

Smart Answers to Tough Questions

By Rainbow Rowell, *The Daily Nebraskan*, U. of Nebraska

In the immortal words of the mortal Bruce Hornsby, "It's time for you to find a job."

OK, Bruce never said that exactly. But if he could see you and your sad, sorry self sitting on that couch pouring your glory years into a Sega Genesis machine, he'd say it. He'd sing it, even. Playing the piano, too, all slumped over because he's tall.

Fortunately, you don't have to face the work world alone. We at *U. Magazine* are prepared to do whatever we can to help you find a job, except give you one. Here are answers to some of your toughest career questions:

How can I find a job within my field of study?

Broaden your definition of "field." Toys R Us middle management may not seem to jibe with your biology degree, but open your mind. They sell microscopes there and a doll that almost gives birth. Besides, aren't you tired of dissecting fetal pigs?

And you there, the French literature major. You never really believed someone would pay you to do that, did you?

When should I start planning my job search?

Seventh grade. Finding a job is tough. You need a head start.

But if you wasted your adolescence on hair spray and Wham! records, don't despair. It's never too late to build résumé fodder. Start by joining some

clubs, organizations and honorary societies, preferably ones with figurehead officers. We hear the Burger King Kids' Club needs a recording secretary and a historian. (Or purchase The Club at any fine discount department store.)

Are internships important?

Does the Pope wear a funny hat?

In a word, yes. In more than a word, internships allow you to test drive the career of your choice. How else will you discover you've spent the last three to 18 years preparing for a job you can't stand?

More than that, you'll learn to make the finest pot of coffee this side of the 42nd parallel.

Do you have any interview tips?

Rule No. 1: Just be yourself. Unless, of course, you're sloppy, lazy or otherwise undesirable, in which case, be someone else.

Be ready to humbly sell yourself, and if someone asks about your weak points, say, "Sometimes I just work too hard" or "Occasionally I forget if Fillmore was president before or after Garfield." Don't mention your deadline problem or admit to crying during AT&T commercials.



I graduate this semester, but I'm not ready for the real world. What should I do?

Don't worry. Those MTV people can't make you do anything without a signature. If you can't get out of it, grin, bear it and refuse to do anyone else's dishes. It only lasts one season, and who knows? Maybe someday you'll host *The Grind*.

I graduated last year and haven't found a job yet. How can I convince my parents I'm not a slacker?

You probably are a slacker. But if you're not ready to come out of the closet yet, convince your parents that you're staying home to spend more time with them. Say you feel the family's been drifting apart as of late. Say you realize their time on this earth is wasting away, and you want to be able to tell your children about their grandparents.

If they don't buy it, come clean. Tell them you want to watch more cable TV. ☺

U. Job Stats

In a few months, a million new slackers will be thrust into the job market. But coffee shop brilliance and political whining don't feed the dog or come with a carpeted office and a cool swivel chair. Is the job pool as bleak as it seems? Probably, but mull over these amazing facts anyway.

Number of bachelor's degrees awarded in 1990-91: 1,094,538

Percentage of 1990 college graduates who felt the work they did in their jobs did not require a college degree: 40

Number of hours at Hamburger U. it takes to become a McDonald's manager: 2,000

Percentage of college students who think college is adequately preparing them to succeed in the workplace: 26.3

How much Microsoft founder Bill Gates made after dropping out of Harvard U.: \$6.3 billion

Number of the following who have college degrees: Jann Wenner, Ted Turner, David Geffen, Larry King and Donna Karan: 0

Average U.S. citizen's per capita income in 1992: \$19,841

What a "vow of poverty" means for a Roman Catholic priest: \$9,000 a year

What a Rabbi earns in a year: \$38,000-\$90,000

Percentage of job openings that are never advertised: 75

Percentage of full-time faculty who say most of their students are "very bright": 8.9

Percentage of musicians who can look forward to working for religious organizations: 60

Percentage of students who have considered going to graduate school just to postpone the job hunt: 21.8

Number of college graduates who applied to work in the Peace Corps in the 1993 fiscal year: 9,948

Percentage of students who think a "great salary" is the most important thing in a first job: 8

Percentage of 1993 students who think they have a 100 percent chance of being employed when they graduate: 24.4

Number of résumés Sears, Roebuck & Co. received in 1993 for 95 executive training program positions: 20,000

Highest education attained by Peter Jennings: ninth grade • Sally Kuzemchak, *The Daily Collegian*, Pennsylvania State U.

Sources: *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, *Digest of Education Statistics*, *Seattle Times*, *Mastering (& succeeding with) The Job Hunt*, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

An Interview Stress Rehearsal



If you're not a senior, you're probably not worried about honing the old interview skills just yet, right? Well, what about landing that summer job or internship? The odds are you're going to be interviewed before you graduate. And in this nasty job market, a little rehearsal couldn't hurt. Here are some questions you might want to practice in front of the bathroom mirror:

- How would a close friend describe you?
- What do you consider to be your major weakness?
- What personal accomplishments are you most proud of?
- Describe your most rewarding college experience.
- Why should I hire you?
- What do you know about our company?
- If you were doing the hiring for this position, what qualities would you look for?
- What qualities do you prefer in a boss?
- What kinds of rewards are most satisfying to you?

Also, your interviewer will expect you to ask some questions of your own. A dumb question might make you look

bad, but not asking anything at all will make you look worse. Here are some questions that are pretty safe:

- What areas in the company most need improvement?
- What is the greatest challenge your organization faces during the next year?
- Do you consider me a qualified candidate for this job?

Most importantly, stay calm. Polish up your best dress shoes and forget that this job might mean the difference between a six-figure future and moving home with the folks. Buck up, little camper, there are jobs out there and you will find one.

Source: *Mastering (& succeeding with) The Job Hunt*