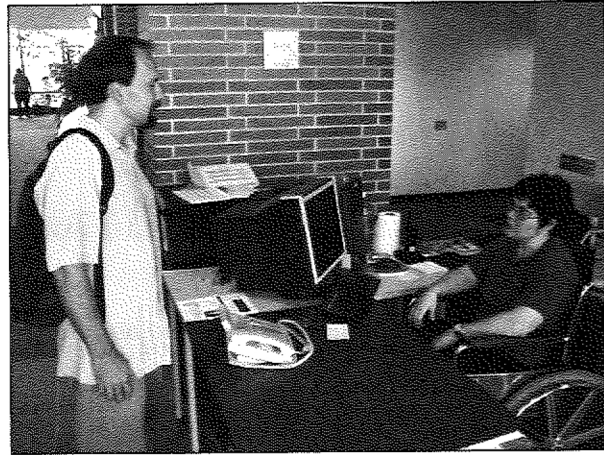


TRACK 42 TRANSCRIPT



Narrator

Listen to a conversation between a student and an employee in the university's career services office.

Student

Hi. Do you have a minute?

Administrator

Sure. How can I help you?

Student

I have a couple of questions about the career fair next week.

Administrator

OK, shoot.

Student

Um, well, are seniors the only ones who can go? I mean, you know, they're finishing school this year and getting their degrees and everything . . . and, well, it seems like businesses would want to talk to them and not first-year students like me . . .

Administrator

No, no. The career fair is open to all our students and we encourage anyone who's interested to go check it out.

Student

Well, that's good to know.

Administrator

You've seen the flyers and the posters around campus, I assume.

Student

Sure! Can't miss 'em. I mean, they all say where and when the fair is . . . just not who should attend.

Administrator

Actually, they do. But it's in the small print. We should probably make that part easier to read, shouldn't we? I'll make a note of that right now. So, do you have any other questions?

Student

Yes, actually I do now. Um, since I'd only be going to familiarize myself with the process—you know, "check it out"—I was wondering if there's anything you'd recommend that I do to prepare.

Administrator

That's actually a very good question. As you know, the career fair is generally an opportunity for local businesses to recruit new employees and for soon-to-be graduates to have interviews with several companies they might be interested in working for. Now, in your case, even though you wouldn't be looking for employment right now, it still wouldn't hurt for you to prepare much like you would if you were looking for a job.

Student

You mean like get my resume together and wear a suit?

Administrator

That's a given. I was thinking more along the lines of doing some research. The flyers and posters list all the businesses that are sending representatives to the career fair. Um, what's your major, or do you have one yet?

Student

Well, I haven't declared a major yet but I'm strongly considering accounting. See, that's part of the reason I want to go to the fair . . . to help me decide if that's what I really want to study . . .

Administrator

That's very wise. Well, I suggest that you get on the computer and learn more about the accounting companies, in particular, that will be attending. You can learn a lot about companies from their Internet Web sites. Then prepare a list of questions.

Student

Questions . . . hmm. So in a way I'll be interviewing them?

Administrator

That's one way of looking at it. Think about it for a second. What do you want to know about working for an accounting firm?

Student

Well, there's the job itself . . . and salary, of course . . . and, um, working conditions . . . I mean, would I have an office or would I work in a big room with a zillion other employees? And . . . um . . . and maybe about opportunities for advancement . . .

Administrator

See? Those are all important things to know. After you do some research you'll be able to tailor your questions to the particular company you're talking to.

Student

Wow, I'm glad I came by here! So, it looks like I've got some work to do.

Administrator

And if you plan on attending future career fairs, I recommend you sign up for one of our interview workshops.

Student

I'll do that.

TRACK 43 TRANSCRIPT

Narrator

Why does the student say this:

Student

So, it looks like I've got some work to do.

TRACK 44 TRANSCRIPT

Economics



Narrator

Listen to part of a lecture in an economics class.

Professor

Now, when I mention the terms “boom” and “bust,” what does that bring to mind?

Male student

The dot-com crash of the '90s!

Professor

OK. The *boom* in the late 1990s when all those new Internet companies sprang up and were then sold for huge amounts of money. Then the *bust* around 2000 . . . 2001, when many of those same Internet companies went out of business. Of course, booms aren't *always* followed by busts—we've certainly seen times when local economies expanded rapidly for a while then went back to a normal pace of growth. But, there's a type of rapid expansion, what might be called a “hysterical” or irrational boom that pretty much always leads to a bust. See, people often *create* and *intensify* a boom when they get carried away by some new industry that seems like it'll make 'em lots of money, fast. You'd think that by the '90s, people would've learned from the past. If they did—well, look at *tulips*.

Male student

Tulips . . .? You mean, like, the flower?

Professor

Exactly. For instance, do you have any idea where tulips are from? Originally, I mean.

Male student

Well, the Netherlands, right?

Professor

That's what *most* people think—but no, they're not native to the Netherlands, or even Europe. Tulips actually hail from an area the Chinese call the “Celestial Mountains” in central Asia—a very *remote* mountainous region.

It was Turkish nomads who first discovered tulips and spread them slowly westward. Now, around the sixteenth century, Europeans were traveling to Istanbul in Turkey as merchants and diplomats. And the Turks often gave the Europeans tulip bulbs as gifts, which they would carry home with them. For the Europeans, tulips were totally unheard of, a great novelty. The first bulbs to show up in the Netherlands, the merchant who received them roasted and ate them—he thought they were a kind of onion.

It turns out that the Netherlands was an ideal country for growing tulips. It had the right kind of sandy soil, for one thing, but also it was a wealthy nation with a growing economy, willing to spend lots of money on new, exotic things—plus the Dutch had a history of gardening. Wealthy people would compete, spending enormous amounts of money to buy the rarest flowers for their gardens.

Soon tulips were beginning to show up in different colors as growers tried to breed them specifically for colors which would make them even more valuable, but they were never completely sure what they would get. Some of the most prized tulips were white with purple streaks or red with yellow streaks on the petals—even a dark purple tulip that was very much prized. What happened then was a craze for these specialized tulips. We call that craze “tulip mania.”

So—here we've got all the *conditions* for an-an *irrational* boom: a prospering economy, so more people had more disposable income—money to spend on luxuries—but they weren't experienced at *investing* their new wealth. Then along comes a thrilling new commodity—sure, the first specimens were just plain old red tulips, but they could be bred into some extraordinary variations—like that dark purple tulip. And finally, you have an *unregulated* marketplace—no government constraints—where prices could explode. And explode they did, starting in the 1630s.

There was always much more demand for tulips than supply. Tulips didn't bloom frequently like roses; tulips bloomed *once* in the early spring and that was it for the year. Eventually, specially bred, multicolored tulips became so valuable . . . Well, according to records, one tulip bulb was worth 24 tons of wheat or a thousand pounds of cheese. One particular tulip bulb was sold in exchange for a small ship! In other words, tulips were literally worth their weight in gold.

As demand grew, people began selling *promissory* notes guaranteeing the *future* delivery of prized tulip bulbs. The buyers of these pieces of paper would resell the notes at marked-up prices. These promissory notes kept changing hands—from buyer to buyer—until the tulip was ready for delivery. But it was all pure *speculation*, because, as I said, there was no way to know if the bulb was really going to produce the variety, the color, that was promised. But that didn't matter to the owner of the note, the owner only cared about having that piece of paper, so it could be traded later at a profit. And people were *borrowing*—mortgaging their homes, in many cases—to obtain those bits of paper because they were sure they'd found an easy way to make money.

So now you've got all the ingredients for a huge bust—and bust it did, when one cold February morning in 1637, a group of bulb traders got together and discovered that suddenly there were no bidders—nobody wanted to buy. Panic spread like wildfire, and the tulip market collapsed totally.