



Hard Times Send 'Economoms' Back to the Job Market

By **BONNIE ROCHMAN**
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With a baby and a toddler, Young seeks work to offset her spouse's shrinking income

Gina LeVay for Time

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When you're eight months pregnant, it's hard to find a good interview suit. But a burgeoning belly didn't stop Nicole Young, 33, from hitting the job circuit this fall. Her husband, who works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, has seen his income shrink along with the Dow. And the consulting projects she has been doing from their home on Long Island in New York are not bringing in enough money to make up the difference. So Young, who left her full-time marketing job in 2005 when she was pregnant with their first child, buffed up her résumé and started conducting phone interviews to try to line up a job that would begin after her second child was born in December. She contacted five recruiters, hoping to find something in corporate communications or general management. Could she start right away? Not exactly. No job offers ensued.

Now, with a 3-month-old and a 3-year-old, Young is reviving her job hunt: full time, part time, any time will do. With the employment outlook turning bleaker by the day, she and many other white collar moms who opted out of the workforce to focus on their kids are scrambling to get back in. Meet the economommies. ([See the best and worst moms of all time.](#))

Of course, for much of the U.S., working is not optional. But with men making up 82% of the recession's job losses, women are flocking to mom-centric job and career-consulting sites, where they learn how to translate their maternal skills (negotiation, time management) into corporate argot. Mom Corps, a staffing company that pairs women

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with white collar jobs that have flexible hours, in February surveyed its 500 most recent registrants: 63% said the economy was driving their decision to look for work. Five percent said they joined because their spouse was laid off.

At Mom Corps, businesses pay to list job openings and gain access to tens of thousands of women who have registered for free; the agency, like rival service 10 til 2, also does actual matchmaking for companies. It's definitely a buyer's market. In early March, Mom Corps had 34,000 job hunters and 54 jobs; 10 til 2 reported a similarly scary ratio. How quickly employees are synched with employers — Mom Corps says most of its openings are filled within two weeks — hinges on factors like location and skill set. Think Excel is just a verb? Next in line, please.

Since Mom Corps opened shop in 2005, it has matched nearly 1,000 women with manager-level positions at small firms as well as Fortune 500 ones. Though the number of listings fell in recent months, founder Allison O'Kelly says, things are picking up as hiring freezes make project-based, benefits-free workers the only kind companies can afford.

"This is not a good time for many businesses, but this is a good time for our business," says iRelaunch co-founder Carol Fishman Cohen. Her firm, along with sites like YourOnRamp and 2Hats Network, offers crash courses in networking as well as tips on how to finesse gaps in résumés (don't organize chronologically) and what to wear to an interview (shoulder pads are for linebackers).

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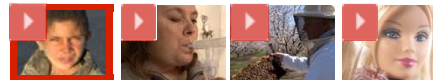
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Carol Cohen Mar 15

3/15/09

Dear TIME editors,

Thank you for focusing on the issue of moms at home accelerating their return to work due to the economy. ("Economoms" 3/12/09) I wanted to correct a factual error and note a quote that was incorrectly attributed to me.

The article implies that iRelaunch recommends resume gaps be "finessed" by not listing experience chronologically. In fact, iRelaunch has always been a proponent of the chronological resume precisely because we believe in transparency about one's work history. We advise not to cover up a career break, and not to apologize for it either.

The quote "This is not a good time for many businesses, but this is a good time for our business," was not mine. While I'm pleased that people returning to work find our products helpful, I feel too connected with the population I serve to make such an insensitive comment. I experienced my own lay off and return to work in prior downturns and I identify strongly with those who are in the same situation

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