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JOB PREP

The Voice of Career Insight

IT Professionals Sound Off
2018 IT Skills and Salary Report

What is your honest opinion about your job? Your salary? Your boss?

Every fall for 11 years, Global Knowledge has surveyed thousands of IT professionals on key topics such as salary, skill development, certifications, job satisfaction and more. The resulting data makes up a majority of IT salaries, which provides a wide-ranging and detailed snapshot of the industry.

And while the facts and figures are highly valuable, the comments shared by our survey respondents are sometimes more interesting and eye-catching. The open field sections of our survey are packed with authentic opinions about all aspects of the IT industry. Some of the strongest sentiments this year revolve around cybersecurity, skills gaps, communication, management frustrations and job satisfaction.

Cybersecurity professionals are confident in their job security

One trend was clear when analyzing survey comments from those in cybersecurity—they're not worried about losing their job.

"IT compliance and security is a secure field, jobs will never run out."

"It is a necessary job function so I am not concerned about losing my position."

We saw many comments similar to these. Cybersecurity professionals are more secure in their role than anybody we surveyed. Cybersecurity professionals have the top global salaries ($81,564) and with a clear shortage of qualified talent in the field, established and credentialed security personnel are in high demand.

Reasons behind skills gaps

One major finding in this year's report is that 70% of global decision-makers currently face a shortage of necessary skills. As already mentioned, there's a meaningful cybersecurity skills gap, which may be a positive for job security but is proving to be harmful for many IT departments.

According to our report, the main reasons behind growing skills gaps are:

Global I.T.'s Monthly Thought Provocation

"Work hard, stay positive, and get up early. It's the best part of the day. "

- George Allen, Sr.

Special Points of Interest In This Issue of 'JobPrep'

- **IT Professionals Sound Off**

- **4 Things to Learn about a Company Before Your Job Interview**

- **Job Interview Tips**

- **Wellness Corner**

- **Tech Corner**

- **And much more!**

- Trouble finding qualified talent

- Lack of training investment

- Inability to pay what top candidates demand

These experiences were supported by comments from several survey respondents.

"[We] can find the candidates with the skills that we need, we just cannot afford to pay them."

"My company does not provide training. It is not part of the company's culture."

A finger is often pointed at upper management, whom many survey respondents blame for a lack of training opportunities.

"Senior Leadership doesn't communicate the budget or ways to get training."

Another survey respondent writes that it's just a struggle to get "the C-suite to understand the value of IT."

One of the most in-demand skills: **communication**

While the technical skills associated with cybersecurity and cloud computing are needed across the board, the most desired soft skill is communication.

A number of the comments highlighted the lack of tech professionals with solid communication skills.

"If you find a person capable of being a good IT person, you can train them. Communication skills is the most sought after component that is missing. I think fixing the communication skills gap will help address the issue more than anything else."

"There is a growing need to be able to simplify the message - we are overwhelmed by the amount of data and tools -- we need to be able to figure out how to communicate the results/impact."

As IT professionals realize the value of strong communication skills, so rises the significance of project management skills, particularly DevOps. We heard from a num-

ber of respondents this year that say the metaphorical wall between departments is making it more difficult to do their job. DevOps is a methodology that focuses on improving communication and collaboration between teams.

A little appreciation goes a long way

Many factors impact job satisfaction: salary, job security, training opportunities, etc.

One thing that is abundantly clear when you peruse this year's batch of comments is the importance of management appreciation.

When asked why they remain in their current position, a survey respondent replied "[because] my manager lets me know he is thankful for my hard work."

Positive feedback and acknowledgement of success go a long way. And it could be the difference between retaining top talent and needing to fill a vacancy.

Concurrently, modern-day IT professionals are motivated by challenges and appreciate the opportunity to add new skills, especially ones that can advance their career.

"I enjoy the department and the people I work with. My supervisor appreciates what I do, challenges me with more difficult audits to perform, and treats me with respect."

Another respondent said they remain in their current position "[because] I am now engaged in tasks which are more challenging and my knowledge, skills and experience are put to better use and appreciated by the owner."

IT professionals value work-life balance

While positive feedback and challenges can improve job satisfaction, increasing workloads have the opposite effect. Unfortunately, the volume of projects hasn't decreased in recent years. On page 50 of our report, you'll see that 37% of our survey respondents claim their workloads are either very challenging or the worst they've ever seen.

"Workload is greater than 60+ hours where work is taken home and there's no ability to disconnect. My personal and family life are each suffering."

IT decision-makers would be wise to find creative ways to lessen workloads whenever possible. IT professionals who are overworked or unsatisfied are five times more likely to be looking for a new position in the next year.

A lack of funds and an already bloated schedule of projects are two main reasons why IT professionals don't train. While there are workarounds, these are two legitimate excuses.

But those aren't the only reasons why people don't train. Here are some you won't see in our report:

"The skills in my industry are becoming common place. As a result, employees are not pursuing certifications to match requirements."

This is a marginal opinion, as 88% of respondents took some form of training last year. In fact, the main training motivator, by far, is skill-building. Nearly every IT functional area—from application development to networking to systems/enterprise architecture—is constantly evolving. Consistent learning is really the only way to keep pace.

And when it comes to certifications, nearly 44% of respondents trained specifically in preparation for a certification exam. Respect for certifications has never been higher—over 95% of IT decision-makers believe that certifications lead to a more effective staff.

"The company is hesitant to provide certification based training as employees tend to leave afterwards. That is mostly in part to the company not recognizing the value of the cert/training. Proper salary surveys are not being used by management."

We accept Veterans/GI Bill Post 911 benefits.

Job Interview Tips

All candidates should research a company thoroughly before an interview. And if the company is a private firm, that's not an excuse to skip doing your homework. Where there's a will, there's a way, and finding a way to gather information on a company distinguishes the great candidates from the good candidates. What else can you do to improve your chances at the interview? Try these tips for size:

Be Concise

Interviewees rambling on is one of the most common interview blunders. Listen to the question, and answer the question, and answer it concisely.

Provide Examples

It's one thing to say you can do something; it's another to give examples of things you have done. Think of recent, strong strategic examples of work you've done, then when the question is asked, answer with specifics, not in generalities.

Be Honest

If you don't have a skill, just state it. Don't try to cover it up by talking and giving examples that aren't relevant.

Ask Great Questions

Come with great questions to ask. Show you've researched the company in general, but also the specific job you're hoping to land in particular.

Career Guidance Column

Andrei - I'm embarrassed to share with my friends and family that I need a job. What are your thoughts on this?

Smart job seekers aren't afraid to mention career aspirations to their book club, their parents' friends or their dentist. One never knows whose golf partner might be the ticket to getting a foot in the door. Even friends may learn more about you and perhaps think of you for a lead that they might have overlooked. But the answer is

Technical Advice

Marcial - Can I be identified using a wireless connection at a coffee shop or local shopping mall? - Unfortunately, there is no stead-fast way to detect whether or not you are being tracked; however, if you are at a local coffee shop or a shopping mall and using their wireless connection, I would always advise you against using such a connection for exchanging highly sensitive information unless on the following is true:

1)   You are connected over an SSL (secure socket layer) connection.

2)   You are connected through you company's VPN tunnel.

Online banking and most online shopping sites use encryption algorithms that insure your connection is secure. That is, information you send over the internet is encrypted and safe. That said, if your local Starbucks wants to know ***where*** you are surfing, they can see that, since only the data transferred is secured, but not the location of where you are surfing to.

Dating the Co-Worker: Yea OR Nay??

Most career experts grumble over the potential problems that arise from dating a colleague. Here's what to consider before asking for that first date:

1. Know your job's fraternization policies. Go to your   employee handbook to see if there's anything written.

2. Be certain of how you feel. Think long-term, not just about a liaison.

3. Consider and prepare for the worst.

4. Be discreet. Remain professional, and absolutely avoid any public displays of affection.

5. Take it slow. If the relationship is serious and could lead to marriage, then you'll have to address it on the job.
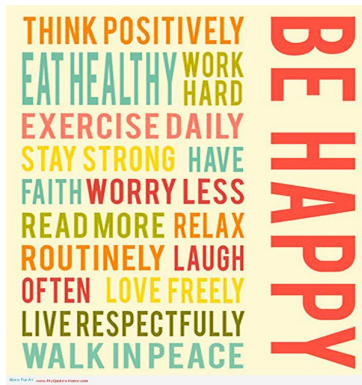
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What can you do to improve what you eat at the office, which for many of us is the bulk of what we consume all day? Here are a few approaches to better nutrition in the land of heartburn and the pizza-sized chocolate chip cookie.

Bring Your Own Food. The consensus of health and nutrition professionals is that you'll eat much better if you plan ahead and pack a lunch.

Control Portions to Control Your Waistline. You've got to control portions to eat healthfully at the office. The key is to portion out at home what you'll be eating in the break room.

Get Real About What's Healthy. Educate yourself to understand what's really nutritious.

Advocate for Institutional Change. Employees should bring their needs to management, which controls the cafeteria as well as the vending machines.

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4 Things to Learn about a Company Before Your Job Interview

An essential part of job interview preparation is doing your homework on the company itself. Employers take note of candidates that are educated not only on the responsibilities of the job opening in question, but also on the company itself. Here are the four most significant things to learn about your company:

1. **Company Mission Statement and Basic Facts**

   If you are in a time crunch and don't have the luxury of studying up on a company thoroughly, make sure you at least jot down some mental notes from the company's website. Go immediately to the "About Us" and "Mission Statement" portions of the site. Learn what it is that the company does and familiarize yourself with the products and/or services provided by that company.

2. **What Sets the Company Apart From its Competitors?**

   Being educated in how a company is doing things differently is a great point of emphasis in your interview, particularly if the interviewer asks you what attracted you to the company. Studying up on this little detail will help prepare you with an educated answer.

3. **What is Being Said About the Company in the News and Through Social Networks?**

   If the company to which you are applying is not large enough to be of interest to news outlets, it may still have a marketing team that issues press releases that it publishes on a company blog, online newsletter or a social networking site. If the company is on Facebook or Twitter, visit the company's page and read up on what the company is saying there to fans and followers.

4. **Who's in Charge?**

   From the top down, do some research on who calls the shots at the company. Know the name of the CEO and key top management of the company. If the company you are applying to is not large, know the name of the manager or top supervisor you will be answering to.