

pinK-slip parTy

Hello, here's my namecard



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IT WAS touted as a "pink-slip party" — for those who had been handed the dreaded re-trenchment letter — to meet potential recruiters.

But as it turned out, some 150 of the 200 attending yesterday's social networking event organised by local recruitment magazine Headhunt, were still drawing regular pay cheques.

So what were they doing at Harry's bar at the Esplanade?

The fear of losing their current jobs drove them to the gathering, according to statistics gathered by RJ Media, Headhunt's publisher.

Most of the participants, who averaged 41 years of age and are in senior managerial positions across all sectors, cited uncertainties in their present jobs and the desire to seek new opportunities for attending the event, which levied a \$15 fee.

"It's always good to be proactive (in seeking new jobs) during such times. More bad news is on its way and you never know when you may be the next to go," said the head of a real estate investment department from a bank.

Another participant, an IT project manager in a multi-national corporation, relished the idea of giving out namecards to headhunters present and having them "key in your particulars into their databases". He added: "It's a good place to meet recruiters, you never know what opportunities you may get."

For those really in need of work like ex-banker Daniel Lim, the occasion was an "excellent" setting to source out prospective employers rather than going to regular job fairs. "Especially in my industry, they don't advertise through job fairs, it's always through word-of-mouth and networking," he said.

"It's imperative that people get out and meet others in

a casual setting. It's interesting that you can meet them all in one spot. The job may not come tomorrow, but at least you have left an impression and your name out there."

Of the 29 firms present, 27 were recruitment and head-hunting agencies, like Robert Walters and Chris-Allen Search. The other two were direct employers — a bank and a commodities trading firm, which declined to be named.

Recruiters at the event were full of praise, with most predicting that it would be a trend as the recession bites deeper, throwing more people out of work.

Besides Headhunt, another recruitment firm — online job portal Vawch.com — had previously held two such parties, with less than 90 and 45 people attending each session.

Given yesterday's response — about a 1,000 had applied to attend but most had to be turned away — recruiters foresee such parties as the way ahead for Singapore.

"It will be popular as long as the recession is around," said Mr Christopher Leong, a partner at Chris-Allen Search.

In fact, Headhunt is planning to hold another in the next few months. It will be more industry-specific, such as those catering to sectors like banking or IT, said Mr Jamie Yap, managing director of RJ Media.

1 more day to Harvey Norman

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LOCATION MAP

