

2010 College Graduates to Face a Highly Competitive Job Market, but One That May Pay Better Than Last Year, Finds CareerBuilder's Annual Forecast

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CareerBuilder's Annual Job Forecast finds the overall job market for 2010 college graduates will remain highly competitive, but is showing some signs of improvement. The total number of employers planning to hire recent college graduates in 2010 - 44 percent - is relatively unchanged from 43 percent in 2009 and is down from a high of 79 percent in 2007. However, one-in-five employers (21 percent) who are hiring recent college graduates said they will hire more than they did last year. Sixteen percent also reported they will offer higher starting salaries than they did in 2009, an improvement from 11 percent in last year's survey. The survey was conducted from February 10 to March 2, 2010, among 2,778 hiring managers and human resource professionals.

Thirty percent of employers plan to offer recent college graduates starting salaries ranging between \$30,000 and \$40,000. An additional 19 percent will offer between \$40,000 and \$50,000, and 19 percent will offer \$50,000 or more. Thirty-three percent will offer less than \$30,000.

"Even though companies are gradually starting to hire again, the job market will still be challenging for college graduates this year," said Brent Rasmussen, President of CareerBuilder North America. "To take advantage of the opportunities that exist, it's important for recent graduates to start their search early, remain positive and keep an open mind. In addition, networking and showing relevant work experience - whether it is internships, class work or volunteering - can help make your application stand out."

Employers reported that the following activities qualify as pertinent work experience for recent college graduates to include on their resumes:

- Internships - 62 percent
- Part-time jobs in another area or field - 50 percent
- Volunteer work - 40 percent
- Class work - 31 percent
- Involvement in school organizations - 23 percent
- Involvement in managing activities for sororities and fraternities - 21 percent
- Participation in sports - 13 percent

While employers said that experience is one of the most influential factors in their decision to hire a recent college graduate, they also pointed to the following attributes:

- Good fit with company culture
- Comes in with good ideas and asks good questions
- Educational background
- Level of enthusiasm
- Comes to interview prepared, is knowledgeable about company

Rasmussen offers the following tips for recent college graduates searching for jobs:

Show relevant experience: Even if you don't have years of professional work experience, be sure to include other related experiences - like community involvement or campus activities - on your resume. Employers value a wide range of different experiences. Don't forget to draw a connection from these experiences to the position to show how your skills apply to the job.

Leverage social media: Use your familiarity with social media to help supplement your job search. Promote your personal brand, skills and strengths on different social networking sites like Facebook and Brightfuse.com so you can reach the widest and most diverse audience of networking contacts and potential employers. Remember to clean up any digital dirt to ensure you convey a professional image.

Be flexible: In a challenging job market, some recent college graduates may need to be open-minded in their

employment search. Look outside your immediate major, consider internships and temporary work and think about relocation to help land a position.

Use the job posting: To help your resume go to the top of the pile, incorporate keywords from the employer's job posting into your resume and cover letter as they relate to your skills and experience. You can check out entry level-job opportunities at sites like CareerRookie.com.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive© on behalf of CareerBuilder.com among 2,778 U.S. Hiring Managers and HR professionals (employed full-time; not self-employed; non government) ages 18 and over between February 10 and March 2, 2010 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset of U.S. Employees, based on their responses to certain questions). With a pure probability sample of 2,778 one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 1.86 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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