

# While Big Biz is Making Layoffs, Small Businesses are Going Fishing

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Regardless of the economic climate, finding and retaining great employees is essential for a small business, even more so than for large companies. Most small businesses have limited resources and thus talent becomes one of the most important assets they have.

So the good news for 2009, according to a [press release by TriNet](#), is that two-thirds of small businesses will be looking to hire. This statistic almost perfectly mirrors a brief conversation I had with [Evan](#) the other day – that being, with the recent splash in the unemployment pool this year, there are undoubtedly top prospects available to help your company’s productivity and profitability moving into the New Year.

Looking at the projections going into 2009 might leave some skeptical, but small business hiring is up 3.3% in 2008, and 80% of respondents in the TriNet survey said they tried to hire this year. This is just point-in-hand that small businesses are able to run leaner than companies we see in the news on a daily basis.

So if you are a small business, here are a few benefits of recruiting in 2009:

1. With so many people in the job market, there are plenty of highly-motivated and qualified candidates available. This is a great opportunity to stock up on talent. And even if your business can’t afford to hire right now, when the markets are back up you will. It doesn’t hurt to have your foot in the door with exceptional candidates.
2. With the advent of social media and other free technologies, you won’t have to put much money into finding new talent. There are so many free, web-based systems (such as [Craigslist](#)) that will help you keep candidates on your radar even if you don’t have an open position. This could work especially well if you are an internet-based or tech company – fish where the fish are.
3. If your competitors have laid employees off or aren’t hiring with the future in mind, they will get off to a slower start when things turn around. Having talent that can move the needle on staff will save you time and money from recruiting costs later on.

4. With having so many people willing to talk about employment, this is a perfect opportunity to network.
5. In the search for candidates, you may run across people who are willing to work for little or nothing in efforts to gain experience (this especially applies to college students and recent graduates).
6. Put a good spin on the economic situation, and give your business a positive image. Clearly, if hiring isn't in line with your business plan, then don't. But after seeing so many public layoffs recently, bringing on new talent portrays a healthy brand.

I'll leave you with one more interesting [survey by Entrex](#) – 72 percent of CEOs in this survey have intentions to add employees in 2009, while none plan to decrease employment size. I realize there is a new survey every week and that everything can turn at the drop of a hat, but this is still a very positive barometer of small to mid-size businesses to bring with us into the New Year. As many of us feel around here, small businesses are going to be essential in getting our world back on track.