

DAILY NEWS

Queens job hunter Christopher Deignan lands grant for retraining class

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Christopher Deignan got positive news last week about a training grant that could help him switch careers.

Deignan, who lost his job in catalogue production in November 2008, is looking to move into nonprofit work. The Middle Village, Queens, resident was featured last Monday in Hire Me! - the Daily News' series about job-hunters.

The city-run Workforce 1 Career Center in Jamaica said yes to his request for a \$1,200 voucher for an advanced Web graphic design course at Compu21, a school in Flushing. He's an experienced designer of printed pages but a neophyte in Web design, which he needs to know better for job openings at nonprofits that want to improve their online presence.

"This will address a definite skills gap," said Deignan, 48, who also appeared on "Job Hunt," a series on NYC TV, which is partnering with The News in helping to put jobless New Yorkers back to work.

Deignan used The News' story to further his search. After adding the article to his Facebook profile, some Facebook friends promised to help hunt for job leads.

He also decided to alter his job-hunting strategies after hearing an expert on Brian Lehrer's WNYC radio show recommend informational interviews as an effective tactic.

There are several arts and cultural nonprofits Deignan plans to target for visits.

"It's about being proactive," he said.

If you've been looking for work for a long time, you need to revise your efforts, career coach Barbara Safani said.

Among her suggestions:

- Don't keep asking the same people for job leads. Broaden your network. And ask everyone you talk to about job-hunting, "Who else should I be talking to?"

- Court your contacts by asking, "What do you know about the industry I'm interested in?" instead of always saying, "Who's hiring?"

- Be sure your online job-hunter profiles have the right key words in them so they'll be found in computerized searches for candidates. The vocabulary in online job postings will clue you in to the right key words for your industry.

- Do volunteer projects that help you meet people who could boost your job search.

- Join professional organizations that could further your job search.