

BROADENING HORIZONS

By Jacquelyn Wonder & Priscilla Donovan

Pop quiz time: Which of the following industries will provide the greatest number of career opportunities for new college graduates in the 1990s? a. Fast foods. b. Health care services. c. Telecommunications. d. Convention planning.

If you chose telecommunications, you'd be wrong—along with 80% of more than 350 college students who were recently asked this question in a survey. The health services field offers the largest number of career options for new grads, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, followed by convention planning, with telecommunications and fast foods tied for third.

Most of us automatically fasten on telecommunications because we've read about satellite transmission and other exciting developments in that field. Yet industrial economists consider the career possibilities in hospital services even more diverse and challenging: designing disease-protecting uniforms for hospital personnel; selling highly flammable, bio-tech materials; developing marketing concepts that tout new hospital services; creating design strategies for cancer treatment centers; or producing time-released medicine dispensers set in attractive jewelry.

In the convention planning field, new graduates will landscape training centers and convention halls, design and produce banner materials and create joint marketing plans between airlines, hotels and trade associa-

tions. In the fast foods arena, they'll devise marketing slogans in foreign languages and make site selections in East Bloc nations.

The message here is that by limiting your career options to only those fields you already know about—through family, friends, TV or fellow students—you'll do your career a real disservice. Instead, your goal should be to remain flexible enough to identify new career opportunities as they emerge.

Company recruiters recognize the importance of flexibility. A survey of 20,000 personnel managers last year identified three leading "must haves" for new graduates entering the 21st century: computer skills, oral communications skills and flexibility.

To broaden your thinking about potential career options, think about your situation as a new grad as it relates to the larger situation—the job market. After exploring every applicable field, decide which ones best match your skills and interests.

Jon Thorne considered his situation carefully after graduating from the University of Wyoming. While serving time on the waiting lists of several medical schools, he investigated careers related to medicine that don't require an M.D. Even though he longed to be

a surgeon, he accepted a job with Ohmeda Labs in Englewood, Colo., producers of medical equipment. Thorne now installs medical instruments at hospitals—monitoring each one, getting ideas for improvement and redesign.

"I'm really on the cutting edge of surgery today," he says with a smile. "I watch the top surgeons in the country work with our instruments. Then I take their comments back to our engineers for refinement. It's financially and emotionally rewarding, yet I don't have the stress of actually performing surgery."

During this initial stage of discovery, explore all related fields with the notion that your skills, background, knowledge and interests will qualify you for many jobs—each with great potential.

Research shows that most people assume one of four personalities when processing change and trying to adapt to it. We call them the four R's:

Reasoners are analytical people who approach change thoughtfully. Past experience and thorough research form the basis of their attitudes and responses. They want to understand every possible implication of their decisions.

