

EDUCATION OPTIONS

»» FOR U ««



In the face of being let go from a company, it can be less difficult for a person to jump into another job like the one they had, in fear of not being able to pay the bills.

However, if Nicholas Wyman's (pictured right) advice is anything to go by, periods of transition in your life are a great time to reassess what you should be doing.

Nicholas, a workforce development and skills expert and Chief Executive Officer of the Institute for Workplace Skills and Innovation, says employees in the mining industry are at an advantage in the workplace.

"People have got to do a bit of a skills matrix and look at what they have to offer and [realise] maybe this is an opportunity not just to get a job like the one they've just had, but to look at what else they could do," he says.

"I think there's going to be a lot of people transitioning from the mining industry and people always try to get a similar job.

"[But] this is a real opportunity to say you only live once, so what is it that makes me happy?"

A fan of online education, Nicholas says there are



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plenty of opportunities to study via massive open online courses, or MOOCs, to brush up on skills for the next chapter of one's life.

"It's exciting times really," he says. "You can study from your lounge room or wherever you are.

"It's a good time for people to draw a bit of breath and look at where they are going."

Nicholas' advice is to stick with a well-known university, as there are many companies out there just trying to "sell you something".

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However, for those in the mining industry who are not passionate about going to university, Nicholas says there are other options, as he outlines in his book, *Job U: Find your path to a successful career in a tough job market*.

"I followed a non-traditional pathway myself," he says. "My father was an academic and he wanted me to follow in his footsteps and I had different ideas.

"I think employers are going about employing people in different ways and there are a lot of people who are saying that change is upon us.

"The fact is that people [in the mining industry] have got a lot of real-world experience and that is highly valued by a lot of employers.

"I don't think people should sell themselves short; they should look at how they can turn that

experience into the next step along their journey.

"A lot of companies have come out and said universities are not necessarily the best path.

"Some countries are ahead of the curve, like America. They had a recession and what happened in that recession is parents started to think how they could future-proof their son or daughter, or somebody was laid off and they are saying they are not going to let that happen to them again."

Nicholas recommends apprenticeships and traineeships as a viable option for people who prefer to work with their hands.

He added 40 per cent of Australian apprentices were over the age of 25.

"There are some employers who will employ the young school leavers because they see that as an affordable option," he says. "But for every one of those, there's an employer who says to me 'no more kids'.

"They want someone who's street smart and knows about safety and people in the mining industry are going to have these things in spades."

Nicholas says his organisation has 120 apprenticeships available across the country in light vehicle, heavy vehicle and trades.

He says these positions are sitting there unfilled, and because of competency-based learning, it is possible to finish

apprenticeships quicker than expected.

Nicholas says he isn't recommending university over skills-based learning or vice versa, but suggests it is finding out what is right for the individual at that stage in their life.

"It has got to be what's right for you," he says. "I was an apprentice chef but I did end up at Harvard University – it's about the right education at the right time."



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