

IBMers Showcase Paths to Success in "New Collar" Careers

Experiences underscore need to expand access to career-focused skills training

ARMONK, N.Y., March 9, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Since [pledging](#) to hire 25,000 American workers by 2020, IBM (NYSE:[IBM](#)), the country's largest technology employer, has been elevating stories of employees who have achieved success in "new collar" jobs. These positions, in some of the technology industry's fastest growing fields, do not always require a four-year college degree, but rather the right mix of in-demand skills needed to get the job done.

"IBM is making the IT industry more inclusive. With our emphasis on new collar jobs, we are focused on hiring for capability, not just credentials," stated Sam Ladah, Vice President for Talent at IBM. "In fact, over the past few years, 10 to 15 percent of our U.S. hires did not have a traditional 4 year degree. An even larger percentage of our U.S. job openings do not necessarily require a four-year degree."

He continued: "Through programs ranging from coding camps to community college courses and innovative vocational schools, our new collar colleagues have built marketable skills in fields from cybersecurity and cloud computing to digital design. Their experiences underscore that new collar jobs offer pathways to career success, and also the importance of expanding career-relevant skills training programs to help more Americans fill the more than half-a-million technology jobs currently open in the United States."

IBM has profiled a number of [new collar employees](#) on THINKPolicy, its official channel for addressing public policy priorities. These IBMers come from across the United States, and reflect impressive diversity of both backgrounds and career experiences:

- **Gabriel Rosa** (New York City) – is among the first graduates of [P-TECH](#), the innovative grade 9-14 academic program that combines the best of high-school STEM coursework with community college, mentoring and hands-on training to build sought after career skills. Gabriel's interest in technology has taken him from hacking his high school IT system, to coding online commerce experiences.
- **Rey Lozano** (Houston, TX) – was determined to expand his horizons beyond work in the fast food industry. Through an associate's degree and completion of various industry certifications, Rey attained sought-after skills in network management. Today, he helps oversee network infrastructure for Bluemix, IBM's cloud-based development platform.
- **Savannah Worth** (San Francisco, CA) – pursued an education in creative writing, but developed a fascination with programming and computer science. After completing an immersive six-month coding bootcamp, she became one of the first employees at IBM's Bluemix development garage in San Francisco. She's still creating, but at the intersection of art and code.
- **Randy Tolentino** (Austin, TX) – one day, while writing hip hop lyrics, Randy spontaneously decided that a technology career would afford him the best opportunity to provide for his family. From there, his new collar journey took Randy from California to Texas, and included a mix of college education and software development camps. Today, he's part of a team helping IBMers worldwide employ new technologies and methodologies to better serve clients.
- **Cecelia Schartiger** (Rocket Center, WV) – when she couldn't find work as a teacher, Cecelia decided it was time to reinvent her career. She joined IBM as a project staffing professional, but was soon intrigued by fast-growing opportunities in cybersecurity. Through on-the-job training and coursework at her local community college, Cecelia built the skills she needed to take on a new role – securing sensitive workloads for U.S. Government clients as an IBM cybersecurity

professional.

- **Joshua Kramer** (Austin, TX) – built skills in graphic design through community college, and then worked on projects ranging from mailers to magazine layouts for a number of employers. Now, as part of IBM's Security division, he's bridging the gap between the unit's product and marketing teams, and helped lead a total rebranding of the department.
- **Ty Tyner** (Austin, TX) – started his design career illustrating comic books and animating mobile apps. After transitioning to digital design, Ty found his way to IBM. Today, he manages a team of professionals that design seamless and efficient user experiences for developers utilizing the IBM Cloud.

"America's high-tech skills gap is a very real challenge," added Christopher A. Padilla, Vice President of IBM Government and Regulatory Affairs. "But these new collar IBMers show that it absolutely can be closed. In fact, data shows that closing the skills gap could fill one million jobs by 2020. Even as IBM invests heavily in skills development and retraining for our U.S. workforce, we will continue advocating for Congressional action to open more pathways to new collar success. [Updating and reauthorizing](#) the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act is one important step that enjoys broad bipartisan support, and that would make career-oriented skills education the rule, not the exception, in U.S. education."

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