

Finding that summer job

SpunOutter Olivia Minnock looks at creative ways of making money this summer

Here in Ireland we are blessed with an entire three months of summer holidays. Did you know that's twice as much as those poor unfortunates over in England get? So it makes perfect sense to do something productive with that time, learn new things, make new friends and maybe earn some dosh, right? If you're looking to go to college, or you're still in school, it's going to be in your best interest to earn yourself some money, whether it be for schoolbooks or transport, or even a new pogo stick. Well, then, what's the problem?

Unfortunately, these days it's becoming difficult to find any job, not least a summer one. What with all this unemployment, job seeking is becoming increasingly competitive. Even if you're not seeking full-time employment, rejection can always be disheartening. In addition, there are many young people (myself included) who are unsure whether to look for a summer job at all.

I'm in fifth year at the moment, and if I'm going to do well in my exams next year it's important that I put in some study throughout the summer. Many pupils and parents alike are worried that it will be hard to strike a balance between work and study. Is it possible to juggle your working hours and still put in the hard graft needed for your exams?

Think outside the box

I think that these problems can be fixed if you're willing to be original and think outside the box. Have you considered that you don't necessarily have to be employed to make money? You can work for yourself! Why not try setting up a little business over the summer? This will enable you to work flexible hours around your study, keep you on your toes for next year and, if you work hard, still make you a wad of cash. Think about what your passion is, how it can be turned into a business, and then go for it! Maybe you could babysit for the neighbours or give piano lessons?

Personally, my two passions are writing and baking. My friend and I are in the midst of setting up our own little cupcake business, ready for the summer. Contact your local environmental health officer for information if you're interested in cooking. They will be only too happy to help. Last year, I went to the Dublin Zine Fair, and that's where I discovered Zines, which are basically homemade, self-published magazines.

They can be filled with whatever you choose. I saw some great ones with short stories, comic strips and photographs. This year I intend to make some of my own so I can try selling them. I've also started a blog, but I think that will need more than twenty views a day before it starts bringing in the big bucks!

If you feel entrepreneurship is for you, there are two things to remember. Firstly, make sure all is legal and above board. Secondly, market yourself. You can make pretty much any product look good if you've got a decent brand. Come up with a name for your business, like "Rock-a-Bye-Baby-Sitting" or something less silly, and have a go at designing leaflets or business cards.

This can be enormous fun, and will probably mean the difference between a September with a brand new laptop and starting the new school year with a tear in your jumper.

So I urge you SpunOutters, to go forth and be original!

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