



# Business. Connexions

**Leaders need to be optimists.  
Their vision is beyond the present.**

**Rudy Giuliani**

## Is Your Website Working?

### Tips for Evaluating Your Small Business Website

When was the last time you evaluated your website? Your website is a marketing tool, frequently the first



place prospective customers go to find out about you. Some things to consider when looking at your website:

**First Impressions:** Look at what people type in order to reach you. Is your URL easy to remember and easy to spell? Does the home page reflect your type of business? A day care center will have a different look than an architecture firm.

**Easy to Read:** Is your website uncluttered and easy for the average person to understand? Use bullet points whenever possible. Keep paragraphs short. Don't use odd fonts that may be hard to read.

**Tell Your Story:** Let readers know about your industry, your company and your products. Your ultimate goal is to sell your product or service. Make it easy for readers to find what they are looking for. If they can't find it quickly, they may leave the site.

**Branding:** Your website colors, design and overall impression should be consistent with other marketing materials. Put your logo on each page and be sure to include your contact information – company name, address, telephone and fax numbers and email address.

**Double-check for Errors:** Check your spelling and grammar. Verify your links work.

One way to be sure your website will work for potential customers is to use friends and family as a test group. Ask them to go online and review your website. Have them purchase an item to see if it's a fast, easy checkout experience.

A great website can be your company's best resource for growth. Make it user-friendly, informative and inviting for both new and returning customers.



## Business Affiliate Spotlight: STRIVE-New Haven

Pass by the office of STRIVE-New Haven, located at 746 Chapel St, just before 9:00 a.m. and you'll see a group of men and women entering the building. They are all professionally dressed and look like typical office workers. The difference? These men and women are job seekers enrolled in an intensive three-week training program at STRIVE-New Haven. "Our training program prepares people for employment," said STRIVE Executive Director Brian Roccapiore. "We want our participants to dress the same way they would for a day at work."

One of STRIVE's main goals is to assist job seekers who lack "soft" job skills. Their training program primarily focuses on:

- Computer literacy
- Life skills training
- Job readiness training
- Placement assistance

STRIVE began operations in New Haven in September 2000. Since then more than 1,000 men and women have graduated from the program and 77.8% have been placed in jobs. At STRIVE no one is turned away; but you'd better show up for training every day and on time. "We want people who understand the commitment of employment. You show up every day, on time," said Roccapiore. "When local employers hire one of our graduates, they know they are getting a reliable employee."

Funding for STRIVE comes from the State of Connecticut, Community Foundation for Greater



The STRIVE three-week training program includes classroom instruction.



Pictured, left to right, Sharon Newkirk, STRIVE Supportive Services Advocate and Brian Roccapiore, Executive Director of STRIVE New Haven. Sharon was instrumental in bringing Connex Credit Union's financial services to the clients at STRIVE. They are pictured in the "Career Gear" area at STRIVE. Graduates receive a suit with all the accessories to be prepared for job interviews.

New Haven, United Way and through other corporate and private donations.

The connection with Connex came from Roccapiore's fear that, "Clients would get hooked up with large banks and be charged exorbitant fees." When Sharon Newkirk, STRIVE's Supportive Services Advocate, first contacted Charlie Dammling, Director of Business Services at Connex, to see what Connex could do to help the clients at STRIVE, Dammling wasn't sure what to expect. Now after several presentations at STRIVE's Speakers' Days, Dammling is certain Connex is making a difference. "Many clients are starting a new life. They are looking for help with budgeting, saving and general financial guidance," said Dammling.

More than one-third of the clients sign up for Connex membership after hearing Dammling's presentation. Even STRIVE staff members have been so impressed with the services Connex offers that many have also become members.

Companies, schools and other non-profits can enjoy the no-cost benefit of Connex Credit Union membership. As Dammling has done with STRIVE, we can visit your place of business to provide information and answer questions about Connex membership. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call Dammling at 203-603-5774.

The Connex relationship with STRIVE is another way we are able to "Improve the Lives of our Members ... One Member at a Time."

For more information about STRIVE, visit their website, [www.strivenewhaven.com](http://www.strivenewhaven.com).

## Coming Soon!

# Small Business FinanceWorks™

Small Business FinanceWorks is a suite of online tools designed to meet the unique needs of small business owners.

- Easily pay employees, pay payroll taxes and file tax forms with Intuit Online Payroll. Get paid faster through Billing Manager.
- Expand your receivables options with Merchant Service.
- Have access to deposited funds faster through My Deposit.
- Protect and maintain your business through MyCorporation.

**Small Business FinanceWorks will simplify the way you manage your business finances.**

Watch for details in the next Business Connections and on our website, [www.connexcu.org](http://www.connexcu.org).



## Branch Locations

### Guilford

849 Boston Post Road

### Hamden

2100 Dixwell Avenue  
Hamden Plaza

### New Haven

227 Church Street, 1st Floor  
555 Long Wharf Drive, 1st Floor

### North Haven

412 Washington Avenue

### Orange

350 Boston Post Road

### Wallingford

970 North Colony Road

## Branch Hours

Monday–Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Thursday, 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.  
(except Long Wharf)

Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
(except Long Wharf)

Saturday Lobby: 9:00 a.m. to Noon  
Guilford, Hamden, North Haven, Orange,  
Church Street, Wallingford

Saturday Drive Up:  
8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. – Guilford,  
North Haven, Orange, Wallingford

## Holiday Closings

### Independence Day

Saturday, July 4, 2009

### Labor Day

Monday, September 7, 2009

If you are interested in having your business featured in our Business Spotlight article, please contact Anita Annunziato at 203-603-5722, aannunziato@connexcu.org.



203-603-5700 | 1-800-CR-UNION

www.connexcu.org



Federally Insured by NCUA  
up to \$250,000



Charlie Dammling  
Director of Business Development

## Ask the Expert

Send us your question! Our Business Services Staff will provide answers to your financial questions.

E-mail: [ask\\_the\\_expert@connexcu.org](mailto:ask_the_expert@connexcu.org)

Do not include personal information such as account number or Social Security number by e-mail.

Fax: 203-239-0447

Attention: Ask the Expert

Mail: Connex Credit Union

P.O. Box 477

North Haven, CT 06473

Attention: Ask the Expert

Dear Charlie,

**The current economy is hard on our employees as they worry about their jobs and their personal finances. Since we can't afford to give raises or bonuses right now, are there other ways we can recognize our employees' hard work?**

These are difficult times for both employers and employees. Most employees know that economic conditions make it difficult for employers to give raises or bonuses. Here are some simple tips to let employees know you appreciate their efforts:

- A direct "thank-you" for a job well done is always appreciated.
- Peer recognition – an employee of the month or an email to staff highlighting a great job by an employee.
- Reward the employee with an important task to let him know you recognize the value he brings to your organization.
- Create teams of your best employees to seek out new business opportunities. It will let employees know you respect their abilities.

- Use coffee or lunch breaks to meet informally with employees. These meetings will help discourage negative rumors.
- Make sure your employees know they are part of your company's future.
- Involve your company and staff in community efforts. "Blue Jean Days" (where staff members contribute to a cause and can wear blue jeans on a specific day), walkathons, etc. help your staff feel connected to the community and show unity within the company.

Your employees will also appreciate any additional benefits you can offer to them. You may think this will be expensive – but with Connex your employees can enjoy the benefits of credit union membership at no cost to you! We offer a full range of financial services with fees lower than most banks, online services to make banking easy, and seven conveniently located branches. If you'd like to discuss offering Connex membership to your employees, contact me at 203-603-5774.

Motivating your employees now, when the economy is in a down cycle, can help in the future when you're looking to grow.

## FREE Workshop Series from Connex

Connex is offering a series of FREE financial workshops, open to both members and non-members, addressing topics from "Online Services" to "Avoiding Financial Scams" and much more!



### Upcoming Workshops:

Thursday, July 9

**Women & Finance: The Key to a Financially Fit Life**

Tuesday, July 21

**Guide to Connex Credit Union Online Services**

Tuesday, August 18

**Preserving your Personal Information: How to Avoid Identity Theft**

Tuesday, September 22

**Scam or No Scam? Avoiding Financial Scams**

All workshops are held at our Hamden Branch, 2100 Dixwell Avenue at 5:30 p.m.

To register for an upcoming workshop or find other workshop topics, please call 1-800-CR-UNION or visit a Connex branch.

## Yes, I'd like more information.

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Company Location \_\_\_\_\_

We are currently affiliated with Connex and would like to set up an on-site visit.

We would like information about Business Accounts/VISA/Checking.

We would like to learn more about offering Connex Credit Union membership as an employee benefit.

Return via fax, **203-239-0447**, Attn: Charlie Dammling, or send to: Connex Credit Union, P.O. Box 477, North Haven, CT 06473, Attn: Charlie Dammling, or email: [cdammling@connexcu.org](mailto:cdammling@connexcu.org)