

# Business Services

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## The Big Picture



### To Retain the Best Employees, Leadership Matters

It doesn't require an MBA to understand the basic fiscal principle that retention is less costly than acquisition. We most often hear that principle applied to sales and marketing activity, but HR professionals will tell you that it may be even more relevant in the staffing context.

The current labor market is marked by intense recruitment competition for a shrinking talent pool.

## Service Spotlight

### Local Tournament Propels Young Entrepreneur to National Success

In classic "Shark Tank" fashion, Fort Collins entrepreneur Acacia Sack spotted a problem and had her own "there's got to be a better way" moment.



She saw young students tackling chapter books for the first time but struggling to track their progress during week-long assignments. Acacia observed bookmarks falling out of place and other pitfalls, so in 2014 she designed a better tracking method. Now her durable, color-coded bookmark system is popularly sold on Amazon.

Isn't that a thoughtful contribution by a teacher to aid young learners?

Sorry, wrong guess. In 2014, Acacia was a third-grader!

Acacia is just one of numerous success stories that have evolved from the Workforce Center's annual Young Entrepreneur Tournament (YET). YET invests in the training and mentorship of Larimer County youths 18 and younger. Each year, young entrepreneurs compete for prize money to help fund their business opportunities. According to YET Coordinator Andrew Minor, the event has enrolled more than 140 participants since 2008, with cash prizes being awarded since 2012 thanks to funding support from local sponsors.

"It's been so gratifying to see successful entrepreneurs 'pay it forward' with their time and money," said Minor. "These are business people who understand that YET isn't a charity. It's about investing in the future strength of our business economy."

Once again, YET is making sponsorship and mentorship opportunities available to area business leaders. To reach their \$10,000 funding goal, YET offers cash sponsorship packages ranging from Angel Sponsors at \$2,500 to Influencers at \$500. Just as important, said Minor, is the investment of wisdom in shaping the dreams of aspiring

Therefore, it makes good business sense for employers to focus on employee retention as a first priority.

We see evidence of progressive marketing methods being used on the talent acquisition side, but what about the internal brand communication focus?

For starters, many smart employers have recognized the value in building a purpose-driven workplace, cascading vision and mission throughout their organizations to earn greater buy-in and loyalty.

They also see that leadership matters most to employees. Leadership matters more than pay and benefits. Without question, pay and benefits are important lures in attracting talent. But once the “basic ante” of pay and benefits brings people to the workplace, transparent, inspiring leadership keeps them there.

That’s why our Elevate Leadership and Workforce Development program emphasizes the so-called soft skills of employee engagement and communication. Elevate courses are designed to help business leaders graduate their employees from “I have to go to work” to “I like to go to work.”

Our Business Services Team’s goal is to help the businesses and other organizations we serve to be “employers of choice.” We invite you to join us.

business leaders.

Be a part of YET. For more information, contact **Andrew Minor, YET Coordinator** at [aminor@larimer.org](mailto:aminor@larimer.org) or by phone at (970) 498-6083.

## Elevate Your Workforce

### Hope and Conflict – Should Your Business Goals Include Both?



On the surface, the concepts of hope and conflict would seem to be mutually exclusive. If anything, a healthy dose of hope may be an antidote for enduring a troubling conflict.

This month, and just five days apart, Elevate instructors will share insights that will leave you with fresh perspectives on how both concepts are beneficial to your workplace.

On February 10, Dr. Therese Lask of Colorado State University presents “**Hope at the Workplace**,” a discussion of how a seemingly ethereal concept has significant impact on cultural health and achievement of business goals.

“Hope is often seen as something we either have or lack, particularly in time of crisis,” said Lask. “But research shows that hope is a variable that impacts many aspects of our lives, including our work.” Her workshop will explore Hope Theory and how important the variable of hope is in our day to day work. In addition, participants will explore strategies to increase their level of hope in the workplace.

Five days later, in “**Why Your Success Depends on Creating MORE Conflict**,” Christopher Arnold of the Trebuchet Group advances the notion that a bit of conflict in the workplace can produce benefits – if it’s what Arnold describes as “healthy and productive conflict.”

According to Arnold, “It may be counter-intuitive, but today’s leaders have to create an environment where their teams can engage in healthy conflict around ideas, values, and outcomes to arrive at the best possible solutions sooner.”

In his February 15 workshop, Arnold explores ways of encouraging positive, healthy, and productive conflict—allowing organizations to achieve their fullest potential.

To enroll in these thought-provoking workshops, visit our **Elevate Workshops** now, as workshops have been filling quickly.



## Business Insights

### NoCoNet Networking Group Connects Employers to Professional Talent Pool



“If you want to catch fish, you have to fish where the fish are!”

That familiar sales and marketing maxim has stood the test of time for good reason. For talent recruiters, it answers the question “Where can I find my best chance for success?”

NoCoNet, northern Colorado’s premier professional networking group, is the answer to that question for area employers who are seeking the best available talent in a hotly competitive recruitment market. Recruiters are looking for talented candidates and for creative ways to find them. They’ve discovered an ideal sourcing solution in NoCoNet.

Founded in 2004, NoCoNet is an all-volunteer networking organization that builds and maintains pathways connecting its highly-skilled members with area employers, all free of charge to both members and employers. A few of the employer benefits offered by NoCoNet include:

- Job fairs twice annually that directly connect exhibitors with attending professionals.
- Speed interviews in a private room adjoining NoCoNet’s weekly meetings.
- Up-to-date job board and announcement of opportunities at the weekly meetings.

Again, all NoCoNet’s services are available at no charge to both members and employers.

The Spring NoCoNet Job Fair will be held April 24 at the site of its weekly Monday morning meetings, the Faith Evangelical Free Church at 3920 South Shields in Fort Collins. To be a part of this popular sourcing event, contact NoCoNet at [employerliaison@noconet.org](mailto:employerliaison@noconet.org) or visit their site at [www.noconet.org](http://www.noconet.org).

## Upcoming Events

### Upcoming Elevate Training Events

February 10

[Hope at the Workplace](#)-Fort Collins

February 15

[Succeed by Creating MORE Conflict](#)-Fort Collins

February 22

[Platinum Rules of Communication](#)-Fort Collins

**February 23**

[Managing Performance Issues](#)-Estes Park

**February 24**

[Multi-Generation Workforce Mgmt](#)-Fort Collins

**March 3**

[Engage Employees in Profit Growth](#)-Fort Collins

**March 22**

[Estes Park Job Fair](#)-Estes Park

**March 24**

[Become a Highly Successful Manager](#)-Fort Collins

**March 30**

[Front Range Community College Job Fair](#)-Fort Collins

## Our Strategic Partners



A proud partner of the  **americanjobcenter**® network

Larimer County Workforce Center is an equal opportunity agency and supports Veterans priority of service. Accommodations for persons with disabilities provided upon request.

(970) 498-6600

418 E. 4th Street  
Loveland, CO  
(970) 619-4650