Advice for Workers of Every Age, at Every Stage

If you're at your first job or you're about to retire, you should always be thinking about where you are and what you want out of your job. With that in mind, Anthony Balderrama - CareerBuilder.com put together some suggestions for workers at every stage of their careers:

You're still in high school: Pick a job that doesn't interfere with school. First jobs can teach you about the value of work and earning a paycheck, but the real benefit is learning how to balance personal and work lives. At this age, you should be more focused on getting your education and a diploma than on climbing the corporate ladder. Show up on time and treat your boss with respect. It never hurts to have a good reference and a boss willing to have you back during your summer breaks.

You're still in college: If possible, find a job that relates to your major or your interests. Look for internships. They don't often pay well but they often count for course credit and always build your resume. Start job hunting a semester (or more) before graduation. If you start sending out resumes and networking ahead of your classmates, you might have a job lined up before you walk across that stage.

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You're at your first “grown-up” job: Learn from others. You're a sophisticated, likeable person with great ideas; you're also the newbie. Don't be afraid to speak up and contribute to the team, but remember that you have a lot to learn from colleagues and your boss. Look for a job that interests you, offers networking opportunities and, most importantly, lets you develop skills that will help you down the road. Don't burn your bridges. When you move on to a new job, do not e-mail your boss with a diatribe about what an incompetent fool she is or don't tell your colleague how sorry you feel for him because he's still stuck in that prison of a company. Peaceful partings can ensure you have good references and a good reputation. (This advice is good for everyone, regardless of age.)

You're in the middle of your career: Assess your life goals. For a second, forget about your career and think about what you want your life to be. This isn’t just about a work/life balance, but also an opportunity to see if your job situation helps you achieve the personal goals and lifestyle you want. At this stage, you are accruing experience and expertise in a field. Ask yourself what your resume would look like if you were to job hunt right now. What are your strongest skills? Where do you need improvement? What career opportunities would be available to you?

You can retire: Decide what you want your golden years to look like. Today, mature workers are taking different paths when it comes to their careers, and you can decide what works best for you. Some people are scaling back to part-time jobs with their current employers. They still get a paycheck and the company retains their expertise. Others are switching professions entirely and venturing into their dreams jobs now that they have the time and money to do so. Plan for the cost of health care, medicine, and other living expenses, none of which are cheap. Deciding what your future looks like should account for your nearly ideal situation.
Federal jobs are desirable because they provide:

1. **Opportunities to be a do-gooder:** No matter what job you choose as a federal employee, you will impact largest numbers of people and vast resources. And the ultimate aim of most federal jobs is to, in one way or another, better the world.

2. **Excellent Salaries:** Contrary to popular belief, federal salaries are not low. In fact, the salaries of most feds meet or beat those of their private sector counterparts.

3. **Terrific bennies:** Feds choose from the nation’s best health insurance, dental insurance long-term care, and life insurance programs.

4. **Unbeatable job security:** Feds are rarely laid off and it is much harder to fire federal employees than private sector employees.

5. **Quick advancement:** Most federal employees receive annual cost-of-living increases and the ongoing retirement wave is creating unprecedented opportunities to quickly climb the federal career ladder.

6. **Generous vacations:** Employees of the federal government enjoy 10 paid holidays and up to 26 days of vacation each year.

If you want to start a federal career, here’s how to find federal openings:

- **Regularly surf [www.USAJOBS.gov](http://www.USAJOBS.gov):** Every day, tens of thousands of openings are advertised on this website - the main website for federal jobs.

- **Check the career sections of agency websites:** Every federal agency has its own website, and every agency website has an employment section. A link to an A-to-Z directory of agency websites appears under “Government Agencies” at [www.firstgov.gov](http://www.firstgov.gov).

Source: [www.jobweb.com](http://www.jobweb.com)
5 Recession-Resistant Industries

Going into 2009, the following industries will likely see sustained, or even increasing, demand:

1. **Education** - Almost 3 million teachers will be needed to replace retiring educators in the next eight years. Teachers must be licensed in each state, so investigate accelerated teacher prep programs if this is an attractive option for you. Counselors, social workers, and administrators will also be in demand.

2. **Energy** - The demand for energy continues to rise and many oil industry workers are approaching retirement in the next 10 years. When crude oil prices dip, the pressure to fund and develop alternative renewable energy sources such as wind and solar power, eases, but the problem is not going to go away. The jobs on the front-end of the process, in research and development, will show most promise.

3. **Health Care** and Senior Services - Although the shortage of educators and internship sites has placed limits on expansion of educational preparation programs for nurses, physical and occupational therapists, the need for these trained employees is acute. Half of the fastest growing occupations on the Bureau of Labor Statistics list are in health care, particularly for jobs requiring 1-2 years of college.

4. **Security** - Cybercrime and homeland security are both areas of growth in this sector. Look at government positions in the Departments of Homeland Security and Defense, as well as the companies that support them, such as defense contractors. Additionally, the demand for law enforcement continues to rise.

5. **Government** - Nearly one third of the permanent full-time federal workforce, over a half million employees, is expected to retire or leave in the next five years.

Source: *Career Vision 2009*

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**Resume Tip of the Month...**

**Cover Letter Just as Important as Resume**

Your cover letter (or e-letter if your contact is online) is as important, if not more so, than your resume. Why? Because it’s the first thing an employer sees from you. If your cover letter doesn’t look professional or if there are misspelled words, grammatical errors, sentence fragments or other mistakes, you’re not making a very good first impression. And you know what they say about first impressions, don’t you? A cover letter isn’t a great work of literature. It’s a marketing tool. So don’t spend hours trying to come up with a clever “hook” to grab the reader’s attention. Keep it simple and direct.

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**Interview Tip of the Month...**

**Perform a One-Minute Miracle**

Job Fairs are not the only place job seekers look for employment. You might unexpectedly find yourself in a situation in which you have just a minute or two to ‘audition’ for a job. Be ready to provide the following information:

- Name
- Class (senior, junior)
- Major
- What type of job you’re looking for
- Relevant work experience
- Skills and strengths