

Where the jobs are...

Years into the economic recovery we are still asking ourselves “where are the jobs?” Perhaps it would be better for us to look at “where the jobs are..”

The big national focus seems to have been on providing support for major industries or for infrastructure projects. Both of these are worthwhile endeavors but are they where the jobs are?

Corporations are not really focused on creating jobs, they are focused on productivity, which in its essence is producing more goods with FEWER people. Manufacturing is a good example of this. Over the last two decades our industrial output has steadily increased while the number of total people employed in manufacturing has decreased. That’s not to say that there aren’t jobs to be created in manufacturing, just that major corporations are not where those jobs are going to come from.

On the other end of the spectrum infrastructure projects seem like a good fit for creating jobs. We obviously have lots of highway, bridge, water and energy projects that are ready to go. The shortcoming is that in most cases these projects provide only temporary jobs, paid out of the already strained public treasury, rather than the self-sustaining jobs that are key to an economic recovery.

So then how do we go where the jobs are? Historically jobs come from entrepreneurs, startups and small to medium-sized companies that are expanding. Carl Schramm, former CEO of the Kaufman Foundation, writes a column for Forbes entitled “Messy Capitalism” and lays out four things that we need to do to nurture this market:

1. We need to be clear, when we talk about supporting “entrepreneurs” we mean the kind who start business, hire people and earn profits.
2. We need to be cognizant of who the entrepreneurs are. While many headlines come to mind of the young geniuses that are creating new companies (does anyone not know who Mark Zuckerberg is?), the majority of entrepreneurs that create expanding companies are more likely around 40 and have vast experience in the industry their fledgling company is in.
3. We must make efforts to expand the entrepreneur base. We need to expand the ranks by ethnicity, gender and regionally, reaching in to under-utilized pools of talent and markets.
4. We need to reformat the way we teach entrepreneurship. The majority of programs today treat it as an academic study rather than a “how to.” Also entrepreneurship should be part of many disciplines rather than being a separate field of study.

The good news is that College of Canyons infuses entrepreneurship into many of its disciplines, not just the business curriculum. Secondly we have a suite of services available through the Economic Development Division that are focused on both helping entrepreneurs start businesses and assisting established companies in their efforts to expand and grow. Our Small Business Development Center (SBDC) can help you get off the ground. Our Center for International Trade can help you expand your markets overseas. Our Employee Training Institute (ETI) is adept at developing your workforce’s talent!

The Center for Applied Competitive Technologies (CACT) is focused on bringing your company cutting edge advances in both production and process. And when you're ready to expand the Worksource Center can help you find the personnel you need.

Perhaps YOU are where the jobs are? We stand ready to help.

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