

Name _____

Date _____

Labor Market Trends



Introduction: Our working world is rapidly changing. As a worker, adapting to changes will become more and more important to your success. For example, the U.S. Department of Labor estimates that half of all existing jobs will be eliminated or changed in the next twenty years.

Many of these jobs will be replaced by new ones. And, people will have to learn new skills or adapt old skills to be able to take the new jobs. This may sound discouraging, but the future holds promise if you can accept change and develop the skills you need. Employer training and lifelong learning opportunities can help you adapt to these changes.

Does this mean that you should give up on the career of your dreams? No, but be prepared for the challenges that you could face. Be prepared to take your career choice and grow with it as the world and your career changes.

Now is the time to validate your career choice. Can you work at your career in Montana? Do you want to live in and work in Montana? What will supply and demand do to your career? What effects will the global economy have? What is the short and long-term outlook for your career choice?

Directions: Answer the following questions to help you better assess your career choice and the labor market trends for that choice.

Career Choice: _____

A. Supply and Demand. The more people want or need a thing (the demand) the more that thing will be produced (the supply) to fill that need. Supply and demand greatly influences the job market. The higher demand for a good or service, the more need for workers to fill that need. The lower the demand, the less workers needed. When there are too few workers to fill jobs that are open, it is a “workers” market - wages are higher, competition is less. When there are too many workers to fill the jobs that are open, it is an “employer’s market” and there is more competition for the job openings and wages may be driven down as a result of the competition.

- What is the supply and demand outlook for your career choice?
- Is the outlook the same for all parts of the country?
- Will you have to (or do you want to) move to take advantage of employment opportunities?

B. Globalization is another factor that affects our job markets. The large number of aging people in America has increased the demand for health care services. Many factories are being moved out of the United States to countries where labor is cheaper. America's leading companies earn from 30-65 percent of their sales from foreign markets, according to the National Alliance for Business (1999). Nations, companies and employees are living in an increasingly interconnected world and the impact of globalization is profound.

- Do you believe globalization will have an effect on your career choice?
- If so, what will the effect be?
- If you don't believe it will have an effect, why not?

C. Technology is defined as the application of science, especially to industrial or commercial objectives. In the real world, technology has become synonymous with computers--personal computers to process words and data; computer aided drafting machines to develop blueprints and plans, computer aided robots to work on the assembly line, etc. The advents of e-mail and the internet have carried technology even further.

- How do you think advancing technology will affect your career choice?
- Will the effect be negative or positive?

D. Environmental Issues. There will be increasing concern over environmental issues. Should we ban the cutting of "old growth trees?" How do we deal with plants and animals that are endangered? Will local, state and national governments need more workers and more technology to deal with the problems of global warming, pollution, air quality, water quality, garbage, ozone and chemical and industrial wastes?

- Will your career choice be affected by environmental issues?
- Negatively or positively?

E. **Demographics** is the study of the characteristics of human populations, such as size, growth, density, distribution and vital statistics. Projections by the U. S. Bureau of Census indicate that the West will continue to be the fastest growing region of the country. By 2000, the baby-boomer generation, which makes up a large portion of the labor force, will be 45-64 years old. The work force will also change with the increased participation of women and ethnic minorities.

- What do these demographic changes mean for your career choice?

F. **Occupational Outlook and Trends.** An occupational trend is a direction or movement of a particular occupation. An occupational outlook is a look at the future job prospects for a particular occupation. Nearly 80% of American workers are now employed by service-producing organizations as opposed to goods-producing organizations. Will the aging of the American population require increased health services? What are the implications of increased reliance on technology?

- Occupational trends and outlooks are affected by many factors, including globalization, technology, supply and demand, the environment, etc. What is the occupational outlook for your career choice?
- Are there any occupational trends that may affect your career choice?