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BUSINESS THIS WEEK

‘Success skills’ promoted as way to workplace leadership

Jason Kiesau will speak this month at The Burson Center about success skills as a way to prosper in the workplace.

Chamber to host seminar on interpersonal talent

BY WINSTON JONES
THE TIMES-GEORGIAN

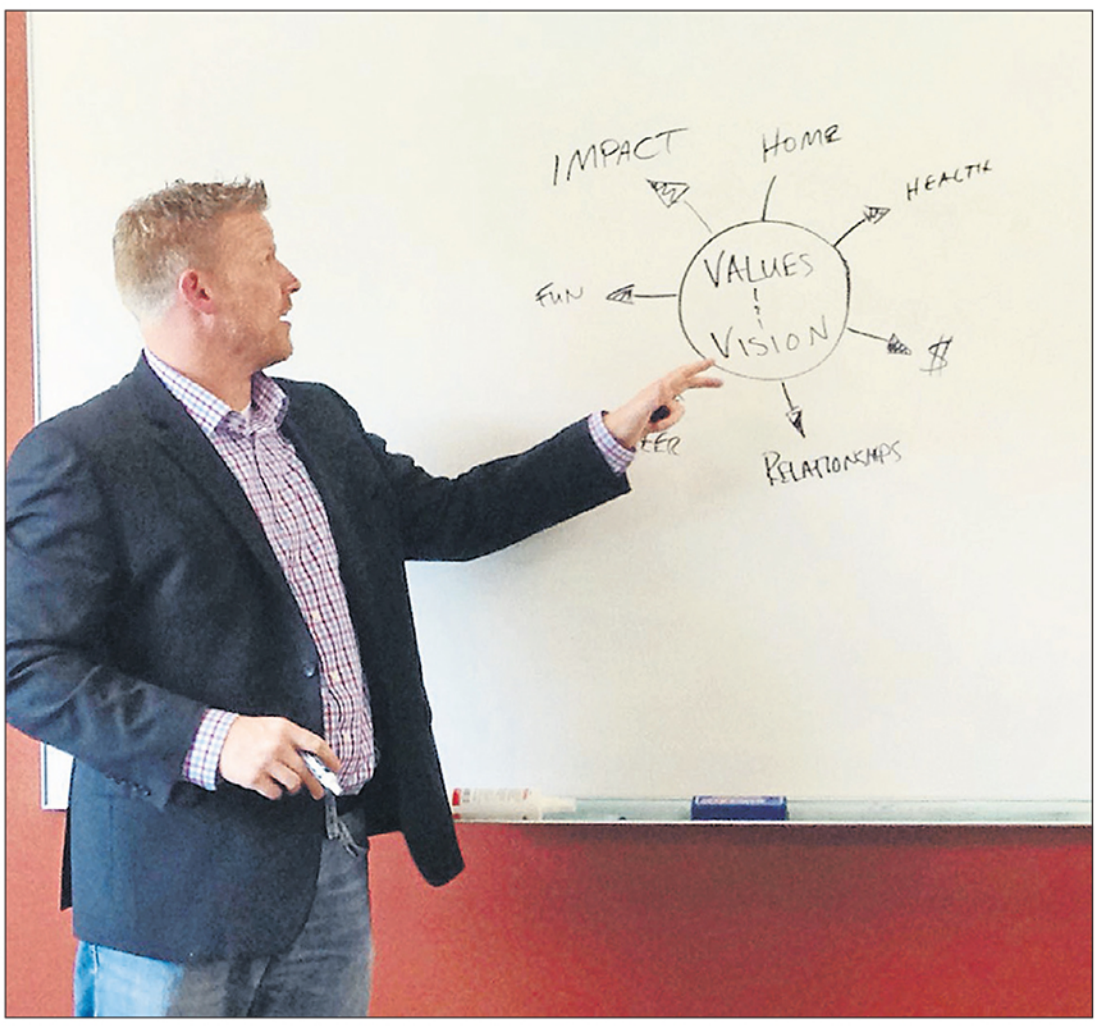
Carroll County Chamber of Commerce President Daniel Jackson said the term “soft skills” comes up in almost every discussion he has about workplace education.

“People always say it’s the non-textbook type stuff that’s most challenging,” he said. “It’s things like work ethic, working as a team and getting along with others.”

Jackson was told at a Georgia Department of Labor program two years ago that 69 percent of first hires lose their jobs because of the lack of soft skills. “They lose their jobs and often don’t know why. We’ve come to realize that we have to do a better job in this training. We, the community at large, need to do what we can to help young people understand what the business climate is like.”

One way the chamber is working on the problem is to present workshops, featuring well-known experts on the subject, for both employees and businesses.

One of these programs will be the seminar “Success Skills 1 and 2,” featuring Jason Kiesau, a Des Moines, Iowa, training and development manager and author. It is scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 16, from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at The Burson Center on Old Bremen Road in Carrollton. The $15 program fee includes lunch. Registration is available online at www.carrollga.org, or by calling 770-832-2446.



Jason Kiesau uses illustrations to show how workers can find success on their jobs by using their own individual skills.

Kiesau prefers to call the interpersonal skills “success skills” rather than “soft skills.”

“Only 11 percent of people fail because they aren’t good at what they do,” Kiesau said. “Most people fail to reach their potential because they lack two skills — self-management and building productive relationships.”

Kiesau was recently recognized by Business Record magazine in its “Forty Under 40” list of outstanding young professionals. He is author of “Unshakable Confidence: Get It and Keep It” and soon-to-be-released “Focused: Your Future Starts Now!”

The first step in developing success skills is to understand yourself, Kiesau said.

“People have to be able to know what their strengths are and build on them,” he said. “People grow up developing their own personalities, but they don’t understand themselves and aren’t proactive in understanding others.”

Kiesau said his workshops help people understand themselves on the highest level, knowing what their needs are and what drives them.

“My need in the world is validation and if I feel I’m not supported, my tension goes up,” he said. “Other people need information and find their tension going up if they don’t get it. Others want to get things done, and if things aren’t going at their pace, their tension goes up.”

Kiesau said it’s understanding all those intricacies about one’s self and others that’s needed to maximize our strengths. He said once people can do that, they can learn to value others and appreciate who they are.

Kiesau is currently training and development manager for Merit Senior Living in Des Moines, working with senior living communities nationwide to help them with leadership skills, service and workplace communications.

He previously worked with Merit as director of marketing and director of recruiting and employer services. He also has experience as a contract diversity trainer and business coach. Before joining Merit, Kiesau ran his own employee and leadership assessment business.

His volunteer experience includes serving as vice president of professional development for Young Professional Connection, Des Moines, from 2009-2010, and a board member of Variety Children’s Charity from 2010-2013.

Kiesau earned an AAS degree in visual communications from Brown College. He has a B.A. degree in organizational management and communications from Concordia University-St. Paul and an M.S. degree from Drake University in adult learning and organizational performance, with emphasis in leadership, training and development.

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U.S. jobless rate falls to 7-year low

BY CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — U.S. unemployment fell to a seven-year low of 5.1 percent last month, but hiring slowed — a mixed bag of news that offers few clues to whether the Federal Reserve will raise rock-bottom interest rates later this month.

The Labor Department report, issued Friday, was closely watched because it will be the last snapshot of the job market before the Fed meets in two weeks. And overall, it painted a picture of an economy growing at a modest but steady pace seven years after the Great Recession.

But it wasn’t the unambiguous signal many on Wall Street were hoping for.

The unemployment rate fell from 5.3 percent in July to its lowest point since 2008 and is now at a level Fed officials say is consistent with a healthy economy. But employers added a moderate 173,000 jobs in August, the fewest in five months.

“Anyone hoping today’s data would clear up the timing of the Fed’s first rate hike in years will be sorely disappointed,” said Megan Greene, chief economist at John Hancock Asset Management.

Nevertheless, the prospect of higher interest rates weighed heavy on the stock market Friday, with the Dow Jones industrial average plunging 272 points, or 1.7 percent.

Higher rates rise would most likely push up borrowing costs for mortgages and other loans for consumers and businesses, and some on Wall Street fear that could put a damper on corporate profits and the larger economy.

The Fed cut the short-term rate it controls to a record low of nearly zero in December 2008 to try to stimulate growth during the Great Recession.

For months, Fed officials have been saying the economy appears to be getting strong enough to tolerate the first increase in interest rates in a decade. They have signaled that they might raise rates at their Sept. 16-17 meeting.

Yet other factors have clouded those predictions lately.

For one thing, there are signs that China’s economy, the second largest in the world, is stumbling, which could drag down global growth. The slowdown has already caused violent swings in the financial markets that could undermine consumer confidence.

Friday’s report suggested to many economists that the U.S. job market, at least, has satisfied the Fed’s criteria.

“We’re well on our way to full employment if we aren’t already there,” said Carl Tannenbaum, chief economist at Northern Trust and a former Fed official.

Even the slip in hiring last month may not end up as bad as it looks. August’s jobs totals are typically revised much higher in later months, because of the difficulties in adjusting the data for the end of millions of summer jobs.

Also, consumer spending has been healthy and has been powering job growth at retailers, restaurants and hotels. State and local governments added 31,000 jobs in August, while health care gained 40,500.

Michael Kanter, president and co-owner of Cambridge Naturals, a health products store in Cambridge, Massachusetts, plans to add two workers to his 20-person staff to handle increased foot traffic and sales.

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