

LinkedIn, Microsoft launch free Learning Path job training courses to fight coronavirus unemployment

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Microsoft and LinkedIn want to put a dent in the nation—and the world's—unemployment numbers.

The [software giant](#) and the professional networking site, which Microsoft acquired in 2016 for \$26.2 billion, identified in-demand jobs and are offering free, online training to help job seekers improve their skills and land positions.

LinkedIn data showed 10 specific jobs with the most current openings and a four-year trend of being in demand, pay "a livable wage," and have skills that can be learned online and remotely. LinkedIn's CEO Ryan Roslansky posted the details on the site's blog about the initiative.

LinkedIn's top 10 in-demand jobs

1. Software developer
2. Sales representative
3. Project manager
4. IT Administrator
5. Customer service specialist
6. Digital marketer

7. IT support/Help desk

8. Graphic designer

9. Financial analyst

10. Data analyst

LinkedIn and Microsoft created Learning Path training modules for those 10 positions.

Microsoft has a goal of getting these digital-centric skills to 25 million people globally by the end of 2020. The training is available through LinkedIn Learning, an online training library, and Microsoft Learn, the [software company](#)'s learning site. Some of the courses will also take place on GitHub—the software development platform Microsoft acquired for \$7.5 billion in 2018.

Those interested can go to opportunity.[linkedin.com](#) to see the Learning Paths (you do not need to belong to LinkedIn to participate). Available free through the end of the year, the courses and content is available in English, Spanish, French and German.

Those who complete a path will get a certification they can post on their LinkedIn profile.

The network LinkedIn is also making available an #OpenToWork profile photo frame for users and more ways within the network for members to help others' job hunts.

Other content will help [job seekers](#) prepare for job interview and develop skills, such as collaborating with others remotely.

"We have the right data to know what the right courses are to create," Roslansky told U.S. TODAY. "We use that to get (these courses) in front of the right people, then connect that back with their LinkedIn profile, to make sure they showcase the skills they have ... to help these people end up in those roles."

Microsoft and LinkedIn begun in January to develop a new comprehensive skill initiative, but the coronavirus pandemic changed the employment dynamic, said Microsoft president Brad Smith.

"One ingredient in getting people back to work is getting them the skills that they are going to need," Smith told U.S. TODAY. "I think we have to assume that many workplaces are going to be more digital than they were when the year began. Clearly that's a long-term trend, as well as a short-term phenomenon with COVID-19. That is really the genesis for this."

Global unemployment in 2020 will rise by 40%, or 74 million people, resulting in 252 million unemployed, Smith says in a blog post, citing Microsoft estimates.

The tech giant is also donating \$20 million to non-profit organizations worldwide to assist people in finding [jobs](#), especially women, minorities or low-income people. About \$5 million of that sum will be donated to 50 U.S. community groups that support people of color.

Later this year, Microsoft Teams will get a similar "system of learning" app to help train company's new and existing employees using Microsoft Learn, LinkedIn Learning, third-party training providers and a company's own employee learning content.

The free Learning Path courses "are principally for individuals, people who want to acquire skills and seek a job," Smith said.

What will come to Microsoft Teams in September will be "a new tool that employers can use," Smith said. "To bring people back to the workplace or to hire new employees, (employers) are going to need to train people up and up-skill them more efficiently. So that was a new area of focus that was really responsive to this changing economic time."

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