

Staying Ahead of the Skills Gap with Pop Up Training

Reducing Costs and Managing Human Capital through Iterative Internal Training

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As globalization and automation changes the nature and needs of work in the United States, companies of all sizes are struggling to ensure that their employees have the hard and soft skills needed to best adapt and function in times of transition. Training is often expensive, disruptive to work rhythm, and a large investment in employees who spend fewer years with companies than in past decades.

Because of these obstacles, firms must find ways to cost-effectively and quickly train staff to meet the demands of our changing economy. The solution is developing a culture of “Pop Up Training”, which is a refreshing, energizing pause – not a distraction. This kind of training requires affordable, mobile, and unobtrusive tools to be most effective. A perfect facilitator of “Pop Up Training” is Wizard Wall.

A Growing Skills Gap

The Great Recession damaged not only markets, but also the public’s trust in institutions, governments, and even our interconnected, global economic system. A key driver of the public’s loss of trust was the unequal gains made between the rich and the poor, the manager and the worker, and the small business and the giant corporation.

Even after the end of the Recession, many workers found that, while the economy has recovered, their skills remain obsolete or “taken” overseas by those who would work for less. This crisis not only affected workers, but also employers as our nation faces a skills gap obstructing its global competitiveness.

In recent years the US economy has experienced a robust boost.



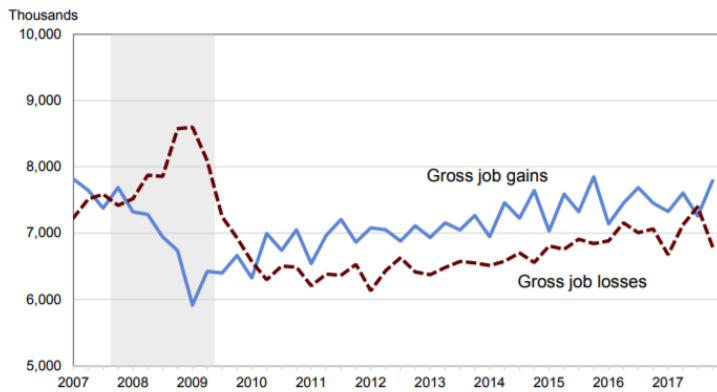
Pop-Up Training at Wizard Wall, Inc. Employees cross-train on information management.

Unemployment is under 4%. Large corporations such as Starbucks, FedEx, and Walmart have used tax savings to increase worker salaries, and a tightening labor market has spurred wage growth.¹ Optimism about the future among small business owners has risen to its highest since 2015, with 66% of small businesses anticipating growth and nearly half hiring new employees.²

Of the top six jobs in demand in 2018, only one – construction worker – is not a white-collar job.³ The need for secondary or specialized education in an increasingly service-oriented market is critical to long-term prospects of employability.

Looking out to the next decade, the most sought-after skills will be information-oriented or soft skills, such as leadership, communication, and collaboration.⁴ Skills in declining demand are mostly blue-collar, such as in manufacturing and utilities sectors.⁵ In addition to the consolidation of sought-after skills to service sector positions, high-paying jobs are becoming consolidated geographically, with half the top 20 places

Chart 1. Total private sector gross job gains and gross job losses, seasonally adjusted
March 2007 - December 2017

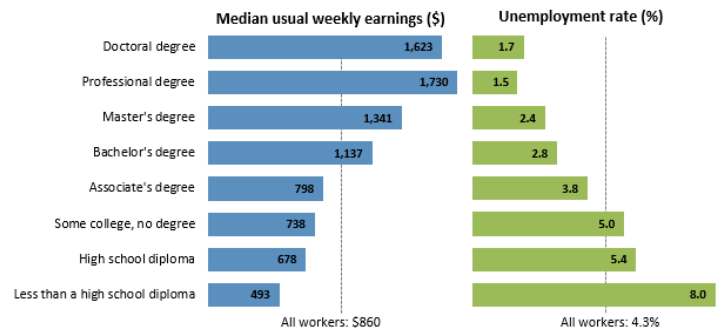


NOTE: Shaded area represents National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) defined recession period.

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, *The Employment Situation*

Despite this, many workers face the specter of replacement by automation or offshoring. To ensure all Americans can share in our nation's growth and prevent backslide in employment, it is critical that employees have relevant skills in the coming years.

Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment, 2015



Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

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¹ Reuters. "Strong U.S. Job Growth Forecast; Unemployment Rate Seen at 4 Percent." *Business Insider*, Business Insider, 9 Mar. 2018, www.businessinsider.com/r-strong-us-job-growth-forecast-unemployment-rate-seen-at-4-percent-2018-3.

² "Small Employer Firms Reveal More Optimism And Success, Though Financial Challenges Persist For Some." *FEDERAL RESERVE BANK of NEW YORK*, www.newyorkfed.org/newsevents/news/regional_outreach/2018/an180522.

³ Nova, Annie. "These Jobs Don't Have Enough People to Fill Them. See If You Can." *CNBC*, CNBC, 20 Feb. 2018,

www.cnbc.com/2018/02/14/10-in-demand-jobs-that-dont-draw-enough-applicants.html.

⁴ Petrone, Paul. "The Skills Companies Need Most in 2018 – And The Courses to Get Them." *LinkedIn*, 2 Jan. 2018, www.linkedin.com/pulse/skills-companies-need-most-2018-courses-get-them-paul-petrone.

⁵ "Is Your Sector on the Way out? Here Are the 10 Industries Expected to Lose the Most Jobs by 2018 -- and What to Do If You're Working in One of Them." *Monster*, www.monster.com/career-advice/article/ten-job-sectors-in-decline.

to work on the West Coast or in the Southwest.⁶

As employers look to enable their employees to maintain relevant skill sets and as employees seek to avoid replacement and maintain high wages, there is a confluence of incentive to hold internal, cost-effective training rather than outsourced, expensive options.

Closing the Gap with Pop Up Training

Tackling the skills gap is a matter of national importance. This is clearly evident through policy initiatives under the current administration to provide access and incentives for education and training. Recent examples include the establishment of the National Council for the American Worker, expansion of apprenticeships, pushes for STEM education, and tax incentives for investment in employees.

Private employers, however, struggle to maintain effective professional development and training programs within their organizations. Other than the high cost of contracting training professionals, in-office training events incur the opportunity cost of time, materials, and meeting space. Managers also are concerned with the loss of face-to-face collaboration in the workplace in the digital age, adopting expensive efforts such as open-office design and overscheduling meetings. This year, Tesla's Elon Musk excoriated meetings for their drain on company time and resources.⁷

The answer to this dilemma is Pop Up Training. The concept is to encourage natural breaks in the work day to facilitate communication and cross-training between employees, or in more structured group learning sessions. Pop Up Training sessions are characterized by their ability to be held anywhere – outside a cubicle, at a cafeteria table, or anywhere else people can naturally meet. Facilitated with transportable collaborative tools such as easels, tablets, and Wizard Wall cling film (in place of whiteboards), employees congregate and share best practices and latest trends to raise the tide of staff skill and knowledge. As humans are visual learners, low-cost collaborative tools are necessary to track and share information as well as ensure fuller comprehension of the training material.

Wizard Wall

One great tool for Pop Up Training is Wizard Wall's suite of static cling film. Their film allows users to cling the film directly to the wall and write on it, transforming any surface into a collaborative space.

Wizard Wall offers an innovative solution to the need for flipcharts and whiteboards. Portable, flexible Wizard Wall clings to any indoor surface without damage and is reusable. Writeable with permanent markers, dry erase markers,

⁶ Gillett, Rachel. "The 20 Best US Cities for Finding a Job in 2018." *Business Insider*, Business Insider, 1 June 2018, www.businessinsider.com/best-cities-for-finding-a-job-2018-1.

⁷ Clifford, Catherine. "Elon Musk's 6 Productivity Rules, Including Walk out of Meetings That Waste Your Time." *CNBC*, CNBC, 18 Apr. 2018, www.cnbc.com/2018/04/18/elon-musks-productivity-rules-according-to-tesla-email.html.



Pop-Up Training at Wizard Wall, Inc. Employees plan out digital marketing campaign.

and chalk markers, Wizard Wall enables Pop Up Training in any indoor setting.

Current heavy users include the federal government (particularly the military), professional trainers, and graphic facilitators. What these users have in common is the need to quickly convey and retain information in group settings. As America's workforce transitions further to

meet the needs of a global world, companies will find the ability to efficiently and effectively train and communicate invaluable.

Lifelong Learning

National policy, economic trends, and increasing interconnectedness are all creating a need for a flexible, adaptable workforce that can quickly pivot in operations and skill to thrive in changing environments. Despite positive economic conditions in recent years, not all sectors of American life are able to equally benefit. Employers seeking to lead disruptive and paradigm-shifting initiatives pay top dollar for intelligent, malleable minds.

Pop Up Training with Wizard Wall and like products pave the way for a new generation of agile organizations. In these good times it's important that benefits are shared across society, and to do our best to maintain the skills needed to endure future bad times. Use Pop Up Training methods and tools to lead your organization into a stable and prosperous future.