

Introduction

Many parents will celebrate their child's graduation from college this year. However, most parents are concerned that their children will not have a better life than they did. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the U.S. ranked fourth worst among 29 developed countries for children obtaining a higher level of education than their parents. In fact, only 22% of those 24 to 34 years old achieved a higher level of education than their parents in the United States compared to an OECD average of 37%.

For many former college graduates, unemployment and underemployment continue to be a curse on their dreams and aspirations. Yet, this pressing problem has impacted many segments of our society and way of life. For example, adult children are returning home to their parents at record numbers. Sadly, overly-protective parents may stunt the maturation of their college graduates by destroying their independence as they return home. These miscues in understanding the financial climate and the hiring process of employers could jeopardize their future. This article examines the current economic crisis and how recent college graduates and parents can better position themselves for more employment opportunities.

The Economic Picture

According to several polls, including Harris and Career Builders' polls, employers expect to hire more college graduates based on feedback from more than 2,000 hiring managers and human resource professionals from various industries. In fact, 57% of employers plan to hire new college graduates which are up from last year (53%). Businesses and other organizations intend to hire graduates in percentages from these majors: computer/information (28%), engineering (18%), math/statistics (14%), health/clinical services (14%), communications technology (12%), engineering technologies (11%), liberal areas (10%), education (7%), science technologies (7%), and communications/journalism (7%). Consequently, in society, getting hired can be shown as the important effect on the demand for any particular college major. If there is no demand or interest for college major, students will have a difficult time in finding gainful employment.

Despite this positive prospect, many employers feel that most college graduates are not prepared for the workforce. According to a recent study, 24% of employers do not feel that recent graduates are prepared for positions in their companies. Sadly, employers do not have the time and patience to groom prospective graduates who are talented but lack experience or preparation for the workforce. Companies want prospective employees who are ready to work. Peter Cappelli, author of *Why Good People Can't Get Jobs*, explains that employers have shifted their expectations for prospective employees: "Employers do not have time to develop the new skills they need internally when dramatic changes in products and strategies happen so quickly." Regardless of where you stand on today's college students, it is clear that some intervention is necessary if they are to be successful in this environment. The following job strategies are offered to better assist this segment of the population:

- Evaluate your current online appearance so that your image makes a positive impression.
- Get an independent assessment on your resume and job strategies.

Job strategies for today's college grads

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- Develop a personal brand that will create an image of indispensability and uniqueness.
- Showcase your expertise on a variety of levels (blogs, media expert, etc.).
- Champion a significant cause in a nonprofit organization such as United Way.
- Consider volunteering in areas where you can build or enhance your expertise.
- Extend your network globally with social media platforms such as LinkedIn.com.
- Obtain special training or certifications to become more competitive.

Conclusion

With the ever increasing competition for limited job opportunities, college grads must understand today's hiring process. Additionally, parents can assist their recent grad by providing other non-traditional strategies for obtaining full employment. This article demonstrates the need for careful and deliberate job strategies in today's competitive environment for employability. Individuals can help themselves by becoming knowledgeable in all aspects of the employment process. The road may not be easy, but dedicated planning will pay off for recent college grads and their parents to find successful employment in the future.

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*About Daryl Green: Dr. Daryl Green has done extensive research on cultural issues impacting today and future leaders. He is an author of several books including *Breaking Organizational Ties: How to Have a More Fulfilled Life in Your Current Job*. For more information, you can contact him at www.darylgreen.org.*