

It's How You Get From Nine to Five

HOW THE CHANGING NATURE OF WORK & JOBS WILL AFFECT YOU

By Dave Koss, UW-Parkside Alumnus

Entire Story:

<http://www.uwp.edu/news/newstemp.cfm?storyID=5922>

The year is 2040, your granddaughter looks up and asks, “What’s a job?” The word is currently a major part of our collective vocabulary. JOB, say it: J-O-B. We have songs about it, we love it, we hate it and most of us have it. However, the time is coming when jobs will have gone the way of the dinosaurs. But not to worry, work will remain, business will go on and you can still be successful. Work in the future won’t pay you for sick days, give you health insurance, or help you retire. In fact it won’t even give you an office to sit in. Work is changing, my friends, and being prepared with the proper skill set is the way to stay relevant—so you don’t go the way of the job.

BLAME IT ON THE (DARN) GOOGLE MACHINE! ...AND THE ECONOMY.

It all started the day Al Gore invented the Internet. What Al didn’t know then was how cheap he was making communication. As the price of connecting with others and transmitting ever-increasing amounts of data was decreasing, our ability to work, create and communicate at a more cost-efficient level went up. In fact, Thomas Malone of the Harvard Business School cites the reduced cost of communication as one of the most significant reasons work is changing. Couple that with huge corporate financial obligations like retiree pensions and employee healthcare, and companies are re-evaluating the entire employment structure.

Think about it this way, a company spends hundreds of thousands of dollars a year just to turn on the lights in a major office building, let alone maintain it. On top of that it pays on average \$15,000 a year in health care coverage per employee. Factor in retirement, bonuses, the holiday party and letting you leave three hours early on the Fridays before Memorial and Labor Day and things add up quickly. These are major costs companies are finding they do not need to incur.

“Decentralized” and “loose hierarchies” are words used to describe this new mentality. What it really means is companies are finding it cheaper to have you work from home or not give you a job at all and simply call you a contractor. No benefits, no retirement, just a check for your work...

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

The future of work is changing both financially and conceptually. Forward-thinking individuals will do well to adapt their skills

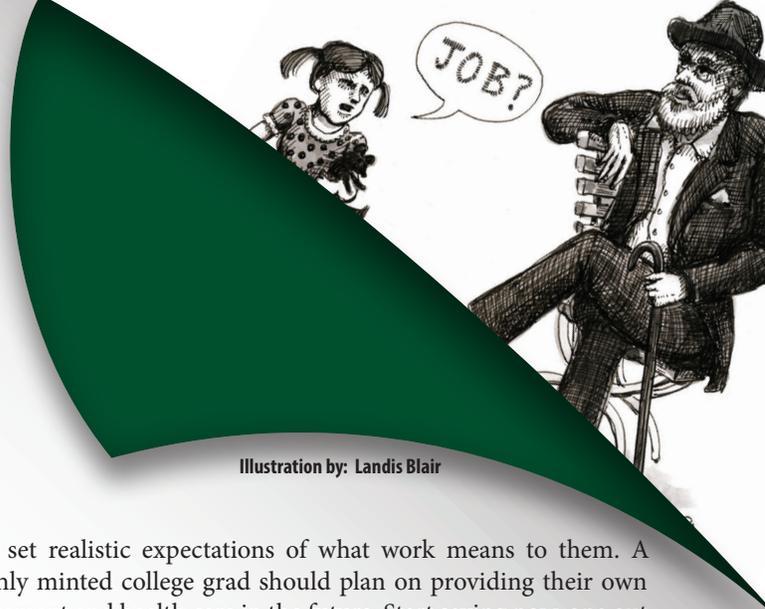


Illustration by: Landis Blair

and set realistic expectations of what work means to them. A freshly minted college grad should plan on providing their own retirement and health care in the future. Start saving now, one out of every three people under 35 does not have any personal savings. Prepare yourself financially, and don’t expect a company to help you.

Work is also changing conceptually. Problem solving, designing, programming, strong analytical and writing skills will be key to success in the future. We are moving to an eat-what-you-kill economy, where money will be made by accomplishing a project the quickest and you won’t be competing against people only in the immediate region, but the world. So when an 18-year-old in Brazil beats you to the project, rest assured the future is already here.

But wait! Step away from the ledge. There is good news. As a graduate of UW-Parkside you have earned the time-tested bachelor’s degree. Your liberal arts or sciences education has made you a well-rounded individual, capable of tackling a myriad of different projects. This will come in handy as you adapt to the changing work environment and start working for yourself instead of Jeffery Immelt. Now is the time to take that education, sharpen your skill set and go find the work, not the jobs. If you do, you will be miles ahead of the masses who will cling to the dinosaurs, I mean jobs.

It’s not a secret that how we get from nine to five is changing. But these changes don’t have to be negative. Using your degree to prepare and adapt will take you from surviving to thriving. So when 2040 rolls around and your granddaughter asks what a job is, you can tell her it was a relic of the past and something you did not need to be successful.

About the author: David Koss is a 2006 UW-Parkside graduate majoring in political science and history. From 2005–2006 he served as Parkside Student Body president between the terms of Chris Semenas and Tyson Fettes. He now owns an advertising agency with Tyson Fettes (Really Resourceful Group, www.reallyresourceful.com) and also works in politics in the northern suburbs of Chicago.

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