

# HUFFPOST IMPACT

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## **Career Seekers: Be Faithful, Success Will Follow**

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On Fourth of July, Americans celebrate Independence Day and the birth of an entrepreneurial, peace-loving nation with fireworks and family barbecues. This serves up an ideal opportunity for people of all political persuasions to discuss true American independence: jobs. This also serves up a time for gratitude with regard to virtuous dependence as inscribed in America's official motto, "In God we trust." As we "pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America" and to the "republic for which it stands," let us pause and reflect on these poignant words: "one nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all." Every time we undertake the patriotic gesture of hand over heart calling out our pledge, it reminds us we are all called to be faithful first. Success will follow.

In the aftermath of 9/11, we debate how to achieve peace in a world of strife and we contemplate our deepest desire: inner peace. Career seekers believing in a higher power may want to consider sage advice from one of the world's most faithful CEOs: Mother Teresa. Her legacy is the influence she left in the hearts and souls she touched and continues to move spiritually as it transcends creed by faithful example. In fact, the organization she founded in 1950 called Missionaries of Charity grows daily, attracting thousands of vocations and co-workers "wholeheartedly serving the poorest of the poor" worldwide, including throughout America. Sustainable succession beyond our founders' lifespans, the true measure of success, emanates from faithful leadership and teamwork. This inspirational mentor offers good recipes for fruitful career paths. Her saintly tip: "God calls us to be faithful, not successful."

Many continue the struggle to find rewarding careers and purposeful lives. Yet as hospitality industry employers, our company AmericanTours International (ATI) is challenged to find the right talent for open positions. Why is there a shortage of recruits when so many people are earnestly seeking to work? Or are they? Have the youth, reportedly amongst the highest unemployed, given up? Are they staying in school, living at home and not wanting to face the real world? One possible explanation is that unemployed college graduates are unwilling to work at jobs they believe to be beneath them. Or they do not possess the skills to hit the ground running in the fields requiring labor.

Did their university promote degrees with unrealistic salary expectations, saddling students with burdensome loans? If so, one could attribute a moral obligation for alma mater institutions to help graduates actually find work. Job commitments from thriving alumni should be encouraged and facilitated. Perhaps there needs to be a partial money back guarantee from endowments. Honest discussion with students and solid advice for classes to take for acquiring marketable skills while instilling a practical mentality is a fiduciary duty. Vocational training is a better career path than college for some. Responsibility to prepare students to enter the work force and accomplish the mission of a career starts in

high school. Teach students to interview, to compete and to humbly roll up their sleeves with a readiness to serve a greater cause than one's own glory. Less emphasis on "self-esteem" and "material status" and more focus on "selflessness" and "faithful service" may be the ingredient needed in our current culture for a positive outcome.

From sources within the hospitality industry I have found an interesting paradigm shift over these past years. The "faithful" mentality of "hard workers" with humble attitudes, strong work ethic and ingrained moral virtues are winning the jobs. The higher institutions of learning are not the place these workers are being found. They are coming from the churches, synagogues and mosques and they are practicing their faith from hard life lessons learned. According to recent finds by a growing number of employers, Pentecostals and other faith-based workers are best prepared when applying and working. They are not looking for "best pay to perform" but rather for "best way to serve" opportunities. Fast becoming the blessed recipients of "on the job training," they embrace greater responsibility and help generate growth, earning higher remuneration. As the company succeeds, the team succeeds. Some also choose to dedicate part of their work to charitable efforts at home or abroad. These efforts help those less fortunate to have the basics such as food, medicine, shelter and education. Faith, hope and charity foster peace.

Mother Teresa begins with the premise, "Holiness is not the luxury of the few, it is a simple duty for you and me. Holiness does not consist in doing extraordinary things." This entrepreneurial woman worked tirelessly until she drew her last breath on September 5, 1997 at the ripe age of 87. Her faithful work ethic continues to inspire thousands to try to emulate her success by being faithful to God and to one's mission in life. She answered her calling to serve God and humanity while strongly advocating the need to smile. All who desire to find work or want to work with less stress must smile she proclaimed. "Peace (inner and outer) begins with a smile," was her corporate mantra. Even her business card advanced the notion of faith before success; "the fruit of service is peace."

In New York Harbor, there is another enduring and selfless icon, Lady Liberty, with a message to believe for hope. This statue warmly welcomes visitors and each new American seeking a better life: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." America is the land of freedom and opportunity, if one is willing and ready to work with faith and humility. Sounding the call for career seekers desiring a higher calling, to serve a cause greater than oneself, namely to be a peacemaker.