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Best Careers for a Changing Job Landscape

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It has only been a year since *U.S. News* published *Best Careers 2007*, yet much has changed. As a result, in *Best Careers 2008*, we've dropped five of the 25 profiled careers and added 11 new ones. (Check out our list of [31 careers with bright futures](#).)



(J.D. King for USN&WR)

We've also added a new section on [Ahead-of-the-Curve Careers](#). These 12 careers are too nascent or narrow to justify inclusion as a Best Career, but they are currently viable and promise to grow further in demand and importance to society. If you'd enjoy being on the cutting edge, they're certainly worth a look.

The factors that prompted changes in the list of Best Careers have implications for all career seekers. Here is a glance at some trends and a word on how to search for *your* best career:

Even college grads might want to consider blue-collar careers. Last year, because *U.S. News* readers tend to be college educated, we included only careers that typically require at least a bachelor's degree. This year we've added four careers that don't. Why? More and more students are graduating from college at the same time that employers are offshoring more professional jobs. So, many holders of a bachelor's degree are having trouble finding jobs that require college-graduate skills. Meanwhile, society has been telling high school students that college is *the* way, so there's an accelerating shortage of skilled people in jobs that don't require college. (Why else do you think you have to pay \$100 an hour for a plumber?)

The four noncollege careers we added would be rewarding even to many college graduates, especially because college grads are likely to stand out against the competition. Those added careers are: [biomedical equipment technician](#), [firefighter](#), [hairstylist/cosmetologist](#), and [locksmith/security system technician](#). Other skilled blue-collar careers that scored well on our [selection criteria](#): machinist (manufacturers report a shortage), nuclear plant