

The new millennium: Candycorn's job picks

Hope Candycorn focuses on tomorrow's up-and-coming occupations

By Nancy Thalia Reynolds, a.k.a. Hope Candycorn

(With apologies to trend-spotter, futurist and author Faith Popcorn, chairman of Brain Reserve, a New York-based trend marketing company.)

As prognosticatrix extraordinaire to the movers and shakers of industry and high finance, I'm paid to ponder many questions at my cozy, yet cutting-edge market research resort hideaway in Idaho, known as the

BrainReservation. Using the latest research and some old-fashioned reading of entrails, I come up with answers that CEOs pay big bucks to hear. Lately, I've been asked about job prospects for the new millennium.

FinalPassages: Our Brain-Reservation team has determined the fastest growth will occur in the preparing-for-death field. From adult-care facilities designed to serve the quality-conscious consumer to custom funerals, this is where the money is.

Why is this a growth area? As they approach the End of the Line, baby boomers will bestow their collective millions on the medical profession. Remember: more than half of all lifetime health-care expenditures occur during the last year of life. For

boomers, that will start arriving around 2115, peaking in 2035. Doctors, nurses, aides and orderlies will be needed, along with morticians, embalmers and estate planners.

What's the consumer seeking? Environmentally friendly cremation and cemetery relocation (away from those top-dollar real estate sites and into semi-toxic landfills).

Funeral consultants will also be hot. (Out-of-work wedding consultants, listen up!) Boomers introduced us to custom marriage vows, pre-nups and divorce ceremonies. What's next? Personalized funerals! Some clients will opt for a hands-on approach, planning their own memorial services, ordering flowers, speakers, music and finger foods. The bereaved, too, will compete to offer friends and family a truly spe-

cial, one-of-a-kind grieving experience. Group homes (think communes!) for the aged, nostalgia CDs and videos, books on the afterlife, workshops and study circles on getting the most out of dying and simplifying death will be hot.

No more dreary nursing homes where "entertainment" means watching a PBS Lawrence Welk retrospective on the big-screen TV in the lounge. Instead, psychedelically painted buses will carry frisky seniors decked out in festive tie-dye to catch the Who's 50th reunion tour!

SpinCity: Death may dominate the jobs agenda, but I spy other growth areas, too, thanks to the predicted failure of campaign finance reform. I foresee the art of fund raising soaring to heights that will make today's political bagmen look like Salvation Army Santas outside K Mart.

Public relations: Every candidate for office — from dogcatcher on up — will require image consultants, spin doctors and more! Speech writers and voice coaches will be in high demand, with ghostwriters at a premium, since it will be de rigueur for candidates to author books about their American journey or building a bridge to the 22nd century.

FetalMonitors: Court-appointed fetus advocates will tail pregnant women to ensure they do not ingest substances harmful to the unborn. Advocates will also make sure women attend childbirth classes.

FocusGroupies: Consumers will finally wise up and realize that they can earn significant bucks for telling marketers what they think. Finding, grooming and placing participants will be big business. Consumers with desirable demographics (18-to-34-year-old female professionals) will be in such high demand that "bounty hunters" will be paid to round them up on behalf of political and merchandising interests.

I could go on and on, but enough freebies. You'll just have to wait for my next book: *Globalizing the Virtual Marketplace*. So, bye for now. This is Hope Candycorn reminding you to cash in before you cash out!

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