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Helpful career hints for the class of 2007

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The spring semester is waning, Class of 2007. Do you know what comes next?

Things are looking up for this year's college grads, with employers planning to hire 20 percent more new grads this year than last - and at higher salaries, according to a survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

But that doesn't mean you can keep putting things off. "Gen Y is famous for procrastinating. I have never seen people procrastinate like that," said **Anna Ivey**, a career consultant and former dean of admissions at the University of Chicago Law School.

Get the ball rolling, and improve your chances of not having to move back into your parents' house by summer.

Clean up your accounts

That includes e-mail addresses, voice mail and networking sites such as MySpace. "Do an audit. Google yourself. See what you've put up there. Take down anything that's even remotely questionable," Ivey said. "If you're going to use these sites, make sure it's to your advantage." Your voice mail message shouldn't include music or "jokes."

Practice your manners

One common complaint about young job seekers is that they don't follow basic protocol. Send thank-you notes after interviews. And be especially considerate toward people going to bat for you in your job search, Ivey said.

Stay flexible

Be open-minded about the type of job you will take and the location, said Brad Karsh, president of JobBound and author of "Confessions of a Recruiting Director." This is your first job, not your only one. Don't limit yourself to the big names. Small to mid-sized companies are going to have more opportunities this time of year, he said.

Resist your parents

They mean well, they really do. But Mom and Dad may not be giving you up-to-date advice. Listen to what they have to say, but make sure you solicit help from outside sources, too. "So many Gen Y folks have such heavy involvement from their parents now that you can stand out if you're independent," Ivey said. "Keep your parents completely behind the scenes."

Forget about grad school

At least for now. It might be a good option down the road, but if you're considering it only as a last-minute alternative to the stress of finding a job, wait. "That's how a lot of people wind up in law school, but that doesn't mean it's in your best interest," Ivey said.

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