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## *Crunching The Numbers*

By Mark Demaree, Vice President of Top Echelon Network

As the economy continues to rebound, 2003 was a positive year for many recruiters. It was also a positive year for us here at Top Echelon, and our annual statistics certainly prove that. What exactly do those statistics tell us? Many things.

The number of job orders we have in the Network is at the highest point since July of 2001. There are 48% more job orders than last year at this time. The number of searches being manually run in the Network is up over 14%. The number of Face-to-Face Interviews reported are up 19% from last year. The number of Completed Placements to date compared to last year is up 5%. After the Offers Accepted that were reported in 2003 come in, our Completed Placements will be 12% to 15% ahead of last year's Completed Placements. The number of recruiters logging in and using the system is up 6% from last year at this time. All of these numbers are positive and are pointing in the right direction, which is toward growth.

### **IT, Manufacturing on the rebound**

When looking at Network placements in certain disciplines during the past couple of years, most of them have remained steady. The one exception, of course, has been Information Technology, which accounted for 46% of Network placements in 1997. That number has dropped every year since '97, coming in at 17% for 2003. As might be expected, there is also a higher percentage of IT candidates on the Network (18.0%) than IT job orders (8.6%).

The IT slide has slowed down in recent quarters, however, and is actually showing signs of stopping altogether and maybe, just maybe, reversing itself. Network Member Sean Napoles of Career Brokers, Inc. in Plano, Tex. has been recruiting in the IT field since 1991. As a result, he's experienced the highs and lows of recruiting in that industry over the past 13 years. According to Napoles, the activity he's witnessed recently leads him to believe that the economy, and specifically the IT industry, is certainly on the rebound.

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"Starting with the third quarter of 2003, we haven't seen this many job orders since the pre-crash of 2001," said Napoles. "We specialize in high tech, so the world basically came to an end in 2001. But starting with the third quarter of 2003, we've seen a ton of job orders from Trading Partners coast to coast. So I would say that the economy is definitely picking up steam."

Manufacturing is another industry that was hit hard by the recession, although the percentage of placements in that discipline within the Network has actually increased slightly in recent years. Currently, Manufacturing accounts for 35.8% of all candidates in the Network. By contrast, only 15.3% of the job orders are related to Manufacturing. Jim Beelaert of Career Professionals, Inc. in Morristown, Tenn., works strictly in the Manufacturing industry, and has done so for the past 19 years. Career Professionals sends out a quarterly newsletter, and according to Beelaert, the mailing list at one time included 1,600 companies. There are far fewer companies on the list these days.

"It was shocking for us to see the closings and the consolidations," said Beelaert. "A lot of the market was eliminated, and we're talking about plants with between 100 and 400 employees. It's no wonder that employees are nervous."

But like Napoles, Beelaert witnessed a dramatic increase in activity during the last quarter of 2003. So much so that he is extremely optimistic about the industry's potential for 2004.

"A lot of companies are booming and starting to add people," he said. "We're optimistic. I would be very surprised if business isn't 40 percent better this year."

**Health Care: growing by leaps and bounds**

The one industry that doesn't have to worry about a recovery at all is the Health Care industry. That's because it's experienced remarkable growth in the face of the economic recession surrounding it. A glance at placements at Top Echelon Network during the past three years illustrates that fact. In

2001, the percentage of overall placements in the Network that were Health Care-related was just 2%. However, that number jumped to 11% in 2002 and 14% this past year. Not only that, more than a third of all current Top Echelon job orders (33.6%) are in Health Care. Conversely, only 6.8% of the Network candidates work in the Health Care industry.

Kimberly White of Professional Recruiting Partners in Chester, Va. specializes in the Medical industry, handling all facets of Allied Health. White has been extraordinarily busy this past year, to the point where the recession truly holds no meaning for her.



"The recession has not affected us at all," said White. "We doubled our profits in the year 2003. There's been a great demand. A lot of my facilities are expanding and there's been a lot of need."

After reviewing the data, we're encouraged about the prospects for the recruiting industry in 2004. We foresee a healthy, gradual growth, which will greatly benefit those recruiters who endured the recent recession and managed to stay in business. The reason for that is tied to the dotcom boom of the last decade. During that boom, the industry became glutted with recruiters trying to take advantage of the burgeoning market. However, when the dotcom bubble burst, the majority of those recruiters went out of business. Those that were left will now reap the benefits of a slowly improving and flourishing economy, one which will reward them for their patience, hard work, and determination without drawing the attention of others who may be tempted to once again jump head-long into the profession. In other words, as the economy improves and the industry grows, there will be fewer recruiters sharing in what will hopefully be an ever-widening demand for employment.

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### **Relationships: the key to Network success**

In terms of how placements are being made at Top Echelon, regular communication between Trading Partners within the Network, primarily over the telephone, is far and away the most prevalent method, accounting for 51% of Network placements in 2003. Placements resulting from Top Echelon's approximately 3,750 job posting sites increased from 17% in 2003 to 24%. In addition, the percentage of placements which were a direct result of recruiters searching Top Echelon's split databases jumped from 13% to 18% in one year's time. But once again, building a Core Group of reliable and dependable Trading Partners is the key to enjoying success within the Network. Not only that, for many Members it's been the key to surviving the recession and making it through the tough times. With a Core

Group of Trading Partners who rely upon one another on a consistent basis, the recruiters within that Core Group benefit from their relationships not only in good times, but in bad times, as well.

And it seems that throughout this past year, the Network has become closer. Members are developing stronger Core Groups. We're getting more calls from recruiters asking us to link them up with other recruiters who either work their niche or can provide them with a piece of the recruiting process that they might be lacking. Our goal this year is to help foster and promote these relationships. We want to continue "Raising the Bar" with the quality of Members we let into the Network, as well as with the service we provide. We are all excited about the coming year and the prospects that it holds for the recruiting industry. We wish you well and hope that you enjoy a very prosperous 2004.

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## *On The Lighter Side*

**A** Sales rep, an Administration clerk and their Manager are walking to lunch when they find an antique oil lamp. They rub it and a Genie comes out in a puff of smoke. The Genie says, "I usually only grant three wishes, so I'll give each of you just one."

"Me first! Me first!" says the admin clerk. "I want to be in the Bahamas, driving a speedboat, with out a care in the world." Poof! She's gone.

In astonishment, "Me next! Me next!" says the sales rep. "I want to be in Hawaii, relaxing on the beach with my personal masseuse, an endless supply of pina coladas and the love of my life." Poof! He's gone.

"OK, you're up," the Genie says to the manager. The manager says, "I want those two back in the office after lunch."

**Moral of the story:** Always let your boss have the first say.



### *Imagine Having A Newsletter For Your Company... Without Writing It Yourself!*

#### **A Special Offer For NAPS Members –**

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## *What Is SPAM?*

So just what 'is' SPAM? That depends on whom you talk to. Some radicals would insist that all e-mail with marketing content is SPAM. But you can get an approximation by defining what *is not* SPAM. An e-mail from your friend is not SPAM. An e-mail that you asked for is not SPAM. An e-mail from someone to whom you gave an open-ended invitation for them to send email to you, based on the quality of their content, is not SPAM – unless you have previously withdrawn that invitation. An email from a friend or associate of someone to whom you gave permission to send e-mail is SPAM – unless you gave them permission to send you e-mail as well. Obviously, an e-mail from someone you never communicated with previously, with marketing content, is definitely SPAM. It does not matter how many state statutes or unsubscribe links you provide. If they did not give you permission – or perhaps as importantly if they don't remember giving such permission – and you send them e-mail; you will get reported for SPAM.

***Wait a second.*** There's a big gray area here that we're missing. What if I tell a company that I want to hear from a number of companies about a particular topic, product, or industry? Why would I do this? This is one of the ways people are harnessing the 'power of SPAM.' I want to comparison shop, so I let the advertising come to me. This variety of bulk emailing to 'opt-in' lists is becoming very popular. Unfortunately, while it can be very effective, it can also be very risky to send mail to any addresses that have not been well-qualified.

Opt-in list providers are where 99% of the SPAM complaints come from. Opt-in lists are lists gathered by someone else for you, with contact info for people who have 'opted' to receive information. The quality of such lists varies quite a lot. The best way to protect yourself from being listed as a 'Spammer' is to build your own list.

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***"The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a person's determination."***

— Tommy Lasorda

***"Obstacles cannot crush me, every obstacle yields to stern resolve. He who is fixed to a star does not change his mind."***

— Leonardo da Vinci

## **NAPS Bulletin Board**

### ***Are You A Member?***

Are you reading this newsletter and not a member of the NAPS, but thinking about getting certified? Join as an individual member first, then sign up for the exam and save up just about enough money to pay for your first year's membership!

Visit our website at [www.recruitinglife.com/MemberServices/Individual.cfm](http://www.recruitinglife.com/MemberServices/Individual.cfm)

### ***Look For Privacy Policies***

If a web site asks you for personal information, like Mailing Address, E-mail Address, etc. be sure to look for a privacy policy statement on the site that explains what they will and/or will not do with your information. Privacy concerns are somewhat over-hyped in the media, but it's a good idea to know who you're giving your information to, and what will be done with it.

