

## Career Hunting: The Generation, Gender Gap

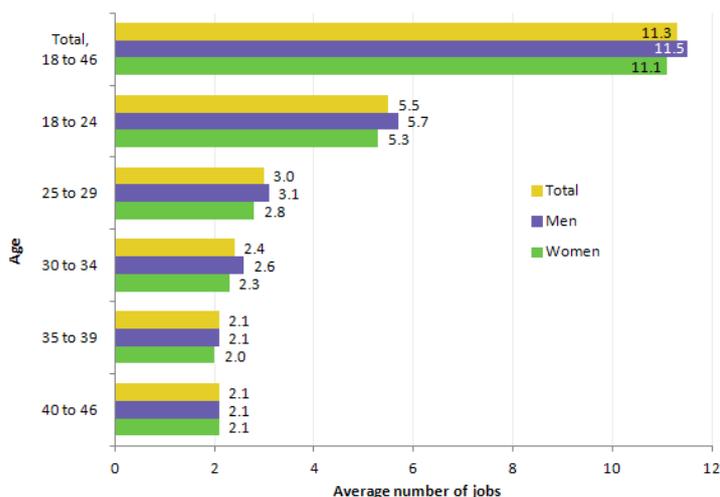
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### The Generation Gap

Flexibility, upward mobility, and work-life balance are some key aspects the current American generation seeks for in a career. Popular industries include technology, business, and health services. Particularly in the technology and business industries, globalization is kindling more overseas ties which affect how work relationships are being conducted in the US due to differences in location and time zones. For example, emailing and teleconferencing are vital to operations in many industries. All these factors that coincide with the change in the current generation's work landscape demand and allow for flexibility from both employees and managers. It also greatly affects the pursuit of gender equality.

In addition, job hopping has become the norm in the US. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, people in their early 50's held an average of 11 jobs from ages 18 to 46. Networking is the buzz word and the constant evolution of technology allows this to be done easier now than in the past. For example, social media platforms such as LinkedIn, are specifically created to help build one's professional network. A common phrase heard in college these days regarding advice to students looking for jobs is, "it's all about who you know".

Average number of jobs held for persons ages 18 to 46, by age and sex, 1978–2010



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

NOTE: Jobs that were held in more than one of the age categories were counted in each appropriate category, but only once in the total.

### The Breadwinner and Homemaker

In past generations, males tended to be viewed as 'breadwinners', meaning a main income earner of a family while females often fulfilled a domestic role as homemakers and were solely responsible for childrearing. This gender stereotype is gradually dissipating as more women feel and become empowered.

There is a saying, "you can't have your cake and eat it, too." Meaning, you can't do

both things; you must choose one or the other. In the case of females, this metaphor often referred to those two things as having a career and raising children. Today, the more common saying you hear is, “you can have your cake and eat it, too.” According to Forbes, the number of women in law school has gone from 4% in 1963 to 44% in 2012, and the number in medical school increased from 6% to 49%. Though there is momentum through this critical mass, there is still a lot more work needed to achieve gender equality in the US.

### **The Gender Difference**

The fact that more women are joining the workforce and achieving managerial and executive positions is encouraging women with careers to be the new standard. C-level female executives such as Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook who graduated from Harvard Business School and also wrote the book *Lean In*, serve as role models for more women to take control of their careers.

In the US, work-life balance is the key and both women and men seek it in their careers. However, women tend to seek more flexibility than men since the majority of responsibilities for childcare are still often laid upon women.

In my case, being in my mid-20's and looking forward to advancing my career in addition to one day raising a family, telecommuting in terms of flexibility is an important aspect I look for in a job.

The highest paying jobs for women are in health care, business and computer science, according to Forbes. Women in these fields can earn and are earning over \$100,000 a year. However, women are still recorded to earn just 82% of their male counterparts. Jobs in engineering and hard sciences are still dominated by males, while the majority of nursing and caretaker positions are held by females.

Regardless of all these existing inequalities, society is on the right track with more and more women feeling empowered to pursue both a career and raising a family in addition to a shift in consciousness at the workplace. Moreover, women empowerment is not just about women. It is about men, too. Because without men sharing responsibilities regarding house chores and child rearing, women cannot have the freedom or time to be able to become successful inside and outside the home. It takes both genders to be aware of each other's goals. Only through respect, compromise as well as increased understanding from employers and a change in the work environment, true gender equality can be achieved.