

CareerTips

College Grads Face Toughest Job Crunch in Years

by Pam Wessel & Melissa Woodacre

By the time summer rolls around, young college graduates compete with literally millions of other job applicants, all frantic to find work within the limited job pool. These graduates not only compete against other new graduates, but also countless displaced workers who have lost their jobs in the struggling economy.



According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, companies expect to hire 22% fewer graduates in 2009; the first drop in 6 years. U.S. unemployment as a whole is at a 25 year high at 8.1%, with South Carolina holding the fastest growing unemployment rate at 11.6% which forces even more workers into the pool of applicants.

Because of these statistics more students are contemplating additional years in school to achieve a higher degree or moving home with Mom and Dad, a situation which strains all parties involved. Alternatives to these options do exist. Graduates, often with the help of a parent or career assessment program, are able to adjust their career plan and work towards gaining the vital skills and experience necessary for success.

To get a competitive edge many students turn to internships. These students are among the fortunate as employers drastically favor graduates with workplace experience. Pay is also up for internships by 5% while companies scramble to acquire the best young talent. However internship hiring is down 21%, making it difficult to secure that valuable position.

Internships are not the only way to gain necessary experience. Community work, volunteerism, and politics can showcase skills and talents which are valuable to most companies. In addition to gaining skills within the community, many students also take classes in public speaking, leadership, communication and business writing to gain skills which distinguish them from the other candidates.

Graduates must offer evidence of teamwork, communication skills and organizational skills when drafting their resume and brainstorming responses for interview questions. Communication and interpersonal skills beyond texting and email are necessary for the work environment, so it is important for graduates to practice face-to-face and verbal communication.



Graduates should also adjust expectations and plan to be flexible. Assessing the top 5 career choices instead of vying only for the “dream job” will give the graduate a better range of options and prevent him/her from considering other stepping-stone opportunities.

It's important to note that the average job length is 1.8 years and graduates can expect a total of 9 careers in their lifetime. Each job presents graduates with an opportunity to learn about work-life and personal characteristics and gain valuable experience which helps with their next step.

For many, all it takes to reach the next step is to know the “right” person. Networking through community programs, alumni associations, special interest groups, professors/teachers, and online networking helps many graduates make contacts who are often invaluable when finding a job.

Specifically for young people, PULSE or Professionals United for Leadership and Social Enrichment, offers networking events and seminars designed for those entering the workforce.



Structured programs such as CareerStart™ can help graduates take advantage of available resources and provide the knowledge needed to succeed in this troubled economy. CareerStart™ is specifically designed for college graduates and young career seekers and includes two powerful components: the course modules and individual coaching. The programs help a college graduate stand out from the pack and increase the likelihood of success. On the average, clients of Golden Career Strategies find jobs 50% faster than the typical search without assistance.

The CareerStart™ modules include: managing your career, personal assessments (targeting your career), creating your resume, interviewing skills, marketing/networking plan, and handling offers.

Perhaps most beneficial to a graduate's success is guidance. While parents are an invaluable source of encouragement and support, structured programs such as CareerStart™ can help graduates take advantage of available resources and provide the knowledge needed to succeed in this troubled economy.

Congratulations graduates and parents on this huge accomplishment and milestone!

Extraordinary Roundtables in June!

Participants looking to strengthen personal marketability, network and improve their chances to land a job should strongly consider making an appearance Monday mornings at 8:30 during the month of June. Golden Career Strategies hosts Roundtables at their office located at 33 Market Point Dr. in Greenville SC. These Roundtables are invaluable to those in transition or even those who simply wish to broaden their knowledge of the latest trends and tips.

June 1st - Lee Stogner will start the month off discussing New Carolina and its efforts to improve South Carolina's economy and job market. New Carolina works with partners to increase per capita

income and help South Carolina re-learn to compete. Join us on June 1st to hear about exciting new happenings within our state.

June 8th - Marketing yourself to employers is essential to landing the interview and finding an exciting career. Susan Cali is an expert at marketing yourself while in transition and will be presenting her lecture entitled "Brand You."

June 15th - Questions within a behavioral interview are typically more probing and specific than a traditional interview. Knowing the right ways to prepare and handle such an interview are keys to success. Myles Golden and Phil Cook will discuss techniques to help interviewees succeed during a behavioral interview.

June 22nd - If you know Myles at all, you'll have heard that 80% of jobs are found through networking or the art of building alliances and contacts. Myles has indeed made an art of this and offers his advice on networking and netweaving. By comparing and contrasting the two you're sure to learn new strategies which may help you meet that essential contact.

June 29th - Be there for an interactive session on the Collective Genius Theory. Participants will be encouraged to offer opinions and collaborate in order to better teach each other and demonstrate the benefits of working together.

Be sure to take advantage of this invaluable information and the wonderful networking opportunity! See you in June!

"Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself."
- George Bernard Shaw