



Targeting the Jobs of the Future

The time is not far off when you will be answering your television set and watching your telephone.

Raymond Smith, chairman and chief executive of the Bell Atlantic Corporation,
The New York Times, February 21, 1993

The Times Are Changing

Ten years from now, half the working population will be in jobs that do not exist today. Positions and industries will disappear almost completely—edged out by technological advances or new industries. When was the last time you saw a typewriter repairman? Or even a typewriter? There are few TV or radio repair jobs either. They have been replaced by new jobs.

Some industries retrench—or downsize—slowly and trick us into thinking they are solid and dependable. At the turn of the last century, there were thousands of piano manufacturers. A few still remain, but that industry was affected by new industries: movies, TV, radio, and other forms of home entertainment, most recently, the Internet, CD-ROMs, and video game systems.

In 1900, most people probably thought: “But we’ll *always* need pianos.” People today think the same way about the industries they are in.

Temporary Setbacks

Some industries and occupations ebb and flow with supply and demand. When there is a shortage in a well-paid field, such as nursing, engineering, or law, school enrollments increase,

creating an excess. Then people stop entering these fields, creating a shortage. So, sometimes it’s easy to get jobs, and sometimes it isn’t. The overall economy may also temporarily affect a field or industry. Real estate, for example, may suffer in a down economy and pick up in a strong one.

All our lives we are engaged in the process of accommodating ourselves to our surroundings; living is nothing else than this process of accommodation.

When we fail a little, we are stupid. When we flagrantly fail, we are mad. A life will be successful or not, according as the power of accommodation is equal to or unequal to the strain of fusing and adjusting internal and external chances.

Samuel Butler, *The Way of All Flesh*

Ahead of the Market

When the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, there was a rush of companies wanting to capitalize on the potential market in Eastern Europe. Given all they were reading in the papers, job hunters thought it would be a good market for them to explore as well. They were ahead of the market. It took a few years before the market caught up with the concept. Now many people are employed in Eastern Europe or in servicing that market.

The same may be true for the area that you are in or are trying to get into: The market may not be there because it has not yet developed.

Another growth area is new media." This is such a rapidly changing area that it is still hard to define. As of this writing, it can include cable stations, a number of which are devoted to home shopping; "imaging" of medical records and credit card receipts; supermarket scanners and other devices that promote items or record what you buy; multimedia use of the computer (sound, motion and, color instead of just text, which you now take for granted); virtual reality; interactive TV; telephone companies (with cable already going into every home); cell phones; CD-ROMs (compact disks containing "read-only memory"), which put materials such as games and encyclopedias on CDs; the increasingly important Internet; and gadgets such as personal data assistants and DVD and MP3 players.

And let's not forget biotech, health care, and related areas (gyms, nutritionists, physical fitness instructors). Americans now take it as their right that they should have anything that makes them healthier. Such industries make up a significant part of the GDP and are projected to grow strongly. Often, large corporations have divisions or areas in a division that are in these new media areas. You can find out your company's involvement by looking at its website, talking to HR managers, looking through a company directory, and finding the appropriate people who are knowledgeable on the company's operations. This could be an excellent opportunity to use your skills in a growing area, as well as learn new skills and make an exciting career move.

If you succeed in judging yourself rightly, then you are indeed a man of true wisdom.

Antoine de Saint Exupéry, *The Little Prince*

What about *Your* Industry or Profession?

Is your dream industry or field growing, permanently retrenching, or in a temporary decline because of supply and demand or other economic

conditions? If you are lucky, your employer is ahead of the market, and the industry will pick up later. Often, you can find out just by reading your organization's annual report and other information it gives out to the public.

Most people in permanently retrenching industries, including the leaders, incorrectly think the decline is temporary. You have to decide for yourself. You could perhaps gain insight and objectivity by researching what those outside your industry have to say.

It has been predicted that if things continue as they are going, there will soon be a great divide in America, with technologically and internationally aware workers making fine salaries, while the unaware and unskilled earn dramatically lower wages. (Even high-level executives can be unaware and unskilled and thus face reductions in their salaries as they become less useful.) If this does come to pass, the best a career coach can do is to encourage people to try to be on the winning side of that divide.

Today's workers need to forget jobs completely and look instead for work that needs doing—and then set themselves up as the best way to get that work done.

William Bridges, *JobShift:*

How to Prosper in a Workplace without Jobs

Retrenching Markets Are All Alike

When an industry retrenches, the results are predictable. A retrenching market, by definition, has more job hunters than jobs. The more that market retrenches, the worse it gets.

Those who want to stay in the field have increasingly longer searches as more people chase fewer jobs. They will also tend to stay less time in their new jobs, as companies in the retrenching industry continue to downsize or go out of business.

Profit margins get squeezed as companies compete for a slice of a shrinking pie. Those companies become less enjoyable to work for because

Launching the Right Career

there is less investment in training and development, research, internal communications, and the like. Of course, salaries are cut.

Many young people are enticed into glamor fields, regardless of the practicality, or into fields their parents or friends are in, regardless of the fit for them personally despite the projections for those fields. Yes, you should pursue your dreams, but check them out a little first.

Most people target only their current industries, fields or professions at the start of their search. They consider other targets only after they have difficulty getting another job in their present field. They would probably have found something faster if they had looked in other fields from the beginning.

Those in retrenching industries who also target new industries have a shorter search time.

**The new fields are new to everyone.
An outsider has a chance of
becoming an insider.**

One doesn't discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time.

André Gide

The Attributes of a High-Growth Industry

By definition, growth industries must hire from outside: They don't have enough people inside the industry. The new industry attracts new competitors—many of whom will fail—and there is a shakeout. But if the industry is still growing, those who got in early are the most knowledgeable and valuable and can command larger salaries. If the industry does *not* continue to grow, new entrants create a surplus of labor, and salaries decrease.

So long as the industry continues to grow, there is an open window: Those outside the industry can get in. As the industry stabilizes,

there will be plenty of experienced people, companies will want only those with direct experience, and the window will close.

HMOs, cellular technology, for-profit schools—and the Internet—were essentially nonexistent industries just 20 years ago.

Expanding Your Search Geographically; Targeting Small Companies

Studies show that more jobs are created in the suburbs than in major metropolitan areas, and there is greater job creation in the *new* suburbs than in the *old* suburbs. Oops! It's good to know the facts, because you can conduct your search accordingly. If you have been ignoring the suburbs, think about them.

Job growth has been in smaller companies. Large companies do most of the downsizing. **In New York City, for example, there are 193,000 companies. Only 270 of them employ 1,000 people or more.** James Brown, economist for the Department of Labor specializing in the New York City labor market, advised members of the mid-Manhattan Five O'Clock Club to look to the other 192,730 companies—those that employ fewer than 1,000 people.

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Samuel Butler,
The Way of All Flesh

Think about your geographic area, and think about the companies you are targeting. Most jobs hunters naturally think about the big companies that are in the news, but perhaps you should think about the new "hidden job market": the suburbs and companies with fewer than 1,000 employees.

For workers, there are dark spots, but the overall picture is still far brighter than commonly believed. Real wages are starting to turn up, after years of decline. The old factory jobs are disappearing, but new jobs in other industries are being generated at an unprecedented rate. Rather than becoming a nation of hamburger flippers, we are becoming a nation of schoolteachers, computer programmers, and health-care managers. About 11 million new jobs have been created since 1989, and of those, approximately two-thirds are managerial and professional positions. There is a tremendous surge in creativity and new opportunities, ranging from new forms of entertainment to cheap global communications.

Michael Mandel, *The High-Risk Society*

Bull Market for Labor Likely to Continue into the Foreseeable Future

Richard Bayer, an economist and the chief operating officer for The Five O'Clock Club, is optimistic. He notes that both the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Conference Board project labor shortages over the next 10 years.

Predictions are, of course, uncertain, and there could easily be a recession or two in this time frame, but the overall employment trend line remains strongly positive.

- The demand for labor will continue to grow. The supply of labor will barely be adequate to meet the demand.
- There will almost surely be pockets of "skills mismatch," in which some positions are very difficult to fill.

- Overall, the educational level required to function in this new economy will rise.
- Although workers will continue to be needed at all levels, the larger increases in employment are coming in the various managerial, professional, and skilled technical ranks. This goes against the myth that the new economy is producing mainly low-skill and low-wage jobs.
- The occupations with the greatest declines tend to be lower skilled and lower paid: garment workers, customer-service (those who answer 800 telephone calls), farmworkers, textile machine operators.

So, what might the implications of all this be for Five O'Clock Clubbers and others?

This is a great time to be alive and have a career! The efforts you put into your education, into career development, into networking, and into targeting a meaningful job have never had such a strong chance of bearing good fruit!

There is guidance for each of us, and by lowly listening, we shall hear the right word.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Getting More Sophisticated

Whether you are relatively new to the labor force or have been working a while, think past the obvious and think more deeply about the changes that are occurring.

Listed here are a few of the industries business experts project will grow in the near future. Try to discover other areas that may be affected by these or how your own job may be affected by growth in these areas. Each is huge and changing and can be better defined by your investigation through networking, as well as by Internet and library research.

- Health care, biotech, or anything having to do with either. Health care is considered a sure bet because of the aging population and the advances being made in medical technology.

Launching the Right Career

- Anything high-tech, or the high-tech aspect of whatever field or industry you are in.
- The international aspect of the field or industry you are considering.
- The environmental area; waste management.
- Safety and security (especially since the September 11th attack on America).
- Telecommunications, the new media, and global communications (movie studios, TV networks, cable companies, computer companies, consumer electronics companies, and publishers).
- Education in the broadest sense (as opposed to the traditional classroom), including computer-assisted instruction. (Researchers have found that illiterates learn to read better with computer-assisted instruction than they do in a classroom.)

Because all of us will have to keep up-to-date in more areas in order to do our jobs well, technology will play an important part in our continuing education. Further, with America lagging so far behind other countries educationally, both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors are working hard to revamp our educational system.

- Alternative means of distributing goods. Instead of retail stores, think not only about direct mail but also about purchasing by TV or the Internet.
- Anything serving the aging population, both products and services.

In studying the preceding list, think of how you can combine different industries to come up with areas to pursue. For example, combine the aging population with education, the aging population with telecommunications, or health care with education. The more you research, the more sophisticated your thoughts will get.

If you combine education with the new media, you will be thinking like many experts. Students in schools are learning from interactive multimedia presentations on computers—presentations as exciting as computer games and MTV

combined, and almost as up-to-date as the morning news (most textbooks are years out of date). Teachers will do what computers cannot do: facilitate the groups, encourage, reinforce learning.

A computer-based approach can be used to train and update the knowledge of America's workers: Employees can learn when they have the time and at their own pace, rather than leaving their jobs in large numbers to learn in a classroom situation.

When you read predictions that there will be huge growth in a certain industry—say, home health care workers, personal and home care aides, and medical assistants, medical secretaries, radiology technologists and technicians, and psychologists—you may think: "I don't want to be any of those." Think more creatively. Companies will have to spring up to supply and train those workers. (Some of the training could be done on multimedia.) People will be needed to manage the companies, regulate the care given, coach patients on how to select and manage such workers, and so on. If you read about the tremendous growth in the temporary help business, you *may* become a temporary worker yourself, or you could go to work running one of the temporary help companies.

Think about the field you are interested in and how it is being affected by technology. Virtually every job and industry—whether it is publishing, entertainment, manufacturing, or financial services—is being impacted by technology and by the global marketplace. If you are not aware, you will be blindsided.

The trouble with the future is that it usually arrives before we're ready for it.

Arnold H. Glasow

Some Areas Are Safer Bets

The rate of change is so fast that technologies you read about may never reach the mainstream or may be replaced with new developments. However,

some areas are safer bets than others. “Hard skills” are more marketable than “soft skills.” For example, a person who wants to get a job as a general writer will have more difficulty than someone who can bring more to the party—such as some specialization or computer skills.

When there is no vision, the people perish.

Old Testament, .Proverbs 29:18

Figure It Out

It’s your job to figure out how your dream industry or field is being affected by technology, global competition, and the market in general. Think where you fit into the future. Do research.

We are now on the ground floor of many industries, and it is an exciting time for those who choose to take advantage of the revolutionary changes that are taking place.

So, once again, remember the definition of job-hunting that The Five O’Clock Club developed:

Job-hunting in a changing economy means continuously becoming aware of market conditions inside as well as outside your present organization and learning more about what you have to offer.

A New Way of Thinking

Any assignment (or job) you get is a temporary one. You’re doing work, but you don’t have a permanent job. It’s like an actor who lands a part. He or she does not really know how long it may last. Furthermore, actors tend to worry about whether a role will typecast them and potentially cause them to lose future roles. Or they may intentionally decide to be typecast, hoping it will increase their chances going forward. Actors understand that they will most likely have to land another role after this one, and they constantly think about how a certain role will position them for the future. And so must you. Your next job is only a temporary assignment.

*Work today is not just doing;
it is, more than ever, thinking.*

Today’s corporation needs thinking, flexible, proactive workers. It wants creative problem solvers, workers smart and skilled enough to move with new technologies and with the ever-changing competitive environment.

It needs workers accustomed to collaborating with co-workers, to participating in quality circles, to dealing with people high and low. Communication skills and people skills have become parts of the necessary repertoire of the modern worker.

Hedrick Smith, *Rethinking America*