you boost your social media smarts.

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Through the darkness of Vivionne Keli's abuse-filled childhood grew a light—and a voice—for others.

*Cover photo by Richard Maack*

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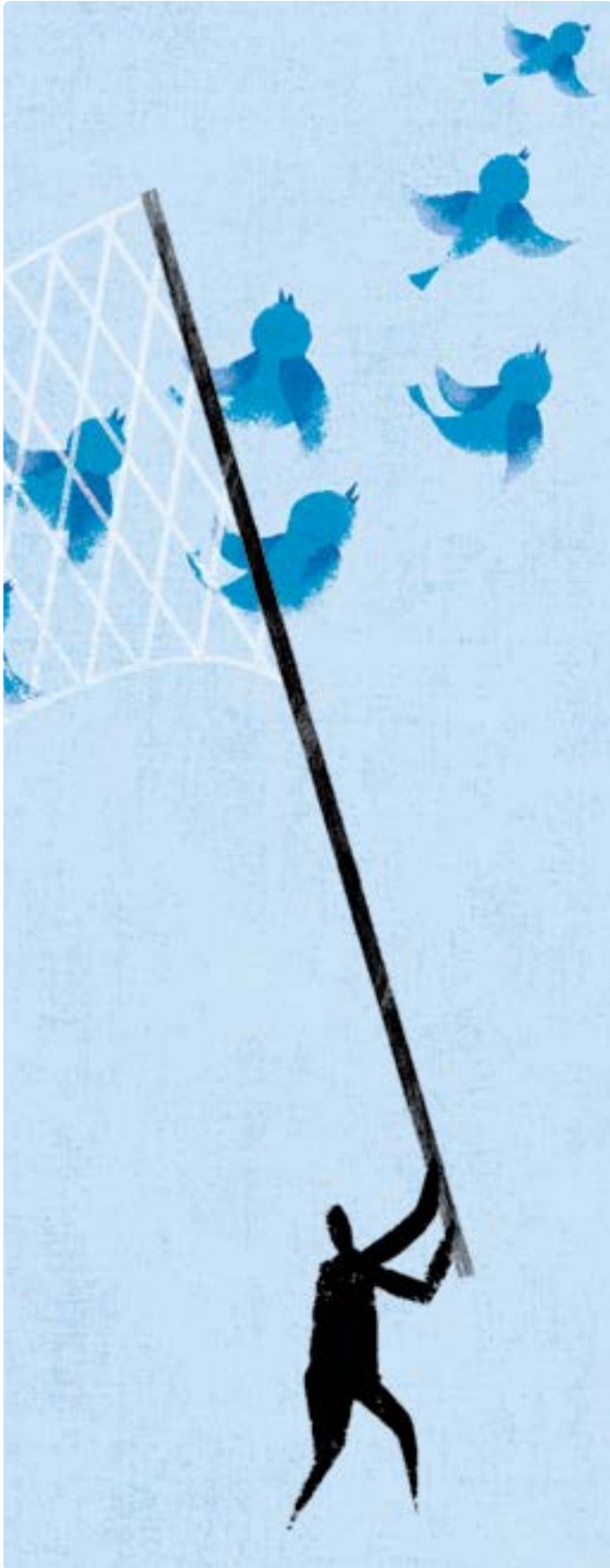
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## ARE YOU SOCIAL MEDIA SAVVY?

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Take our quiz and find out.

By Jenny Jedeikin

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From Facebook and LinkedIn to Instagram, Vine and the anonymous question site Ask.fm, these days it seems there's a social platform for promoting and discussing just about everything in the Twittersphere.

But despite the vast popularity of social media, there are still millions of people who are confused about how sites and symbols work, and how to use them appropriately. "Lots of people may be familiar with Twitter, for example, but they don't really understand how to tweet in order to gain a following," says Dave Kerpen, author of the bestselling book *Likeable Social Media*. And in this day and age, being in the dark about social media and how it works can also mean missing out on promoting your small business or nabbing your next big job.



Here's a short quiz on the basics of social media to find out how well you measure up.

### 1 | The # (or hashtag):

- a) refers to the number of posts you've made on the same subject
- b) has to do with locating another website on the Internet
- c) is used to reference a specific topic so that other people can find it

### 2 | When the @ symbol is used in a post, it's:

- a) to direct a comment toward a specific person
- b) the connector between your name and your email address
- c) a key I don't use on my electric typewriter.

### 3 | Which social media sites use a hashtag?

- a) Twitter and Facebook
- b) Instagram and Twitter
- c) Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and LinkedIn

### 4 | TBT in a tweet stands for:

- a) Throwback Thursday, where you post old photos of yourself and/or others
- b) two backstage tickets, when you're reselling tickets to an event
- c) Throwback Tuesday, when you post old photos of yourself

### 5 | What's the difference between an RT and an MT?

- a) The letters R and M
- b) RT stands for regular tweet, which is under 140 characters, and an MT is a medium-sized tweet, that goes over 140 in length
- c) An RT is retweet of a tweet, and an MT is a modified tweet, when you're retweeting someone's tweet with new information added

### 6 | When someone uses Hootsuite, they're using:

- a) a social media site where users assume an owl avatar
- b) a platform for raising money through crowdfunding
- c) a tool that allows you to schedule your social posts

### 7 | When someone's in a "hangout," they're using:

- a) Instagram
- b) Google+
- c) Pinterest



## Being in the dark about social media can also mean missing out on promoting your small business or nabbing your next big job.

**8** | If you're looking to network to find a job, the best platform is:

- a) Instagram
- b) LinkedIn
- c) FourSquare

**9** | If someone tweets: "#FF @StacyT, @icecream, @deluxrecruiting," they're saying:

- a) I think these tweeters have a good sense of fall fashion
- b) I recommend following these tweeters
- c) Here are some good fast food restaurants

**10** | Which social media platform do companies use most often for handling customer service?

- a) Facebook
- b) Instagram
- c) Twitter

**11** | Which of the following terms don't apply to LinkedIn:

- a) Circles
- b) 2nd degree connection
- c) Endorsements

**12** | Which are the 3 best social platforms for promoting your crowdfunding campaign?

- a) YouTube, Facebook and Instagram
- b) Twitter, Pinterest and Google+ and Slideshare
- c) It depends on who your audience is

**13** | If you're a "plusher," it means:

- a) you have a lot of followers on Vine
- b) you're active on Google+
- c) you display a lot of plush animals on Pinterest

**14** | When sending "InMail," what platform are you using?

- a) Facebook
- b) Twitter
- c) LinkedIn

**15** | The biggest different between Facebook and Twitter is:

- a) You're likely to interact with friends on Facebook and the public on Twitter
- b) You post more pictures on Facebook and more text on Twitter
- c) You can use Twitter to promote a business, but not Facebook

**What's your social score?** Tally your answers and give yourself 10 points for each one you answered correctly. (Answer key: 1:c, 2:a, 3:c, 4:a, 5:c, 6:c, 7:b, 8:b, 9:b, 10:c, 11:a, 12:c, 13:b, 14:c, 15:a.)

**150-110: You're an expert.** Kudos! You're up to speed on using social media. You're already actively networking and promoting yourself or your business on several platforms. You probably don't need any lessons. Get back to work.

**100-60: You've gotten your Web feet wet.** While you may have done a little posting, it's clear that you're no pro. If you're interested in using social media to further your career, or gain a loyal fan base for your small business or community, take a look at the problems you answered incorrectly to figure out which platform you're most in the dark about. Says Sarah Milstein, author of *The Twitter Book*, "I recommend spending more time experimenting with an application online to understand where you're getting hung up so that you can improve your knowledge."

**Below 60: Yikes.** Your low score indicates that you're probably not very familiar with how to use social media, and when you attempt to interact, you may be choosing the wrong platform entirely. Even worse, you may not even have a LinkedIn profile, which means you're missing the boat on networking for your career.

But it's never too late to learn. Start by reading the Social Media Guidebook in this issue, and then hone in on which platform(s) would be most helpful to your life or career, and start practicing. You'll be up to the task in a few weeks. 🦋

Jenny Jedeikin's writing has appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *In Style* and *The San Francisco Chronicle*.



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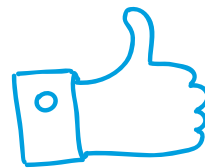


# THE SOCI MEDIA GUIDEBO



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## Essential symbols, sayings and social media savoir faire.

By Jenny Jedeikin

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Are you a social media novice? Don't fret. With so many new applications for social media, it's hard to be an expert unless you're online 24/7. But who has the time?

The good news is, if you're looking to use social media to advance your career, small business or a community cause, you don't need to master every single platform. Some popular applications may not serve a function in your life. And that's fine.

To help you figure out what you really need to know, here's a basic guide to the fundamentals of using social media to make an impact.



## ESSENTIAL SOCIAL MEDIA TERMINOLOGY

“At a very basic level, you should know how the symbols @ and # are used, before you start posting on social media,” suggests Sarah Milstein, bestselling co-author of the *The Twitter Book*.

**@ symbol:** “The @ symbol is used to preface any account name on social media platforms, then it automatically links to that person’s account,” explains Milstein. “So if you use an @ symbol followed by somebody’s account name, the person will automatically see that post. When you’re talking about me on Twitter, rather than call me Sarah Milstein, you would generally call me @SarahM.”

**# or Hashtag:** # is used to tag a topic of discussion across social media. It turns the words immediately following the symbol into a searchable term. For example, by typing #hurricanesandy into a search bar on a social media site, you will find everything people are saying about Hurricane Sandy.

**Bit.ly:** Bit.ly is a URL shortening service that allows you to link to a shorter web address. For example, University of Phoenix’s School of Business has the URL: [http://www.phoenix.edu/colleges\\_divisions/business.html](http://www.phoenix.edu/colleges_divisions/business.html), but bit.ly shortens it to: <http://bit.ly/1nKRkso>

### Best practices across all social media platforms

- “It’s called ‘social’ media for a reason,” offers Andrew Macarthy, who wrote the bestselling tome *500 Social Media Marketing Tips*. “If you want to be successful, you’ve got to offer up your human side and spend time helping others with your knowledge and expertise.”
- “Don’t spread yourself too thin,” says Macarthy. “Pick one stream and stick with it. It’s better to have one solid engagement than to be spread out across 20 different platforms.”
- Post consistently. Depending on the platform, active users will post anywhere from one to eight posts per day. For blogs, two a week may be sufficient, but for Twitter it could be 12 per day.
- Add a link to your social profiles in your email signature. “Think about how many emails you send per day,” suggests Macarthy. “Each email will encourage people to engage.”



## Small business essentials

**Best platforms:** The most popular platform for promoting a small business is a Facebook page, says Macarthy. “But it really depends on where your customers spend the most time,” he says. Doing a survey where you find out which platform your customers use most will help you decide where to focus efforts.

Twitter’s microblogging site is also key for any business with customer service because you can immediately respond to anyone who’s complaining. Some companies like picture-friendly Instagram and also FourSquare, where users check in when they visit your location for promotions and prizes.

## Business tips 101

- The hard sell does not work: “Social media is not a place to talk about how great your business is,” offers Milstein. On Twitter, for example, you want to build relationships by sharing interesting information and talking to people as people, rather than talking down to them.
- Rely on a dashboard tool: Hootsuite or Tweetdeck are applications that allow you to schedule posts to your social media sites so that you don’t have to remember to do it yourself all day.
- Use the rule of thirds: Share your own content a third of the time, post related material from an outside source a third of the time and interact with your customers on a one-to-one basis a third of the time, suggests Macarthy.
- Try paid promotion: Many social media sites offer paid promotion where you spend anywhere from \$7 and up to promote your message so that it reaches more people.

**Emoticons:** A textual representation of facial expressions, such as a smiley face :), depicted by combinations of characters and used to convey feelings without having to use words.

**Emojis:** Fully drawn emoticons, such as 😊 and 😞, which express ideas and emotions.

**GIF:** A Graphics Interchange Format (GIF) is a compressed image file that is commonly uploaded to social media to reduce transfer time. A gif supports minimal animation, which is why some appear as pictures in motion, but without sound and not with the same length or quality as video.

**Facebragging:** When someone promotes themselves too blatantly on Facebook, they are “Facebragging.”

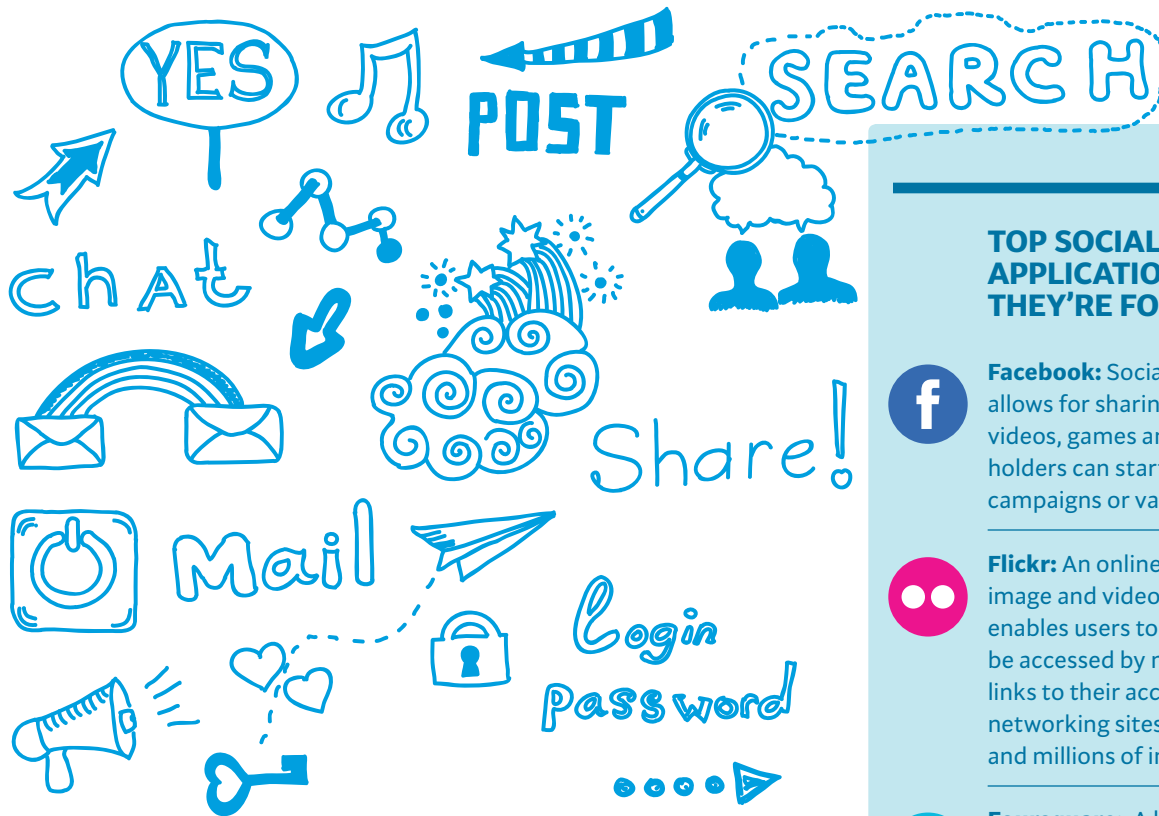
**FF:** Stands for #Follow Friday. This is used on Twitter when recommending that other tweeters should follow someone, as in: #FF @greenpeace for great environmental news.

**Google Analytics:** A free Google tool providing data about how many views you’re getting on social media sites and where they’re coming from. Conversely, Google Analytics is also useful for gauging traffic on your website and how much comes from social media pages.

**Selfie:** A photograph that someone takes of himself or herself and generally posts to social media.

**RT:** Stands for Retweet. This is used on Twitter when someone tweets another person’s tweet verbatim. An MT is a modified tweet when a user retweets just a portion of someone’s tweet, adding something new.

**TBT:** Stands for #Throwback Thursday, an abbreviation used across platforms when posting anything, especially images, from the past.



## Career building essentials

**Best platforms:** The best site for your professional career is LinkedIn. You absolutely need a profile, says Macarthy, but blogging on Wordpress or Blogger, or using Slideshare and Google+ to promote yourself are good backups.

## Social media career tips 101

- **Get linked:** Create your profile using short paragraphs or bullet-pointed lists, where you describe yourself in terms of what you accomplished or how you helped a business grow.
- **Grab a vanity URL:** Rather than use the random URL that LinkedIn assigns, Macarthy suggests going to the “public profile” section to create your LinkedIn URL of choice. “This will make directing potential clients to a memorable address that much easier.”
- **Clean up your act:** Once you begin using social media professionally, it’s important that every platform, including your personal profiles, portray you in a flattering light because employers are going to look at all of you, not just LinkedIn.
- **Tout your expertise:** Blogging is a great way to get your name out there as an expert in your field. “Write posts that help others,” says Macarthy, “and use eye-catching headlines that offer to solve problems.”
- **Use share widgets:** These are the buttons that allow people to Like, Share or Tweet your blogpost. In addition to others sharing your post, you should always post your own blogs to LinkedIn, as well as Google+, which has a special authorship feature that increases your visibility online.

## TOP SOCIAL SITES, APPLICATIONS, AND WHAT THEY’RE FOR (In alphabetical order)



**Facebook:** Social networking site that allows for sharing of text, links, photos, videos, games and locations. Account holders can start pages for businesses, campaigns or various causes.



**Flickr:** An online community for image and video hosting. The site enables users to post images that may be accessed by nonusers and share links to their accounts on other social networking sites. Flickr houses millions and millions of images.



**Foursquare:** A location-based networking service for smartphones and other GPS-enabled mobile devices. The service allows people to “check in” at locations and become designated frequenters called “mayors.” Businesses can benefit from engaging with their Foursquare users.



**Google+:** Google’s version of Facebook, which allows users to separate their connections into specific circles. It also serves as an authorship tool that helps to link authors directly with their content on the Web.




**Instagram:** A photo- and video-sharing site as well as a social networking site that enables users to take photos and then use filters to enhance them and then post them on other networking sites.



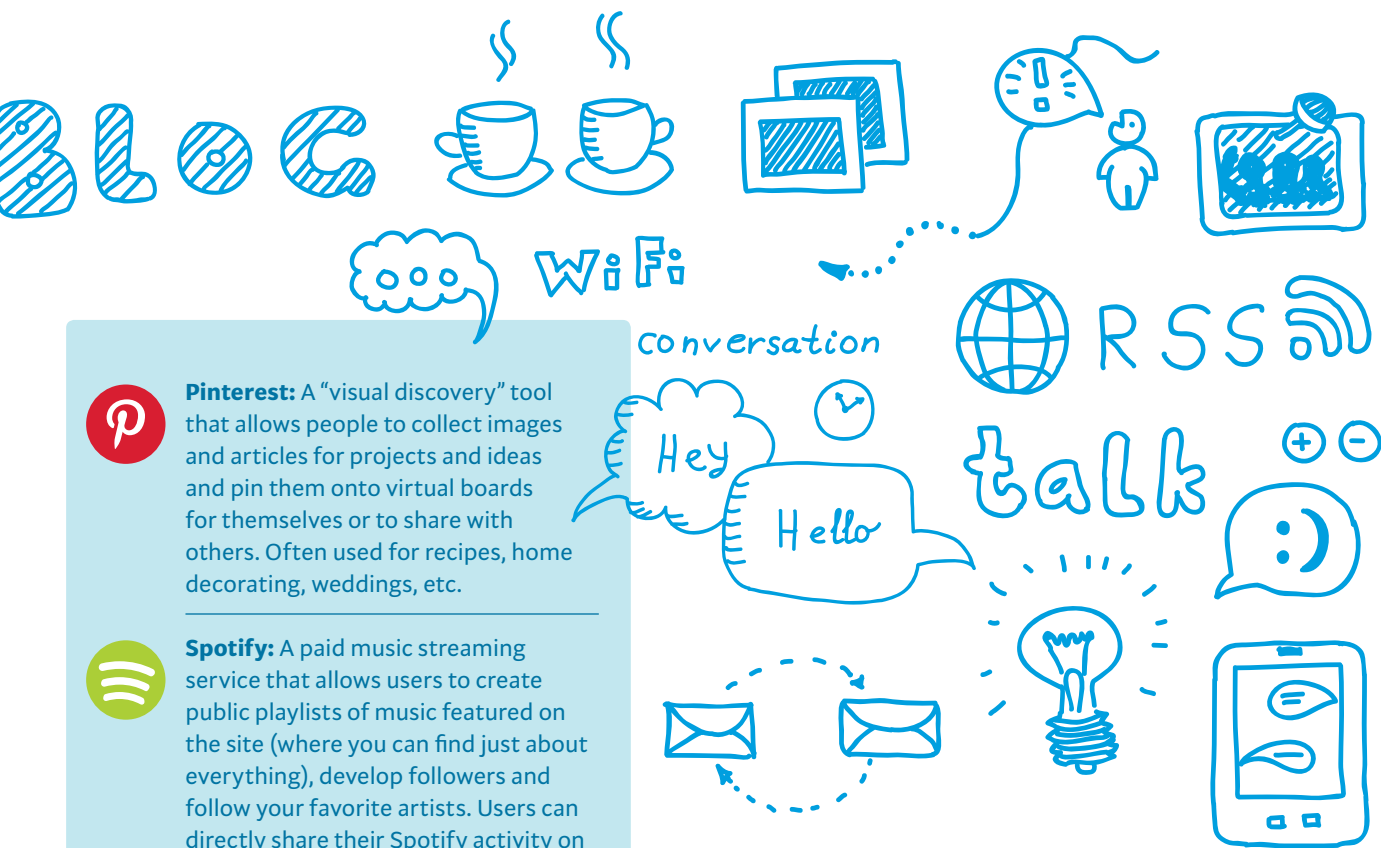
**LinkedIn:** A Professional networking site that allows you to post your resume and other career-oriented information, connect with people in your industry or company, join industry or alumni groups (like the University of Phoenix Alumni LinkedIn group) and network for your career.





“It’s called ‘social’ media for a reason. If you want to be successful, you’ve got to offer up your human side and spend time helping others with your knowledge and expertise.”

*Andrew Macarthy, author of 500 Social Media Marketing Tips*



**Pinterest:** A “visual discovery” tool that allows people to collect images and articles for projects and ideas and pin them onto virtual boards for themselves or to share with others. Often used for recipes, home decorating, weddings, etc.



**Spotify:** A paid music streaming service that allows users to create public playlists of music featured on the site (where you can find just about everything), develop followers and follow your favorite artists. Users can directly share their Spotify activity on other social networking sites. Certain businesses can use the service to connect clients to playlists.



**Tumblr:** A social networking application for “micro-blogging.” The site enables users to create accounts and post short-form blogs that can be posted, followed and re-blogged, much like Twitter’s tweets.



**Twitter:** A social media site where users can post short-format text, links and images. Users aspire to follow other Twitter users they’re interested in and to be followed.



**Vine:** A Twitter-owned app that lets users post brief (up to six seconds) looping clips of videos that can be shared on social networks.



**YouTube:** A video-sharing site that enables users to upload videos, view them and share. While it’s primarily individuals who use this site, businesses—including major corporations—also use it for promotional efforts. This is usually the place you see instant Superbowl replays ... of commercials.

### Creating community essentials

Best platforms: Facebook pages are the best platforms for raising awareness or promoting a social cause or shared interest, says MacCarthy, but having a presence on Pinterest, Instagram, Google+, Twitter and Vine can supplement your main hub.

### Community-building tips 101

- Create sharable content. “This is key,” says MacCarthy, “because if people are engaged, the first thing they want to do is share it. It reflects well on them not only in their own mind, but in the way that other people will think of them.”
- Blend your streams. “Make Facebook the hub of your wheel, and the spokes Instagram, Twitter, and Vine,” advises MacCarthy. Do this by encouraging fans to spread messages across other platforms using a particular hashtag. And then you can grab those photos and post them on your Facebook stream.
- Engage creative participation. “If you’re trying to raise money, you need a really good central idea,” says MacCarthy. A recent promotion that was popular in the UK included the #nomakeupselfie. “It was a campaign where women took selfies wearing no makeup, in support of a cancer charity and it went massively viral on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.”
- Create a Google+ community. Google+ makes it easy to create any type of community online and set up your rules for posting to it, says MacCarthy. You can also use Google+ hangouts, a free application for communities of any size to engage in face time classes and share learning and ideas.

Jenny Jedeikin’s writing has appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *In Style* and *The San Francisco Chronicle*.



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# 10 ways to grow your professional network

What to do—and not to do—when connecting professionally.

By Cynthia Ramnarace

Whether you're looking for your first job or hoping to move on to your next one, your professional network is the secret weapon to get your resume the attention it deserves.

That's because in this day and age, when computers are the first "eyes" on a job application, a personal connection gives you an advantage.

"When you apply online for a job now, your resume may not rise to the top because you're using the wrong keywords," says Dave Delaney, author of *New Business Networking*. "It's so important to grow your network now before you actually need it so that when you do need a network, it's there for you."

A survey by recruiting firm Jobvite shows that four in 10 job seekers found their favorite positions through personal connections. Recruiters, too, say personal referrals result in the highest-quality hires.

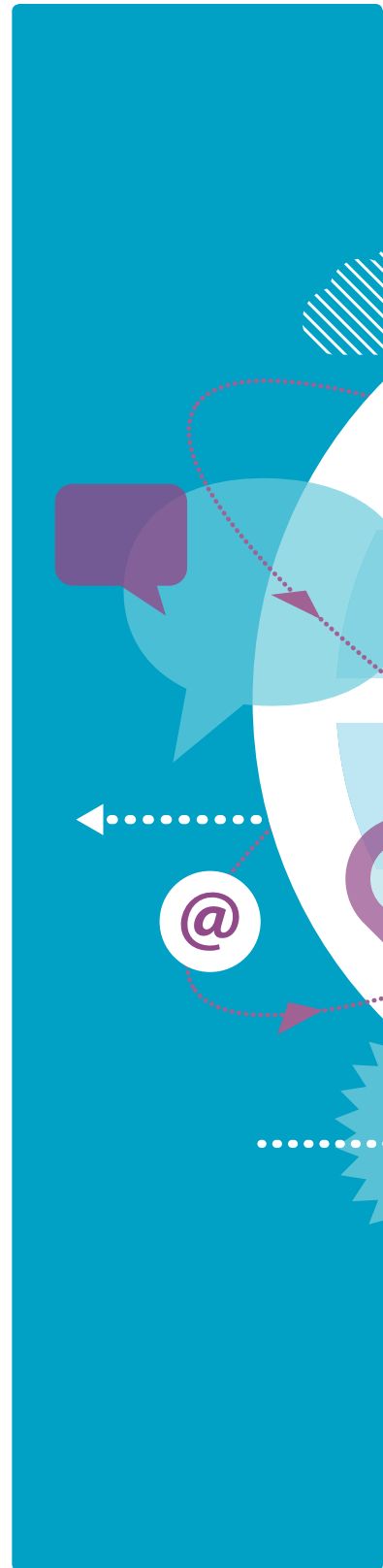
"Networking is one of the most important things you can do to have job security in the future," says Porter Gale, author of *Your Network is Your Net Worth*. "You have to keep connecting. Networking puts you in control."

## Tips for building your professional network

**1** Give before you take. Whether at a mixer, an industry conference or through social media, your primary thought shouldn't be, "Who can get me my next job or promotion?" Instead, think: "How can I help you?" "If you're going out of your way to help others, then when you ask for a favor later down the road, people are much more likely to help out," says Delaney.

**2** Interact with people on social media. Your number of Facebook friends, Twitter followers or LinkedIn contacts means little if you're not commenting, retweeting or congratulating them regularly. "It's really important to have strong relationships with people," says Delaney. "And in order to do that, you need to be listening—both in person and online—and interact with people frequently."

**3** Be picky. The big-name colleague with a million Twitter followers is less likely to be a good professional connection than the person with a small but cultivated following. Invest your networking time with people who are equally interested in connecting with you.





## 5 things to avoid when expanding your network

### 1. Thinking everyone is your friend

On social media, be selective with whom you link and friend. Connections are a quality, not quantity, game.

### 2. Nonstop selling

If every tweet is trying to get someone to buy your product, no one is going to be interested in following you. Same thing goes in person—turn off the sales pitch and instead, listen to their needs.

### 3. Not knowing when to ignore your smartphone

Did your iPhone just vibrate? Muster every ounce of self-control to keep your eyes on the person you're talking with. Scanning your phone, even for a moment, is rude and gives the impression that you're bored.

### 4. Failing at follow-up

"Don't be pushy or send stupid 'just checking in,' 'anything going on?' emails," says Sandy Jones-Kaminski, chief connecting officer with Bella Domain Media. "Follow up with things that have relevance. That's how you build rapport."

### 5. Never going beyond the virtual

Having a great social media presence helps with networking, but it still can't beat the connection you make with someone face-to-face. So invite people out for coffee. If you're traveling, give heads-up that you'd like to connect in person. And then ask, "What can I do for you?"



“Networking is one of the most important things you can do to have job security in the future. You have to keep connecting. Networking puts you in control.”

Porter Gale, author of *Your Network is Your Net Worth*

**4** Follow up. You meet at a conference. Then what? “The fortune is in the follow-up,” says Sandy Jones-Kaminski, chief connecting officer with Bella Domain Media. Email them within a week with a piece of information or a contact that might be of help.

**5** Shake it up. Industry colleagues aren’t the only people to network with. Meetup.com allows you to connect with others who share your outside-work interests. “I’m a frequent traveler and I’ll say hello to people,” says Gale. “I’ve made good contacts just by being open and receptive.”


**6** Volunteer. Whether it’s your alumni association, professional association or local library, don’t just be another body in a chair. Find out what the organization needs and how you can help.

**7** Be strategic. “I’m a big believer in strategically building your network,” says Gale. If the conference has an attendee list, Google the names and pinpoint who you are interested in meeting. If you’re on Twitter, Delany recommends using FollowerWonk to search Twitter bios to find influencers in your industry.

**8** Introverted? Use that to your advantage. “Introverts can be the best networkers,” says Jones-Kaminski. “They’re listeners. So go into these things with some mojo. You have it. You know inherently how to have a quality conversation.”

**9** Grab a pen. Follow up with a hand-written thank-you note instead of just a hastily typed email, says Gale. It’ll ensure you’re remembered.

**10** Bring your connections to you. Jones-Kaminski hosts regular “Pay it Forward” parties. Held at a restaurant or bar, the only rule is “you have to be willing to help someone else first.” By hosting, you get to easily meet all the attendees and you can be the facilitator hooking up people with like interests, a favor that will be looked upon fondly. “I always pick a place with great food and during happy hour so you make it cheap for people to come,” she says. “Put it on your LinkedIn profile that you host these events. Employers want to know that you have a network of people through which you can get things done.”

Reach out to others, figure out how you can help them and most of all, get your name and face out there. When the time comes for you to start looking for your next opportunity, it might come easier than you’d think. 

Cynthia Ramnarace is an independent journalist based in New York City. Her work has appeared in *Reader’s Digest* and *O, the Oprah Magazine*. Learn more about her at [cynthiaramnarace.com](http://cynthiaramnarace.com).



University of Phoenix® Alumni Association

# Do you know someone on this list?



**Each month, approximately 8,000 dedicated students earn their degrees and become proud University of Phoenix graduates.**

Phoenix Focus magazine now celebrates the newest members of the growing alumni community—now more than 864,000 strong—with an online list of recent graduates.

To see the list of graduates from April 1 – June 30, 2014 visit the Phoenix Focus homepage.

**[alumni.phoenix.edu/phoenix-focus](http://alumni.phoenix.edu/phoenix-focus)**



# Career planning, simplified

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Tips for creating a fulfilling career.

By Julie Wilson

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Are you a planner? While some may prefer a fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants approach when it comes to figuring out what to do on a Saturday night, even the most schedule-averse person should consider creating a career plan.

Why? “If you don’t know where you’re going, any road can take you there,” cautions Gladys Stone, executive coach and recruiter and author of *Goal! Your 30-Day Game Plan for Business & Career Success*. Meaning, without clear direction, it’s hard to reach your desired destination.

Instead of getting lost along the way, create a map to help you get there with minimal roadblocks. Here’s how.

## Search your soul

Marty Nemko, producer and host of NPR-San Francisco’s *Work with Marty Nemko* and author of *Cool Careers for Dummies*, believes that a career has to be fulfilling, whatever that may mean to you personally. “You probably spend the best hours of your day, the best weeks of the year and the best years of your life at work,” he says. It’s important to make them count.

How? By making sure your career aligns with what matters to you. “Identify your career non-negotiables,” he advises. You may require flexible work hours, need a big paycheck, long to serve your community or want a short commute. Whatever it may be, use this list of values to create a firm foundation for your career plan.

“If you know what you’re interested in, [you have] a very solid starting point,” asserts Stone.

## Set your target

From here, you can explore different industries, positions and markets to see what excites you. Nemko suggests looking at top-jobs lists, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ *Occupational Outlook Handbook* and other books for ideas.

“With the filters of your non-negotiable, you can go through those and not be overwhelmed,” he says of the goal-setting process.

You then can begin to create a list of jobs you want and companies where you’d love to work. After that, scour your network to find connections willing to give you an introduction. Once you hone in on your dream career and employers, then you can set a clear goal and get to work pursuing it.



“You probably spend the best hours of your day, the best weeks of the year and the best years of your life at work. It’s important to make them count.”

Marty Nemko, author of *Cool Careers for Dummies*



## Evaluate your skills

Once you know where your passions lie and where you want to be, it's time to take an honest look at what you bring to the table. Nemko advises his clients to identify their skills and basic aptitudes, along with how well their education—or tolerance for returning to school—aligns with where they want to go.

“The first thing is the goal,” agrees Stone. “After that, the question is, ‘What do you need to do in order to get there?’ Figure out the gaps.”

Then fill them. If you need better presentation skills to qualify for your dream job, try taking a workshop and volunteering to participate in presentations in your current position to gain experience. If your targeted career requires certain software or language knowledge, find a way to get it. Whatever the missing skills may be, make a calculated effort to obtain them so prospective employers see what a fabulous fit you are for their needs.

## Create the basics

Once you have a clear vision for your future, it's time to get it down on paper, so to speak. This means creating a resume—and supporting documents like cover letters—tailored to your ideal employer and job, highlighting the skills and experience that matter to prospective hiring managers. Find a way to articulate how your total package can benefit their organizations.

Don't forget your online presence. “Create an awesome LinkedIn profile,” says Nemko, complete with a headline, summary and key words that clearly describe what you are looking to do. And don't forget an appropriate headshot. “The picture should be relevant and memorable,” he notes.

Then, take it one step further by participating in online forums and reading and commenting on blogs related to the organizations, industries and jobs you're after.

## Chart your course

In order to keep forward momentum as you work toward your goal, Stone recommends setting milestones between your point A—now—and your desired point B in the future.

“You might have two or three,” she explains, “and they should represent significant progress toward that goal.”

Milestones can range anywhere from adding to your responsibilities at work for experience to earning a degree or pitching a certain number of wish-list employers. Whatever they are, make sure their completion gets you one step closer to reaching your goal.

## Course correction?

As time goes by—and milestones are met—it's important to revisit your career plan on occasion. It will give you a point of reference by which to evaluate whether your decisions are getting you closer to succeeding with your goals.

Sometimes, though, your career plan may need an adjustment or two, and that's OK. “It's a living document,” says Stone. “As things change in your life, [your plan] will change, too.”

And if that change takes you in an unexpected direction, so be it. The most important thing, says Stone: “You don't ever want to be stagnant.”

# Create your own career plan

Did you know that alumni of University of Phoenix already have access to great career planning tools?

“We work with students and alumni to help them hone in and focus on their individual career goals,” explains Mary Osadzinski, a member of the University's Career Services team. “Our sole purpose is to help them in their efforts to pursue professional success.”

Currently, the University offers a wide range of resources for students and alumni at every stage of their careers, including tools for:

- Exploring your career interests
- Researching the job market
- Evaluating your skill set
- Searching for a new job

The University is in the process of upgrading its suite of career tools to provide a step-by-step, guided approach to career planning and management. Stay tuned for more information later this year.

Learn more at [alumni.phoenix.edu/career-resources.html](http://alumni.phoenix.edu/career-resources.html).

# Alumni Association Benefits

Take advantage of the complimentary resources the University of Phoenix Alumni Association offers you. Visit [alumni.phoenix.edu](http://alumni.phoenix.edu) to customize your account and confirm your profile.

## Built-in career networking

Tap into an alumni network that's more than 864,000 strong by joining the Alumni Association.

## Career resources

Discover tools and resources to help you market your skills to potential employers.

## Discounts and savings

Find discounts on everything from computers and electronics to insurance products, travel and more through University Marketplace.

## Homecoming and events

Reconnect with fellow alumni at Homecoming each fall or attend special events throughout the year.

## Scholarships

Apply for scholarships to return to school or nominate someone you know for the chance to attend the University.

## Get involved

Become a mentor, join an Alumni Chapter or share your story through Phoenix Focus alumni magazine.

**Get started now**  
[alumni.phoenix.edu](http://alumni.phoenix.edu)



Antoine Jackson (left), AAB '12, and Santoine Jackson, AAIT/VC '10



Maira Isabel, MBA/MKT '03



Emilio Parga, MAED/ECN '03



Lonna Levin, BS/COM-CT '13



Nathan Currie, MAED/AS '05  
Assistant Superintendent, Rowan-Salisbury School System  
Salisbury, North Carolina



# Rewarding impact

By Julie Wilson  
Photos by Bruce Racine

Devoted to a path of education for himself and others, Nathan Currie prepares students—and schools—to succeed.

For Nathan Currie, a life without learning is simply unimaginable. This assistant superintendent for the Rowan-Salisbury School System in North Carolina was raised by parents who valued education and hard work above all else—something he seeks to instill in his own students today.

## Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award honoree

In recognition of his efforts to improve the lives of young people in his community through education, Nathan Currie was honored with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award earlier this year. The award, bestowed by the Salisbury Human Relations Council in North Carolina, was part of an annual humanitarian celebration that focuses on the life and works of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Currie embraces the spirit of service, which is why officials recognized him for his work in North Carolina schools. “My dream is to be remembered by my service and my will to make the world better each day,” says Currie, who works as the assistant superintendent for the Rowan-Salisbury School System.

Read more about Currie and this honor at:  
[phoenixfocus.com/blog/living-dream](http://phoenixfocus.com/blog/living-dream)



“Education was the plain true gospel in my family,” he says. “It was the foundation that my mom and dad believed in.”

### Early inspiration

Before Currie was born in North Carolina, his father was wounded while serving in the United States Army in Vietnam. Though he was rendered permanently blind by his injury, Currie’s father was a brick mason, an auto mechanic, a scoutmaster and an active member of his church community. He never let his disability deter him from putting in a long day at work and living life to its fullest. All the while Currie’s mother was there by his side, serving as his father’s eyes and ears, and Currie helped his father navigate the world around him, too.

“Of all the life skills [my parents] taught me, the biggest is that you cannot make any excuses for any handicap you have. The world doesn’t want to hear it,” he says. “If anyone could make excuses, it was [my father], and he didn’t.”

### Foiled plans

So when Currie’s dreams of becoming a musician were dashed after a car accident his senior year of

high school, he just kept on going. His injuries, which required him to have reconstructive surgery on his mouth, cut his alto saxophone-playing days short. Amid the disappointment came good news, though: Currie learned he was accepted at Livingstone College in Salisbury, North Carolina, on full scholarship.

“I had happened to stumble upon the application in the guidance office,” he recalls. “[Livingstone College] was recruiting minorities into the field of education.”

### Life’s purpose

It was a natural fit for Currie, who graduated with a bachelor’s degree in elementary education in 1999. He began teaching fifth grade in the Rowan-Salisbury School System, where he continued for seven years. He thrived in his new career, and under his guidance his students earned some of the highest test scores in the district.

Having been raised in a close-knit school community, Currie set out to create a similar environment in Rowan County. Though the school system didn’t offer organized sports, he coached basketball at his school and launched an after-school readers theater program. During that time, Currie was honored as teacher of the year for his active involvement with and dedication to his students.



“Of all the life skills [my parents] taught me, the biggest is that you cannot make any excuses for any handicap you have. The world doesn’t want to hear it.”

Nathan Currie, MAED/AS '05

### Return to the classroom

Though Currie enjoyed being at the head of the class, his days as a student weren’t over yet. “I knew the impact I had on 28 kids in the classroom, and I knew in administration I would be in a position to have a greater impact on more kids,” he explains. “My goal was to obtain the credentials I needed to make that happen.”

So he enrolled at University of Phoenix in 2003 and realized the University’s schedule could accommodate his busy lifestyle. He began the Master of Arts in Education with a Concentration in Administration and Supervision program the day his son was born. Two years later, he graduated on his son’s second birthday, a coincidence Currie sees as meaningful.

### A greater impact

A month before his graduation, Currie was hired as an assistant principal at a nearby school, marking the start of his career in education administration. After two years, he was hired to lead a minority achievement program in Duplin County, overseeing efforts at six middle schools with an enrollment of 3,000.

Then Currie was recruited back to the Rowan-Salisbury School System to serve as principal of a low-performing middle school, one that already was on the state’s watch list. He had to implement changes swiftly and effectively to make a difference for those children. “We didn’t have time,” says Currie of the urgent situation. “We had lives and we had education. We couldn’t miss a beat.”

Thankfully, he didn’t. “At the end of the year, for the first time, the school had met all state and federal goals,” he says. The following year, it exceeded its goals, becoming a high-growth school.

### Super influencer


Spurred by this success, Currie was ready for an even bigger challenge. He had gone from the classroom to the principal’s office, making a measurable impact on the quality of education at every stop along the way. Next, he set his sights on the assistant superintendent position at Rowan-Salisbury Schools in his quest to “influence a greater magnitude of people.”

He was hired to fill this second-in-command post at Rowan-Salisbury Schools, which has an enrollment of more than 20,000 students at 35 schools. As assistant superintendent, Currie oversees all student services, including school nurses, social workers, intervention programs and athletics.

His real passion lies in transforming his schools with digital technology, providing a device for each child. “Our vision is to enhance and expand upon our technology to improve literacy in our school district,” he says.

He also seeks to make education relevant for students so they stick with it. “One thing we look at is engaging our students,” he says. “If we can give them real-world problems to solve, [their education] has more meaning.”

For his part, he’s continuing his own lifelong learning with a doctoral degree, Currie’s goal is to “continue to seek avenues where I can have a greater impact on education.”

Though he’s not sure exactly what that will look like, he does know this: “I want to be remembered as someone who had a positive impact on education.” 

# Advocate for hope

By Julie Wilson

Photos by Richard Maack

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Through the darkness of Vivonne Keli's abuse-filled childhood grew a light—and a voice—for others.

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Even as a young girl, Vivonne Keli had a profound sense that growing up in an abusive environment wasn't normal. "I knew it shouldn't hurt to be a child. Something was wrong," she insists.





Vivonne Keli BSP, '10  
Program Director, The Hope of Survivors  
Bedford, IA



Keli, who today works as the program director for abuse victim advocacy group The Hope of Survivors, turned her personal pain into a passion for helping others come to terms with their own traumatic pasts.

### A childhood disrupted

Keli's earliest childhood memories include episodes of abuse at the hands of the trusted adults around her. Bouncing from relative to relative and home to home, she caught an occasional glimpse of happiness at her grandmother's house and at school with a trusted teacher, but for the most part she felt isolated in her private misery.

"While the abuse was going on, I knew someone had to speak up for me, but I knew no one would," she remembers.

As she grew older, though, she reached the point where she had to decide what her future would be. Would she succumb to her suicidal thoughts, or would she stand up for herself and work on healing her heart and mind?

"I chose to live," she says, simply.

### Time to heal

She knew the road to recovery would be long and difficult. As she sought help from mental health professionals, she found that none really could understand her situation.

"They weren't well versed or well educated in childhood sexual abuse," she notes.

So she set about working through her pain on her own. She developed a method for addressing her abusers within herself and coming to terms with each one so she could put them behind her.

"After two years, I was able to break free of past abuses," she says.

With her life on track, she focused on the future. She had earned her GED in 1996, and in 1999, "I married a wonderful, dynamic man," she says.

Together, they ran a salon and day spa in posh La Jolla, California. She soon discovered that her clients came to her for more than just expensive beauty treatments. "A lot of [women] were coming to my business to be counseled," says Keli. They would reveal their problems to her during their services, "and I was giving them advice and suggestions." She became known for her own survival success and the sage counsel she provided to members of her community.



# A light in the darkness

For a young, struggling Vivonne Keli, hope came in the form of a small Russian woman: her first grade teacher. For the single year Keli was in her classroom—all the way back in 1972—Raya Abadir showed her that there was goodness in the world.

“She was so beautiful, gentle and kind and so different from my abusive mother,” recalls Keli. “Mrs. Abadir’s love, compassion and character was imprinted in my heart and my mind, and this helped me when I was in my darkest time in my life.”

Though Keli lost touch with Abadir after the school year ended, she never forgot her. In

2010, Keli decided to try to locate her former teacher. “She influenced me, and though it was a short time, she was always on my mind,” she says.

She did find her, and Keli also found that their bond remained after all those years apart. Today, the pair often can be seen visiting the San Diego zoo and local museums, dining out or going to church together.

Keli is ever-grateful for Abadir’s caring presence in her painful youth. “I am who I am because of her love and her way of being,” she says. “She is truly my hero, and I am proud to call her my favorite teacher.”



Abadir was Keli’s guest at UOPX Homecoming 2013 where Keli was presented with the Community Service Award.

## A call to help others

As time went by, Keli was asked by churches and community organizations to speak about her story of trauma and healing. Then she began teaching seminars for women who are struggling with domestic violence and sexual abuse.

In 2005, she decided it was time to earn her degree. “When things started turning around, I realized it’s about education,” she says. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Psychology in 2010, fulfilling a dream and providing her with additional skills and knowledge in her newfound field.

One year before her graduation, she published a book about her experiences overcoming her past abuse and thriving, rather than just surviving. She began writing her book, *Awaken the Silence: When Silence Isn’t Golden*, 20 years earlier when she was in a different frame of mind. Revisiting it—and realizing how far she had come—was inspiring.

“You change your thoughts, you change your life,” she muses.

## A bright future

Today, Keli is working on four more books—along with a movie of her first one—in an effort to help a broader audience realize there can be life after abuse.

In addition to her public speaking and seminars, she’s also taken a position as program director for The Hope of Survivors, an organization that helps survivors of sexual abuse at the hands of the clergy.

“We have had [clients] of all denominations,” she says. “We help them on the journey to healing.”

In this role, she works to create programs to support them, and she has plans to expand her organization’s scope in the future. “We are branching out to childhood sexual abuse. That will be my program—my baby,” she says. She wants to open a house for adults who have experienced clergy abuse, too.

To help her reach these goals, Keli is working on earning her master’s and doctoral degrees in clinical psychology. “I’m at the dissertation stage,” she notes.

Looking back on her life’s ups and downs, she’s grateful to have reached a place where she has a clear purpose that brings her fulfillment. “I’m hoping to be a voice for those who cannot speak,” she says. “There’s no amount of money in the world you could pay me to do anything else.”



Nadine Streski-Flanders, MSN/MBA/HC '12  
Senior director of nursing practice and education  
Kaleida Health  
Buffalo, NY



# A career without limits

By Julie Wilson  
Photos by Luke Copping

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Nadine Streleski-Flanders keeps her nursing career interesting—and her skills sharp—by challenging herself with new opportunities in her chosen field.

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As a bright-eyed nurse fresh out of school, Nadine Streleski-Flanders already knew something that some of her seasoned colleagues hadn't figured out yet: that a nursing career offers much more than roles in bedside care.

“I enjoyed working with the new nurses, introducing them truly to the world of nursing and being one of the first faces they saw going into their career.”

Nadine Streleski-Flanders, MSN/MBA/HC '12



“When I was looking into nursing, [I saw] there was the opportunity to do so many different things,” she says. “I was fascinated by the different avenues you could take.”

### Getting her feet wet

With that in the back of her mind, Streleski-Flanders began her career of caring for others. After she completed her internship at Women and Children’s Hospital of Buffalo in her native New York, she had her pick of jobs, but she chose to continue on the path she had started.

“It offered me the two areas that interested me most: women’s health and pediatrics,” she says.

She worked in high-risk obstetrics before deciding to challenge herself with a new role. “I was trying to keep babies in, and six years later I went to the NICU (neonatal intensive care unit),” she says. “I went from big people to one-to-two pounders.”

She relished the opportunity to grow in her profession. “I come across colleagues who find an area they like

right at the beginning, and they stay there and never leave,” she says. “I think to myself what an opportunity I had to go from women’s health to the NICU—to be able to learn something and to apply some of the information I already knew.”

### Sharing her knowledge

After a dozen years, though, what was new and exciting was no longer enough of a challenge for Streleski-Flanders. “I still really enjoyed the babies, but the routine of bedside care wasn’t stimulating enough for me,” she remembers. “I just needed to have a little more. I was ready to spread my wings.”

One of her favorite parts of her job had been sharing her knowledge with the new nurses, helping them gain their footing in their chosen career. With that in mind, Streleski-Flanders became the clinical nursing educator for the NICU. She had never been an instructor before, but that didn’t stop her from embracing her new role.

“I enjoyed working with the new nurses, introducing them truly to the world of nursing and being one of the first faces they saw going into their career,” she says. “I wanted to do a good job and be that coach and mentor so they could flourish. I loved seeing them change as they moved along.”

### A student once again

Over the years, Streleski-Flanders had toyed with the idea of returning to school to pursue a master's degree and continue to grow in her knowledge, but the timing had never been quite right. Several years after she and her husband adopted a daughter from Vietnam, though, everything fell into place.

"I felt it would be a good example for her to see me going through school and doing more," she explains. "I set the expectation for her to get her master's or doctorate, so I had better live by that example, as well."

When it came to selecting a degree program, "I didn't want to pigeonhole myself," she admits. She opted for a dual program in which she could earn a Master of Science in Nursing along with a Master of Business Administration with a Concentration in Health Care Management. She earned her degrees in 2012.

### Another new challenge

Management of the hospital took notice of her professional development and accomplishments. Two months after she graduated, they approached her to apply for the manager of labor and delivery position. When she went to meet with the chief nursing officer (CNO) about the job, though, her career took a new turn. Rather than hiring her for that position, the CNO created a brand-new one designed around Streleski-Flanders' strengths.

"She said, 'You are passionate about education and quality, and I think this is where you will thrive,'" recounts Streleski-Flanders.

She enthusiastically accepted the role of manager of clinical education for the entire five-hospital Kaleida Health system. After a short time, she was promoted to the senior director of nursing practice and education for Kaleida Health. In this role, she will focus her efforts on assessing the current orientation programs in the hospitals and standardizing them across the organization.

"I'm also responsible for clinical affiliations with different schools, both local and out of state, and I work closely with [the quality department] to ensure we are offering the most optimal nursing practices at our facilities," she says. On top of these and other

## Nadine Streleski-Flanders' advice for new nurses

Over the course of her decades-long nursing career, Nadine Streleski-Flanders, has learned a lot about what it takes to thrive as a provider of patient care. Here, the senior director of nursing practice and education for Kaleida Health offers some of her wisdom to nurses who are just beginning their careers.

### Be open to growth

"I feel bad for people who limit themselves and don't try different things," she says. "You don't know what's out there."

### See everything as a learning opportunity


"Be a sponge and soak up everything new," Streleski-Flanders counsels.

### Give yourself time to find your place in nursing

"I still haven't decided what I want to be when I grow up," she jokes. "Give yourself time. I think it was my life experience that helped guide me," she says of the different roles she has taken in nursing.

responsibilities, Streleski-Flanders served as interim CNO and vice president, another learning experience for a woman passionate about professional development.

Though she's not in a bedside role anymore, Streleski-Flanders is right where she wants to be.

"I'm making sure patients get the best care by ensuring that those on the front lines are getting what they need to provide exceptional care," she says. "If anything, I feel like I am doing more now, and I am very satisfied with that." 

# Extra! Extra!

Must-reads and online resources for optimizing social media use.

By Paula Boon

## BOOKS

1. *The Zen of Social Media Marketing: An Easier Way to Build Credibility, Generate Buzz, and Increase Revenue*

By Shama Kabani

This global bestseller outlines a step-by-step process for leveraging social media, including specific guidelines for individual platforms. Those who buy the book also gain access to a continually updated online version.

2. *Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook: How to Tell Your Story in a Noisy Social World*

By Gary Vaynerchuk

Learn how social media has changed the marketing landscape, making context at least as important as content. The takeaway: strategies for developing high-quality content, tailor-made for various social media platforms.

3. *Social Media Intelligence*

By Wendy W. Moe and David A. Schweidel

Wondering what to do with the metadata you gather? This book combines an understanding of the psychology of social networks with practical advice about developing effective strategies based on social media data.

4. *The Power of Visual Storytelling: How to Use Visuals, Videos, and Social Media to Market Your Brand*

By Ekaterina Walter and Jessica Gioglio

This visually stunning book offers a road map for using videos, photos, presentations and infographics to strengthen your brand. Also included are facts and figures showing why your company should expand into specific social channels.

5. *The Social Employee: How Great Companies Make Social Media Work*

By Cheryl Burgess and Mark Burgess

This is the perfect guide for those who want to increase their company's visibility by empowering employees to become brand champions and ambassadors. It includes success stories from corporations such as Cisco and AT&T.

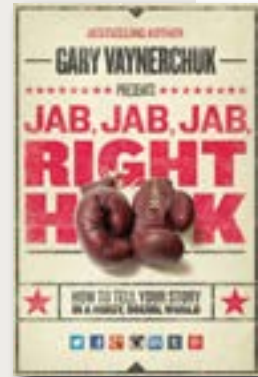
6. *Writing on the Wall: Social Media - The First 2,000 Years*

By Tom Standage

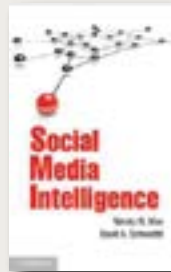
Engaging and provocative, this book demonstrates how modern technology is simply providing a new, more sophisticated way to satisfy our human impulse to socialize.



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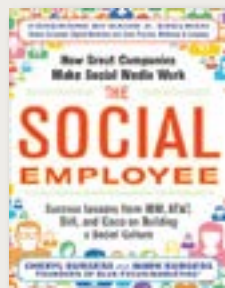
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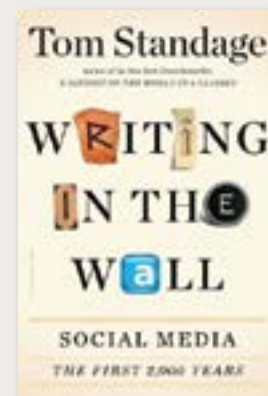
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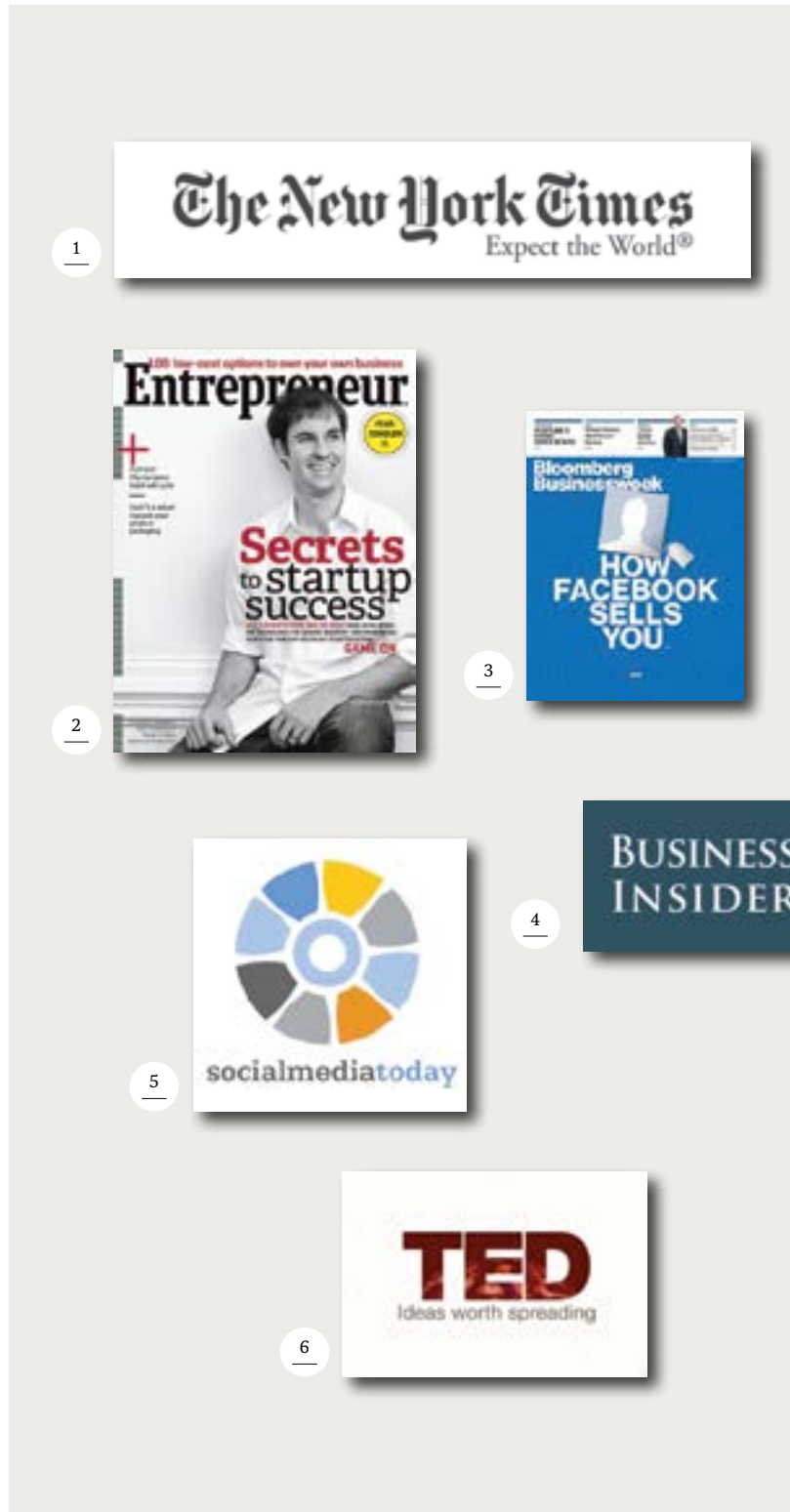
Paula Boon is a freelance researcher, writer and editor whose work has appeared in publications in the United States and Canada.

## MAGAZINES AND ARTICLES

1. *The New York Times*, April 16, 2014  
 “Cut the Clutter in Your Social Media Accounts”  
 By **Hanna Ingber**  
 Tips for tidying up your Facebook and Twitter accounts so using them remains a pleasant and productive experience.
2. *Entrepreneur*, April 9, 2014  
 “The Year Ahead: 5 Social Media Trends Every Entrepreneur Needs to Know”  
 By **Jayson Demers**  
 An overview of the rapidly evolving social media landscape, including developments you should be aware of when strategic planning.
3. *Bloomberg Businessweek*, November 7, 2013  
 “The Hidden Technology That Makes Twitter Huge”  
 By **Paul Ford**  
 A programmer provides the inside scoop on how sophisticated and revolutionary Twitter actually is. Access a seven-minute interview on the same subject here: [bit.ly/HiddenTwitter](http://bit.ly/HiddenTwitter)
4. *Business Insider*, April 22, 2014  
 “Here Are All the Ways You Should Be Using LinkedIn’s Apps but Probably Aren’t”  
 By **Jillian D’Onfro**  
 10 tips for using LinkedIn apps to help build your professional identity online, for LinkedIn newbies and veterans alike.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

5. *Social Media Today: The World’s Best Thinkers on Social Media*  
[socialmediatoday.com](http://socialmediatoday.com)  
 A collection of articles about the social media companies, tools, personalities and platforms that continually change the way we consume information.
6. TED talk: Jennifer Golbeck on “The Curly Fry Conundrum: Why Social Media ‘Likes’ Say More than You Might Think”  
[bit.ly/TheCurlyFry](http://bit.ly/TheCurlyFry)  
 A computer scientist reveals the surprising things companies can guess about you based on your social media likes and shares—and explains why this is not always a good thing. (9:55)

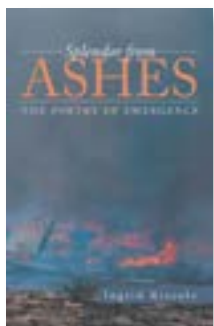


# The BUZZ



We want to celebrate you in our alumni announcements. Share your story and be part of “The Buzz.” Email us at [alumni@phoenix.edu](mailto:alumni@phoenix.edu).

## Published by Alumni



### *Splendor from Ashes: The Poetry of Emergence*

By Ingrid Rizzolo

Ingrid Rizzolo, EDD/CI '12, depicts her transformation after she is betrayed by a handsome Romeo and led down a dark path. A seasoned New York City educator, Rizzolo opens her heart and her life in her poetry, revealing an honest and authentic portrayal of the pain, fears and confusion born out of physical and psychological abuse.

The book is available through Amazon.

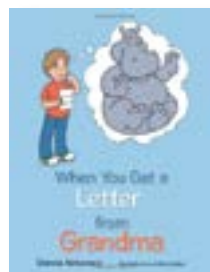


### *Hired! Paths to Employment in the Social Media Era*

By Alfred M. Smith, Jeff Sheehan

Co-authored by alumnus Alfred M. Smith, BSB/M '03, this book offers an extensive look at the steps today's job seeker should take to secure employment in the social media era. *HIRED!* presents a multi-faceted approach utilizing a myriad of tools that are discussed and explained so they can be implemented effectively to secure a new position in the shortest period of time.

The book is available through [hiredthebook.com](http://hiredthebook.com).



### *When You Get a Letter from Grandma*

By Dianna Antonacci

Grandmothers love to keep in touch with their grandchildren, and sending letters is still a great way to have that personal touch between the different generations. However, sometimes young children with big imaginations can take a simple funny idea to a whole new level, as Diana Antonacci, MBA '05, explains in this children's book.

The book is available through Amazon.



### *Souls of Pier 35*

By Rajah E. Smart

In this modern mainstream fiction novel, Rajah E. Smart, MAED/ADM '06, writes about Alex and Tonya, two orphan teens who form a relationship in childhood that survives into their teens. After graduating from high school, they make the life-changing decision to run away from home in search of a better future, with unexpected results.

The book is available through Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

## Recognition

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### Illinois

#### Galesburg

**DuRae Fletcher, BSBA '09**, was recently named as the new site manager for OSF Galesburg Clinic. Part of the OSF St. Mary Medical Center, the Galesburg Clinic provides a multitude of health care services including pediatrics, family medicine, internal medicine, cardiology, neurology and obstetrics/gynecology.

“I wanted to join an organization that truly cares for their patients and employees with actions and not just advertisements,” says Fletcher, who obtained his Bachelor of Science from University of Phoenix. He received his MBA from the Keller Graduate School of Management, and is pursuing a PhD of studies in Theology. He holds an Honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree from World Christianity Ministries and he was a recipient of the 1984 United States Achievement Academy Award.

### Kansas

#### Kansas City

**Lt. Colonel Jeff Fewell, MBA '11**, was named Correctional Administrator of the Year at the American Jail Association Conference in Dallas earlier this year. With a background in military corrections, Fewell, a Certified Jail Manager, began his tenure with the Wyandotte County Sheriff's Office in August 2008, where he is Warden of the jail facility. Fewell is recognized for taking a struggling jail and implementing a number of changes, which have made the facility more efficient, safe and secure for staff and inmates.

### Massachusetts

#### Braintree

**Joshua Walker, MBA '10**, was recently named director of business development for Ryder Global Supply Chain. Ryder System, Inc. is a leading provider of commercial transportation, logistics, and supply chain management solutions, serving customers throughout North America, Europe and Asia.

### South Dakota

#### Sioux Falls

**Jeff Rohlena, MBA/TM '04**, was promoted to manager of global business development for Raven Industries' precision agriculture group. In his new role, Rohlena, an eleven-year veteran of the company, will focus on promoting and expanding the reach of Raven's innovative precision agriculture solutions around the world.

### Texas

#### Austin

Effective August 1, **Dr. Don Christian, DM '07**, will serve as the new leader of Concordia University Texas. Christian will fill the shoes of Dr. Tom Cedel who is retiring after 12 years in the CEO role. Christian has served as dean of the Concordia University Texas College of Business since fall 2005. Prior to joining Concordia University Texas, Christian served in a variety of leadership positions, including headmaster of Lutheran High North in Houston, parish life administrator at Trinity Lutheran Church in downtown Houston, and as a high school

band director in Minneapolis, where he began his professional career.

#### Houston

**Michael Torres, BSCJA '05**, is a sergeant with the Texas Attorney General's Office and was part of the task force that investigated this case: On March 12, 2014, a federal jury in Houston convicted two owners of a former Houston mental health care company, Spectrum Care P.A. (Spectrum), several of its employees and owners of certain Houston group care homes for their participation in a \$97 million Medicare fraud scheme. The owners of Spectrum were each convicted of conspiracy to commit health care fraud and conspiracy to pay kickbacks as well as related counts of health care fraud and paying illegal kickbacks.

# Homecoming 2014

Where opportunity and fun collide

Join us for a fun networking event, where you'll enjoy food, drinks, games and prize drawings, as well as a chance to meet fellow alumni in your community.

Register today and receive your complimentary Spirit Kit, including a UOPX decal and lapel pin to show your Phoenix pride!

To register and link to more information about this year's fun-filled events, visit: [alumni.phoenix.edu/HC2014Reg](http://alumni.phoenix.edu/HC2014Reg)

**Register today**  
[alumni.phoenix.edu/HC2014Reg](http://alumni.phoenix.edu/HC2014Reg)

Check your email for  
your Personal Registration  
ID number

## What's Homecoming all about?

Homecoming is all about you. It's a time when the University of Phoenix Alumni Association shines a spotlight on our amazing alumni. Homecoming is a series of fun-filled social events to thank you for your continued support of the University. RSVP today to receive a free spirit kit.

## What will you find at Homecoming in 2014?

This year promises to be one of the largest and most dynamic homecomings in the nation. Each event will feature a Networking Bar & Grill, a Lucky Socks Lounge and a Connection Zone. There will also be a host of fun activities including prize drawings, a Funniest Picture Contest and a Find-a-Phoenix Competition.

## Why should you attend?

You've heard the saying "there's strength in numbers," right? You are a member of an alumni network more than 860,000-strong. Homecoming can help you connect with alumni colleagues in your area for friendship as well as professional and industry advice. To brush up on your networking skills, check out our 5 Ways to be a Homecoming King or Queen tips at: [alumni.phoenix.edu/events/homecoming-2014/campaign-kickoff.html](http://alumni.phoenix.edu/events/homecoming-2014/campaign-kickoff.html).

More details about attire, parking and Spirit Kits can be found in our FAQ. See you soon!





# Homecoming

## FAQ

Have a question about Homecoming?  
We have the answer.

**Q: How do I register?**

**A:** Register at: [alumni.phoenix.edu/HC2014Reg](http://alumni.phoenix.edu/HC2014Reg). Note: If you received a Save the Date or invitation email, please use the Personal Registration ID number listed in that email when registering.

**Q: Will I receive or need to print out tickets for the event?**

**A:** No. There will be no tickets issued or required this year. Just sign in with the registration/check-in table at the event.

**Q: Does the University pay for event parking?**

**A:** No. We cover the cost of the event for you and a guest, but you will be responsible for your parking costs if applicable.

**Q: Why aren't you doing sports events this year?**

**A:** Popular demand. Our 2014 Alumni Survey indicated that alums wanted to have a more formal networking experience. We listened!

**Q: What is the dress code for the event?**

**A:** Business attire. It's your time to shine with your fellow alumni! Make the most of this networking opportunity by putting your best foot forward.

**Q: Will the University post or use pictures of me from the event?**

**A:** The Alumni Association reserves the right to use photos, audio and video captured at the events.

**Q: Is this a kid-friendly event?**

**A:** No. Alumni are allowed one guest at this year's events and that guest must be 18 years or older.

**Q: Will alcohol be served?**

**A:** There will be a cash bar for all attendees 21 years and over. Please drink responsibly.

**Q: What's included at the event?**

**A:** Heavy appetizers and nonalcoholic beverages will be served at no charge.

**Q: Can I bring more than one guest?**

**A:** No. You may attend with one guest and that guest must be 18 years or older.

**Q: Will there be room blocks reserved or discounted at the hotel for alumni?**

**A:** No, there are no special rates or reservations for the event.

**Q: How many business cards should I bring?**

**A:** At least 100. Be prepared for a full night of networking!



**Q: Will there be icebreakers for people who aren't natural networkers?**

**A:** Yes. There will be several opportunities to get into the game. Before your event, we encourage you to visit our "5 ways to be a Homecoming King and Queen" (see [alumni.phoenix.edu](http://alumni.phoenix.edu)) for tips on how to network.

**Q: Will I get a spirit kit this year?**

**A:** Yes. You will receive your free spirit kit with completed registration sometime prior to the event.

If you didn't find the answer you were looking for, send us an email at [alumnihomecoming@phoenix.edu](mailto:alumnihomecoming@phoenix.edu).

# University News



## University introduces new CJ&S dean

In June, the University of Phoenix College of Criminal Justice and Security welcomed James A. Marks into the role of executive dean.

General Marks, affectionately known to friends, colleagues and the media as “Spider,” attained the rank of Major General in the United States Army, from which he retired in 2004. During his time in the Army, Spider was the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Intelligence Center at Ft. Huachuca, Arizona. An entrepreneur, Marks was most recently the cofounder and principal of Willowdale Services, LLC, a private advisory helping entrepreneurs grow their businesses. He also has served as president and CEO of Global Linguist Solutions, a private contractor providing linguistics services to the U.S. military in Iraq and the largest employer of native Iraqis. Marks is also a national security, military and intelligence contributor for CNN.

Marks is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering. He is also a graduate of the University of Virginia, earning a Master of Arts degree in International Affairs. Additionally, he received a Master of Science degree in Theater Operations from the School of Advanced Military Studies at the United States Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

## Accounting students get a boost with Quick Books

The School of Business has replaced its existing software in Principles of ACC/290 and ACC/291 (Accounting I and II) with Intuit® QuickBooks® Online, the leading cloud-based accounting solution for accountants and small businesses around the world.

The integration of QuickBooks Online into University courses will help shape assignments to real-life work situations and will prepare students to apply classroom learning to their jobs. The software is used by more than 1.7 million people to manage financial data.

QuickBooks Online became available for ACC/290 and ACC/291 enrollments in July. Students who complete these courses as part of their degree program will earn a certificate in bookkeeping, which will offer them an opportunity to gain a job-relevant credential even before they complete their degree program.

The School of Business plans to fully integrate QuickBooks Online into ACC/210 (Accounting Information Systems) later this year. Students will learn how to set up and use the software as they complete accounting-related functions. Students wishing to become certified QuickBooks professionals will be prepared to take the corresponding exam through Intuit at the conclusion of the course.

# Focus, at your fingertips

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\*Available on iTunes® and Google™ Store.



# Campus News



*In celebration of Criminal Justice Week, NOPD Superintendent Ronal Serpas spoke to students at the New Orleans Learning Center.*

## Police chief offers education advice to students

In celebration of Criminal Justice Week, New Orleans Police Superintendent Ronal Serpas spoke to a standing-room-only crowd of University of Phoenix students at the New Orleans Learning Center.

Superintendent Serpas has had a distinguished career in law enforcement, which he began as a patrolman at NOPD. He has been chief law enforcement officer for four jurisdictions, including Nashville Police Department and Washington State Police Department. He returned to New Orleans four years ago to begin a reform movement within NOPD. He is also vice president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police. He has taught courses in criminal justice in the New Orleans area, and has published numerous papers on the Accountability Driven Leadership management philosophy he created.

A native of New Orleans, Serpas became a high school dropout when he fathered a child. Trying to raise a family with no high school education, he realized that he needed to go back to school in order to provide for his family. After obtaining his GED, he pursued a bachelor's degree and a master's degree while in the military. Realizing that he was now "hooked on education," he went on to earn a PhD in urban planning at the University of New Orleans. Serpas emphasized to students that he earned his education as a full-time working adult.



*Metairie elementary benefits from donations to classroom libraries.*

## Louisiana loves reading

Campus locations in Louisiana are helping area kids develop a love of reading. The Baton Rouge Campus and the Metairie (New Orleans) Learning Center recently held book fairs to benefit their adopted schools.

The book fairs were hosted by the Social Responsibility & Environmental Awareness Committee. All books and materials were provided by Scholastic. Once the book fair results were tallied and scholastic dollars received, committee members and staff visited the Scholastic Warehouse and purchased books to fill the teachers' wish lists and supply the school libraries.

Baton Rouge staff and faculty delivered close to 450 books to University Terrace. Approximately 500 books and school supplies were delivered to Bridgedale Elementary School in Metairie.



# Chapter News

## Fifteen new Alumni Chapters across the nation

The University of Phoenix Alumni Association is pleased to announce the recent launch of 15 new Alumni Chapters. Charlotte, Jacksonville, Miami, New Jersey, Indianapolis, Richmond, St. Louis, Minnesota, El Paso, Honolulu, Las Vegas, Oklahoma City, Portland, Bakersfield and Fresno will now host local chapter events and networking opportunities.

As the program expands from 30 to 50 UOPX alumni chapters in 2014, these and other chapter leaders are stepping up. Their enthusiasm and “make it happen” attitude are part of their Phoenix DNA. But they need your help.

How can you get involved with a chapter near you? Volunteer! It’s all about alumni giving back to their fellow alumni and to the University. Over the past two years, alumni volunteers have played a pivotal role in the success of Alumni Chapters and the ability of fellow graduates to connect and network. For more information on Alumni Chapters, visit [alumni.phoenix.edu/get-involved/chapters.html](http://alumni.phoenix.edu/get-involved/chapters.html).

## Chapters partner with Boys & Girls Club

In May, the Salt Lake City Alumni Chapter hosted an event in partnership with the Boys & Girls Club of South Valley in Salt Lake City, Utah. The event, attended by alumni and their families, featured a 5K race for kids and adults, after which the Chapter sponsored a light lunch and networking event.



## CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT: CHICAGO

### Chicago Alumni Chapter adds events, career resources

University of Phoenix alumni in the Chicago area have a great way to get connected: Join the Chicago Alumni Chapter.

The chapter, which has 300-plus members, offers alumni the chance to network with each other, access career development opportunities and gather to give back to the local community as a group. In May, the chapter participated in a National Cancer Survivors Day community service event, one of several similar gatherings the group has held over the past year, with more planned for the future.

“This summer, we’re getting involved in a lot of community events,” notes Imani Akin, EDD ’07, the leader of the Chicago Alumni Chapter.

The Chicago chapter also is working on creating more career-focused meetings. “We are excited about collaborating with our local campus administration on upcoming value-added workshops,” adds Akin. With its active social media presence, members can stay connected virtually, as well as in person. In addition to its Facebook and Twitter feeds, the chapter is launching an electronic newsletter soon, which will highlight local members and their achievements.

Akin says the chapter is actively seeking new members so it can expand its reach in the area. “The benefit is being able to access resources from current alumni and the networking,” she notes.

Connect with the Chicago Alumni Chapter of the University of Phoenix Alumni Association. Sign up at <http://bit.ly/ChicagoMembership> or email [uopxchicagoalumnichapter@gmail.com](mailto:uopxchicagoalumnichapter@gmail.com) to learn more. You can follow the Chicago Alumni Chapter on Facebook and Twitter, too.

# In your words

We've asked you to share your University of Phoenix stories, and you've answered. In this section, we highlight your accomplishments and accolades in your own words.

We'd like to hear about your accomplishments and accolades. Share your story at: [phoenixfocus.com/share-your-story](http://phoenixfocus.com/share-your-story)



**Shawn Tsuha, BSBM '01**  
Deputy Director for Law Enforcement at State of Hawaii Department of Public Safety

I completed my degree program at University of Phoenix Hawaii Campus 14 years ago. Back then I didn't know how much the program would help me to attain my goals. Today, I have the privilege and honor to serve as the deputy director for law enforcement at the State of Hawaii Department of Public Safety. Years ago, I was a struggling deputy sheriff that needed a bachelor's degree for promotion in the Hawaii National Guard. Between my family, law enforcement and Army Guard responsibilities, I couldn't see a way forward. UOPX opened the door. Today, with two combat deployments, I am a major and have worked my way up from deputy, to sergeant, to lieutenant and have been appointed as the state sheriff and now the deputy director, and am also a graduate of the FBI National Academy, Class of 2014.



**Jason Donnelly, MAED/CI '06**  
Author

I failed out of college. It wasn't because I was stupid—far from it. I left high school and went to a state school an hour and a half away from my parents. For the first time in my life, I was free of their tyranny! That meant staying out late and partying with friends instead of going to bed at a reasonable time and studying. After four years, 104.5 credits, and nothing but memories to show for it, I moved to Arizona. I got a job as an enrollment counselor at UOPX and finished an AA degree in general studies. I kept pushing forward and received a BS in management and an MAED. I then went to another school to round out my degrees with an MFA in creative writing.

I now have four degrees, have written three books and work for a fast-growing ad agency in NYC. UOPX started me in the right direction and I hope this story helps another "failure" find the road to success.




**Desiree Bennett, AABF '13**

I remember thinking to myself that I really should go to college, like I had promised my parents, but life always got in the way. Besides, I had a decent job for a 22-year-old, and I was making decent money. I thought, "Why do I need a degree? I'm an adult, right? I know what I'm doing." I continued to get decent jobs making decent money, but I wasn't happy with any of them. Suddenly, I got an invitation for my 10-year high school reunion. There I was, almost ten years later, with no college degree and no career. I had applied for my dream career in marketing several times, but those three magic words kept me from getting a call back: College Degree Required. Time to make a change! After I got my reunion invitation, I made the decision to go to University of Phoenix. I finally feel like I can say, "I'm an adult & I know what I'm doing!"

# Everyone has a story to tell.

Share yours and you could be in an  
upcoming issue of Phoenix Focus.

[phoenixfocus.com/share-your-story](http://phoenixfocus.com/share-your-story)

A photograph of Emilio Parga, a man with short brown hair, wearing a blue button-down shirt, sitting outdoors in front of a red brick wall. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows a brick wall and some greenery.

Emilio Parga, MAED/ECN '03  
Founder, Solace Tree

Alumni



## GET CONNECTED.



# Where has your University of Phoenix education taken you?

Share your story and images at  
[phoenixfocus.com/share-your-story](https://phoenixfocus.com/share-your-story)

*Flight of a Phoenix: New Jersey Alumni Chapter President Alvaro Restrepo (BSM '09; MBA '12) sports his Phoenix pride at Machu Picchu in Peru.*

