

Introduction

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Abstract

As we look at the job landscape, this paper investigates opportunities for NACM to promote the profession of Credit. From colleges to connecting with people that want a career change, NACM can connect professionals and the profession of credit. We explore several paths on “how” NACM can attract new or seasoned professionals. We also connect how NACM can attract more professionals to credit and add more members to NACM.

Keywords: [\[Click here to add keywords.\]](#)

Introduction

It was 2003; a recent college graduate sits in his parent's basement without a job. He had been desperately trying to find employment. He was looking for jobs associated with his major in Finance. He made good grades, had a finance internship during his studies, and had a stellar resume. However, he was coming up empty on jobs other than telemarketing that seemed like a last resort. The economy was ok, but tough for college graduates to find a job. He called his friend who had graduated six months before to see if there were any opportunities at his current employer. Sure enough, they had an opening. It was in commercial credit for a material supplier. He had no idea what Credit was, but he needed a job, and it sounded like it was related to finance. The rest was history. Fifteen years later, he is the Director of Credit at a 15-billion-dollar company. He looks back and thinks how he just stumbled into this career and the profession of credit. In college, he had no idea of the potential for an opportunity in the profession of Credit existed. Does this story sound familiar? It seems like many credit professionals have a similar story about how they stumbled into a career in Credit. The "Stumble Affect." A short survey was created with different questions regarding someone's experience coming into the world of credit and 100 responses were received.

Below is a breakdown of the survey results:

Age		Years in credit	
21-30	23%	Less than 5	20%
31-40	25%	6-10	13%
41-50	25%	11-15	18%
51-60	12%	16-20	16%
60+	15%	20+	33%

Our survey asked if a person's first job out of school was in credit. Out of our 100 responses, over 50% said Credit was not their first job. Still, while two-thirds of our surveyors had more than ten years of experience working in Credit, for the majority, it was not their first

career path. Additionally, 65% of those responses had at least two jobs before they got a job in Credit. Furthermore, 69% of the respondents had a 4-year college degree. What if these respondents knew what commercial credit was earlier in their careers and were aware of the opportunities that the profession presented? What if professionals were not stumbling into Credit but were actively seeking a career in Credit? We believe NACM is in a great place to answer these questions. NACM can lead the way in recruiting for the profession of Credit which will add value to its members, help provide careers to individuals, and add long-term value to NACM.

Make Credit Sexy

“Make Credit Sexy” to stay relevant. In order to do this, professional associations must rebrand, per the Harvard Business Review. Association membership is declining across the board. Too many times, professional associations make a small modification to appeal to new members, but all too often they miss the mark. As social media provides a comfortable and convenient way to connect, the forum of yester-years is all but gone. Moreover, to appeal to the Millennials, a rebrand can be used as a catalyst to reposition itself. NACM could present a bold vision for the future for Credit by providing an avenue to make the credit profession more relevant. Credit decisions cannot be an afterthought, and it is imperative that we keep energized individuals interested and passionate about our field.

How can NACM appeal to those still deciding what they want to do when they grow up? First, it can target younger students, whether in high school with organizations such as DECA and the National Honor’s Society, or colleges targeting business fraternities such as Beta Alpha Psi and Delta Sigma Pi. By partnering with these associations, we have a target audience:

students who are interested in the field of business. The benefits of the association need to be apparent, with the ability to earn professional certification, as well as earn college credit.

Motivated high school students are very focused on accelerated programs to get a jump start on college. By providing these individuals with an avenue for earning college credits, this would be a win-win for Credit. If NACM can target these audiences, we can enlarge the pool of prospective credit professionals.

Second, to entice individuals to join Credit as a career and join NACM, it is recommended that membership be free for new members in the above targets. NACM can target those users under the age of 25 with a simple ad campaign approach: “NACM membership is your resource for professional growth. Join NACM free of charge for one year.” This campaign would take away one barrier, which is the price. It would also create a better dynamic in relationship management with the NACM affiliates. Affiliates could host appropriate audience meetings to ensure applicability to the newer credit personnel. Making those meetings fun and educational will assure repeat attendance and future members. In the same vein, NACM affiliates could sponsor events. With association memberships declining across the board, NACM needs to position itself by taking immediate action to change that pattern. One step would be to set-up a quarterly incentive programs for affiliates to attract new membership. Options to satisfy that program would be to work with members to host social events where space would be available for at least five members to set-up a booth about their company and what jobs are available. The member with the highest level of participation could earn a free enrollment to Credit Congress. Substantive actions can be taken to keep the job pool flowing by promoting, educating and finding a way to make credit sexy by keeping it relevant and exciting.

Third, develop and foster internship programs in Credit. Internship programs are a mechanism that NACM could promote to their members. Through their connections, NACM could help target a broader audience, help advertise, and then pool candidate applications to the interested members in the area. In order to set-up a successful program, there needs to be a pool of interested members. NACM can reach out to all members to set-up a program and help assess the desired background, skill set, and expectation of the intern. Members need to provide a clear overview of what they are looking for and ensure that the internship includes real work assignments. Once the internship is over, an assessment of the experience from both the intern's perspective as well as the member's perspective should be taken. By targeting college-age interns, the credit profession will gain more awareness.

Finally, NACM can employ a variety of tactics by partnering with local universities' career service departments. The following tactics would educate students on Credit and help attract them to careers in Credit:

- Work directly with the career service office in the business schools
- Pinpoint specific curriculums such as risk management and insurance majors, to attract this sector
- Start an NACM club through the business schools
 - Reach out to similar clubs (ex. NABA- National Association of Black Accountants) to get ideas on how to form and target specific majors/students
 - Coordinate plans with faculty advisors and student leaders
- Establish the program with core schools as a pilot
- Offer career fairs a few times a year where NACM could set up a booth along with their local NACM club
- Provide Meet-the-Firm type programs, which would allow organizations to come in on a weekly or monthly basis to speak with career-oriented students

The end game would be companies being able to use NACM as a resource for hiring young graduates into their credit management programs.

Professional Recruitment – NACM¹

Through these collegiate initiatives, NACM can attract younger, less experienced professionals to Credit, but what about everyone else? There are plenty of professional and career-oriented people that are looking for a career change. According to an article from The Balance, people will change careers ten times in their working life. Yes, ten! Why can't the Credit Profession position itself as an alternative career for those people that want a career change?

First, NACM can partner with recruiting agencies. There are many benefits to using a trusted and reputable recruiting agency when a company is looking for the ideal candidate to fill an open position within their company. A trusted agency partner will have an established network of engaged, skilled professionals. By partnering with recruiters in local markets, NACM could be a leader in assisting its members in the search for ideal candidates to fill open Credit Management positions that another NACM member may have available in their industry.

Professional recruitment companies can save a company time by providing specialists in a particular field to canvas for the NACM member. The member would submit the job profile to the recruiter and the agency could do the rest. Professional recruitment agencies would be able to provide temporary or permanent solutions for staffing needs of our NACM members.

Additionally, NACM can utilize technology to attract people to Credit. Another excellent recruiting tool would be the LinkedIn Recruiter. This is an online option that in today's world, would be well utilized. LinkedIn Talent Solutions offers a streamlined, quick online process that makes finding the right candidate easier. LinkedIn provides the ability to expand the searches

beyond personal connections and gives the user access to over 500 million LinkedIn members, along with faster search possibilities using more than 20 smart and simple to use filters.

LinkedIn offers the ease of contacting any candidate via INmail. There are customized templates that enable the user to reach out to candidates quickly and efficiently, which provides a higher response rate than cold calling or cold email. LinkedIn also enables the user to create a Talent Pipeline Management file by allowing the user to build, track, and manage the candidate pool that they might consider hiring immediately or in the future. It offers tools such as reminders and “smart” to do lists to help better manage each scenario. You can streamline your workflow and include team activities, shared projects, application notes, profiles and much more.

This Linked Recruiter program is utilized by large corporations such as Sony and Walmart with great success. LinkedIn will empower the user to search for and hire the right candidate in less time than ever before, by advertising positions to large candidate pools. Imagine NACM utilizing a video about a career in Credit that included built-in links on the website that can link people to job postings or careers in credit. Aside from employment opportunities, this technology can be used to attract people to other resources like continuing education postings.

By researching and using these available tools, NACM can be an instrumental partner for its membership by providing the conduit through which professional credit management can grow, thrive and network across many industries. This type of partnership will undoubtedly increase the membership for NACM and put credit management and NACM in the forefront of the credit management industry.

Training.

If we were able to attract new people from college or other job markets to a career in Credit, what is the natural next step? Training! As Queen Elizabeth II stated, “It’s all to do with training: You can do a lot if you’re properly trained.” It is one thing to attract people to the profession of Credit, but it is another to give them the tools to be successful in Credit. While many companies take this task on to train new associates on how they do business, NACM can offer these companies a template on core competencies or fundamentals they can use to teach new associates in Credit. These templates can be tailored to individual companies. Also, the templates can be supplemented with educational resources from NACM.

Why would companies use NACM training templates for new employees? It could reduce the cost and time it takes to train a new associate and can lead to better retention.

According to an article by Chron:

“The cost to replace an employee vary by their earning level, so training costs also vary. The Sasha Corporation averaged the results of 15 studies that determined average costs to replace an \$8 per hour employee, determining an average cost of \$9,444.47 per turnover. Even when the 33 percent of estimates with the highest prices were removed from calculations, replacement costs were \$5,505.80 per turnover. Chartcourse estimates it costs \$40,000 on average to replace a nurse, while technology companies can run up replacement costs of more than \$125,000 per vacancy.”

With those types of costs in mind, NACM can find an opportunity to attract, train and grow membership with future credit professionals.

The Future

We have discussed at length how many people have stumbled into a career in credit. While we have highlighted an opportunity to improve on “The Stumble Affect” into a career in Credit, “The Stumble Affect” has still provided a constant amount of credit professionals. However, can the “The Stumble Affect” be reliable for the future? To answer this question, we need to examine the transforming workforce today and into the future. One critical item is a generational issue of Baby Boomers retiring today as well as in the near future. What demand and competition for talent are retiring Baby Boomers creating? According to a website called Manpower Group, 46% of employers in 2016 were having difficulty filling jobs. See charts 1 & 2:

Chart 1

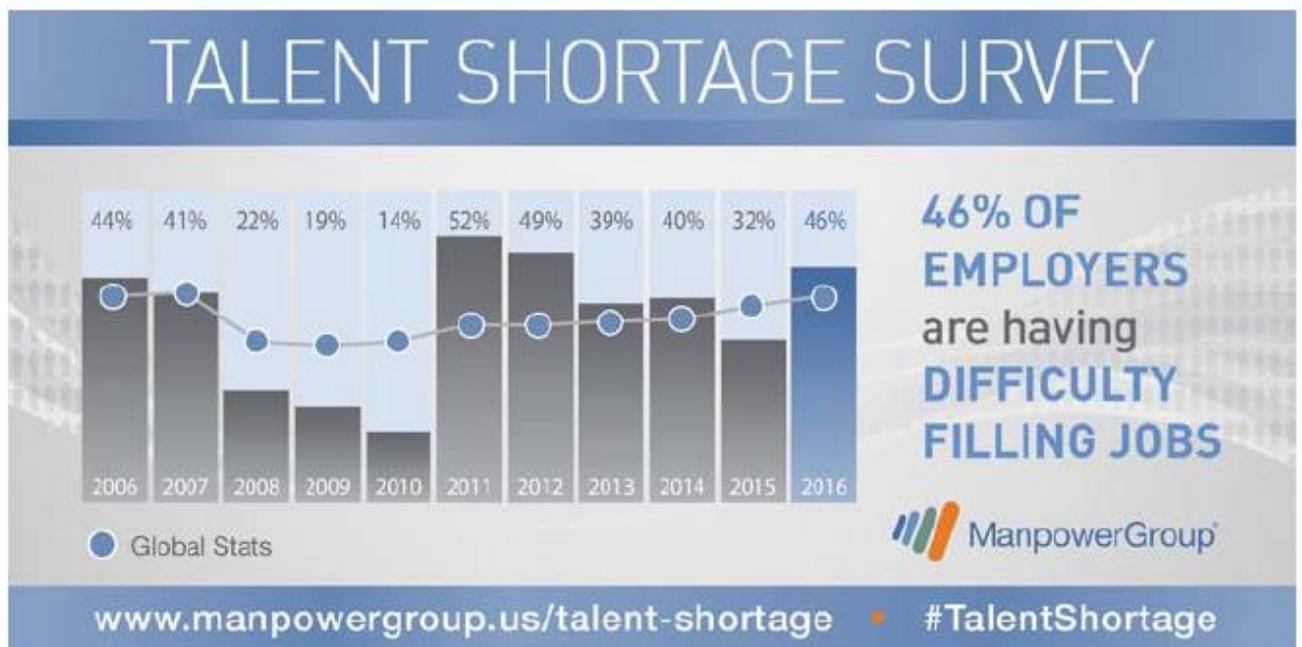
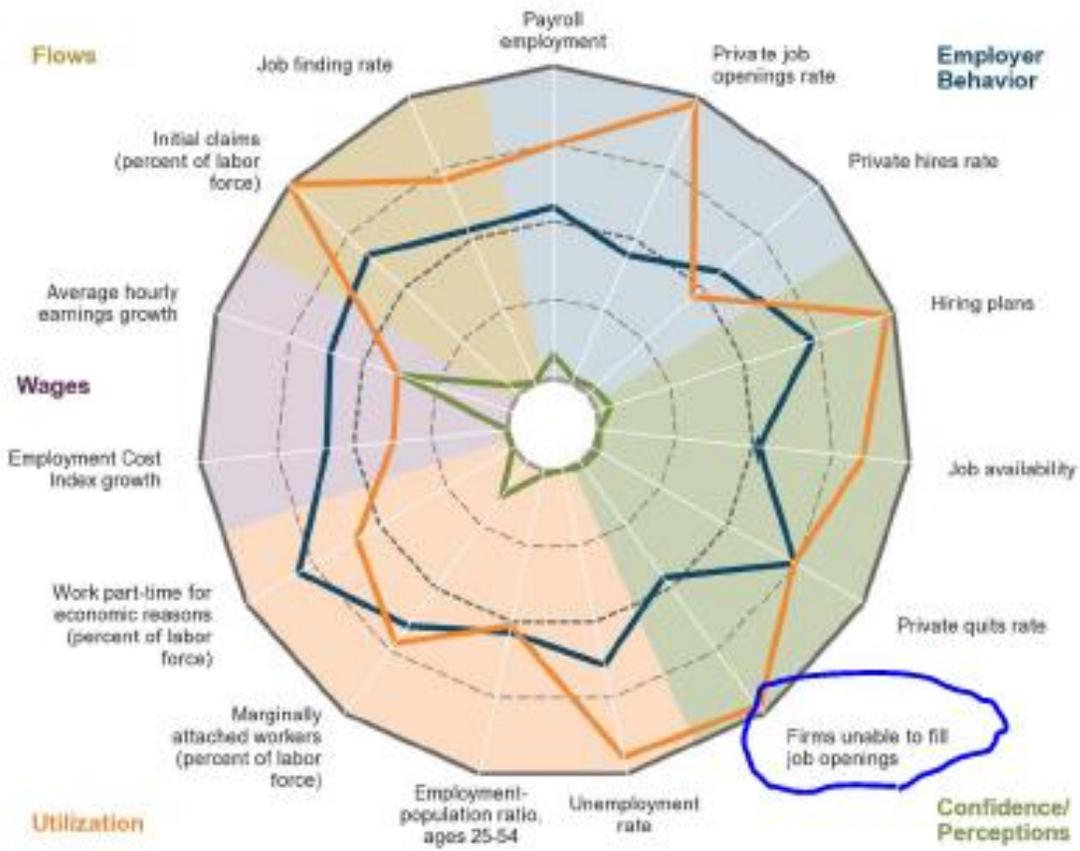
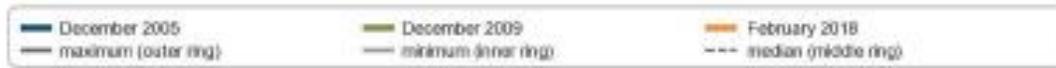


Chart 2:

U.S. Employment

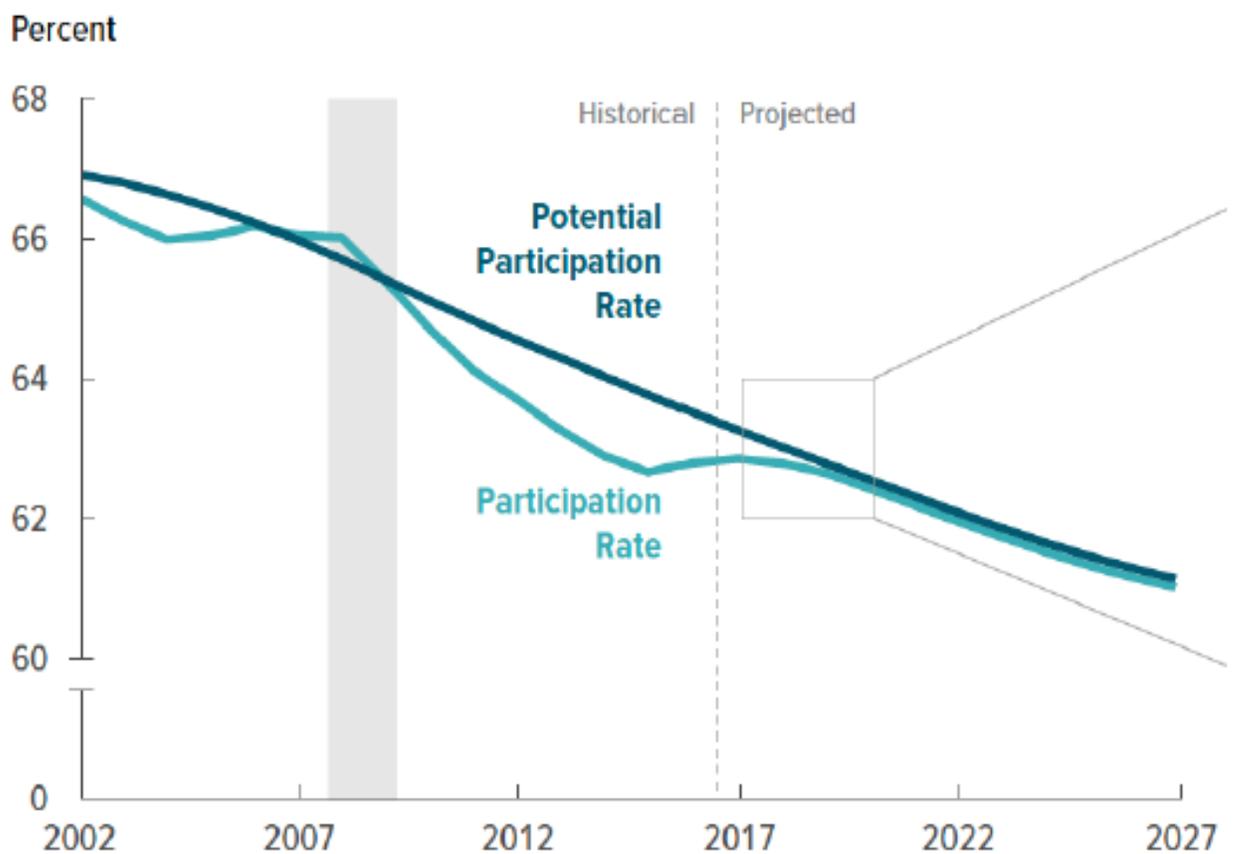
Labor Market Distributions Spider Chart

Data since March 1994



According to Professor Lundblad at the University of North Carolina, there is going to be a huge reduction in the participation of the US labor workforce in the future. See chart:

U.S. Labor Force Participation



Furthermore, Professor Lundblad connects to credit by showing that finance and accounting jobs will be the hardest to fill now and in the future. See list:

Talent Shortage

Hardest Jobs to Fill in 2016

1. Skilled Trades
 2. Drivers
 3. Sales Representatives
 4. Teachers
 5. Restaurant & Hotel Staff
 6. Accounting & Finance Staff
 7. Nurses
 8. Laborers
 9. Engineers
 10. Technicians
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The above statistics and charts show a compelling reason why we need to attract people to the Credit Profession. With the potential labor shortage expanding into the future, “The Stumble Affect” won’t be sufficient to capture talent, membership or quality decision makers that assist in extending credit in our economy.

In summary, we believe NACM has a tremendous opportunity to connect existing and future professionals to Credit. NACM has the opportunity to tap into multiple platforms and use their own membership to attract people into credit, with the potential to provide people with lifelong careers. How long we wait will show to be a competitive advantage or disadvantage for the profession of Credit.

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