

Company Overview of Awesome Financial Future, LLC

Synopsis

Today's young adults are in completely uncharted waters when it comes to their financial future. Previous generations could count on widely available employer pensions, healthy and substantial Social Security, and near-automatic hefty homeowner equities to pave their way. These cornerstones are crumbling fast, leaving today's young adults *completely on their own* financially. Making it even worse, they're starting out further behind than any previous generation – thanks to spiraling college tuitions, crushing student loan debt, and the most challenging employment landscape in decades.

Chris Smith has emerged as a voice of hope and empowerment for young adults. His message is simple: although it's more complex and challenging than ever before, today's financial world is actually *better* than the old one – but only if you know what you're doing and get off to a strong start. His book [*Securing Your Financial Future – Complete Personal Finance for Beginners*](#), and his accompanying online video series *Awesome Financial Future*, walk young adults through the knowledge they need, step by step. The information presented is solidly grounded in financial fundamentals and covers all aspects, but is also approachable for those with no previous financial background.

Company Structure

In order to create a robust platform to launch the current and planned future financial education offerings, Awesome Financial Future, LLC was incorporated in July, 2012 as a Washington limited liability company. Chris Smith serves as Founder, President, and Secretary of the LLC. Additional directors have been elected, and are detailed on the Board of Directors page.

Board of Directors for Awesome Financial Future, LLC



Mr. John Inskeep

Mr. Inskeep is Chairman of the Board of Directors for Awesome Financial Future, LLC. He was Vice President and Partner during his 16 year tenure at Columbia Management Company, a Portland based investment advisory firm which served large pension and profit-sharing plans, foundations and endowments. Upon the sale of that firm, John turned his attention to angel investment opportunities. These include several startup firms, such as Ascension Software, Air Advice, EthicsPoint, and Fios (among others) where he learned that “success takes a lot longer than failure.”



Ms. Nora Denzel

Ms. Denzel has held an impressive succession of senior management positions in the tech industry. Most recently, as Chief Marketing Officer at Intuit. In 2012 alone, she was named one of the Top 10 Leading Women in Technology (CIO Magazine), Top 25 Women Engineers (Business Insider), and Top 20 Chief Marketing Officers (Exec Rank). Prior to Intuit, she held senior positions at Hewlett-Packard, Legato, and IBM. She is widely admired as a supporter and mentor for young women in management and technical careers.



Mr. Leaverton has three decades of financial services experience, and is currently Chairman of the Board for SNW Asset Management. Prior to that, he has served as President and CEO of Seattle-Northwest Securities Corporation as well as both President, and Regional Director of the private client group for RBC Wealth Management. Currently, he serves on the Boards of five other companies and one non-profit. He has also served on several other charitable boards, including the Southeast Asian Refugee Community Home and the Fred Hutchinson Executive Board

Chris Smith Biography



Mr. Chris Smith

After earning an undergraduate degree in economics and a master's in finance, Chris Smith began a three-decade career at Hewlett Packard. While at HP, he rapidly rose through the finance ranks to eventually become the senior financial executive for two of HP's multi-billion dollar global divisions. While at HP he received an Outstanding Service Award for his work as a Loaned Professor at Florida A&M's School of Business and industry. Chris has always been passionate about giving back by teaching young adults personal finance. After he retired from HP, Chris tackled the task of teaching his two college-age sons the basics of personal finance.

From them he saw today's financial world from a new perspective. Chris realized that today's path to financial independence is dramatically different from just a generation ago.

Today's young adults can no longer depend on career-long associations with single (or a few) employers, unions, pension plans, a dependably funded Social Security program, or automatic equity just from owning a home. Despite these daunting shifts, Chris knew that a bright financial future is still completely attainable for young adults everywhere. However, it would require a stronger understanding of the fundamentals, and plenty of sound plainspoken advice on how to wisely and successfully navigate today's financial world.



That's when Chris got busy – he wrote *Securing [Your Financial Future—Complete Personal Finance for Beginners](#)* and created the [Awesome Financial Future Video Series](#).

The book is a comprehensive resource, offering detailed help for the variety of financial situations facing young adults. The video series, which follows the same overall structure as the book, provides a solid grounding in all of the financial fundamentals in a convenient, easy-to-understand form. William

Bernstein, well-known author of *The Four Pillars of Investing*, says this video series and book, "...will improve both the peace of mind and bottom lines of its recipients, and it may even make them better people." Lynnette Khalfani-Cox, author of the New York Times best-seller *Zero Debt* says that it's "...truly a life-changing gift for anyone seeking long-term financial security."

Now Chris describes himself as a "man on a mission" to increase the financial IQs of young adults everywhere. He's made this his mission because of his four core beliefs about the financial prospects for today's emerging generation.

Awesome Financial Future's Four Core Beliefs

1. Before any young adult goes out into the financial world, *each and every one of them deserves* a solid, understandable explanation, of exactly how that financial world works.
2. We as a society, have done a remarkably poor job of providing our young adults with the tools they need to understand how the financial world works.
3. The way the financial world works today, this kind of personal finance understanding is *more important than ever*.
4. If we can solve this problem, those young adults would be immensely better off. *But they wouldn't be the only ones!* So would their families, their communities, our economy, and our entire country.

Awesome Financial Future Mission Statement and Vision

Mission Statement

Awesome Financial Future enables young adults to master the fundamentals of personal finance – so they can be empowered to lead their best, most fulfilling lives.

Vision

Millions of young adults are solidly on the path to their best financial future, thanks to the knowledge they gained from *Awesome Financial Future* content.

Access to this knowledge is widely available to all young adults, either through the direct purchase of affordable content, or provided free to the end user through an innovative collaboration of a wide variety of enlightened partners.

As a result, this emerging generation's previous sense of financial stress and futility has been replaced by hope, confidence, and *true financial empowerment*.

Video Series Introduction and Summary

Introduction

One thing is for sure: today's young adults are far less likely to read a book cover to cover than previous generations. *This does not mean that they're any less capable of absorbing and mastering complex information.* It does mean that they're used to a far richer array of media, and a quicker pace, than their parents or grandparents ever dealt with.

That's exactly why the *Awesome Financial Future Video Series* was created. While the book is an invaluable, detailed reference, the video series covers the main highlights at a brisk pace. Each video is short – only 7 minutes. They're organized by topic, so it's easy to jump to whatever topic is on your radar screen at the moment. They're viewable from any computer screen, tablet, or smart phone. And they're streamed online, so you can watch anytime, anywhere you can get an internet connection.

The book and the video series are designed to work together. The ideal sequence is to watch the videos first to get a solid grasp on all the main ideas, and then refer to the book as financial events unfold in your life. For example, in Video 19, you'll learn the soundest financial way to decide whether buying a house makes sense for you. And if it does you can then refer to Chapters 13-15, in the book to learn all about how to go about it—from how to organize your search, to understanding exactly how mortgages work. In short, the videos are wide in breadth and brisk in pace, and the book is the reference for the entire “how to” details.

Summary

What makes the *Awesome Financial Future Video Series* so unique?

Online video – this is how young adults *want* to learn today; online videos can be viewed from computers, tablets or smart phones.

Comprehensive – all of the important elements of personal finance are covered, in a single convenient place, all from the same source – so the pieces all fit together.

Convenient – the videos are *short*, just 7 minutes each – each one is self-contained, which makes the tone concise and practical.

Rock solid content – personal finance education is characterized by “get rich quick” scams on one side, and corporate advertising slickly disguised as helpful hints on the other. *Awesome Financial Future* is neither; just high quality financial education for young adults, based on sound, proven principles.

Persuasive recommendations – the series doesn't just explain and define, it presents *distinct recommendations*, and backs them up with powerful examples and evidence.

Focused exclusively on young adults – today's young adults have distinct issues, opportunities, and learning styles, and these are *focal points*, not afterthoughts, in the series

Engaging, encouraging tone – young adults are typically inexperienced with financial topics, and a condescending or academic tone won't help matters. However, examples, analogies, and an authentically encouraging tone will.

Professional grade" production values – young adults are sophisticated consumers of online video; skilled professional videographers and editors were used to ensure a high degree of attention sustaining watch-ability. (<http://awesomefinancialfuture.com/>)

Chris Smith's Book Overview

Securing Your Financial Future: Complete Personal Finance for Beginners,
by Chris Smith © 2012 by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., ISBN 978-1-4422-1422-4

Building a strong financial position takes two things: a steady income, and a solid plan for what to do with that income. If you're like most people, you've put nearly all of your attention on the first of these. There's nothing wrong with that. Finding a way to sustainably earn a living, which matches up with your talents, interests and values is an important (and sometimes elusive) goal. Depending on your choice, it may take quite a bit of time, training and education to position yourself for success. And because the choice is such a personal one, it's natural for this part of the equation to dominate your attention.

A steady income, all by itself, is not enough to ensure a strong long-term financial position. You need a solid plan to go along with it. Few people realize the importance of this when they're just starting out, but even those who do understand the importance have a hard time developing such a plan. It can seem like the world expects you to already know all about how to manage your money, but doesn't provide a good way for you to learn. You've been responsibly pursuing the first half of the equation – but what about the second?

Practical, straightforward advice for young adults to help ensure a secure financial future—that's what *Securing Your Financial Future* is all about. The goal is to teach you how to manage your money safely, responsibly, and most of all successfully. The book is comprehensive enough to cover everything you need to know, all in one convenient place. The emphasis is on practical, straightforward explanations that are easy to apply to your financial life. If you're interested in finding how to get on a path towards a bright financial future – then this book is for you! (<http://securingyourfinancialfuture.com>)

Book Endorsements and Testimonials

*“Were I to recommend just one book for a young person just starting his or her financial life, Chris Smith’s *Securing Your Financial Future* would be it. Comprehensive yet lively and easily readable, it covers everything from saving habits to a sound, stone-simple investment strategy; the chapters on the multiple facets of house buying alone are worth the price of the book. It will improve the both the peace of mind and bottom lines of its recipients, and it may even make them better people.”*

—**William J. Bernstein**, author of *The Four Pillars of Investing* and *The Investor’s Manifesto*

*“Young adults today face so many economic pitfalls, including excessive credit card bills, student loans, investing blunders and more. If you’re just starting your financial life, or you know someone who is, *Securing Your Financial Future* can help you or a loved one avoid all those money-draining mistakes that we’ve all made – and later come to regret. *Securing Your Financial Future* is truly a life-changing gift for anyone seeking long-term financial security. Best of all, it’s chock-full of interesting, sound advice dispensed in a way that makes learning about money matters fun and doable.”*

—**Lynnette Khalfani-Cox**, author of the *New York Times* best-seller *Zero Debt* and co-founder of the free financial advice blog, AskTheMoneyCoach.com

*“The majority of young adults are not taught basic money management either by parents or through school. Consequently, they receive their financial education by attending the “school of hard knocks.” It doesn’t have to be that way. Chris Smith’s *Securing Your Financial Future* is the easy to understand, and enjoyable to read primer that shows young adults how to create a strong financial foundation for, as the title says, a secure future.”*

—**Melissa Tosetti**, author of *Living the Savvy Life*

“Chris Smith’s book is a must read for all those beginning their financial lives. Indeed, this superb book has clear and compelling guidance for financial decision making throughout life.”

—**Suzanne Nora Johnson**, Former Vice Chairman, *The Goldman Sachs Group*; Board Member, *American Red Cross*, *Women’s World Banking*

“Financial security – an impossible dream for young people today? This may be the Age of Economic Anxiety, but Chris Smith explains how making a few good early decisions and sticking to sound principles can put today’s college students on the road to financial success. Required reading for every college student and recent graduate (and for their parents, too).”

—**Mike Veseth**, author of *Mountains of Debt* and Robert G. Albertson Professor, *University of Puget Sound*

“It isn’t easy making financial topics fun to learn, but that’s exactly what Chris did for years at HP with his creative approaches and trademark humor. Young adults everywhere: prepare to be entertained and learn how to manage your finances at the same time!”

—**Jim Murrin**, Senior Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, *HP Enterprise Group*, *Hewlett-Packard*

Target Market

Primary Market

The content in both the book and the video series is aimed at young adults, in their late 20's and early 30's. In today's financial world, young adults have the most to gain by establishing the right habits and getting an early start with long term investing. However, this vitally important market is distinctly underserved by the personal finance industry. Why?

First, many young adults are simply unaware of the urgency of a strong early start, so marketing to them requires a fair amount of convincing. (And that translates into higher marketing and promotional expenses.)

Second, this market is quite small relative to older, more "willing and able to spend" generations. Awesome Financial Future is undaunted by these obstacles, and will continue focusing on young adults because that is where this education is *most desperately needed!*

Secondary Markets (Emerged)

Parents: Young adults may not understand the urgency of a strong start in today's financial world, *but many of their parents do.* The problem is that these parents are often at a loss when it comes to advising their young adult children – either because they never mastered the skills in the first place, or the 20th Century skills they mastered are obsolete (or insufficient) in today's financial world. A surprising number of such parents have been drawn to the book and video series, as a way of starting a financial discussion with their young adult children.

Current high school and college students: A great deal of discussion is taking place nationally (and around the world) on "financial literacy programs" incorporating personal finance education into high school and college curriculums. These programs have noble intent and generate a lot of enthusiasm, but there is also evidence that they don't make a truly lasting difference for most students. Nevertheless, the debate itself is generating visibility and interest; the products are an outstanding fit for an "enlightened few."

General public: (*Late 30's, 40's, and beyond.*) Even though the content is aimed at young adults, 70-80% of it is generally applicable for any age. (The recommended long term investing strategy is the clearest example of what would *not* be; older investors should seek other advice.) Many people seeking broad, general personal finance education are frustrated by the difficulty in finding a straightforward, authoritative and understandable source—one with no hidden agendas. When these people encounter the refreshingly clear voice of Awesome Financial Future, they find value even though they're not necessarily the intended audience.

Communities with unique financial circumstances: Almost everyone needs general financial education, but some groups, or communities share particular challenges over and above what everyone needs to know. Examples are the best way to illustrate this. Many Native American tribes have experienced a substantial economic resurgence in the last generation. But, this resurgence isn't doing nearly as much good as it could be, because of a lack of financial know-how at the household level. Another example is students with specialized post- secondary degrees – like medical or law school graduates. These people are in a “good news/bad news” situation—potential for very high income, but burdened by truly staggering levels of student loan debt. Their probable high incomes can put them in great financial shape long-term – but whether that actually happens or not depends on how wisely they handle this very specific circumstance. Awesome Financial Future offers these communities a customized educational experience—a blend of “what everyone needs to know,” along with thoroughly researched, highly customized guidance on how to deal with their particular challenges and circumstances.

Fact Sheet

Personal Finance Skills in the US Are Abysmal Across the Board

- 56% of Americans admit that they do not have a household budget at all. (Harris Interactive, 2012)
- United States personal savings rate is consistently among the very lowest of all industrialized countries. (OECD, Economic Outlook n.91, June 2012)
- 39% of Americans carry credit card debt from month to month; of those who do, the average balance is over \$15,000. (Harris Interactive, 2012)
- 45% of working Americans have no retirement savings at all; almost 80% have less than one year's income saved. (NIRS Study, 2013)
- 34% – the highest percentage ever – of middle class Americans predict that they will have to work “until at least age 80”. (Harris Interactive, 2013)

Young Adults Are Facing a Particularly Daunting Financial Challenge

- One in five Americans between the ages of 25-34 are neither working, nor in school. (United States Census Bureau, 2013)
- For 25-29 year olds, the rates of both home ownership and geographic mobility have dropped to 50 year lows. (US Census Bureau, 2013)
- Only 18% of 20-29 year-olds are confident that they will have enough money to live when they are ready to retire. (PNC Financial Independence Survey, 2011)
- Social media generation: Three in four 25-to-34 year olds look first to their (equally confused) peers for money guidance and advice. (TIME Business and Money, Nov 2013)
- In 1980, one year of college (tuition, fees, and room and board) cost two months of that year's median income. In 2012 – just one generation later – it's ballooned to five months. (*Author research)
- 65% of undergraduate students are carrying student loans, and the average balance at graduation is almost \$28,000. (US Census Bureau, 2013)
- Short term CD rates reached 9.06% thirty years ago. As of mid-year 2013, they've dropped to 0.16%. (BankRate.com, 2013)

Why Young Adults Need Awesome Financial Future:

- Only 13 states currently require students to take a personal finance course as a high school graduation requirement. (Council for Economic Education, 2011)
- Even where financial literacy courses are offered, there is serious debate as to whether it is effective. (“The Fallacy of Financial Literacy”, Jill Schlesinger, CBS MoneyWatch, April 2013)
- Why? Shortage of qualified/confident instructors, curriculum dominated by financial services firms, presented too early in student’s lives. (*Author research)
- Parents are in the best position to teach; but most parents grew up in a completely different financial reality, and do not feel confident/qualified to teach. (*Author research)
- Young adults have grown up facing a 24/7 onslaught of consumerist advertising unprecedented in history; the vital concepts of delayed gratification and saving now seem quaint by comparison (*Author Research)

Improving Young Adult’s Financial Skills Benefits Everybody—Free use Statements

- Financial knowledge among the young is strongly influenced by family background. (National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 2009)
- The 27% of survey respondents considered financially literate, indicates a disproportionate number were white males from college-educated families. (National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 2009)
- “These skills [financial and economic] not only help people provide a better life for themselves and their families, but having such skills also helps equip them to be engaged citizens and informed voters.”(Ben Bernanke, April 2013)
- Higher rates of personal savings facilitate higher geographic mobility and job skills investment, benefitting economic growth.
- When young adults are on a strong financial footing, their parents can concentrate their efforts on their own retirement savings.
- Public safety nets could be narrower and deeper because fewer people would need them; less overall burden on government.
- Greater financial stability at the household level lessens vulnerability to the economy’s inevitable ups and downs.
- Financial knowledge, unlike other assets, can be shared without there being “less” for anyone else.

- Smarter, better informed consumers would reward sellers who provide solid value, and drive weaker/less ethical sellers out of the marketplace.
- Financially stronger consumers drive financial services “bottom feeders,” who prey on financial fear and inexperience, out of the marketplace.

Why “Securing Your Financial Future—Complete Personal Finance for Beginners” is an important book

- Few personal finance books are targeted at young adults; authors and publishers prefer the much larger, always-ready-to-spend Boomers
- The few books that are aimed at young adults fall into either of two categories
 - “Textbook” style – carefully researched and presented, but take great pains not to “take sides” or make recommendations beyond the most obvious
 - “Marketing driven” style – emphasis on celebrity, hip/trendy approach, short term response to most recent newsworthy economic development, social controversy, etc.
- Securing Your Financial Future is NEITHER. Instead it is:
 - Comprehensive
 - Enduring
 - Authoritative
 - Persuasively advocates a specific course of action
 - Provides solid education behind the key points
 - Presented in an engaging, readable way
 - Endorsed by an impressive array of respected thought leaders in business, academia, and financial education

Sample Story Ideas for the Media

- How news media, popular culture and both political parties keep touting the 20th Century financial playbook and how harmful that is for our young adults
- Why financial literacy programs won't solve the financial literacy problem
- Why most student debt "relief" proposals benefit government more than the graduates they are supposed to be helping
- Why the recession of 2008-2009 might have been the best possible thing for the financial futures of young adults, and why a financial futures and why a full-fledged recovery might be the worst
- From a lifetime of creating budgets in corporate America – the two most important lessons Chris Smith can teach you about your household budget
- What parents can do to help their young adult children prepare financially for the future
- How Chris Smith's programs differ from other literacy programs and why it matters
- What is the Money Skills for Life program; what makes it different than other financial learning programs?
- How Native Americans across the country benefit from the Money Skills for Life program

Why Chris Smith is a Great Interview

- Media trained for television and radio
- Opinionated and outspoken advocate for the financial future of young adults
- Not beholden to ANY constituency or institution – many “financial experts” are compensated spokespeople or salespeople
- The rare bilingual financial expert – understands the technical complexities, but explains in refreshingly clear, understandable language
- The master of financial analogies: you may not understand investment intricacies, but if you understand bathtubs, checkerboards, and swimming in rivers – you’ll learn something!
- Great sense of humor, articulate, passionate
- Can move within an interview—pick up and keep moving if errors or complexities exist (does not get flustered)

Interview Questions

- What's so different about today's financial world for young adults?
- What is the good news regarding the financial future of young adults today, with so much bad news consistently in the media?
- What's so important about starting to save money early?
- Please give us some examples of key financial decisions, and tell us why they are important.
- Where is the best place for young adults to start in the process of making the right financial decisions?
- Once you taught your own sons, what made you take the next step and turn those lessons into a book?
- How can parents help the young adults in their life?
- How can adults that lack the financial savvy to help the young adults in their life get the help they need?
- Why is talking to your kids about money so difficult?
- Why did you produce a video series when you already have such a comprehensive book available?
- What is the most difficult decision for a young adult coming out of college?
- Why are so many young adults caught up with credit card debt, and how can they stay away from it?
- What should students and graduates do with student loans? Should they get them to begin with?
- How did you get involved with the Native American community in teaching financial information, or as you call it, "Money Skills for Life?"

Additional questions available: Please contact Lynette Hoy at Lynette@FiretalkerPR.com or call 206-455-9366.

Press and Book Reviews

[NorthWest Indian News TV 2015 from Episode 63](#)

Muckleshoot Indian Tribe in Auburn, Washington, implements financial education program Money Skills for Life, with Chris Smith, author of *Securing Your Financial Future – Complete Personal Finance for Beginners*, and Founder and CEO of Awesome Financial Future, LLC. Awesome Financial Future, LLC.

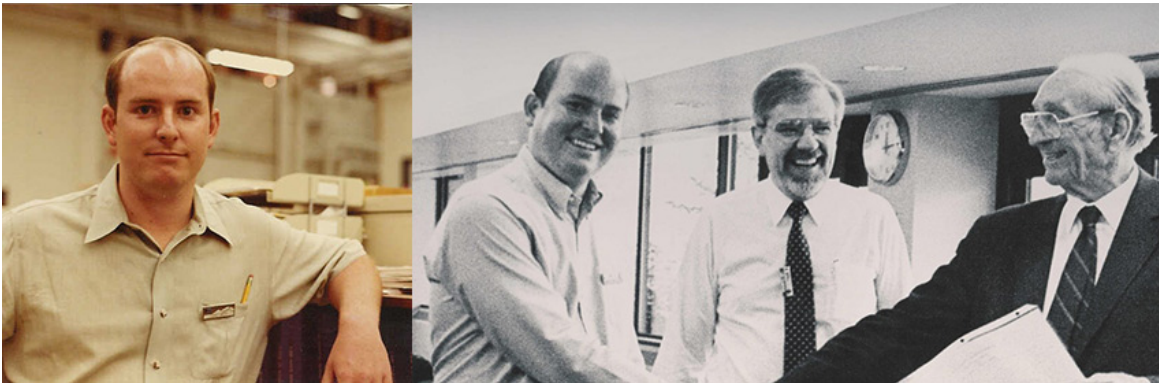


Published article by Chris Smith, Hewlett Packard—

HP Continuum, September 24, 2013

[HP Alum Pens Book to Help People Learn Finance](#)

By Chris Smith



First appeared in HP Continuum, September 24, 2013

My name is Chris Smith, and I started with HP in Loveland as a financial analyst in 1978. At the time, John Young had just been named CEO, though Bill and Dave were still very active, and both made visits to Loveland from time to time. The company was growing fast, and was approaching the almost unimaginably high \$2B mark in sales... (*see more*)



Posted June 14, 2013

Securing Your Financial Future – Detailed Book Review

Posted in Book Reviews by [Jacob](#)

[Securing Your Financial Future: Complete Personal Finance for Beginners](#) by Chris Smith is an excellent book and one that I wholeheartedly recommend. It is the most clear and comprehensive guide on personal finance for young adults that I've come across. If you're in the 16-30 age range, it's a must read. If you are older than that, I still recommend you check it out. - See more at: <http://cashcowcouple.com/book-reviews/securing-your-financial-future-book-review/#sthash.oSo6fQD4.dpuf>



Posted May 9, 2012

The following is an excerpt from [Securing Your Financial Future: Complete Personal Finance for Beginners](#) courtesy of Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. All Rights Reserved.

The Best Way to Pay for What You Buy



Posted May 16, 2012

The following is an excerpt from [Securing Your Financial Future: Complete Personal Finance for Beginners](#) courtesy of Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. All Rights Reserved.

Words of Advice on Selected Insurance and Risk Management Topics

Radio Interviews



[Alternative Talk 1150 KKNW | 1150KKNW.com](http://1150KKNW.com)

Femme Finance on 1150 KKNW

With Host Debbie Whitlock

August 2, 2013

Interview with Chris Smith, author of *Securing Your Financial Future – Complete Personal Finance for Beginners*

Your Money: Your Choices

With Host Hank Coleman

August 26, 2013

What Young Adults Need To Know About Money When They Are Just Starting Out

Global Talk Radio

With host Kevin Dawson

June 12, 2013:

Financial Challenges and Opportunities Young Adults Face Today