

## Some New Job Ideas

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A few job ideas that suggest new ways to look at employment.  
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This is not an article about new job ideas for those who simply want to do something different for a living. It is about changing our ideas about the meaning of employment. I was inspired to think about this by an article in Time Magazine in March of 2009. It suggested that as a culture we are largely done with our constant concern with real estate value and stock market investments, thanks to the current recession.

{bot\_wrgoogle}No more do people see their rising 401K value as a ticket to early retirement. Nor do they get to tap into their home equity (which has largely vanished) as a way to live beyond what their income allows. According to the article, we are turning towards giving the same attention and nurturing to our employment as we used to those previous sources of wealth.

In fact, the title of the piece was "Why Your Job is Your Most Valuable Asset." It was a bit misleading though, in that what was really pointed to as the valuable asset was not a person's job, but the skills that make jobs an option. That made more sense and got me thinking.

Will people begin to invest in and develop job skills the way they carefully invest in their retirement accounts. Will we start to talk about the "mental equity" we have in the form of experience and training and knowledge? Will enrollment in non-credit job-skill classes rise as workers try to bolster their qualifications for one or more types of work?

Maybe so. Now I personally think that the future will be one with fewer and fewer jobs as more and more people begin to work in their own businesses or as independent contractors. But there will be jobs, and some people will always prefer the consistency of pay and simplicity of working for others. So what can they do to make themselves more employable?

Specialization has its place. If you spend enough years doing computer programming, tax preparation or machine designing you'll have an edge on the competition in those fields. You might even be the only one in town who specializes in preparing tax returns for companies which are based locally but incorporated in other countries.

On the other hand, what if they actually simplify the tax code someday, putting half of the tax preparers in the country out of work? What if computers start programming themselves? Things change, and whole industries die. How would you have liked to be starting a career as a wagon wheel maker in 1905, just as cars started to become popular?

Here's a new job idea that solves this problem to some extent. It comes from a newspaper article I saw on a young man who was trying to work at 52 jobs in 52 weeks. That's the basic idea, by the way. Fresh out of high school or college, perhaps young people should work a few months at several different jobs, just to have the experience and skills for whatever the future brings.

To be more systematic about this, you might choose a couple jobs that are likely to be recession-proof, like being a cook or bar tender, and several that are in a growing area, like retirement home administration or medical fields. With a variety of job skills and experiences you should be able to find work in almost any kind of economy.

Of course you may have noticed that your resume alone doesn't always get you a job. In addition to skills and experiences in specific fields, you might want to develop the skills of getting hired. It may seem a radical suggestion, but what if you obtained and quit seven or eight jobs in a span of a couple months early in your working life? That - in addition to using the good advice in some of the books out there - might make you much more prepared to quickly get a new job if you should ever lose your existing one unexpectedly.

A Few More Job Ideas

- See yourself as a business, with your labor as your product. Think about how to make your customers happier and more likely to keep using your service.

- There are jobs that are meant to provide income, jobs that are meant to train you for a related business, jobs that are actually what you want to do in life, jobs meant to build a resume, and sometimes even jobs that are only about getting to know people who can be useful. Think about what kind of job you are looking for, or what elements each position considered has.

- The benefits that come with jobs are often possible without the job. Tally the true costs of buying your own benefits. Don't take a job that pays \$10,000 less each year just because it has health insurance and vacation pay that you can replace yourself for \$7,000. Do the math.

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