

A lone traveler heads to the ticketing counter of Frontier Airlines in the main terminal of Denver International Airport. (AP)



Booking.com cuts workforce by thousands as travel atrophies

Booking.com is laying off a quarter of its workforce - more than 4,000 people - with the global pandemic snuffing out travel. Layoffs will begin next month and run through the end of the year, according to parent company Booking Holdings Inc. Booking Holdings, based in Norwalk, Connecticut, also owns the restaurant reservation company OpenTable and Priceline.com. The number of rooms reserved at Booking.com during the first quarter of this year tumbled 43%, to 124 million. The company warned investors in May to

brace for worse in the second financial quarter, the results of which are due Thursday. Booking.com, based in Amsterdam, is a dominant player in Europe, where it controls more than 60% of online travel bookings, according to a 2018 report from Hospitality Europe. But bookings have plummeted as travel from major markets like the U.S. and China has slowed significantly. The number of people passing through U.S. airport checkpoints is running about 70% lower than a year ago, according to figures from the Transportation Security Administration. Travel

plunged about 95% by mid-April, then rose steadily until leveling off throughout July. More than 700,000 people were screened each of the last five days, through Monday, the first time that has happened since mid-March. The World Tourism Organization, an agency of the United Nations, said late last month that there was a 56% drop in tourist arrivals between January and May. That's about 300 million people, and \$320 billion in lost international tourism receipts. Booking.com has 17,500 employees and more than 200 offices worldwide. (AP)

Business Plus



Graduate jobs are expected to shrink in 21 countries - survey

Pandemic wrecks global Class of 2020's hopes for first job



Emmanuel Reyai walks on the streets of Harare while looking for a job, Wednesday, Aug. 5, 2020. Around the world, young people armed with new degrees, diplomas and professional qualifications are struggling to enter the workforce as the pandemic pushes the global economy into recession. Two years after graduating from Zimbabwe's Midlands State University, 24-year old Emmanuel Reyai is no closer to his goal of getting a job related to his degree in local governance. His search is stymied by both the African country's economic collapse and the coronavirus outbreak. (AP)

By Kelvin Chan

British fashion school graduate Phoebe St. Leger's dream of landing a job at a design label is on hold. Like many others in the global Class of 2020, the pandemic is clouding her career ambitions.

The coronavirus forced the cancellation of her university graduating class's final-year fashion show, removing the chance to show her knitwear collection to people in the industry, some of whom might have liked her work enough to offer her a job.

Instead, St. Leger, 22, returned to her family home in Winchester, southern England, and submitted her classwork online. She has applied for about 40 jobs and received only rejections.

"All the jobs have all dried up - everywhere," she said. She knows graduates from previous years who have been fired or furloughed and is prepared to get a job at a bar. "It's still hard to be hopeful when you're not seeing anyone doing well at the moment."

Around the world, young people armed with new degrees, diplomas and professional qualifications are struggling to enter the workforce

as the pandemic pushes the global economy into recession. COVID-19 has thwarted hopes of landing first jobs - important for jumpstarting careers - as employers cut back graduate recruiting plans or even revoke job offers.

The latest U.S. job numbers Friday underscored the murky outlook: 1.8 million jobs were added in July, a sharp slowdown in employment growth from the month before. It means the world's biggest economy has regained just 42% of jobs lost to the coronavirus.

U.S. careers website Glassdoor says the number of jobs advertised as "entry level" or "new grad" was down 68% in May from a year ago. In Britain, companies plan to cut student recruitment by 23% this year, according to a survey of 179 businesses by the Institute of Student Employers.

The wave of delayed employment will ripple out through the economy, says Brian Kropp, chief of HR research at consultancy Gartner.

Many grads will have student loan debts they won't be able to start paying off until they find a job, he said.

"If you can't get an entry level job today, that means that you don't move out of your parent's house, you don't

develop real work experience, you don't buy your first home until later, and you don't get married until later."

Michael Welch, 22, has been scouring LinkedIn, Monster and Indeed for postings and connections after earning a University of Connecticut engineering degree. He hadn't planned to start his job search until after graduation. "That plan was disrupted because I was planning to go into a good job market," he said. "Suddenly I was in one of the worst job markets in recent history."

Welch, who moved back home with his parents, worries about online interviews and starting a job remotely.

"Remote jobs are great for someone who doesn't have to commute and already has a job," he said. But "for someone entering the job market it is a scary prospect. It's difficult to learn technical skills when you're in a remote setting."

Noah Isaak, a 2019 grad and newly certified teacher, has been applying for jobs in the Chicago public school system and has done a few interviews but they didn't lead anywhere. Most of the people he knows from his program are having trouble, too.

Now he's considering applying for minimum wage jobs at Target, Costco, coffee shops and Amazon.

"I'm stressed," said Isaak, 23. "Nothing is really going how we expected it to go. It's comforting that it's not a personal flaw and other people are going through the same struggle. But it is difficult not knowing."

One important long-term effect for young graduates who take longer to find good first jobs is lower pay over the course of their careers, experts said.

Someone who takes a year or more to find their first job lags behind their peers when it comes to promotions and also competes with younger people who come on to the job market later.

The problem, like the pandemic, is global.

Graduate job vacancies for July are down from the previous year in 10 countries, according to Adzuna, a job postings search engine. Britain, India and the Netherlands have seen the biggest declines, with postings down by more than half from a year ago, but other countries including Austria, Australia, Brazil, and France are also seeing double digit percentage drops.

Graduate jobs are expected to shrink in 21 countries, with most unlikely to recover next year, according to a separate report by Britain's ISE.

Maria Jose Casco, a newly qualified doctor, hasn't found work after graduating in Ecuador in April. Casco, 24, said she's been searching for health-related jobs as well as work in other industries.

Even though the pandemic means more need for health services, she found employers aren't hiring for full time jobs.

"They're looking for temporary staff they can easily fire," Casco said. She and her husband are living off savings and his \$480 monthly salary and, like others, are considering emigrating. "Because there is no future, many of my colleagues are looking at the possibility of leaving Ecuador."

The pandemic is compounding problems for young people in countries plagued by chronic economic instability.

Two years after graduating with from Zimbabwe's Midlands State University, 24-year old Emmanuel Reyai is no closer to his goal of getting a job related to his degree in local governance. His search is stymied by both the African country's economic collapse and the coronavirus outbreak.

"I have applied more than 40 times - nothing," he said, clutching a plastic folder containing his academic certificates.

More than two thirds of Zimbabwe's population, including university grads, get by on informal trade such as street hawking. Reyai initially resold cooking gas from a shack in his poor Harare neighborhood but the local council razed it after the outbreak. Now he makes and sells peanut butter around the city.

"There are no hopes of getting a job," said Reyai. "I have tried all I can to apply for jobs but the situation is not getting any better. It is actually getting worse."

In Indonesia, Clara Karina, 25, graduated in January with an accounting degree from a well-known business and finance school in Jakarta.

She wanted to work as a civil servant but applied for jobs at private firms as the government froze recruitment. Only three of 20 companies replied to her applications. Two turned her down and the third is in progress. "Companies aren't recruiting new employees, they're reducing employees now," Karina said. "I need to be more patient."

For some, there are happy endings. In China, 23-year-old Li Xin graduated this summer with a statistics degree but had started looking for a job in January - just as the pandemic forced many companies to suspend operations. She encountered apparent scams from companies hiring for finance and IT jobs that wanted hefty "training fees."

Some classmates found banking jobs thanks to their connections. Others without ties ended up in industries unrelated to their degrees. Several are doing tutoring jobs, and Li found one herself but lasted just a week.

She felt hopeless but also realized everyone has it hard.

"I'd sit in the subway, seeing the people come and go around me, and I'd suddenly feel that it wasn't easy for anyone," Li said.

Eventually, Li landed a data analysis job in her hometown near Beijing that started this month. More than half her class, though, have yet to find jobs. (AP)

‘It’s still hard to be hopeful when you’re not seeing anyone doing well at the moment,’

SEATTLE, Aug 10, (AP): Federal officials are seeking to fine Boeing \$1.25 million, saying that company managers pressured employees who were designated to perform safety-related work for the government at an aircraft factory in South Carolina.

The Federal Aviation Administration said that over a nearly two-year period, Boeing managers pressured employees to inspect a plane before it was ready, harassed inspectors to speed up, and threatened to replace them.

Sometimes managers at the plant in North Charleston waited outside a plane to keep track of how long it took safety-unit members to perform inspections, the agency said.

And Boeing retaliated against a safety-unit manager for complaining about undue pressure by not interviewing the "highly qualified manager" for a promotion, the FAA said in an enforcement letter to Boeing officials.

Chicago-based Boeing said it in-



In this file photo, Boeing employees stand near the new Boeing 787-10 at the company's facility in North Charleston, South Carolina. (AP)

vestigated the allegations, reported them to the FAA, and took corrective action.

The proposed civil penalties "are a clear and strong reminder of our obligations," company spokesman Peter Pedraza said in a statement. "Undue pressure of any type is inconsistent with our values and

will not be tolerated."

For decades, the FAA has relied on employees of aircraft manufacturers to carry out some safety-related tests and analysis. The approach saves the government money, but it has come under scrutiny in Congress since two deadly crashes involving Boeing 737 Max

jets, which are built at a separate plant near Seattle.

Some lawmakers say letting company employees do safety analysis amounts to self-regulation, and Congress is considering changes in the FAA's use and oversight of those company employees.

Boeing has 30 days to respond to the FAA proposal to levy civil penalties. Companies often negotiate to reduce or eliminate the fines.

The FAA lodged two complaints against Boeing. The first, for which the agency is seeking a penalty of \$1.07 million, deals with how Boeing set up its program for having designated employees carry out safety functions on behalf of the FAA. They do inspections and issue certificates when a plane meets safety standards. They are supposed to be independent from other company workers.

The FAA said that from November 2017 to July 2019, Boeing employees in two different units at the South Carolina plant reported to

managers who were not approved for those jobs and weren't in position to look out for the FAA's interests. Workers were subjected to undue pressure or interference by at least four managers, including a vice president, the FAA said in a letter to Boeing officials.

The FAA proposed a smaller civil penalty, \$184,522, for an event in February in which "Boeing managers exerted undue pressure or interfered with" employees who were conducting a final inspection of a Boeing 787-9 jetliner before it left the factory.

The plane was being held up while safety employees tried to verify that a nonworking light had been repaired according to instructions. An employee for subcontractor Safran who did the work didn't have the instructions and drawings but made a false log entry indicating they did, according to FAA. The agency faulted Boeing for not ensuring the work was done properly.

‘Undue pressure of any type is inconsistent with our values and will not be tolerated’