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Where Have All The Jobs Gone?

By Jim Stavis

It seems that wherever you turn, sooner or later the topic of today's job market comes up. I clearly remember during the Obama campaign for the Presidency, increasing jobs was, well, "Job One." So what happened? It appears to have fallen in status to health care, the environment, Iran's nuclear program, etc. Yet from my perspective, either the lost job topic has diminished in importance, or we've all become used to it just as it is.

(continued inside)



Infant Job Openings

All jobs filled

- Baby Wanted** for feeding and changing - minimal crying - must have own pacifier
- Baby Wanted** - crawl on deep shag carpet - play on swings in exchange for hugs
- Baby Baby oh, Baby** - baby needed to inspire musical lyrics - union babies only!
- Baby to work on construction projects** - Must provide own Legos and hard hat

Application	
Name: BRYAN	
Age: 9 M ^o S	
Diaper Size: M	
Allergies: NO	
Hours Available: 7:00PM - 7:30 PM	
<i>[Signature]</i>	

Where Have All The Jobs Gone?

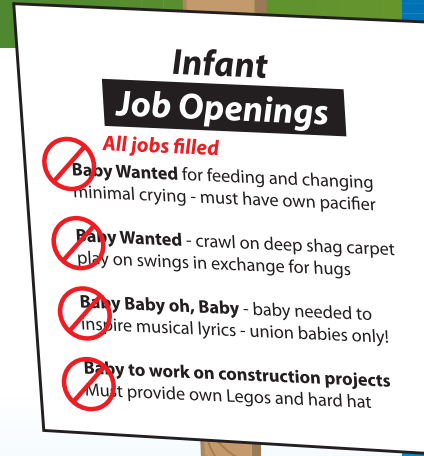
(continued from front)

I recently decided to go into the field to find out where all the jobs have gone. I quickly learned that “the field” is no “Field of Dreams.” It is more of a “minefield” filled with ex-employees laid off from the recession. Every company I visited listed their casualties. They had laid-off X percent of their workforce. They are waiting for the turnaround. They hope and pray that another round of lay-offs will not occur. Unfortunately, each company I visit is more depressing than the last. The conclusion I have come to is that, in many of these cases, the jobs have not only been lost, but will probably never be found. This is a startling reality—one that many have not come to grips with. Just ask the latest group of college grads what view they have of the once burgeoning job market. And many of them have student loans that must be repaid.

Experts predict that it will not be until 2012 that production levels recover to pre-recession levels with just a 2% gain next year and then improvements thereafter. This year's jaw-dropping 12% decline, on top of a dip of 3% in 2008, spells a contraction considerably worse than the recessions of 1980-1982 and 1974-1975. Most of today's college grads don't remember because they weren't born yet. Of the 2 million jobs lost since January 2008, only about two-thirds will return by 2013. As for the rest, largely in automotive and industries tied to autos or housing, including

textiles, plastics, fabricated metals, furniture, appliances, etc., the recession is simply the last squeeze in a long wringing out process. Relentless automation and globalization of labor-intensive industries began before the recession and will continue long after the recovery.

Since 1979, manufacturing has lost an average of 252,000 jobs a year, while overall production has risen by 2% a year. Typically, productivity leaps follow a recession as employers get more output from a reduced workforce. Ultimately, it is good for profits and eventually for wages, letting employers raise them without increasing prices. The decline in job layoffs is slowing, but job seekers still have a tough road ahead. Many have foolishly given up the hunt for employment. When people stop seeking employment, they are no longer considered unemployed so the jobless rate actually declines. This is happening right now. Unfortunately, the worst is still to come as businesses will not start hiring full-time employees until long after the economy turns the corner in 2010. The United States led the world into this recession and will have to lead the way out. I always pride myself on being an optimist, but in this matter, I must be a realist. Yet through all this uncertainty, I'm certain it will improve...eventually.



And Yet We Wonder

Joe was determined on this day to find a job. He set his alarm clock (Made in Japan) at the crack of dawn. While his coffeepot (Made in China) was percolating, he showered and shaved with his electric razor (Made in Hong Kong). Then, he put on a dress shirt (Made in Sri Lanka), designer jeans (Made in Singapore) and tennis shoes (Made in Korea). After cooking his breakfast in his new electric skillet (Made in India), he sat down with his calculator (Made in Mexico) to see how much he could spend today. After setting his watch (Made in Taiwan) to the radio (Made in India), he got into his car (Made in Germany), filled it with gas (from Saudi Arabia) and continued his search for a good-paying American job.

At the end of yet another discouraging day, Joe checked his computer (Made in Malaysia) to see if there was anything available online. Most the jobs he saw did not pay very well so he decided to take a break from this source of frustration. He put on his sandals (Made in Brazil), poured himself a beer (Made in Denmark), gathered some crackers and cheese (Made in France) and settled down to watch a game on his TV (Made in Indonesia). He just couldn't figure out why he couldn't find a good-paying job here in America...

