



# The NRWA Connection

*Linking Our Members ... Keeping Them Current*

## In This Issue

[Executive Greeting](#)  
[What's Happening in Region Four?](#)  
[End-of-Year Savings](#)  
[Feature Article](#)  
[Affiliate Spotlight](#)  
[Quote of the Week](#)

## Quick Links

[The NRWA Website](#)



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## Welcome!

Hello ,

Welcome to this week's edition of *The NRWA Connection*.

The intent of this newsletter is to keep you current about both our association and our industry. We hope you enjoy this membership benefit!

## Executive Greeting



Pay Yourself  
By [Pat Criscito](#)

I'm sitting here, just before Christmas, beginning to work on the budget for The NRWA's 2012 fiscal year, but I can't help but think about my own personal budget and the ones that I will need to create for my business and my husband's. The truth is, I'd rather be wrapping packages for my grandchildren, but work must come first, which makes sense. Work makes money, and you must have money to budget, and you must have money to buy presents to wrap!

So, let's get to work. One of the inevitable challenges entrepreneurs face is fluctuating income. We never make the same amount of money every month, but the bills are always the same, which makes it difficult to budget. The key is to calculate your expenses and budget to pay yourself a regular paycheck based not on your previous year's average monthly income but on the lowest month's income.

For instance, if you earned an average of \$6,000 per month (\$72,000 per year) but your lowest monthly income was \$4,800, you will use that amount for your monthly budgeted income. This won't work if your monthly income varies wildly (say \$1,000 in June and \$10,000 in December). In that case, you have no choice but use a number closer to your average monthly income, but make it a number lower than the real average.

Once you've established a monthly income (\$4,800) and deducted your estimated expenses (say, \$2,000), you will know how much you can take for your monthly salary

(\$2,800) and how much to put into a savings account for the future (\$6,000 minus \$4,800 equals \$1,200 for savings, although the \$6,000 will change every month, as will the amount to be put in savings). It is important that you set up separate checking and savings accounts for both business and personal uses.

After paying business expenses each month, write yourself a paycheck based on the salary you calculated. Move any remaining cash into your business savings account, where it will accumulate during the year to pay taxes and unexpected expenses. There might be months where you will need to draw on this reserve to pay your salary when income is tight, but other months will make up the difference.

Don't be tempted to draw from your business savings as cash accumulates, and make sure you set aside some of your monthly salary in a personal savings account. When you have a nice cushion in your personal savings, you won't be tempted to panic during the slow times.

At the end of the year, do three things. First, create a new budget and reset your salary based on the prior year's income (like you did this year). Second, use some of the money from your business savings account to pay taxes. And, finally, transfer most of the remaining money in the business savings account to your personal savings account as a year-end bonus. You will need to leave a cushion in your business savings to begin the new year, so you can't have it all, as tempting as that might be.

Hopefully, this hasn't been too taxing for your holiday brain, but the process is fairly simple in practice. Drawing a salary based on your minimum monthly income creates a safety buffer and brings peace of mind, which allows you to focus on more important things, like your business. May you have a prosperous and happy new year.

Warm regards,  
Pat Criscito, NRWA Treasurer

## What's Happening in Region Four?

By [Travis Wilson](#)  
Rochester, MN

*Representative for Region Four: States of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.*



The holiday season is upon us! Sleigh bells jingling, hung stockings, caroling carolers, and Minnesota is covered in...brown? I can't speak for the other areas of my "fregion," but the lack of precipitation up here in the north has been remarkable. Being a warm-weather guy, I'm not too upset about the lack of the white stuff, but I wouldn't be opposed to a white Christmas. Wherever you are, I hope that you're in the spirit of the season!

This will be my last *The NRWA Connection* update as the Region Four representative, and I want to thank The NRWA board and the members of my region for making the experience so memorable. I also want to congratulate and welcome Michelle Penn-Swanson as the new Region Four representative!

And now...the news!

Connie Hauer of CareerPro Services, LLC, Sartell, MN, was invited to participate on a panel at a local university to discuss résumé and interview strategies to business students. She was also asked to be a guest speaker at a local community college and

talked to a sales and management class on the importance of networking. Connie also continues to facilitate a monthly networking group for job seekers. Way to go, Connie!

Mary Jo King of Alliance Writing Service, Racine, WI, will be volunteering in the REAL School charter program effort to help young people launch the careers of their dreams. She will once again be helping out with the *Journal Times* virtual career fair, providing website content for participating job seekers and answering individual inquiries about career documents and processes. She is delighted to bring notes from The NRWA Conference to the fair, as well. Finally, she was elected vice president of her business networking group. Congratulations on your accomplishments and thank you for your service, Jo!

Murray Mann of Global Diversity Solutions Group LLC and MulticulturalResumes.com, Chicago, IL, was voted Best Latin@ Business Blogger by Latinos in Social Media (LATISM) for Latinos@Work Blog and Latinos@Work Twitter.

Michelle Penn-Swanson of Résumé Results, Edwardsville, IL, shared that she is excited about the opportunity to serve as the Region Four rep in 2012. She said, "I want to take this opportunity to thank Travis for his efforts over the last year. Until Travis reached out to me personally and took the time to learn about me and my business, I was only minimally involved with The NRWA. His efforts motivated me to really look into how much the organization offers: valuable resources, a vigorous certification program, training opportunities, a fantastic conference, and, most importantly, a network of professionals who are eager to share their time and expertise. I am taking advantage of all of those things, and my business has become much more rewarding. Thank you, Travis. I look forward to serving all of the Region Four members in 2012!"

Thanks for the kind words, Michelle! You are going to be a fantastic region rep!

Barb Poole of Hire Imaging, LLC, St Cloud, MN, is busy drumming up business and serving clients and is available for subcontract résumé writing, career coaching, and career writing. Thanks, Barb!

Steven Provenzano of Executive Career Services & DTP, Inc., Streamwood, IL, just released his 7th book, *Top-Secret Executive Résumés, Second Edition*, and will continue his volunteer work for the Willow Creek Career Support team, at their care center in Hoffman Estates. Nice work, Steven!

Charlotte Weeks of Weeks Career Services, Chicago, IL, presented "Five Strategies For Advancing Mid-Career" to the Association Forum of Chicagoland. She will also be leading a roundtable at their annual holiday meeting. Thanks, Charlotte, and thank you for your service to The NRWA!

## End-of-Year Savings



The NRWA archives of previously recorded teleseminars and webinars are rich with tools and information to help you advance your skills as a writer and successful businessperson. Throughout December, The NRWA is offering a \$10 member-only discount on each and every program recorded prior to January 1, 2011.

If you have been wishing you had more time (and money) to invest in your professional development but just couldn't seem to fit it in, this end-of-year savings is an opportunity you won't want to miss! Purchase and download as many pre-recorded programs as you like; listen to them now or save them to your computer and listen later (as many times as you like!).

Many of them will count toward your NCRW certification requirement.

And here is another incentive for taking advantage of this opportunity: Business-related teleseminar and webinar registration fees qualify as tax-deductible business expenses. Buy now and you may be able to write the cost off on your 2011 tax return!

Go to our website and select from the many valuable programs that are currently available for download.

Of course, you can still purchase and download all teleseminar/webinar recordings of programs that were presented in 2011, but you'll have to pay full price for these.

Here is a breakdown of your costs and potential savings for pre-recorded programs:

#### Teleseminars

Recorded after January 1, 2011: \$35 members, \$45 non-members

Recorded prior to January 1, 2011: member discounted price - \$25

#### Webinars

Recorded after January 1, 2011: \$45 members, \$55 non-members

Recorded prior to January 1, 2011: member discounted price - \$35

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### Feature Article

Turn the Calendar, Transform Your Approach  
By [Amanda Collins](#)

Traditionally, the week between Christmas and New Year is a down time. We're spending time away from work, enjoying family, and eating entirely too much food. But for those ambitious folks, this slower week can be a time of preparation to start 2012 on a high note and really get your business in the right gear.



While your phone isn't ringing off the hook, sit down with your books and track how you did in 2011. Figure out the answer to these vital questions:

- What is your ratio of inquiries to closed customers?
- What is the length of your sales cycle?

From the answers to these questions, you'll know how many inquiries you need to have to close the right number of clients, as well as how many you need to have in your pipeline for a steady income. With the average cost per transaction, you can extrapolate to your projected income in 2012 and make a solid growth goal.

What if you don't know how to access this information? Some people just don't think to take these great notes of when they receive inquiries, when those inquiries turn into clients, and how much money they spend. That's okay; now is the time to set up systems. Your system can be as simple as an Excel spreadsheet, as long as you keep track of things moving forward.

The more knowledge you have about your business, the better prepared you'll be. I recently met with a new business owner who sells mattresses. He said, "There are four million people in Phoenix; I just need to sell three mattresses each day." The problem is that he can't possibly reach four million people. And what if they all showed up at the same time? I suggested that, before he starts spending money

haphazardly, he should figure out who is target market is...and "anyone who needs a mattress" isn't it.

If you don't know who your target market is, you have a different place you need to start with your 2012 planning, but I'm going to assume you have that one nailed down at this point. So get out the computer and take advantage of this slower time to work on your business. You'll inevitably build excitement to get the new year started right.

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### Affiliate Spotlight



This week, we spotlight Preptel

Preptel is the first candidate-optimization service to provide online résumé optimization, interview guides, and other tools to career-development professionals, résumé writers, and coaches. Preptel's Resumeter service enables fast and easy customized résumés for each job, enabling career-development professionals to provide better résumés, expanded services to their clients, and an increased success rate. With an 80% hit rate, Resumeter makes online job searching effective and removes any effort in identifying keywords, résumé formatting issues, and job-specific tailoring. Try Preptel today at [www.preptel.com](http://www.preptel.com).

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To check out a complete listing of our Affiliate Partners or for more information on becoming an Affiliate, [click here](#).

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### One Quote of the Week

"One kind word can warm three winter months."  
~ Japanese Proverb

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Thanks for reading this issue of The NRWA Connection!

Sincerely,

The NRWA Board

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