



Junior Achievement[®]

Teens Say They're Bullish On Job Prospects

(NAPSA)—When it comes to starting a career, today's youth is ready to get down to business. According to a recent poll, 87 percent of young people feel either "very well prepared" or "adequately prepared" to enter the workforce.

Additionally, when asked if they would ever have their ideal jobs, just over 74 percent of young people said either "definitely" or that they were "pretty sure" they would. For more than 10 percent of teens polled, "businessperson" was the top career choice, making it the highest-ranked choice for the fifth year in a row. The responses provided key findings for the eighth annual JA Worldwide "Kids and Careers" Interprise Poll conducted online and sponsored by Verizon.

Contrasting Views

While young people's responses tended to be optimistic, a number of employers who were polled took a more sobering view. In a separate 2006 study, more than 42 percent of employers rated new workforce entrants with high school diplomas as "deficient" in their overall preparation for entry-level jobs. Additionally, employers characterized the new workforce as "woefully ill prepared" for the demands of today's and tomorrow's workplace.

"The results of our I-poll, when compared to employers' perceptions of the current workforce, demonstrate that we need to do a better job of making our young people 'work ready,'" said David S. Chernow, president and chief executive officer of JA (also known as Junior Achievement) Worldwide.



BRIGHT OUTLOOK—Seventy-four percent of young people polled were confident they'd have their ideal job after entering the workforce.

"Our programs help bridge the gap by reinforcing classroom lessons and by giving students additional skills, which employers are increasingly seeing as critical to success in the workplace, such as problem solving, professionalism and work ethic, and teamwork."

Chernow explained that students can also certify their work readiness to prospective employers by acquiring the National Work Readiness Credential, an online assessment of basic entry-level job skills (www.workreadiness.com). The credential is sponsored in part by JA Worldwide and can give those holding it an edge over other applicants, saving employers valuable resources during the application process.

JA Worldwide is the world's largest organization dedicated to educating young people about work readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy. For more information about the organization and poll, visit www.ja.org.