

## Hired! New Job, New State, New Start



May 29, 2009 - NEW YORK (CNNMoney.com) -- The 2.3 million college grads in the class of 2009 are finding that starting a career in the current economic climate will require some sacrifice.

While 73% of recent graduates worry about finding work after graduation, 50% say they have already changed or plan to change their career path, according to the State of the Student Survey released recently by DeVry University.

But putting long-term goals on hold and taking a "bridge job" don't have to derail a grad's ambitions.

Shalyn Pugh, 21, was living in Vancouver, Washington, and working as an Americorp volunteer during her last year of college at Washington State University. With a degree in public affairs and environmental science, Pugh planned on a career in environmental education and outreach.

"I was set to graduate early. I thought that was a good thing. Having worked as a research assistant and an Americorps volunteer in Clark County, just north of Portland, Oregon, I figured finding a job in the non-profit world would be a snap," she said.

But after 8 months of searching, Pugh didn't land a single interview.

"It was a stalemate," she said.

With no leads and news of her sister's pregnancy, Pugh decided it was time for a change. She moved to Bend, Oregon, to be closer to her sister and brother-in-law. That's when her brother-in-law told her about a position at his company, G5 Search Marketing.

Although the position as a Web QA specialist was a far cry from what Pugh had intended on doing, it was a full-time job with benefits -- and it was available.

"After a couple rounds, I was on the team," she said. Now, "here I am, three hours from where I was job hunting, in a different industry than I intended."

Pugh also discovered that she loves her new job testing formatting and design changes for G5 clients as well as her place in Bend, which she shares with her dog, Lulu.

Eventually she plans to resume her pursuit of a career in environmental law or science, but for the time being Pugh is learning about HTML coding, search engine optimization and how to build web pages.

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"I believe the skills I'm gaining now will be more than useful in the future regardless of the industry I'm working in," she says.

For now, her sights are set on the impending arrival of her niece or nephew, due any day.

Compromise is O.K.

For other job seekers trying to stay afloat in the worst job market in 25 years, our career experts agree that finding a job for the interim is a good idea, even if it is outside your desired industry and region.

"Do what you need to do to satisfy your needs today," said Gerry Crispin, co-owner of Careerxroads, a consulting firm based in New Jersey.

According to Ford Myers, president of Career Potential, LLC, a Pennsylvania-based career consulting firm, there are times when it is appropriate to get what he calls a "bridge job," when the opportunity you want may be out of reach.

"You've got to do something temporary until you can find the opportunity that you're really looking for," Myers said.

That's not always a bad thing. As in Pugh's case, sometimes trying different fields can uncover a new interest, or develop a valuable skill.

"It may seem like a detour," said Kathy Robinson, the founder of TurningPoint, a career consulting firm in greater Boston, but "she's learning a skill set that may apply to the environmental field down the road."

"The important thing is to never lose sight of your real career goals," Myers added.

To that end, Crispin recommends that job seekers stay connected to their career of choice by joining professional associations, tracking colleagues in that industry and building a network of contacts.

"If you can't meet your dream today, then decide what it is you can do without necessarily giving up your dream forever," Crispin said.

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By [Jessica Dickler](#), CNNMoney.com staff writer