The Real Economic Opportunities of Middle-Skill Work

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Introduction and Presentation Roadmap
Resume Data: Overview and How it Informs Our Understanding of Advancement and Stagnation
Key Paper Findings
Implications for the Field
Discussion
JFF is a national nonprofit that drives transformation in the American workforce and education systems. For 35 years, JFF has led the way in designing innovative and scalable solutions that create access to economic advancement for all. Join us as we build a future that works.

Burning Glass Technologies is an analytics software company that has cracked the genetic code of an ever-changing labor market. Powered by the world’s largest and most sophisticated database of labor market data and talent, we deliver real-time data and breakthrough planning tools that inform careers, define academic programs, and shape workforces.
WHICH JOBS REPRESENT REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MIDDLE-SKILL WORKERS?

• Career pathways have promise, but do they work?
• Historically, weak data
• Resume data can change our understanding of career pathways
• The result: stronger outcomes for students
THE CHALLENGE

CONCEPTUAL MODELS OF CAREER PROGRESSIONS
THE CHALLENGE
WHAT IF THE REALITY IS DIFFERENT?
THE SOLUTION

RESUME DATA ALLOWS US TO TRACK AND UNDERSTAND REAL CAREERS

Observe Real, Not Theoretical Career Progressions
What really happened in peoples careers, not just what should happen or could happen?

Link Skills, Credentials and Degrees to Advancement
What factors related to education and training encourages career advancement?

Understand Long-term Pathways at Scale
Track the careers of millions of American workers, not just a small study sample.

Enables Novel and Actionable Analyses
How does career progressions differ by occupations and based on specific skills and credentials?
KEY FINDINGS

When is a Job Just a Job – And When Can it Launch A Career?

Sara Lamback and Dan Restuccia
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

• Which middle-skill jobs offer the strongest opportunities for middle-skill workers?
• What are the credentials, skills, and other characteristics most associated with advancement and stagnation over time?
METHODOLOGY

Study Sample
3.7M resumes where workers start in a middle skill job and have an career outcome five years later.

Key Variables Extracted
- Starting occupation
- Occupation at T = 5 years
- Degree level attainment
- Industry certifications
- Skills listed
## KEY METRICS

### Measuring Job Transitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Stability</strong></td>
<td>The likelihood that a jobseeker will be employed in the same occupation five years after entering the position. (In this analysis, if someone moves to a new employer but remains in a role with a similar title and duties, that is not considered a change.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Career Stability</strong></td>
<td>The likelihood that a jobseeker will be employed in an occupation within the same career area as the starting occupation within five years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advancement</strong></td>
<td>Progression from a starting occupation to a different occupation within the same career area, with a median salary that is at least 10 percent higher than the starting occupation salary, within five years. For example, moving from a bookkeeper ($18/hour starting salary) to an accountant ($32/hour starting salary) would constitute advancement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pay</strong></td>
<td>Workers in each occupation are assumed to be paid the median wage for that occupation based on federal employment statistics.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
WHEN IS A JOB JUST A JOB – AND WHEN CAN IT LAUNCH A CAREER?

THE OPPORTUNITY FRAMEWORK

LIFETIME JOBS
Lifetime jobs are careers in themselves. They pay well and offer long-term stability but workers rarely advance to higher-level positions. E.g., Dental Hygienists.

SPRINGBOARD JOBS
Springboard jobs lead to careers. Workers often advance to different roles with more responsibility and greater pay within the same career area. E.g., HR assistants.

STATIC JOBS
Static jobs don’t typically lead to careers. They offer low pay compared to other middle-skill roles and suffer from high turnover. E.g., Medical assistants.
JESSICA FINDS A
LIFETIME JOB IN
HEALTH CARE

LPN
Jessica earns an associate's degree and passes the licensed practical nurse (LPN) exam. She lands a job at a hospital, earning $21 per hour.

LPN
Jessica has been at the hospital for three years. She gets a small raise each year.

LPN
Jessica is at the same hospital and now earns just over $24 per hour. She is contemplating getting her RN license, but knows that she'll need to go back to school.

First Job
Moving Up?
Five Years Later
Zach is unsure what he wants to do in high school and decides to take an entry-level job as an HR assistant. He continues to work as an HR assistant, earning around $18 per hour. He earns a PHR Certification, based on his supervisors' recommendation.

Zach lands a job as an HR specialist, earning around $28 per hour.

First Job
HR Assistant
Zach is unsure what he wants to do in high school and decides to take an entry-level job as an HR assistant.

Moving Up?
HR Assistant
Zach continues to work as an HR assistant, earning around $18 per hour. He earns a PHR Certification, based on his supervisors' recommendation.

Five Years Later
HR Specialist
Zach lands a job as an HR specialist, earning around $28 per hour.
Nicole finds a springboard job in IT.

Nicole, a Computer Support Specialist, earns her A+ Certification in high school and is able to get a computer support specialist job after graduating.

Nicole, as a Computer Support Specialist, earns $23 per hour as a computer support specialist. She wants to move up and begins the CCNA Certification.

Nicole passes the CCNA certification and now earns $30 per hour as a Network Support Specialist.

First Job

Moving Up?

Five Years Later
Anthony has a high school vocational certificate and finds a job as a machine operator at a heavy equipment manufacturer.

After a few years, Anthony barely earns more than when he was hired, at $16 per hour.

Anthony’s company experience layoffs. He survives the first few rounds but is let go. He takes a job at a big discount chain to make ends meet.
**CAREER AREAS: PERCENT EMPLOYMENT BY OPPORTUNITY CATEGORY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Lifetime Jobs</th>
<th>Springboard Jobs</th>
<th>Static Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE ROLE OF CREDENTIALS

Door-opening Credentials are necessary to demonstrate that a jobseeker has the skills required for an entry-level position but offer little aid to advancement.

Career-advancing Credentials are not necessary to obtain an entry-level job but they are significant factors in accelerating advancement to higher-level positions within a career area.

Examples include: the American Welding Society’s AWS and the CompTIA A+ certifications.

Examples include: Professional in Human Resources (PHR) certification and the CCNA and MCSE credentials in IT.
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

*When is a Job Just a Job – And When Can it Launch A Career?*

Nate Anderson
IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING PROGRAMS

• Careers, not just jobs
• Creating advancement opportunities
• Better student tracking
IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

• Incentivize training programs that create advancement opportunities
• Drive partnerships that focus on sectors with advancement outcomes
• Build outcomes data systems
IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

• Expand to look at other factors related to advancement
• Link to other data sets
• Link strategy to improved outcomes
Q&A AND DISCUSSION
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