



# The Wellesley Townsman

COMMUNITY  
NEWSPAPER  
COMPANY

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2005

## Career help for the new graduate

By Barbara Lehmann  
TOWNSMAN STAFF

High expectations and poor preparation result in rejections for many of today's college graduates seeking to land their first job. Possibly the most "child-centered" generation in history, many of these young people assume they will immediately get well-paying, interesting jobs on the fast track to the top. Not only are their expectations unrealistic, they don't understand the basic skills required to get a foot in the door.

Hayden-Wilder, a new career counseling firm founded by Wellesley resident D.A. Hayden and Michael Wilder of Boston, hopes to reverse that trend by "helping college graduates successfully prospect for entry-level jobs." With more than 25 years in the marketing communications business, Hayden and Wilder have had extensive experience interviewing entry-level candidates.

In early 2005, approaching what he termed "the third trimester" of his professional life, Wilder asked himself, "What do I really want to do?" Over the course of his career in merchandising, promotion and strategic planning, he had enjoyed the interactions and opportunities to provide guidance to young people new to the marketing business. Wilder said it struck him then that "absolutely nobody was counseling them and, when they left college, they were pretty much left adrift."

Realizing there were few resources in the marketplace to help these college graduates, Wilder put his business ideas to paper, and in March 2005 showed his concept to D.A. Hayden, a business colleague in the marketing communications business. Hayden was equally taken with the business concept and the two decided to form a partnership to fill the void, a "classic situation of building a category that's never been done," said Hayden. Things moved quickly after that, and the business was legally and functionally operative by mid-August 2005.

The first stage in launching their new business was to get feedback from human resources

personnel in a number of businesses about the young people interviewing for jobs. The feedback was that "80 to 85 percent of young people are poorly prepared," said Wilder. It's too litigious for H.R. people to level with applicants about why they did poorly, said Wilder, so it becomes a "self-perpetuating failure, and finally young people give up and go home."

Today's students are different from earlier generations, said Hayden. Fewer and fewer are graduating in four years, instead interrupting their college time by traveling or taking time off; when they finally graduate, many are unsuccessful in finding jobs, and 57 percent of young adults between the ages of 24 and 28 already plan to move back home, according to Hayden.

"The misconception is that graduates are moving home because it's too expensive in the 'real' world," said Wilder. It's not more expensive, but "expectations are much higher today. There's a sense of entitlement of young people going into business - it's a sort of pandemic."

"One of our jobs is to manage their expectations about what is out in the market for them," said Hayden.

These college graduates, explained Hayden, also lack focus, don't prepare or research the companies they want to work for, and are careless with resumes and cover letters, failing to delete typos and grammatical errors. "There's [also] a prevalent feeling that is a person 'doesn't know what to do,' he doesn't do anything," Hayden said.

Another misconception, said Wilder, is that getting a great job is all about creating a good resume and sending it to large number of potential employers. The graduates are often shocked to get little or no responses from their resume-sending campaign. "The hardest thing to do is get an interview," said Hayden, and that's where their company may make a difference.

For \$3,000, each client is provided with an eight-session (90 minutes each) curriculum. The graduate develops job-searching skills through practice, videotaped interviews, feedback and ongoing counseling.



D.A. Hayden



Michael Wilder

Approximately three hours of homework are required after each session. Hayden added that they are "available to the client '24/7.'"

People are uncomfortable talking about themselves, especially young graduates, said Hayden. It's important that they have an "elevator speech" and that they know who they are and what they're all about. "People get hired because they're liked," said Wilder. "If you're universally despised, you're probably not going to get hired," no matter how good your credentials.

Since August, they've already had 11 clients. Two are in the process, two are in the beginning of the pipeline, two have jobs, one has an internship and the others are actively interviewing.

Friend networking and word-of-mouth have launched their business and they "have had tremendous reaction from the [local] colleges," Wilder said. Although the colleges cannot promote their firm publicly, the career counselors can do a referral for a struggling student. Their Boston location in Back Bay is ideal for the city's university base. They're also starting to get speaking engagements, another avenue to get the word out to the public.

"The hardest thing and the biggest challenge still is ... we're still wrestling with how to reach the parents," said Wilder. The parent is the one, added Hayden, who will endorse their business product. It's not the student coming to the parent asking for help, but pressure from the parent to the student to get assistance that leads them to career counseling.

"The conclusion we continually come to is that this is a real need out there," said Wilder. "We must first convince people of the severity of the problem before we can present ourselves as a solution."

*Hayden-Wilder is at 306 Dartmouth St., Boston, MA 02116. It can be reached by contacting 617-367-1412 or [www.haydenwilder.com](http://www.haydenwilder.com).*