

# Issues Impacting the Software Workforce

Harris N. Miller, President,  
ITAA

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# About ITAA

- Established in 1961
- 400 Corporate Members
  - Plus global affiliate, WITSA
  - Offices in Arlington, VA and Silicon Valley
- Leader in Public Policy Advocacy
- IT Workforce and Education Specialty



# The Future IT Job Picture

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

### **Tech Jobs Start to Come Back In U.S. After Three-Year Slump**

“After a deep three-year slump that erased more than one million jobs, US technology companies have begun hiring again, marking a so far modest but solid trend that could well brighten the country's economic outlook.”

“Executives remain cautious after the long downturn, and job gains could quickly evaporate if sales slip. Yet even the small increases herald a significant shift.”

- April 29, 2004



# The Future IT Job Picture

- Even Though the Job Picture is Improving, the IT Job Market is Becoming More and More Competitive
- Jobs are Being Created across the Economy, but IT Workers Must Be Better Prepared to Navigate the Changing Job Market



# ITAA Is A Leader in Workforce Issues

- In Mid-March, ITAA Held a Workshop on the Software Workforce at George Mason University To Discuss the Challenges Facing the Software Workforce
- Workshop Included Top Employers Such As IBM, Northrop Grumman and Microsoft and Representatives from Academia





# Key Workshop Themes

- **Skill Needs of the Current Software Workforce are Changing**
  - A greater emphasis on non-technical skills
- **Need for Better Data on Postsecondary Degrees**
  - More accurate data is required on sources of postsecondary degrees; data should include job placement and salary rates
- **Navigating the Certifications and Licensing Landscape**
  - Is there a need to pare down and prioritize certifications?
- **Integrating Accessibility into Software Development and Products**
  - Accessibility training must be integrated into the development of software products and services
- **Benefits of Global Sourcing**



# Skill Needs Are Changing

- There Is General Hiring Shift - Employers are Placing Greater Emphasis on Non-Technical Abilities, Specifically Business Acumen
- Businesses Want Employees Who Can “Think Outside the Box”
- Soft Skills are Important
  - Knowledge of the Business Model
  - Interpersonal Skills
  - Writing Ability
  - Strategic Thinking
  - Need better term than “soft skills”



# A Word on Education


- During the Workshop, Participants Noted the Decline in Graduates with Degrees in Computer Science
- To Gain a Broader Understanding, It Was Suggested that Students in Technical Fields Should Pursue A Liberal Arts Minor
- While Much Attention is Paid to Four-Year Colleges, Little Attention Is Given to Two-Year Colleges
- Community Colleges and Private Technical Schools Gaining Momentum





# Certifications and Licensing

- Community Colleges and Career Colleges Are At the Forefront of Educational Flexibility
- There Are Many Certificate and Licensing Programs Out There – It Is Increasingly Important to Know Which One is the “Right One”
- Workshop Participants Discussed Forming a National Committee to Pare Down and Prioritize Certifications to Prepare Students with the Skills that Are Most “In Demand”
- Over the Next Five to Ten Years, Community and Technical Colleges Will Increasingly Be Vital Partners with States and Employers in Building a Rigorous Lifelong Learning System that Keeps our IT Workforce at the Forefront of Innovation



# Having the “Right Stuff”

- Job Experience Counts
- Prior Experience is Critical for:
  - Technical Support
  - Web Developers
  - Network Administration
  - Digital Media
  - Technical Writers



# But I'm a Seasoned Professional...

- Even Seasoned Professionals Must Take Advantage of Lifelong Learning Programs and Continually Hone Their Skills to Stay at the Forefront of Their Profession
- Certification Programs and “On the Job” Training Are Also Important
- Advanced Degrees and Degrees in other Fields Could Also Make a Critical Difference



# Areas of Future Growth

- Over the Next 3 – 5 Years, ITAA Anticipates Positive Job Growth in Sectors Like:
  - Information Security
  - Network Design or Administration
  - Programming or Software Engineering



# Let's Wrap It Up...

- Motivation and Flexibility Are Critical Elements to Success
- Lifelong Employment Is Out
- Lifelong Learning Is In
- Domain, Technical Knowledge Are a Powerful Combination
- Soft Skills Round Out the Picture



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President

ITAA

703-284-5340

[hmiller@itaa.org](mailto:hmiller@itaa.org)

[www.itaa.org](http://www.itaa.org)

