

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Critical
Thinking
Resource

Business

About The Wall Street Journal's Critical Thinking Resource

We developed this guide to help you maximize The Wall Street Journal as a resource for your classes. You'll be able to energize discussions and engage students with tangible examples of course concepts that your students can apply in the real world. In addition, with the help of faculty partners, we've curated a special collection of our most popular and thought-provoking articles about business. For each of these readings, we provide a summary, correlation to course topics, classroom applications and questions suitable for launching discussions and conducting assessments.

Here are some of the many ways to incorporate WSJ into your courses:

- **COURSE READINGS:** Assign articles as required reading alongside your textbook sections. For best results, include assessment questions on quizzes and exams.
- **DISCUSSION LAUNCHERS:** Use articles to spur classroom and threaded discussions in online and hybrid courses on core concepts and current events.
- **EXTRA CREDIT:** Allow students to read optional articles and answer assessment questions for extra credit.
- **GROUP PROJECTS:** WSJ is a rich source of real-world topics for group research and presentation projects.
- **RESEARCH PAPERS AND CASE STUDIES:** WSJ features provide timely citations for research projects.

Subtopic:

The Shifting Post-Pandemic Workplace

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Workers Quit Jobs in Droves to Become Their Own Bosses
2. 4.3 Million Workers Are Missing. Where Did They Go?
3. Companies Need More Workers. Why Do They Reject Millions of Resumes?

Workers Quit Jobs in Droves to Become Their Own Bosses

REPORTERS: Josh Mitchell and Kathryn Dill

REVIEWED BY: Brian Tietje, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

DATE: November 29, 2021

TOPICS: entrepreneurship, external marketing environment, business marketing, marketing careers

LINK TO ARTICLE: [CLICK HERE](#)

SUMMARY:

The pandemic has unleashed a historic burst in entrepreneurship and self-employment. Hundreds of thousands of Americans are striking out on their own as consultants, retailers, and small-business owners. The move helps explain the ongoing shake-up in the world of work, with more people looking for flexibility, anxious about Covid exposure, upset about vaccine mandates, or simply disenchanted with pre-pandemic office life. It is also aggravating labor shortages in some industries and adding pressure on companies to revamp their employment policies.

CLASSROOM APPLICATION:

There are significant implications that students can explore in this topic. First, you can ask students to speculate how all of these new startup companies might present a market opportunity for other companies (e.g., might they need an accounting program like QuickBooks?). Second, you can ask students to put their entrepreneur hats on and consider what types of marketing-related startups they might consider for themselves.

QUESTIONS:

1. Highlight at least two key data points that are provided in the article that are informative about current labor trends.
2. What are the reasons why so many people are choosing to become their own bosses? (Provide at least three.)
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of starting your own business and being your own boss?
4. What market opportunities might exist because of the growth in the number of new business startups?
5. If you were to choose to start your own business after graduating college and if the business were to be marketing-related, what might it be?

4.3 Million Workers Are Missing. Where Did They Go?

REPORTERS: Josh Mitchell, Lauren Weber and Sarah Chaney Cambon

REVIEWED BY: Brian Tietje, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

DATE: October 14, 2021

TOPICS: customer service, external marketing environment

LINK TO ARTICLE: [CLICK HERE](#)

SUMMARY:

Scarce labor is becoming a fixture of the U.S. economy, reshaping the workforce and prodding firms to adapt by raising wages, reinventing services, and investing in automation. More than a year and a half into the pandemic, the U.S. is still missing around 4.3 million workers. That's how much bigger the labor force would be if the participation rate—the share of the population 16 or older either working or looking for work—returned to its February 2020 level.

CLASSROOM APPLICATION:

The labor shortage poses both opportunities and challenges from a marketing standpoint. For a learning activity, you could ask students to either broadly identify the marketing opportunities and challenges that arise from the labor shortage or have students focus on one specific marketing activity like customer service and ask students to identify the challenges that companies might face in delivering great customer service in the midst of the labor shortage and how companies might try to find alternative approaches to customer service in the absence of sufficient employees.

QUESTIONS:

1. What data point to the fact that there's presently a labor shortage in the U.S.?
2. Describe at least two factors that seem to be contributing to the U.S. labor shortage.
3. What challenges do companies face in the midst of a labor shortage? How do these challenges impact customers?
4. What strategies are companies using in an effort to manage their operations in the midst of a labor shortage?
5. Specifically in the domain of customer service, how might firms try to deliver customer service even without enough personnel?

Companies Need More Workers. Why Do They Reject Millions of Resumes?

REPORTER: Kathryn Dill

DATE: September 4, 2021

TOPICS: targeting, segmenting, marketing careers

LINK TO ARTICLE: **[CLICK HERE](#)**

SUMMARY:

Employers today rely on increasing levels of automation to fill vacancies efficiently, deploying software to do everything from sourcing candidates and managing the application process to scheduling interviews and performing background checks. These systems do the job they are supposed to do. They also exclude more than 10 million workers from hiring discussions, according to a new Harvard Business School study released Saturday. For related articles about the employment market, see: "[Walmart Plans to Add 20,000 Workers](#)" and "[Amazon Seeks to Hire 55,000 for Office, Tech Roles.](#)"

CLASSROOM APPLICATION:

I've had some success in the past having students apply the concepts of segmenting, targeting, and positioning to their own career pursuits by asking them to (1) identify and evaluate different industry, employer and career segments of interest, (2) prioritize the industries, employers and careers they most want to target for employment, and (3) develop strategies to achieve superior positioning against competing job candidates for those industries, employers and careers. These articles provide background information to support a similar activity, with an emphasis on how to structure their resume and application in light of the screening software that they'll likely encounter.

QUESTIONS:

1. In your own words, explain how the software that employers use to screen resumes and applicants works.
2. Why do today's employers rely on automated screening software?
3. Why are some applicants screened out of the process when automated software is used?
4. What strategies and tactics might you use on your own resume to avoid being screened out when you apply for positions?
5. To answer this question, look at the related articles mentioned above. For what types of positions are Walmart and Amazon hiring at a large scale? What does this suggest about future trends in hiring?