

# Op-Ed

## Students put computer skills to use in summer jobs



### Helpful tips for getting summer employment

The nation's positive economic picture is creating an increasing number and variety of opportunities for summer job seekers, including college students and teachers.

"But even with the favorable odds, students and others looking for summer work will have to use some resourcefulness and initiative to make the most of those opportunities," said Mitchell S. Fromstein, President and CEO of Manpower Inc., which expects to fill about 100,000 temporary job openings this summer.

Fromstein offered some tips for summer job seekers:

- 1. Be Persistent:** Don't be discouraged if you haven't lined up a summer job yet. Many firms haven't completed their hiring.
- 2. Explore All Potential Job Sources:** Newspaper ads are a good source of job leads, but not the only source. Ask relatives, teachers and friends; call major firms and inquire about openings; contact temporary help service firms; check with local government service offices.
- 3. Contact Your Former Employers:** Firms like to bring back former workers who understand how their business operates, and minimizing training requirements.

**4. Understand Your Marketable Skills:** Students often underestimate their skills. Consider your educational assets such as computer literacy, language, keyboard, research and communication experience. And remember that students are accustomed to learning new skills quickly.

**5. Look for Learning Opportunities:** Present yourself as someone eager to learn; you may land a job where you can develop skills in work processing, computer operation or general business practices.

**6. Have Proper Legal Identification:** This year, you must have a passport, Social Security card or pictured driver's license to prove citizenship under the Immigration Law. Lack of identification will delay your job search.

**7. Make Commitments and Keep Them:** Employers want assurance that you will hang in for the duration of a summer job, not disappear after a month. Replacing workers is costly and difficult for businesses. Leaving an employer in the lurch could destroy your valuable contacts.

Manpower Inc. annually provides employment to more than 700,000 people through its 1,400 offices worldwide.

Throughout the school year, students across the nation have become familiar — even comfortable — with computer equipment and software.

But this summer, they'll face the ultimate test: Can they translate those skills into workplace proficiency?

One employer that's confident is Manpower, the worldwide temporary help service. "Students are coming out of classrooms with basic computer literacy, and in some cases, quite a bit of computer knowledge," said Manpower President and CEO Mitchell S. Fromstein. "All they need is the opportunity to see how those skills fit into the working world."

With about 100,000 temporary assignments to fill from coast to coast this summer, Fromstein expects his company to hire a veritable army of students. "In summer jobs, students can combine their classroom learning with their desire to see for themselves how businesses operate," Fromstein said.

He also said, "Participating in that interaction is a valuable learning experience."

Despite the growing interest in computer literacy, Fromstein said students who lack those skills should not feel they will be shut out of the summer job market in today's economy. "Many students are looking forward to gaining office experience, but others will be looking to the industrial sector for temporary summer employment — and the jobs are there," Fromstein said.

"Line experience in the manufacturing environment is important for students who intend to build management careers in in-

dustry, and summer is a peak season for manufacturers looking to maintain productivity by using temporary help to fill the places of vacationing workers."

Traditionally, one problem facing students entering the workforce is a lack of understanding of their own skills. That problem has been licked, Fromstein said, by Ultradex, Manpower's state-of-the-art, comprehensive test of industrial skills. "Ultradex gives us the ability to identify our student workers' strongest skills and their desire to use those skills to make a high quality produce," he said.

"We can then match them with tasks they will enjoy and can do well."

At the same time, students who know they want to work in an office environment, but haven't had the opportunity to pick up computer skills during the school year, can use the summer to learn those skills — while holding down a job. Manpower trains its temporary workers in office automation skills through Skillware, a hands-on, disk-based training program that uses the actual hardware and software the students will encounter in the workplace.

Skillware takes only one to two days to complete and is offered to Manpower's temporary workers free of charge.

Skillware packages bring workers up to date with the latest in software for a wide range of computers, including the IBM Personal Computers, Personal System/2, System/36 and the new 9370 computers. "Our workers are

training on office software packages as they're being introduced to business," Fromstein said.

"Because we work with such a broad base of customers, we're able to identify business trends as they're forming and can adapt quickly to anticipated changes in worker skill requirements."

Fromstein added that one of the trends they see quite clearly is an increasing demand from businesses for 'universal operators'—people who can sit down at a multi-function workstation and perform any number of office applications, including word processing, data entry, electronic calendaring messaging, spreadsheets and database management.

Fromstein said, "Students who work with us can be trained and gain proficiency in all of these areas quickly and easily, broadening the range of their skills."

These wide-ranging summer jobs, he said, "give students the opportunity not just to get a foot in the door, but to open the door wide. Students strengthen their resumes, gain experience in different types of jobs and working environments and make contacts that will be valuable when seeking full-time work after graduation."

By looking beyond the summer paycheck, he said, students who combine earning with the learning of new skills will increase their future income potential. "Students understand that the more skills and experience they have under their belts, the more marketable they will be."

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