

Job hopping an option for young people



Andrew

Boyink, 27, and girlfriend Renee Glowacki, 24, enjoy a dinner at Laurel Grill and Bar in Boston. (Aram Boghosian for The Boston Globe)

By Penelope Trunk

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Maybe the recession is here, but do you want to know what the top worry is among chief financial officers? Recruiting. That's right.

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu says the next 10 years will be an employee-driven market, because of a whole host of demographics issues, from boomers leaving the workforce to fewer Generation Yers being interested in corporate life. Its consulting group released a survey of firms this week that identified a shortage of skilled and talented workers as their greatest concern.

Young people are in such high demand right now that they start to look sort of savvy when sources such as MTV report only 17 percent of Generation Y is worried about the economy. Take Renee Glowacki. She has an entry level job in Boston, which can't be easy given the cost of living in the city, but she is optimistic things will get better for her.

She's at Patni Computer Systems, an IT company that does global outsourcing. Glowacki went to this firm because it's growing and creating opportunities for

employees. Certainly no recessionary situation. And she is making one of the most profound statements of economic optimism - spending money on expensive food. Yes, its Restaurant Week, so dining out is cheaper. But Glowacki's attitude that you live for now and figure things out as you go is typical of her generation, and understandable given they are relatively immune from a recession.

Young people will not have a problem finding jobs.

Some of you - those who read this with mouths wide open in disbelief - are saying that many industries are totally tanking and there is no way employers are hunting down young people like starving animals. But check out the National Association of Manufacturers campaign to recruit young people. The campaign is called "Dream it. Do it" and it cost \$70 million. Manufacturing is no exception: there's huge difficulty finding skilled young people for jobs.

Or how about real estate? Sure, your home prices are tanking, but many young people don't own homes. And in terms of jobs in the real estate sector, many real estate agents are older. Given this demographic reality, you don't need a great housing market to provide great career opportunities for young real estate agents.

So there's lots of chatter about how people can recession-proof their careers. But what should young people do, when their golden demographics make them recession proof already? Job hop, of course.

The best thing you can do early in your career is move around a lot so you can figure out what you're good at and what you like. If you compare people who job hop with people who don't, people who job hop build their network faster, build their skill set faster, and are more engaged in their work.

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That's right, before you start screaming about corporate loyalty, companies actually get more passionate work out of people who are in the first two years at a company than people who have been there a while and plan to stay longer. It makes sense: If you don't need to get another job anytime soon, then you don't need to perform well in the next six months. You can coast. Job hoppers don't coast or their resume will look bad.

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So, young people should take advantage of the fact that they are in high demand and make sure to leave a job as soon as their learning curve flattens. Older people -

especially those who have lived through terrible job markets, which includes everyone older than Gen Y - will tell you to be cautious and grateful. These are not inherently bad traits, but they are bad if they instill complacency in a job market that is not demanding that of you.

Some of you will find yourselves gunning for jobs in areas hit particularly hard by the recession. Investment banking, for example, used to be very difficult to break in to, and now, with cutbacks for summer interns, investment banking is insanely difficult to get into.

But so what? What are you going to do with that investment banking experience? Leave, probably. Because the hours are terrible and the work is totally inflexible and driven (at all hours of the day and night) by the client. So you will leave banking to do something that sustains your goals for family and friends. Why not just leave now? It's very competitive -no need to put up with that. Go to an equally interesting field that is not going to require you to take clients to strip clubs.

Tech is hot. Healthcare is hot. And you don't need to be a software developer or changer of bed pans. In fact, any tech company or healthcare company needs sales people and marketing people, and accountants, and all the other types of people who could, possibly, get stuck in an underperforming company, but clearly have the ability to change sectors without dumping their expertise.

So figure out what your skills are, what you love to do, what you're great at. Job hop until you are sure. Or as sure as someone can be at the beginning of his or her career. Then go to a sector that is booming, which is most sectors if you are blessed to be born to Gen Y.

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