



BY TEENS FOR TEENS

WINTER 2024/25

Thank you Chicago Bears
Offensive Lineman
Doug Kramer Jr. for
choosing the Economic
Awareness Council &
On the Money Magazine
as his cause!

Need extra cash?

See youth employment & entrepreneurship tips on pages 3 & 6

Worried about saving on college costs?

Check out our articles on money management & financial aid in college pages 9-11

MY CAUSE MY CLEATS

ON THE COVER



Chicago Bears Offensive Lineman Doug Kramer Jr. #68 chose the EAC as his non-profit for the NFL's My Cause My Cleats Initiative! The NFL's "initiative allows players to showcase custom cleat designs to amplify causes important to them." (NFL, 2024) Thank you Doug for choosing the Economic Awareness Council & On the Money Magazine as his cause! Over \$16,000 was raised for youth scholarship funds through this initiative and the EAC's Elevate Hope fundraiser in December.

WINTER 2024/25

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When considering options for future careers, the idea of starting a small business may come to mind for some youth. They may be scared to start their own business from the bottom up since they don't know where to start. However, they are not alone. From a survey conducted by Junior Advancement, in 2022, about 60% of students want to start their own business (Grocholski, 2022).

In 2023, about 99% of U.S. businesses are small businesses (Office of Advocacy, 2023) and about 47.2% of them are owned by Gen Z (Guidant Finance, 2023). The high percentage of Gen Z starting small companies shows the impact they have on the U.S. economy and should serve as inspiration to any young people wanting to start a business. Even though young adults have access to

resources at their fingertips, some are still scared to jump in because they don't know anything about business. However, having a strong knowledge of business isn't always necessary.

According to Michael Lee and David Liang, co-owners of Panda Provisions and juniors at WashU, diving into entrepreneurship doesn't necessitate prior business expertise. "You don't need to know anything about business to start one! Rather, you need to know how to ask questions and learn fast. Even if steps seem obvious, asking the right questions to fill gaps will propel you forward."

Even though they didn't have any prior insight into business, success lies in asking insightful questions and swiftly adapting. Initial steps may seem straightforward, but the ability to ask probing questions uncovers

crucial details. Agility, market research, and customer validation are pivotal in navigating challenges to build sustainable businesses.

Within the current small business community, the percent of small businesses that are profitable is 65% (Guidant Finance, 2024). This can be seen as a possible opportunity for many students who want to pursue their life dream. When considering a future in entrepreneurship, Lee emphasizes that having a groundbreaking idea is crucial. "Sometimes a lack of genuine commitment often leads to short-lived projects, when it requires long-term commitment to succeed. Success isn't just about the idea itself, but the dedication and effort put into developing it." In other words, success hinges more on dedication and effort than the idea itself.





THE MENTAL HEALTH OF A BUSINESS

GABRIEL DELGADO VALENTIN

When a person gets a cold, they may call off work to avoid spreading their sickness to the rest of the office. The person needs to get better before returning to work. Just like physical well-being, mental health plays the same crucial role in the employee's performance and, therefore, the business.

The mental health of employees should be as important as their physical health. A 2002 study conducted by Goetzel et al. discovered that workers with depression experienced more short-term disability days than workers without depression. Thus, affecting productivity with a loss of between \$182 and \$395 during a month (Goetzel et al, 2002). In an article from 2022 from the University of California, Berkeley, this topic is addressed in more contemporary times. Unresolved depression accounts for a 35% reduction in productivity in companies. Employees who suffer from depression miss an average of 31.4 days of work per year" (Berkeley Exec Ed, 2022). Overall, this is an issue that could cost the company money, affecting the decisions made within the company such as pay, budget cuts, and staff cuts, leaving employees unsatisfied.

Dr. Michael Carroll is a professor in the faculty of business at Concordia University Chicago. When asked by Dr. Carroll about the topic, he suggests that "corporations should be proactive when it comes to handling depression." Dr. Michael recommends managers and human resources should be aware of depression

symptoms. This factor may negatively affect employee well-being as well as the company's performance and productivity if it is not treated adequately.

Similarly to Dr. Carroll, Alberto Cruz Jr, a private financial advisor at J.P. Morgan Wealth Management, agrees and adds that "it is more cost-efficient for companies to be proactive". He adds that many companies are stepping in the right direction to make sure that their employees are happy and that their mental health needs are met in the work environment.

Overall, mental health is a topic that is being touched increasingly in the daily lives of people across companies. For businesses, it is in their best interest to have adequate care for their employees since they do the work for these companies. The mental and physical integrity of employees should be one of the company's largest priorities.





On the Money would like to thank Republic Bank of Chicago for their support of this issue and volunteer support. (Republic Bank volunteers pictured above)



THE DEBATE ABOUT THE RATIONAL

CHOICE MODEL

SARANSH GUPTA

The rational choice model, which is the idea that people make decisions based on maximizing incentives, is crucial to microeconomics, explaining how individuals make decisions and interact in markets. Economist Adam Smith highlighted this in his The Wealth of Nations book in 1776, "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages" (Smith, 1776). Smith's idea is that people aim to maximize their benefits from transactions and could always be happier with a different basket of goods. This model implies that free markets promote a productive society by providing incentives for utilitymaximizing individuals to benefit each other.

Evidence shows success in economic systems based on the rational choice model. Storr and Choi found that market societies rank higher on measures of morality and social capital. For example, the top five countries in charitable giving are market societies, while the bottom four are non-market societies (Storr and Choi, 2019). This suggests that free market models benefit not just individuals but society, reflecting Smith's narrative of the benefits of surpluses from economic transactions. Economist Gary Becker argues that the rational choice model is essential for economic decisionmaking, asserting that it "[applies] to all human behavior" (Becker, 1976).

Dr. John Tauras highlights that assumptions in the rational choice model, while not necessarily true, enable useful predictions on a societal level.

However, critics argue that individuals often don't behave as predicted by rational choice. An experiment at a daycare showed that a fee for late pickups led to nearly double the number of late arrivals, suggesting that incentives or fines can be less effective as compared to social obligation (Gneezy and Rustichini, 2000). Haaroon Hayat, an NYU student, notes that models used in his introductory economics courses could be confused with how people make decisions. Dr. Mary Hirschfeld encourages economists to recognize the limitations of rational choice and participate in a larger cultural conversation to determine where their models can be beneficial (Hirschfeld, 2018).

The quantitative tools that economists use can provide mathematically-testable hypotheses, and therefore real insight into human behavior, but it's important to understand that those tools simplify human nature and are not always the most effective framework for social analysis.







On the Money would like to thank BMO for their support of this issue and volunteer support throughout One Summer Chicago.



In May of 2022, an estimated 5.5 million teens from the ages of 16-19 years old had a job (Desilver, 2022).

However, what type of jobs hire young adults? As a teen, there are many jobs and "side hustles" available to make extra cash. To start, a teen can apply to open job spaces around their area. They can look for corporations in various specialties, such as food, retail, or district jobs. A tip is to ask friends for job referrals, increase your chances increasing their chances of obtaining a job. Also check out youth employment programs like One Summer Chicago at OneSummerChicago.org.

A second suggestion is offering

Employed persons 16 to 24 years of age, by industry, July 2023

Leisure and hospitality
Retail trade
Education and health services
Professional and business services
Manufacturing
Construction
Other services
Transportation and utilities
Local government
Financial activities
State government
Financial activities
State government
Financial activities
Wholesale trade
Federal government
Information
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction

0 1,000,000 2,000,000 3,000,000 4,000,000 5,000,000 6,000

services to acquaintances. For example, offering to cut your neighbor's grass and nannying for your parents' friends when they need it, is key to making extra money and maybe even becoming an entrepreneur. Lucero Gonzalez (age 39), an entrepreneur of her company Lucero's Cleaning, started her company in this way. She states, "Ever since I was fourteen, I took all the jobs I could, no matter how small they were, every penny counted...because of all the jobs I had when I was young, I gained experience to know I wanted my own cleaning company... I enjoy what I do".

Finding your talents or hobbies and using them as a "side hustle" is another tip. Like Lucero, if you enjoy cleaning, offer cleaning services. If you enjoy dancing, offer choreography services or dance lessons. If you enjoy painting, offer to paint kids' faces for birthday parties. It is important to note that there are many industries that young people can go into. In July 2023, there were typically 17 different industries that people ages 16 to 24 went into (see chart at left) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023).

Exploring these different fields is

something Luke Zajczenko, age 18, has done. He says, "I've worked six different jobs including at the zoo, at Jewel-Osco, and Potbelly... They taught me responsibility, how to save my money, and skills I can use in my future career...". Experience in different areas can uplevel a person's college application or resume (Matzinger, 2024). Overall, taking the opportunity to work in a field of interest has proven to impact young adults' lives whether in developing new skills, keeping them occupied, or simply making extra cash.



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Wintrust Bank is proud to support the Economic Awareness Council – On The Money Magazine and its mission to prepare students and families for the economic and financial decisions they will make.

FINANCE EDUCATION AMONGST HIGH SCHOOLERS

MATI FAVELA

Consider this question: Could I have been more prepared when dealing with my finances?

Teenagers have a wide variety of education levels in financial literacy, therefore, teaching these crucial skills in high school could avoid these discrepancies.

Teaching personal finance introduces opportunities for people to have control of their lives. An article from Champlain College pointed to a 2017 T. Rowe Price Survey that stated 69% of parents don't feel comfortable "discussing financial matters with their kids" (Champlain College, 2017). With this continued lack of education at home, it's essential to introduce a curriculum that addresses budgeting, saving, credit, college finance, etc. Karis Kelly, an On the Money (OTM) Mentor with the Economic Awareness Council (EAC), shared that her first exposure to finance was in middle school. While in high school, she noted that she wasn't taught any personal finance-related topics, however, this didn't stop her from gaining more knowledge of finance as she joined the OTM mentorship program. From an early age, Karis knew about finance and concluded that "basic finance is a part of everyday life."

One can see how beneficial bringing that education to her life was, however not all students in high school will have a similar beginning and go through high school without "basic finance." If that curriculum is not offered in schools it makes programs such as OTM necessary to teach more students in after-school experiences.

Building and maintaining a stable lifestyle comes with working with your personal finances over time, therefore, initiating that process earlier is crucial. In a 2023 report, The Financial Literacy Crisis in America, emphasis is placed on how adults today desired to be taught more about financial literacy in high school. It was reported that 74% of adults believe they "would've made fewer mistakes with money" if they had more exposure to personal finance (Ramsey, 2023). Furthermore, after speaking with the Vice President of Commercial Banking at Chase Bank, Euphraise Backhaus, he emphasized the value of "creating awareness and giving them the tools to take charge" when referring to high school students. Thus, introducing crucial topics of personal finance in high school may allow students to feel prepared and live a prosperous life.





On the Money would like to thank U.S. Bank for their support of this issue and their volunteer support.

Thank you to Krystal Collado of U.S. Bank for volunteering.





HAILAN YU

The increase in the number of card payments accounted for more than 84 percent of the growth in the number of non-cash payments from 2018 to 2021 (Federal Reserve, 2022). In recent years, the digitalization of money has changed the global financial landscape. Although electronic banking systems and credit cards have been in use for decades, the emergence of mobile technology and Covid-19 has helped the rise of digital money.

With money becoming virtual, concepts such as cryptocurrencies and blockchain technology have introduced methods of secure payments throughout the internet. Companies like PayPal, Zelle, and Venmo have taken advantage of the increase in the use of digital money to allow for more convenient transactions. Mobile payment solutions, such as Apple Pay, have further integrated digital money into our daily lives, allowing consumers to pay for a transaction with a simple tap of their smartphones. Incoming college student, Mackenzie Cote, said, "It's so much easier to pay for things now, especially when I am away from home".

Globally, 1.7 billion adults

remain unbanked, yet two-thirds of them own a mobile phone that could help them access financial services (World Bank, 2018). Digital banking can empower minorities by providing them with direct access to financial services, enabling them to save money securely, invest in their businesses, and manage their finances independently. This can lead to greater economic participation and increased equality.

While digitized money offers numerous benefits, its adoption is not uniform, often leaving marginalized groups behind. Incoming PhD candidate William Benet shares, "Factors such as limited internet connectivity, lack of access to smartphones, and insufficient digital literacy prevent many from the benefits of digitalization of money". In rural and remote areas, inadequate infrastructure can hinder access to digital financial services, excluding those who are struggling to afford the necessary technology or data plans required for digital transactions. This digital divide can worsen existing inequalities, as those already disadvantaged may find themselves further marginalized in an increasingly digital economy.

Addressing the digital divide requires action steps, such as investments in infrastructure, affordable access to technology, and comprehensive digital literacy programs. By bridging this gap, we can ensure that the benefits of digitized money are equitably distributed, fostering inclusive economic growth and financial empowerment for all.





Thank you to Ahkeem K. Henderson, Huntington Bank, for volunteering to present to Malcolm X college students during financial literacy month

FINANCIAL LITERACY FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

CRYSTAL CASTREJON

Interest, taxes, loans and debt. These words may cause anxiety for college students. As adolescents mature into young adults, greater responsibilities will be given, making it necessary for them to understand them. According to data from NASFAA, up to 60% of college students anticipate taking out loans, but only 15% believe they have enough knowledge to repay the debt in the future (Bidwell, 2018).

Below are a few of the resources to help you grow your financial literacy education:



School Resources

As many as 60% of college students have never taken a course on financial literacy, according to EBSCO (EBSCO, 2024). Many universities provide financial literacy courses, as well as other services and support. Make sure to take advantage of this since it is included with your tuition. Furthermore, many institutions provide workshops and even one-on-one counseling sessions to further assist students in efficiently managing their funds. College student Madeline Matiarena said, "I use the budgeting method as it allows you to see your income and expenses." Financial educator, Moises Sanchez agrees with this technique and mentions that "physically seeing the amount of money you spend going out to eat or going on a shopping spree may help you cut down on some of those expenses." Additionally, the Economic Awareness Council, On The Money's parent company, provides workshops and coaching to hundreds of City Colleges of Chicago students.

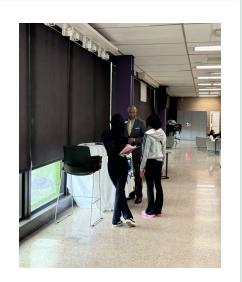
Your Local Library

Another excellent resource for gaining additional money management skills is a library. You can check with your local library to see if they have any resources or programs specifically for college students, especially in college towns. Additionally, you can educate yourself by reading various books on the topics of banking, budgeting, credit, saving and investing.

Online

Make the most of the knowledge available online these days! There are services like Khan Academy, Quizlet, and others that might provide all the definitions and information you are looking for. Other free tools include Tik Tok and YouTube where you can have a more active community. You can also check out websites like EconCouncil.org and OTMOnline.org. However, keep in mind to fact-check and review different sources, as some can spread misleading information. There are even online budgeting simulators, like CollegeBudgetBuilder.org, that allow you to type in your exact information and it will create a college budget for you!

With all of this knowledge, it's crucial to incorporate these skills into your everyday life. Some skills could be making a budget plan or keeping track of your transactions. Don't hesitate to seek out and take advantage of these learning opportunities!





On the Money would like to thank Fifth Third Bank for their sponsorship of this issue.

MANAGING DAILY EXPENSES AS A COLLEGE STUDENT

ALETSA ROBLES





Managing daily expenses as a college student can be tough, but it's doable if students are ready to budget. College expenses are one of the many stresses added to students. Knowing how much they're spending can help them decide how to make smarter decisions with their money. For example, buying coffee is a big thing for college students, it can help them through a long night of studying, or simply give them a happy reason to wake up in the morning. Education Data Initiative reports that "The cheapest way to save on coffee for a college student would be to make it at home. If a college student bought a cup of coffee daily, they would spend \$63 a month on average" (Hanson, 2023). Ordering coffee from a restaurant could easily be \$180 a month, or more! In this case, students should opt out of buying coffee every day and maybe choose to only buy coffee once or twice a month.

Transportation is also something that really takes over students' money. Anthony Hernandez, a student in the University of Illinois Chicago living off-campus says, "College does make me spend a lot of money. After my first year, I realized I had to make a change. I ride the bus or my bike more often now to save money on gas. "SoFi Learn reports that "students living off campus may require a car to get to class, which can significantly add to transportation costs. Filling up at the pump alone costs \$164 a month for the average driver in the US' (Brouillard, 2024).

As students start seeing that it is possible for them to start cutting down some expenses they start building a plan which can later on help other people not make the same mistake they did. Emilia Ozan, a PhD Candidate in Economics in the University of Illinois Chicago, says, "Budgeting and planning my expenses for the

year is something I took to really early on and has paid off for me in my postundergrad years." Once students have created an income/spending plan, it will become much easier for them to save their money. This is important because having financial stability can reduce stress, allowing them to focus more on their studies, and prepare them for future financial responsibilities.

Use this website to help YOU create your own college budget: https://collegebudgetbuilder.org/



SAVING EARLY GIVES YOU A HEAD START ON HANDLING THE FINANCIAL PART OF **COLLEGE**

ESTRELLA HERNANDEZ

Starting college is exciting since it is a new beginning, but figuring out the financial part of it is not so thrilling. Many students might choose to save at the beginning of high school, but they most likely will not have as much saved up as they would like when they graduate. An easy fix for this is to start saving earlier. If kids start to save for college at a younger age, time will be on their side and they will not be in the same position as students who start saving in high school.

One way that kids can start saving money is by doing simple paid tasks. The earlier they begin to save the better. This Vanguard article says it best: "The earlier you save, the more time your money has to grow. This is the magic of compounding — when your returns earn more returns and so on" (Vanguard, 2022). An easy way this can be done is by creating a 529 Plan (Illinois offers a BrightStart 529

Plan). Dennis Acosta, a teacher at Roberto Clemente Community Academy, spoke about how he handled the financial part of college. "I felt remorse towards those adults in my life when I was getting introduced to college (who) didn't encourage me to save up money." Now there are 529 college savings plans, which are savings accounts for educational expenses that parents can start for their kids. For example, a parent starting a 529 account for their 7-year-old, constantly adding in \$10 each month until their child is 18 years old, can end up with \$2,007 (or more) in that account (based on average returns in a sample state, UT). Ideally, parents should fund these accounts when the child is between the ages of 0-3 in order to reap the highest return—almost double than that of the parents that started at age 7 (Collegefinanciallady,



freshman at NIU (Class of 2028), commented that her parents had a college account for her that only had \$500. Zoe, who is worried about the financial aspect of college, wishes she had deposited more money more frequently. "My parents give me an allowance and instead of spending it on shopping, I (should) have saved it up in that account to be less tempted to spend it." Kids need to remember that even though a parent can open a 529 account, they aren't the only ones who can deposit money into it. If teens can recognize that the responsibility to save for college belongs to both them AND their parents, not only will their account balance increase, but they will also gain a sense of responsibility.

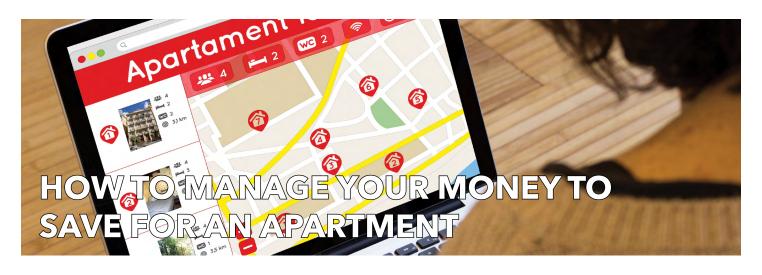


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JANEL RAY

If you wanted to save for an apartment, how would you do it? According to Trekk Properties, "The first step....is understanding your monthly income. This includes your salary and any freelance gigs, part-time jobs, or financial support you may receive" (Trekk, 2023). Ivon Guzman, a program manager who recently purchased her own home, states, "I was able to manage and save for my house by religiously making sure that I budgeted myself with all my expenses. I made sure that I had money to pay costs first and even after, I still have some money left to put towards my savings. It is important to manage your money for future goals so you can achieve them. You also want to make sure to spread out your goals or create steps for yourself so you won't feel overwhelmed or feel that you are not making progress".

A budget can do more than help you understand your income and expenses. According to Apartments.com, it can "... help you build up cash for a variety of apartment-related expenses, including money for rent, hiring movers, and saving for a security deposit (Ross, 2019)." The best way to do this is to deduct your fixed and variable expenses from your monthly income to determine how much you can save.

A budget can help new apartment dwellers and homeowners AFTER they move in as well. According to CNBC, "Nearly half of Americans have \$500 or less in their savings accounts, an amount that leaves them vulnerable to

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unexpected expenses" (Winters, 2024).

It's important to save just in case you ever find yourself in a situation where you have unexpected expenses, like an appliance breaking down, theft, or even a fire. Saving and budgeting is an essential part of life. If we don't save and manage our money, then we are putting our assets at risk.

> "Despite more positive statistics in meeting expenses and overall financial satisfaction [recently], it hasn't correlated to better budgeting. Two-fifths of Americans (40%) spend less than their income, 38% spend about equal to their income and 18% spend more than their income" (George Morris, 2023). Jamal Ray, a college graduate who financed his first apartment at the age of 22, says, "Saving and managing my money has helped me plan for an apartment for a few reasons. Essentially, I had planned for unexpected expenses that I may come across. For example, renters insurance and a down payment. I estimated how much I make a month versus what my bill will look like. Overall, it helped me plan for when I moved in."

RIDESHARE IN CHICAGO

UMAR SHEIKH

You don't see cabs around the city of Chicago like you used to. NBC Chicago reports, "There were 27.2 million taxi trips in 2013, compared to just 6.5 million in 2023" (Sisk, 2024). 2013 is around the time that Uber and Lyft were introduced in the city, and they have had a notable impact on the cab industry around the world. These apps allow for the convenience of calling up a ride wherever you are. "It's much more convenient than waiting around a block to hail a cab," explains Uber user Antonio Zamudio. Uber has been a big success in Chicago; as of 2018, Uber has 67,000 drivers, almost ten times as much as the 7,000 licensed cabs in the city (Channick, 2018).

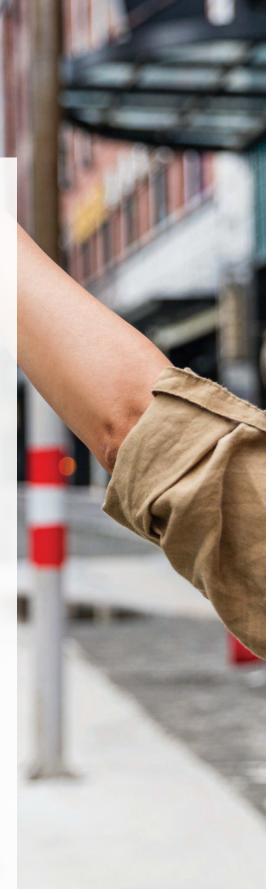
A taxi medallion (a license to operate a taxi) isn't cheap and costs roughly \$350.00 per week in the city. Zayn Ahmed, a local taxi driver states, "It takes me roughly three days just to pay for the medallion. It makes it very hard to keep up with all my payments, especially since I have kids as well."

However, there have and are many advancements being made to help cab drivers keep up. Curb is an app for taxis that functions

in a similar way to Uber and Lyft. Curb is available in big cities across America, including Chicago. The fares tend to be cheaper during surge hours as well, which can help keep cabs competitive with Uber/Lyft.

Uber seems to have responded by allowing cab drivers to work directly with the company. Starting in late April of this year, Uber has given the option to hail cabs from their phone. When this program started in San Francisco, these "taxi drivers earned on average 30% more than their counterparts who chose not to provide Uber trips" (Wade, 2024), which is a huge amount of money. Not all cab drivers see working with Uber as a positive because of the control that the company has over their meter. Cabbies are also not being welcomed too warmly by existing Uber drivers, who are concerned it will increase an already large competition. No matter, Uber and Lyft have had a massive impact on all rideshare workers and transportation industry.

> Want to Intern with On the Money?



THE ECONOMICS BEHIND FASHION

RHEA DEWJEE





Although fashion may seem like just following trends, it is a complicated industry that is intertwined with economics. From shifts in consumer behavior to interesting supply chain dynamics, the fashion industry is more intricate than it seems. Following a decrease in shopping in 2020, the industry had to adapt and still continues to do so to keep up with the quickly changing market.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, consumer behavior changed significantly, reshaping the fashion industry. Many consumers are now more aware of their spending habits due to the lockdown and worldwide economic shifts. There was a move in clothing trends away from luxury and fast fashion and towards sustainability and comfort. As the economy began to strengthen, consumers returned to their previous spending habits, leading to growth in the fashion industry.

For example, after slumps in sales figures in 2020, the womenswear market grew 28.9% between May 2021 and 2022 (Statistica, 2023).

This partially comes from companies pivoting to a new type of consumer and catering their marketing to a new generation. Many brands have used the pandemic as an "opportunity to step back and read and react to what was going on and adapt from there," said Abercrombie and Fitch intern, Aneeka Jain. By doing so, many clothing brands were able to bounce back from the pandemic, catering to a new consumer market. Additionally, the digitalization of retail that persisted helped the shopping industry go back to what it once was due to its accessibility.

The fashion industry is increasingly pivoting towards sustainability, due to growing awareness and demand for environmentally and socially

responsible practices. Traditionally, globalization allowed brands to reduce costs through outsourcing to countries with lower labor costs. but this often came at the expense of environmental impact and labor conditions. After the COVID-19 pandemic, we have also been exposed to the fragility of the supply chain which left room for a pivot to more sustainable practices. A survey done by McKinsey shows that 67 percent of participants "consider the use of sustainable materials to be an important purchasing factor" (Granskog, 2020). According to NSR clothing line founder, Andy Azad, "Younger generations are more conscious of sustainability. They are more conscious of biodegradable fibers so it is better for the environment". The slow shift to more sustainable practices shows a broader industry commitment to a more eco-friendly future for fashion. **BEAUTY INFLUENCERS AND CONSUMER TRENDS**

YARITZA CHAVEZ

What recent purchasing impulse did you have because of an influencer? It is likely you will find an influencer promoting makeup products while scrolling on social media. This is a new shift that many makeup companies have taken to promote their products to bigger or new target audiences. These digital content creators possess significant power in molding consumer preferences, particularly in the makeup sector. A study found that 41% of internet users follow influencers for beauty information (Boehm, 2023).

Influencers speak highly about brands' products that sponsor or endorse them to sway consumers to buy the products they demonstrate. As this new marketing tactic develops, the global influencer market value stands at 21.1 billion U.S. dollars as of 2023, which has tripled since 2019 (Dencheva, **2023).** With beauty influencers on the rise, it is not surprising that consumers increasingly reject traditional marketing forms like TV commercials and magazine ads and consider them less credible and trustworthy. Marketing graduate Alyssa Cano, mentions that "influencers are trusted as they have established themselves online through personal storytelling (creating and fostering a community - where they feel close with followers) – especially compared to old forms of advertising that were more staged and untrustworthy."

However, considering influencers are getting paid to talk positively about the product, consumers are now growing weary regarding the authenticity of the promotion. College student Mandy Lor notes, "Some influencers only post when they must promote products, which makes them seem more interested in making money than recommending products to people." This new need for genuineness of content among consumers has created a new value-driven shopping trend that preaches to the 'de-influencing' of popular products; instead of telling followers to buy products,



'de-influencers' ask them not to; amid the hype for the product. Other focus topics are decluttering, minimizing beauty consumption, and encouraging the discovery of cheaper duplicates that perform similarly to the original. This follows the trend of consumers valuing reviews, word-of-mouth recommendations, and research on products, including influencer recommendations (Boehm, 2023).

With so many opinions from influencers, choosing what products to buy can be challenging. Undoubtedly, influencers will continue to shape consumer preferences, but doing research can ensure that you buy the best product for you or not at all!



On the Money would like to thank Byline Bank for their sponsorship of this issue.



JACOB GOROFF

Taylor Swift is a 34-year-old billionaire. She is everywhere. You would be hard-pressed to find a random American who doesn't recognize her name. Yet, despite that, the average musician makes \$48,459 a year (Salary.com, 2024). That is \$15,336 less than the average U.S. salary of \$63,795. Taylor Swift has 99.6 million Spotify listeners a month, 78.4% of Spotify musicians have less than 50 monthly listeners (Peleg, 2024). Why is there such a sharp divide between the popularity and wealth of the average musician vs Taylor Swift?

One theory is called the Pareto Distribution, also known as the "80-20 Rule", a modeling system in which a few (20%) control the majority (80%) (Haley, 2025). This would mean that a few artists tend to get most of the attention, regardless of industry. Perhaps the popularity of Taylor Swift is just a consequence of psychology in which humans give most of their attention to the few rather than the many. Jim DeRogatis is a music critic who hosts SoundOpinions and a popular NPR show where they discuss trends in the music world. DeRogatis said, "Just like in Hollywood, you have a few studios that control." A few

record labels, radio stations, and now streaming services can have big effects on how many people listen to music.

Taylor is also a big personality and tends to write about her life in her songs, to which many can relate. According to Michael Berg, an influential entrepreneur, partner, and brand manager in the music industry, "The artists that have the ability to exemplify their humanity so people can connect to them are the ones that seem to have long-standing careers." Authenticity can help artists go a long way.

There are a lot of reasons why a few musicians receive most of the income and popularity in the music industry. Humans have the psychological tendency to give a lot of our attention to the few rather than the many. Record labels, online platforms, and radio stations are dictating the popularity of artists. Authenticity and artists' branding have large impacts on artists' popularity and wealth in the music industry. Artists can have a lot of control over their success. But, a lot of their prosperity lies in the hands of others and factors outside of their control.





In today's digital age, social media platforms have evolved from virtual hangouts to lucrative gold mines. The average person spends approximately two hours daily on these platforms, offering ample opportunity to turn your online time into a revenue stream. If you're like me and can't get enough of scrolling and posting, why not make some cash from it?

"With over 4.7 billion users worldwide as of 2023, social media's potential for income generation is immense" (Abecasis, 2023). Whether you're promoting brands, selling products, or leveraging ad revenue, there's no shortage of ways to make your mark—and your money—online.

METHODS TO MONETIZE SOCIAL MEDIA

- Affiliate Marketing: With affiliate marketing, you can earn commissions by promoting products and services. Share unique referral links and pocket a percentage of the sales made through those links. It's like being a matchmaker but for products!
- Selling Products/Services: From Etsy shops to Instagram boutiques, many people use social media showcase and sell your goods.
- Ad Revenue: Platforms, like YouTube and TikTok, share ad revenue with content creators for YouTube.

Let me share some insight from my journey. I've started multiple YouTube channels that have amassed over 10k subscribers and 1 million+ views. Thanks to the YouTube Google AdSense program, I've raked in over \$1,000 just by talking about my interests. I feel it's best to learn from influencers who already have a following, such as Bola (@fububola), with 7k Instagram

followers and 230k TikTok followers. He had this to share about his social media journey. "I first started with small ads for apps and companies. Challenges included declining views and viewers preferring more content over ads. Posting every day was my game-changer. Consistency boosted my videos and attracted more brands. It's all about showing up. Authenticity is crucial. If your fans think you're 'selling out,' support will drop. They want a real person, not just another ad machine."

Turning your social media presence into a profit-making machine isn't just a dream—it's entirely doable. By understanding the potential, choosing the right methods, and staying authentic, you can transform your posts into profits. So, why wait? Start monetizing your social media today and watch the magic happen!



Thank you to DePaul University & DePaul University's Center for Writing Based Learning (UCWbL) for your support of our interns.

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THE BENEFITS AND CONSEQUENCES OF MOBILE BANKING

JENIN HATTAB



Today's teens and young adults, Gen Z, individuals born from 1997 to 2012, have primarily lived in their young adult years with mobile banking. I interviewed an anonymous financial institution source that has been a teller since 1999 and has seen the benefits of mobile banking apps firsthand. This source shared, "The new generation does

mobile banking nowadays.....I have never seen that before in my career." Market Watch Guides surveyed 2,000 Americans regarding each banking trend, from Baby Boomers to Generation Z. "For instance, baby boomers feel more financially responsible; Gen X is most likely to feel financially insecure; millennials have higher retirement accounts; and Gen Z is the most comfortable talking about finances" (Kasulis, 2024).

However, with this access has come an increase in fraud. According to a 2023 Deloitte study referenced in Time Magazine, "Gen Z is more than three times as likely to fall for online scams compared to baby boomers" (Burga, 2024). Hailey Bautista, 19, a sophomore at the University of Wisconsin Madison, was a scam victim. She received a fake job opportunity via email with a promised payout of \$500. "I didn't think I was being scammed at all, I was oblivious to the situation." She deposited the check and received a call from her bank, reporting it

was fraudulent. Unfortunately, she can no longer bank at that financial institution and they closed her account indefinitely.

Due to issues arising like Haliey's, "JP Morgan Chase, the largest US bank by assets, now invests \$15 billion a year and employs 62,000 technologists to, in part, help fortify its defense against cyber crimes" (Goodkind, 2024).

The anonymous financial institution source shares, "(The financial institution is) working very hard to educate those who are still learning technology, especially our senior [citizens] who can fall into a fraud trap easily." Surprisingly, scams are happening to everyone, and no one is completely safe, "you are caught up in a moment where you are busy or distracted, and anything can happen." Although many technological advances have made financial management easier, it is critical to be on the lookout for financial scams even online.

CHASING MEDICAL SUPPLIES: SUPPLY CHAIN DELAYS

KARIS KELLY

Medication is an essential need for many patients, yet so many cannot access it due to drug shortages. Patients and physicians remain frustrated as the supply chain delays worsen. The first quarter of 2024 saw a 40% increase in supply chain disruption alerts for healthcare compared to Q1 of 2023 ("Life Sciences and Healthcare", 2024). Such disruptions in healthcare can be life-threatening and diminish a patient's quality of life. Additionally, it prevents physicians from providing the best care they can. As this becomes a rising issue post-COVID, how is this impacting the patients all over the US?

With 323 active medication

shortages in the United States, this is at the highest it has been since drug shortages were tracked in 2001 (ASHP, 2024). When patients are deprived of access to medication, like Ativan or chemotherapy, it can cause irreversible damage or death. As shortages continue, more patients' lives are at risk.

Often, when medications are backordered or not available, patients are not
notified until it is too late. Ken, a student
with multi-systemic chronic illnesses stated,
"If we know about shortages, we can contact
our doctor to find alternatives." Standard
practice should be to alert patients of their
medication shortages since many require
tapering down dosages. An anonymous
patient reported, "[Doctors] don't understand
the gravity of the lived experience." Patients
reported some negative effects of shortages,
such as having to drive to different
cities or states to receive medication, an

increase in side effects due to alternative medication options, and an increase in symptoms and flare-ups, with 80% reporting a decrease in quality of life (Kelly, 2024).

In 2023, manufacturers reported reasoning for shortages as unknown or would not provide a reason (60%), supply/demand (14%), manufacturing (12%), business decisions (12%), or raw material issues (2%) (American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, 2024). With the majority unspecified, this raises the question of what is causing the dramatic increase in shortages. As 2024 and 2025 progress, healthcare shortages may continue. Patient lives are on the line without continued reform and support from organizations and the government alike.



If you are at least 16 years old* and a high school junior or senior, you can save time and money by taking college-credit courses at City Colleges of Chicago.

*High school students who are younger than 16 can participate in Early College with the approval of the college president or vice president of their desired City Colleges location

CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO

Chicago Roadmap»»





Learn more about Early College opportunities at www.ccc.edu/EarlyCollege

HOW AI WILL CHANGE THE **WAY WE WORK?**

JOSEPH DAI

Artificial Intelligence is everywhere now, from self-driving vehicles, chatbots, social media algorithms, and even robot bees! The rapid improvement of AI capabilities raises an alarming question: Will AI take all of our jobs soon? An obvious flash point is the creative industry, jobs ranging from graphic design and audio production to journalism have all felt the AI disruption. According to Angela Misri, Assistant Professor in the School of Journalism at Toronto Metropolitan University, "More than half of journalists use AI as part of their journalistic work. Journalists use AI methods for everything from headline generation to generating articles and videos from data." In some high-profile cases,

the use of AI by media companies has backfired as articles have been found to contain misinformation and incorrect data.

The creative field is not the only field that is challenged by the emergence of AI. While high-level computer science jobs can harness AI to increase productivity, many entry-level computer science roles are now entirely automated. Wired Magazine reports that "Tech companies around the world laid off more than 400,000 workers in 2022 and 2023" (Wired, 2023). These layoffs result from the increasingly competitive job market in the tech field. Yinuo Huang, a competitive coder and machine learning student, states that "with the increasingly rapid development in technologies over many areas, graduates nowadays are supposed to actively follow and learn the most frontier technologies, new frameworks, and state-of-the-art inventions."

Consequently, due to rapid improvements in AI, the tech field is one where a worker has to constantly strive to stay up to date with AI's progress to avoid being replaced.

While it is true that some industries will fluctuate and have to adapt to AI, others will thrive and benefit from AI's capabilities. Consulting firm McKinsey & Co. predicts "demand for occupations such as health professionals and other STEM-related professionals would grow by 17 to 30 percent between 2022 and 2030" (McKinsey, 2024). The predicted growth in healthcare jobs is due to the nature of the profession, a very hands-on and interactive-based field. Although the future is uncertain for many occupations, such as the arts and technology, one thing is certain: getting an education is still as important as ever!

TRY IT OUT! Apply what you learned in On the Money

- 1. On page 9, Crystal talks about financial education for college students and reports that ___ % (pull from page 9) of college students have not had financial education. Have you? What did you learn? Write about it below or visit EconCouncil.org or OTMonline.org to access financial education from OTM!
- 2. On page 10, Aletsa highlights many strategies for saving money in college. What is a daily expense that you might be able to cut back on? Pick 1 & write about it below. Not sure? Try recording all your purchases this week & then review them. Learn more & create a budget at SimpleBudgets.org or CollegeBudgetBuilder.org!

Want to learn more about a specific article topic? Visit otmonline.org to read our web version and access hyperlinks to any sources cited by our writers to learn more!



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