



# 2020 Career Navigation Technology

A Technology Market Poised for Innovation and Impact

## AT A GLANCE

For millions of Americans, career navigation is broken. A new technology revolution is on the horizon—connecting people to opportunities, at scale.

Developed by

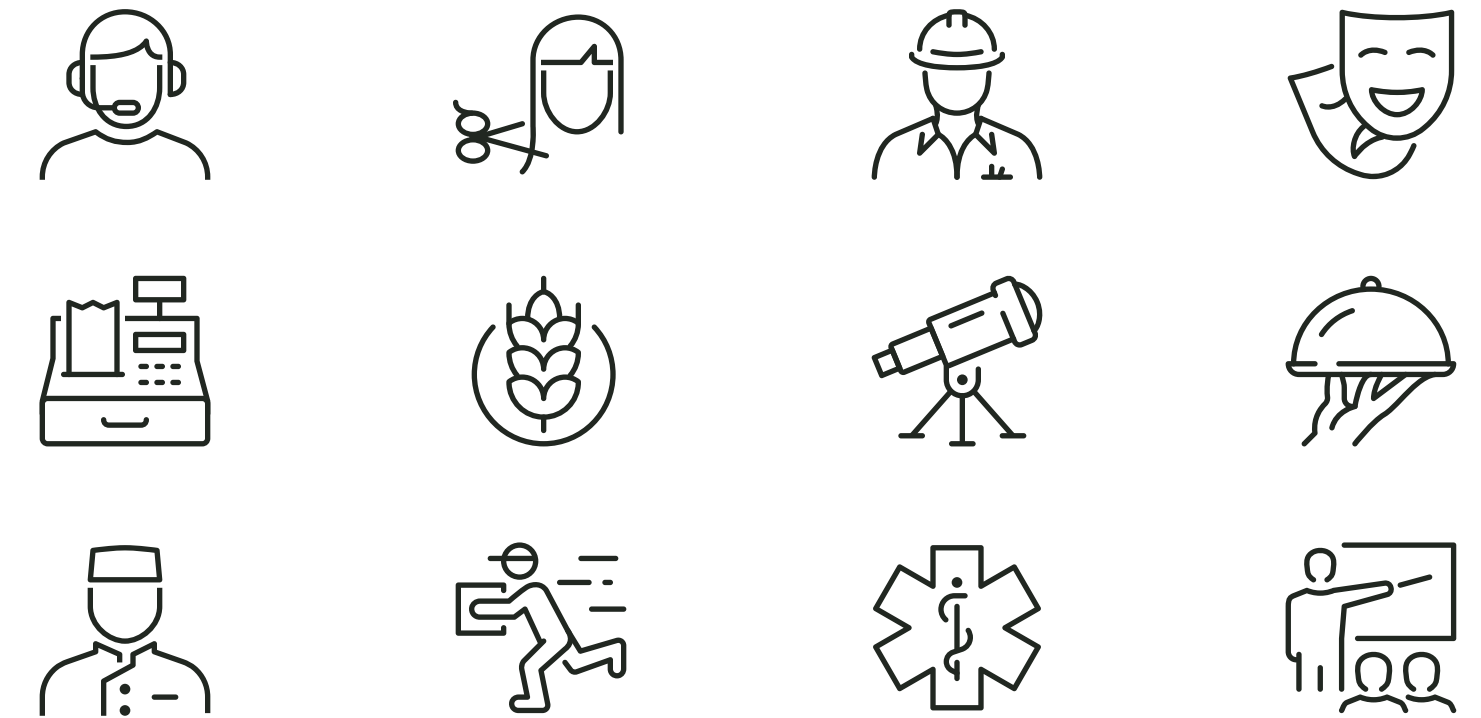


SEPTEMBER 2020

# Why Career Navigation

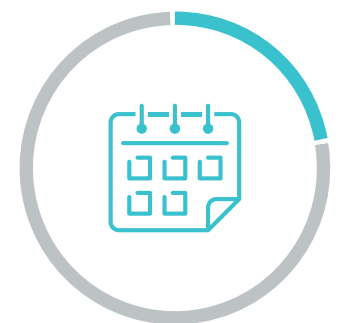
What we do for a living shapes our lives—our very identities—in profound ways. Work is the foundation of our financial security, directly impacting the opportunities we have access to and the lives we lead. Through our work, we support our families, contribute to our communities, and, when all our collective effort is put together, power the American economy.

Yet for at least the past four decades, a worker's ability to pursue one continuous, stable, and predictable career has eroded. The economic crisis of 2020 revealed that workers need to follow career paths more defined by variety and near-constant change than consistency. Building a stable, sustainable working life across the many jobs and industries that make up a contemporary career requires a new set of skills: adaptability, resilience, self-reflection, and self-directed lifelong learning.



On average, workers in the U.S. will likely hold an average of **12 different jobs** during their working life.<sup>1</sup>

**22%** of the workforce will likely change jobs or careers **every 12 months.**<sup>2</sup>



To navigate a complex network of job and career options, we use internet searches, word of mouth, and—if we're lucky—personal relationships we've built over many jobs and many years. There are technical resources that can help as well. A scan of the career navigation technology landscape reveals that platforms for employers seeking workers are seemingly everywhere, as are tools for corporate workers looking for new professional opportunities. But for the well over half of American workers in entry-level or mid-skill jobs,<sup>3</sup>—especially the 73 percent who don't have a college degree<sup>4</sup>—the process of finding a career is chaotic, seemingly random, and ultimately broken.

Our scan focuses on the millions of workers too often overlooked or underserved by traditional approaches to career navigation. Framing career navigation as a lifelong process that involves workers, employers, and other entities, such as schools and workforce boards, we delve into the dynamics shaping the career navigation technology market, identifying innovations, trends, and areas of opportunity. For the first time, advances in technology have the potential to offer all workers meaningful, robust, and personalized supports—and we celebrate the companies that are leading the way.

For millions of American workers, the process of finding a career is **chaotic, seemingly random, and ultimately broken.**

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# Introduction

It's no secret that the world of work is going through massive disruption that has only accelerated as a result of COVID-19. This has had a profound effect on workers' lives—driven by the decimation of certain industries like hospitality and travel, job loss due to automation, and new ways of working sparked by technological advancements—and may permanently alter people's ability to support their families and earn a living wage. Those who have been hit the hardest are the workers in lower-skilled jobs and those who lack a college degree.

While technology has contributed many positive changes to the world of work by increasing connectivity, collaboration, and the rapid exchange of ideas, too often less-educated and lower-skilled workers get left behind because new tools are not designed for or accessible to them. This is true in all aspects of people's working lives, including career navigation—the process of discovering one's interests, and finding, connecting to, and securing a (better) job.



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Tyton Partners is an investment banking and strategy consulting firm exclusively focused on the global knowledge markets. For more information, visit [TytonPartners.com](https://TytonPartners.com) or follow [@tytonpartners](https://twitter.com/tytonpartners).



To date, there has been considerable emphasis on tech-driven career navigation tools that focus on increased transparency for workers and employers, with powerful search tools, big data, and algorithms allowing workers to find suitable jobs more quickly and enabling employers to find well-qualified individuals across the globe. But career navigation platforms were designed for employers and have helped them lower their hiring costs, while also benefiting socially-networked white-collar professionals, who use the tools to pursue ongoing pay increases.

Too little attention, creativity, and capital have been focused on frontline to mid-skill workers, especially those who are from underrepresented populations. These workers need unbiased ways of assessing and representing their skills and competencies, and they need supports such as virtual mentoring to learn how to build social networks and engage in self-advocacy. It is no longer enough to get an education or develop technical expertise and soft skills. Jobseekers also need to know how to navigate the world of work, which is an acquired skill-set of its own. And to do that effectively, they need accessible technologies that were designed with them in mind.

Throughout its 35-year history, JFF (Jobs for the Future) has unflaggingly supported lower-income workers and learners and built a remarkable track record in helping drive equal opportunity for economic advancement. More recently, JFF has purposefully focused on becoming a driver of innovative connections between the public and private sectors in the education-to-employment ecosystem. JFF Labs has been a catalyst for partnerships with forward-thinking philanthropists and impact employers such as Walmart, Autodesk, and Salesforce, which have begun to move the needle with tech-enabled tools to train, upskill, and connect individuals to meaningful employment and opportunities for economic advancement.

In this year, our 10th anniversary since our founding, Tyton Partners is proud to partner with JFF on this important and timely research regarding the technologies that help workers navigate their careers.

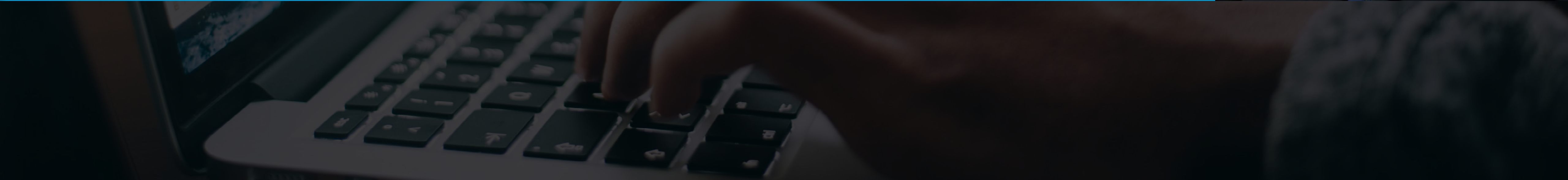
This market scan offers a road map through the complex and messy ecosystem of career navigation. It will be useful for a number of stakeholders, including:

- **program directors and career counselors**, identifying tools they can use to help their clients;
- **investors and philanthropists**, illuminating where investment is needed;
- **technology entrepreneurs**, shining a light on what's working and where innovation must happen;
- **business operators**, identifying great ideas they can scale and grow; and
- **employers**, demonstrating how they can adopt talent strategies that benefit not only employees and job candidates, but also the bottom line.

**Finally, for workers, we know this report will give you hope that there are tools out there made just for you—and they could be your key to finding a meaningful and evolving lifelong career journey.**

**“We’ve seen firsthand that investing in our associates’ learning, development, and advancement helps us better serve our customers and our communities. Especially in this year of profound disruption across workplaces, we hope JFF’s work to uncover the most promising innovations in career navigation technology will encourage many companies to take a closer look at how their human capital tech platforms can help their workers grow and succeed.”**

—Brynt Parmeter, Senior Director, Military & STEM Programs, Walmart



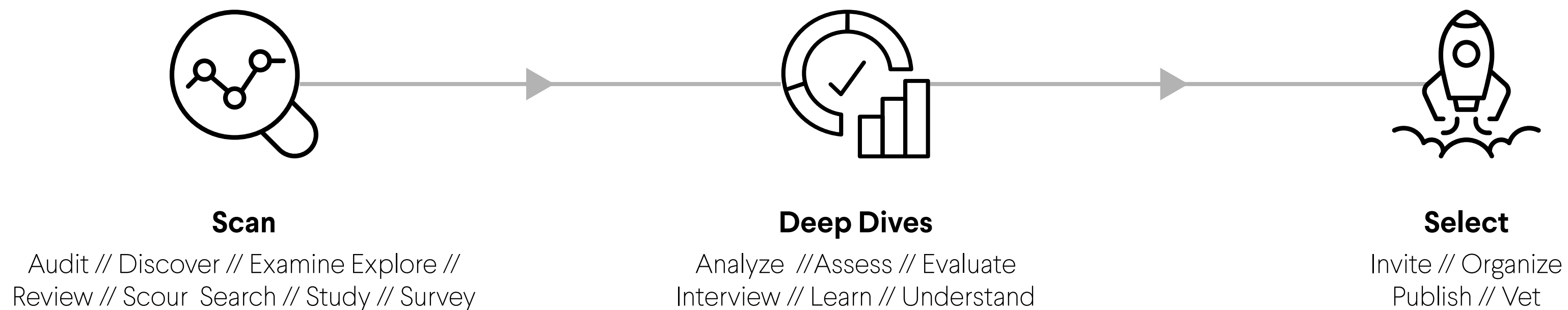


# About This Market Scan

We believe the best technology can revolutionize the way we live and work—helping people be more efficient and productive, opening access to new information and opportunities, and allowing us to solve bigger problems than we ever dreamed possible.

JFFLabs market scans dive deeply into the technology landscapes that are transforming work and learning in America today, uncovering impact opportunities, technology trends, market dynamics, and impact investment insights. Our market scans feature mission-aligned companies and nonprofit organizations of all sizes, from seed-stage startups founded by inspiring innovators and entrepreneurs to growth-stage organizations already creating significant social impact and business value.

Through our proprietary evaluation process, we review hundreds if not thousands of companies for their approach and orientation to social impact, and the traction their efforts have gained. We identify the most innovative and advanced technologies connecting people to good jobs and careers, education and training, better workforce and education systems, and equitable, resilient opportunities for economic security and mobility—at scale.



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# A Brief History

The Information Age marked a profound shift in the way people find and connect to job opportunities.

After centuries of using low-tech approaches like networking with family and friends, combing through newspaper ads, and signing up with person-to-person placement services, jobseekers started turning to high-tech tools. Databases of job openings and information about career options emerged and flourished online. And advanced search and data-aggregation technologies made massive amounts of data available, speeding up the job search and hiring processes for both workers and employers.

Now, a second revolution is on the horizon. Advances in data science, artificial intelligence, and other technologies are fueling smarter career navigation platforms that offer more precise matches and deeper insights that are customized for individual users.

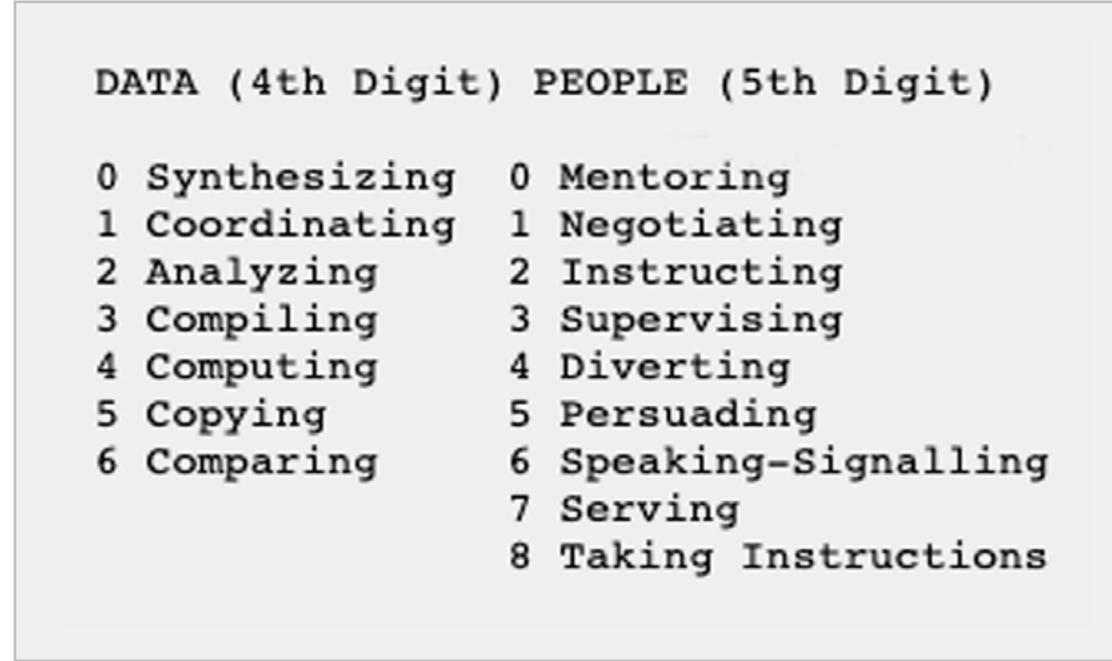




1936

## World Brain

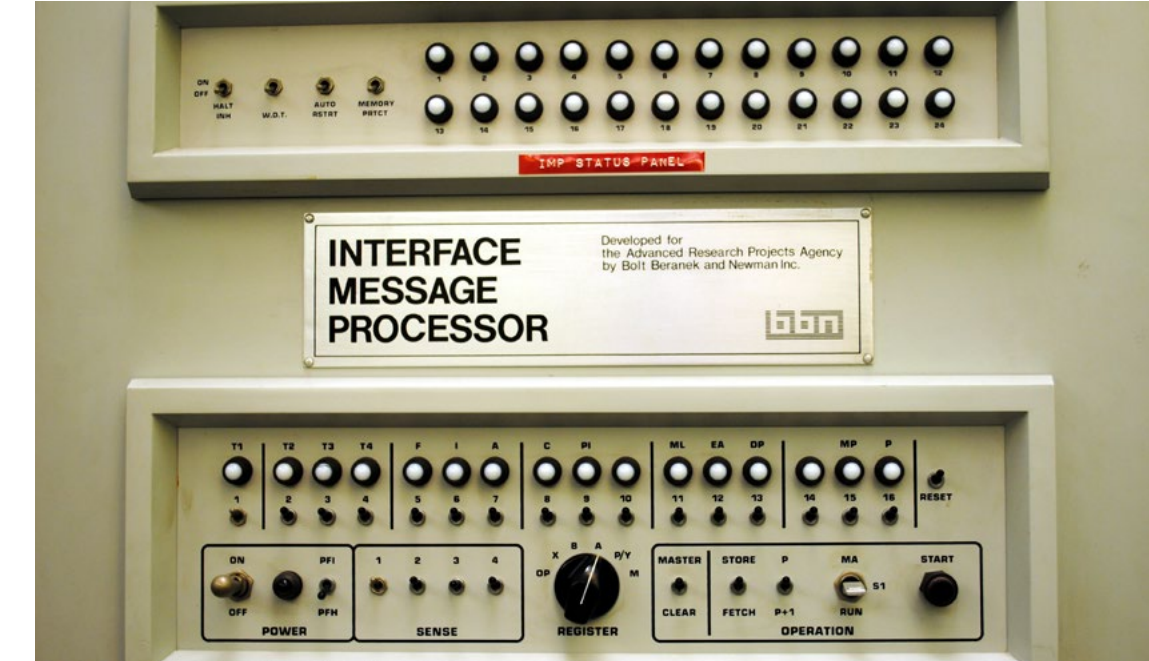
A collection of essays and addresses by English novelist, journalist, sociologist, and historian H.G. Wells, [World Brain](#) introduces readers to the author’s vision of a free, synthetic, authoritative, permanent “World Encyclopaedia” that could help people everywhere make the best use of universal information resources.



1939

## Dictionary of Occupational Titles

Originally developed by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Analysis Program during Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s presidency, the [Dictionary of Occupational Titles](#) (DOT) defined, categorized, and documented every job in the U.S. economy. Published in hard-copy book format until 1991, the DOT was ultimately replaced by the Labor Department’s online [O\\*Net](#) database, which provides the data foundation for many career navigation tools in use today.



1969

## ARPANET

The product of research funded by the U.S. Defense Department’s Advanced Research Projects Agency, [ARPANET](#) (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network) was the precursor to the internet. ARPANET carried its first message on October 29, 1969, and the rest is history. [Leonard Kleinrock](#) is often credited with proposing ideas that led to the eventual development of the internet in a 1961 paper titled “Information Flow in Large Communication Nets.”

1936

1939

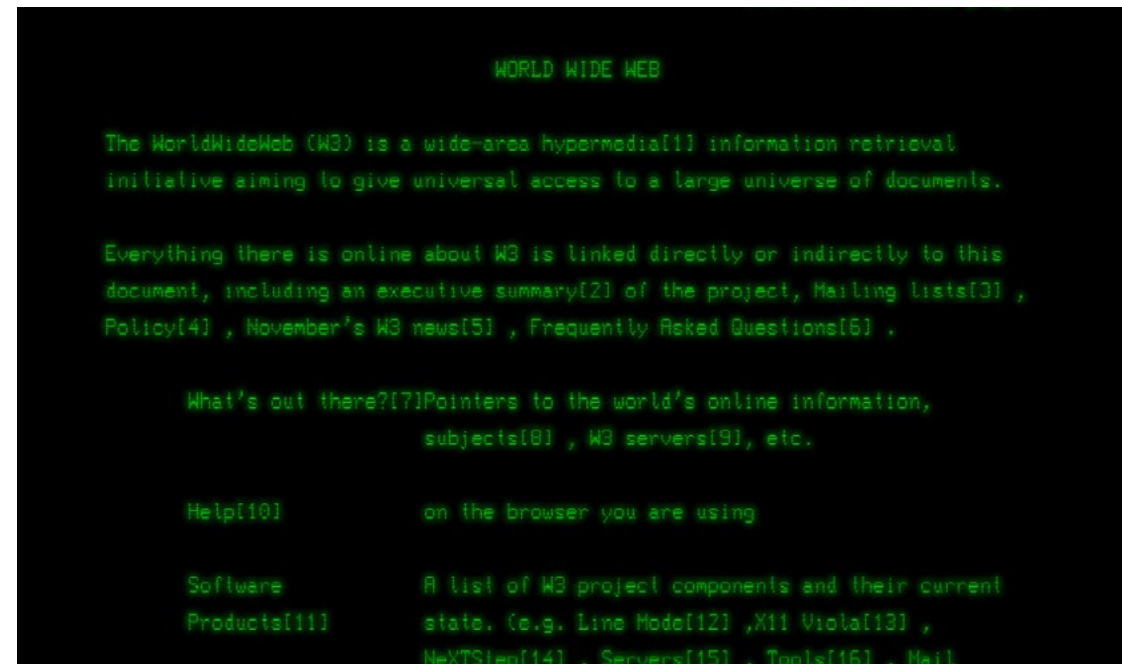
1940

1950

1960

1969

1970



1970-1991

## The internet is born

In two-decade span, numerous incremental advances and investments build the basis for the modern internet. Scientists in research facilities developed a range of capabilities, including [global networking](#), in 1973 when England's University College of London and Norway's Royal Radar Establishment connected to ARPANET. In 1983, the [Domain Name System](#) (DNS) established the common extensions .com, .gov, and .edu. And in 1989, Tim Berners-Lee invented the [World Wide Web](#) while working at CERN laboratory, and [The World](#) became the first commercial provider of dial-up internet service.



1994

## The Monster Board

The employment website that later became [Monster.com](#) goes live. One of the first commercial websites, Monsterboard.com provided career and recruitment services for jobseekers and employers. The company became known as Monster.com in 1999 after [merging](#) with Online Career Center.



1996

## Viasite

The first online recruiting tool, Viasite, a French-language job board for employers interested in applying the principles of supply chain management to recruiting, launches in Quebec, Canada. Viasite was later renamed Recruitsoft, and then Taleo. [Taleo](#) was acquired by Oracle in 2012.

1970

1973

1980

1983

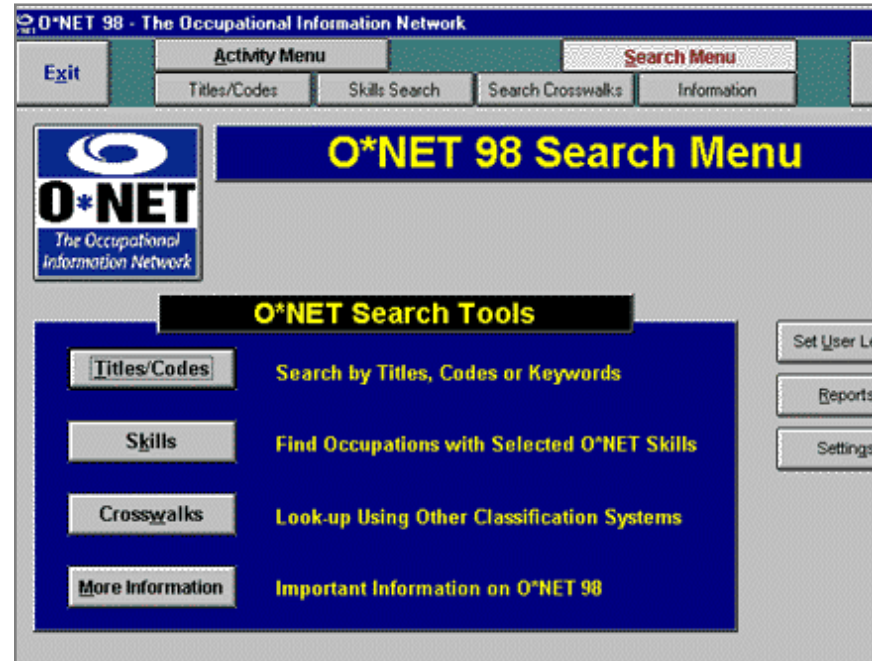
1989

1990

1991

1994

1996



1998

## The Occupational Information Network (O\*NET)

O\*NET replaces Dictionary of Occupational Titles. The first free online database of U.S. occupational definitions, O\*NET continues to be the basis of many career navigation technologies today.



2003

## LinkedIn

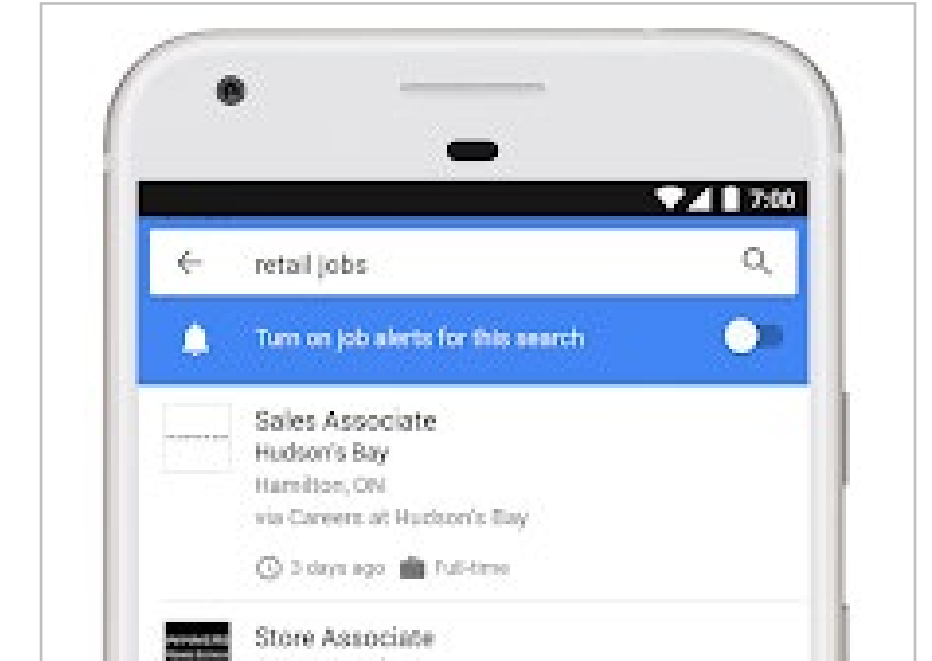
An employee-focused social media site devoted to professional networking, [LinkedIn](#) goes live on May 5.



2014

## Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Signed into law in 2014 and taking effect in 2015, the WIOA adds a focus on technology throughout the workforce system as it replaces the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. For example, the section of the law focusing on [state workforce development boards](#) calls for “the development of strategies for technological improvements to facilitate access to, and improve the quality of, services and activities provided through the one-stop delivery system.” And the section focusing on [local workforce development boards](#) states that, “The local board shall develop strategies for using technology to maximize the accessibility and effectiveness of the local workforce development system for employers, and workers and jobseekers.”



2017

## Google for Jobs

Hoping to make it easier for jobseekers to find information about openings, Google applies advanced search and data analytics capabilities to the job hunt. In an [announcement](#) at its Google I/O event in May, the search giant says it used a new API to create a sophisticated aggregator and search tool that collects and organizes millions of job postings.

1998

2000

2003

2010

2014

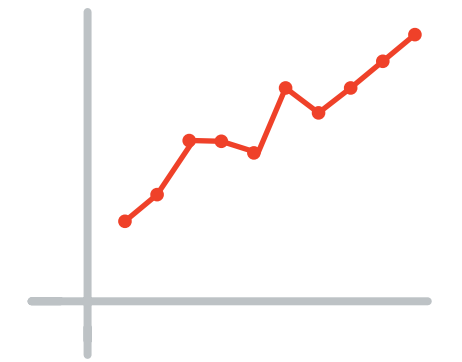
2017

# The Market Today

In any marketplace, those who can afford to pay dominate. Today, challenges of scale and selection continue to shape the landscape of career navigation technologies, with the needs of individual, frontline and mid-skill jobseekers an afterthought at best. In our review of approximately 1,000 companies and organizations active in the employment, recruitment, and career planning sectors, we found hundreds of systems designed to solve talent challenges for employers. There are tools that employers can use to post an opening to many job boards at once, market their organizations to jobseekers, track and communicate with job applicants, and analyze data. On top of that, there are many, many staffing and executive search firms that provide one-on-one job placement services. The opportunity costs of leaving a critical position unfilled, combined with the actual costs of recruiting, hiring, and training new employees, give employers a powerful incentive to invest in recruitment and hiring technologies.

## More than \$16 billion

was invested in human resources technology ventures in the past five years.<sup>5</sup>



## Only 12% of the \$6.7 billion

in venture capital invested in HR technology businesses in 2019 went to career navigation companies.<sup>6,7</sup>



## Top investment targets

include online hiring and recruiting platforms, skills development and training companies, and companies serving postsecondary students entering the job market.



Public workforce boards, postsecondary educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations also provide a range of career services to millions of individuals every year. Often referred to as intermediaries, these organizations sit at a career development crossroads, often supporting individuals during times of crisis or other important points of transition and decision-making along their education and career pathways. For entry-level and middle-skill workers, intermediaries can be lifelines at times of job change or disconnection.

Intermediary organizations invest in technologies to provide services to workers and learners more efficiently, scale staff capacity, and navigate the complex career and industry landscape themselves. Having the need, scale, and spending power to make big investments in technology and digital transformation, these organizations are a powerful catalyst for innovation in the career navigation technology market.

Intermediaries are using many of the most fully featured career navigation systems available today, including tools that help jobseekers connect with education and training options, jobs, career guidance, and employers looking for workers. They're also using technology to provide a broad range of wraparound supports, such as coaching or connections to community resources.

**We have seen innovative initiatives in these areas in particular:**



A growing number of technological tools have emerged to facilitate career guidance in educational settings, oriented toward students and entry level or early career workers discovering pathways and connecting to employers. Postsecondary students have generally had access to more advanced and individualized services, notably through career services offices using technological platforms such as Handshake, and the use of innovative K-12 solutions such as Nepris is on the rise.



In a typical year, about 4 million jobseekers of all ages receive career services assistance from the nation's 550 local workforce boards and 2,500 American Job Centers.<sup>8</sup> They use digital tools to search for jobs, get career advice, and participate in training programs. While many workforce leaders have made it a priority to integrate technology into their offerings, the vendor market is fragmented and comprehensive technology solutions often focus more on data collection than on workers' needs.

The intermediary market has an opportunity to significantly influence the ongoing development of career navigation technologies, with an emphasis on innovations that yield more worker-orientated systems.



**We believe the moment—and the market—is ripe for a new generation of career navigation tools to help tens of millions of workers find new careers, and meaningful and economically transformative work, at scale.**

Paradoxically, the users of career navigation technology who arguably have the greatest need for innovative, high-quality tools are those who are least likely to be able to afford those tools: the workers themselves—especially workers in entry-level, frontline, or middle-skill roles. As a result, much of the market for worker-centered career navigation services is limited to low-quality “free” job search tools or systems offering more transactional, easy-to-automate supports, such as resume writing or portfolio-building assistance.

That said, it’s true that things have begun to change. Digital job boards and career development sites such as LinkedIn, Glassdoor, Indeed, and Google Jobs offer features that allow for more user-friendly employment searches and application processes. Applicant communication

tools allow companies to connect with workers via text and new assessment technologies have begun to break down bias in hiring evaluations.

Progress notwithstanding, there is an epic investment disparity in the career navigation market. The relative lack of adequate tools, especially tools designed to help underserved and overlooked workers build skills and social networks, has left workers largely unsupported as they chart their courses through a complex, fast-changing landscape further transformed by a global pandemic, massive economic disruption, and the growing displacement of jobs by automation and artificial intelligence. The system is badly broken, which means there is tremendous room for tools that make an impact not only for workers, but for our entire economy.

# Understanding the Career Navigation Landscape

To make sense of the complex career navigation technology market, our Career Navigation Framework analyzes the tools, platforms, and resources populating this landscape through two interconnected lenses:

▶ **Who is using the tool, and who primarily benefits from it**

Many tools are expressly designed for employers, others are for jobseekers, and some provide benefits to both parties. Others are built to be used by intermediaries such as education or workforce systems for the benefit of jobseekers, employers, or both.

▶ **What goal is the user of the tool trying to accomplish**

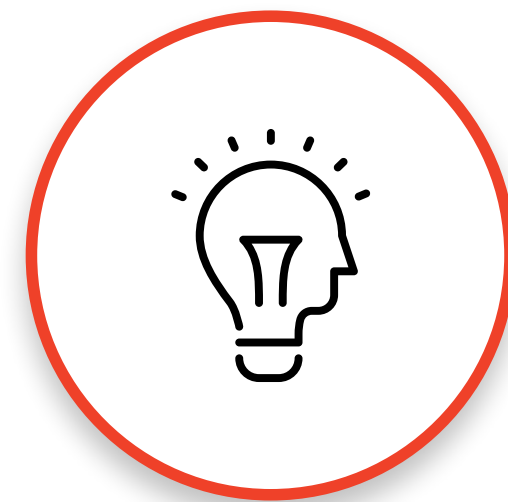
Our key insight in building this framework was to recognize that workers, employers, and intermediaries are all engaged in versions of the same sets of activities—exploring, connecting to, and landing opportunities.



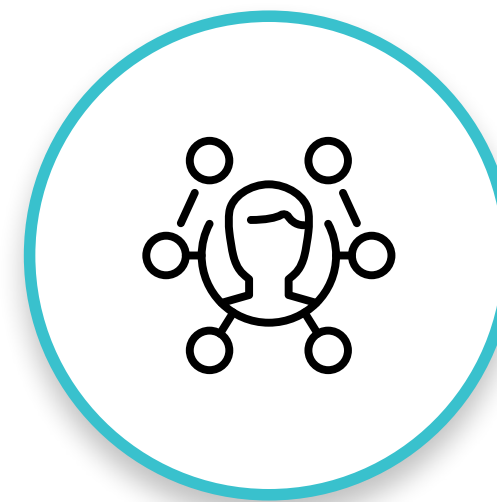
**Our key insight in building this framework was to recognize that workers, employers, and intermediaries are all engaged in versions of the same sets of activities—exploring, connecting to, and landing opportunities.**

We use the terms **Discover, Connect, Position to Succeed, and Develop** as shorthand for these shared activities: Workers explore career pathways and employers of interest, employers look for candidates to fill jobs, jobseekers and employers hope to connect with one another, and both employers and jobseekers use technical tools to increase the likelihood that the match will succeed.

Throughout this process, both workers and employers ideally deepen relationships, expand their social capital, and discover new connections they might otherwise have overlooked. Intermediaries support both parties in doing all of the above.



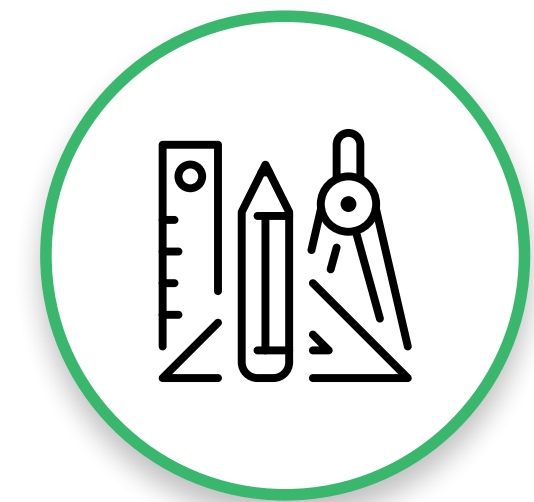
**Discover**



**Connect**



**Position to Succeed**



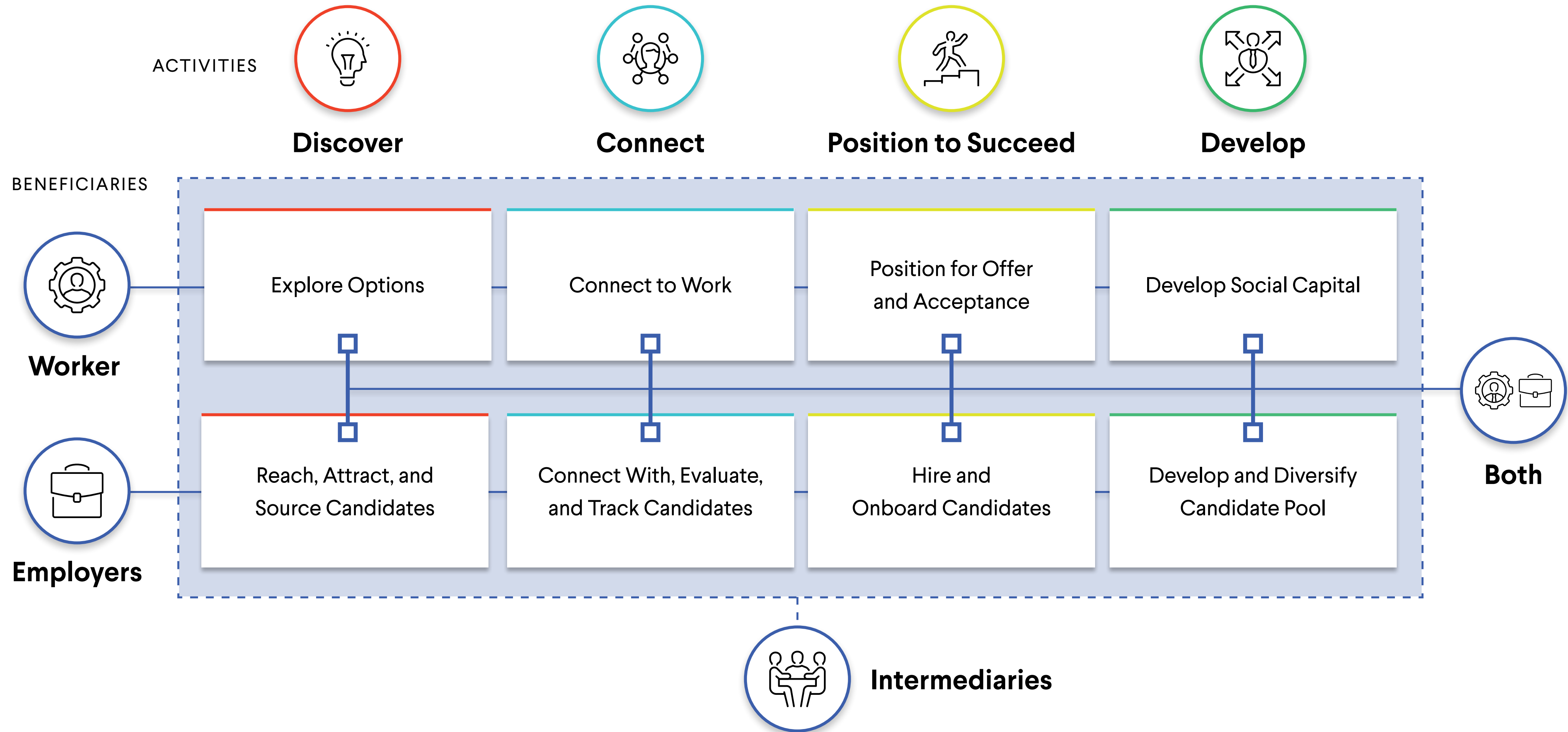
**Develop**

### **A Note on What is Not Included**

Intentionally, this framework is not all-encompassing. Most notably, while learning and training opportunities such as traditional two- and four-year colleges, career and technical education, adult education, alternative credential programs, boot camps, and other such pathways can help people learn more about work they may like to do or the jobs for which they may have an aptitude, we generally chose not to include education and training programs in our framework or company research. This deliberate exclusion gave us more room to underscore the fact that the work of searching for and successfully embarking on a career involves its own set of skills—self-knowledge, decision-making, relationship-building, and self-presentation, among others—that are not necessarily widely taught in training programs.

It's also important to note that even many of the impact-oriented tools we highlight may be inaccessible for workers who lack internet access, digital fluency, spoken or written English language skills, or time outside of work to use a given tool or platform. Universal internet connectivity, technical skills and digital access, and fundamental improvements in K-12 education must be core building blocks of supports for workers.

# The JFF Career Navigation Framework





# Workers

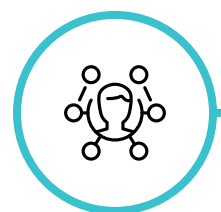
Workers engage with career navigation services through a variety of channels that include workforce and education systems, consumer websites, job placement services, want ads, and personal and social networks. This is by no means a linear, step-by-step process, nor does every job search connect to every channel mentioned here. Most job boards, content platforms, and transactional tools such as resume-building engines are scattershot, and do not offer meaningful, personalized guidance or support. The solutions we highlight here take a truly worker-centered approach.

## Activities



### Discover

Explore career interests and related industries; identify transferable skills and experiences.



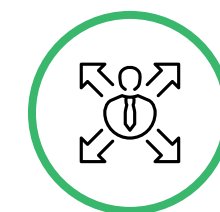
### Connect

Search for and connect with a variety of work options, including salaried, hourly, and gig opportunities.



### Position to Succeed

Position for a successful employment offer by utilizing pre-hire tools and supports, such as resume development and interview prep services.



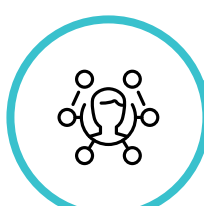
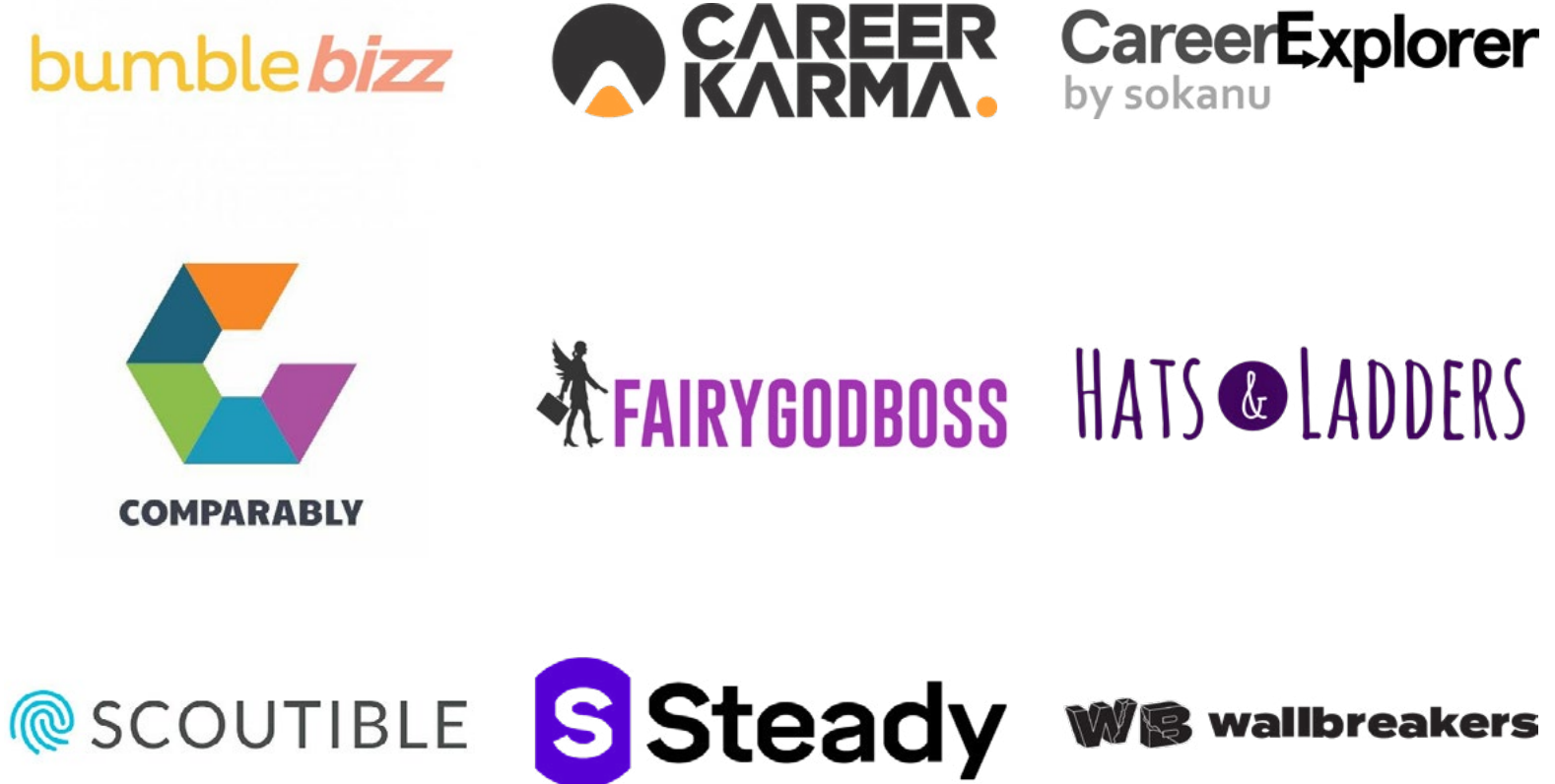
### Develop

Engage with community; build and maintain relationships and social networks; find mentorship and/or coaching support.

# Workers



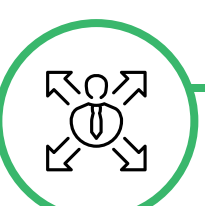
## Discover



## Connect



## Position to Succeed



## Develop





# Employers

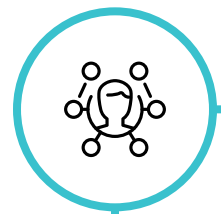
Connection to work is inextricably bound to employers' hiring and recruiting practices, which include attracting, managing, evaluating, and communicating with job candidates, often at a very large scale. Providers' success depends on their ability to deliver ROI by supporting seamless, well-integrated hiring processes that save employers time and money and identify candidates who are a good fit for the organization.

## Activities



### Discover

Attract, reach, source, and persuade candidates through a wide variety of recruitment practices and platforms.



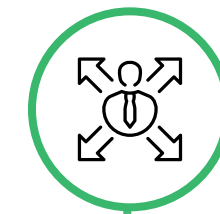
### Connect

Manage a pipeline of applicants; conduct interviews and non-biased evaluations of prospective candidates; deepen the best candidates' interest in the company.



### Position to Succeed

Utilize onboarding practices that clearly define work roles and pathways for advancement; connect employees with opportunities for mentorship, coaching, and social networking.



### Develop

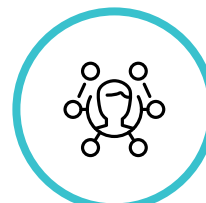
Diversify talent by developing relationships with candidates who typically don't show up in the pipeline; launch diversity and inclusion initiatives focused on certain population groups.



# Employers



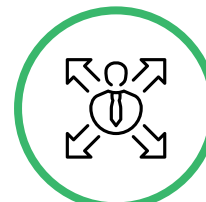
## Discover



## Connect



## Position to Succeed



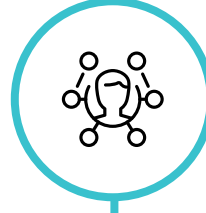
## Develop



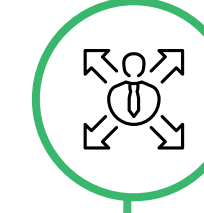
# Both Workers and Employers



## Discover



## Connect



## Develop

SOCIAL CAPITAL & DIVERSE CANDIDATES



## Position to Succeed





# Intermediaries

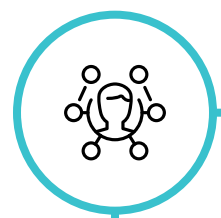
Large-scale intermediaries, such as public workforce boards, utilize career navigation products and services to support jobseekers in their jurisdictions. While education and workforce systems often have a mandate to serve both employers and workers, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that they are not always well equipped for the task. The tools we are highlighting here help systems operate more effectively at scale—meeting the challenges of providing truly specialized, differentiated advice to workers while getting to know the particulars of a variety of industries as well.

## Activities



### Discover

Help workers explore and recognize their skills and career interests and identify the industries in which they can be most successful.



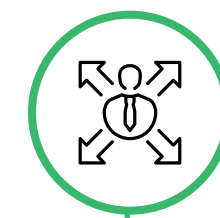
### Connect

Effectively and efficiently match workers and employers at all stages of career development.



### Position to Succeed

Position workers for successful job offers with pre-hire supports such as resume development and interview prep services.



### Develop

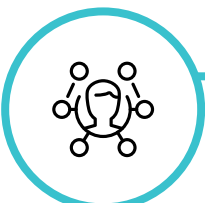
Introduce workers to ongoing training opportunities; help workers build and maintain social networks and secure mentorship and/or coaching support.



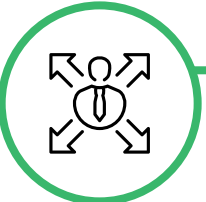
# Intermediaries



## Discover



## Connect



## Develop



# Trends to Watch

Across the market, we see a second revolution in career navigation technology emerging. Innovative new systems offer sophisticated capabilities and features that benefit workers, educators, and training providers.

For the first time, workers have access to, and are benefiting from, advanced resources such as personalized insights, in-depth data, and peer communities. Impact employers, enterprise solutions, and incumbent players are all pushing the market forward.



# 1 Coalitions Meeting the Moment

In the most urgent and exciting trend we've seen, employers, education providers, philanthropists, and technology vendors are stepping up in response to the twin crises of 2020—the global pandemic and widespread economic disruption. Through technology and boundary-breaking partnerships, new collaborative models are connecting jobseekers to training and career opportunities at scale, addressing a key breakdown in the market—the gap between who is most in need of support and who is most able to pay for it.

## SKILLUP

Among the most exciting of these new partnerships is [SkillUp](#), a coalition that offers a free tool for workers earning less than \$40,000 annually who have been displaced by the coronavirus pandemic. SkillUp offers career guidance, aligned training, and connections to open jobs in high-growth, in-demand fields.

The new coalition, launched in July 2020, is made up of a wide range of partners, including these:

- Leading employers such as Walmart
- Education and training partners such as PennFoster, Per Scholas, General Assembly, and Climb Hire
- Technology and content partners such as Guild and Pymetrics
- Philanthropic partners such as the Charles Koch Foundation and Strada.

JFF is honored to serve as an operating partner in the coalition, alongside Opportunity@Work, Guild, and Strada.

We spoke to **Josh Jarrett, executive chairman of the SkillUp Coalition**, to learn more about how this groundbreaking partnership came to be and how he sees this effort transforming both workers' lives and the U.S. economy.

## Spotlight On SkillUp

**JFF:** *SkillUp's model starts with career navigation, assessing people's previous jobs, how they like to work, and what industries are growing in their regions to recommend career paths. Why is it important for jobseekers to consider all of those factors as they plan their next steps?*

**JJ:** It's critical, as a jobseeker, to think "What's the next best choice for me? What's the nearest-neighbor action that I can be taking? It's great to have the whole universe out in front of me, but that's almost more difficult to navigate." So



**Josh Jarrett**  
Executive Chairman  
SkillUp Coalition

how do we help people break those choices down into more digestible pieces? And importantly, how do you start to visualize yourself getting there? One of the biggest challenges, we like to say, is someone's own self-doubt. How do we help them doubt their self-doubt? That begins with seeing something that's attainable and adjacent to where you are in your starting point.

If you look at people's resumes and profiles, if you look at the Current Population Survey, we want to see where there actually are pathways. If I was displaced from retail or food service, what are the most likely pathways that I can reach? In retail, there are a couple of good pathways that we can actually see in the data: Retail into a customer service job, into a sales development representative, into a sales role is one path. Another takes us through

administrative assistant, and that might lead to office manager or bookkeeper.

That's the new power: to be able to see these pathways in real, intentional ways. What's a job I might need to get now, as a transitional job that's going to help me replace my income, but hopefully with an organization that's upskilling-friendly and will support my continued career development? Or, what's a gateway job that's going to get me on that first rung of the ladder in an industry that may have more growth prospects, like technology, business, health care, skilled trades, or supply chain logistics? Or, can I get all the way to a destination job, with middle- to upper-level wages? Usually it's a two- or three-step process.

**JFF:** *We see the gap between who is most in need of career navigation support and who is most able to pay for it as a key breakdown in the market. How is SkillUp's model helping fill this gap?*

**JJ:** SkillUp's platform is powerful technology; it's necessary, but it's not sufficient. We talk about empathy plus technology: How do we add that human connection that meets somebody where they are and gives them confidence? It's really the combination of human coaching and technology-based supports, and that's hard from a financing standpoint. Fundamentally there's a shortage in the whole country around these important roles. Just like we're

talking about contact tracing as this new job that we need 100,000 of in the COVID-adjusted economy, we need 100,000 or more career navigators.

We need to think about this as a challenge along the lines of the Work Projects Administration from the 1930s. We need systemic policy supports, and we need to find a mechanism, whether it's AmeriCorps or another tool, where we can recognize that this is a job that needs to be done on behalf of society and as part of this transitional economy. Because five years of changes that were already happening in our economy—automation, the rise of telemedicine, the redesign of supply chains for e-commerce—are going to happen in 12 months because of COVID. And so we need to think as a country, How do we create

a career navigation corps to help people make this shift?

**JFF:** *SkillUp brings together a remarkably wide range of partners, from major employers to training providers to technology and content providers. What are they bringing to the table that's great not just for jobseekers but for their own businesses?*

**JJ:** For example, on the employer side, just telling people to go get training and then sending them over to Indeed to find a job is wholly insufficient, particularly because a lot of the folks we work for don't get seen in the hiring process. They don't have a bachelor's degree. So we need to work with employers who



want to work with this population. [Our partners] are all saying not only “Come here,” but also “I’m going to support your career. I’m going to have an education-as-a-benefit program. I’m going to have an internal mobility solution. I’m going to have an explicit diversity and equity program.” Those are the employers that we want to be directing workers to, because not only are they going to get a good first job, but hopefully they’ll be on that ladder up.

[These employers] know that their long-term success depends on having their communities be strong and having people get back to work. And so they see that supporting SkillUp means that their community will get back to work, and that’s good for them as well.

**JFF:** *What innovations do you think are still needed for workers, and how might the SkillUp Coalition help drive those new developments?*

**JJ:** One, we need to understand these pathways better. Looking at these pathways is also going to expose where we don’t have good short-term skilling solutions, for educators and entrepreneurs [to step in]. Two, we need a catalog of quality. How do I find a good program near me? There are so many different, scattered solutions out there—we need to be able to synthesize and make sense of those options. Three, we need to think about how employers can work together more closely and partner with

training providers so that there are real jobs that come out of this, not just people with credentials wandering the earth. Each of those pieces is critical.

And then the last piece is, how do we pay for this? We’re in the process of raising a rapid reskilling fund to help offset some of the cost of training programs for the individuals or the providers. We think that can be a model for how the federal government or the states can think about creative ways to finance this, such as pay for performance. Ultimately, that comes down to evidence, and there’s not enough data right now in these short-term programs either on their overall success or disaggregated by subpopulation to the point of equity. We need to parse all that out. And by virtue of trying to solve it in the

COVID moment, we hope to create some infrastructure that will add value in 12 to 18 months as we start to come out of this.

**JFF:** *Are there other kinds of partnerships like SkillUp that you think would be especially powerful—either now, amidst the economic crisis, or in the future?*

**JJ:** I think there a couple of things. First, we need multiple front ends reaching out to workers to give them access to these different solutions—we don't think there's one end-all, be-all. In fact, being able to focus on a particular user group, understand their needs, and help them find the next best thing is actually easier to do the more targeted you are, rather

than, let's create a tool for every worker in the economy. So I think we should see multiple front ends, but we should be sharing certain back-end resources—evidence, data collection, this training provider catalog of shared resources, a rapid reskilling fund, the labor market data of where the jobs are. We need shared innovation on the back end and then multiple experimentations on the front end.

And we need horizontal solutions that reach across providers or platforms. Job placement is hard, and if we ask every single training provider to make sure that they're delivering 80 percent job placement, that's a huge investment of time and energy to make that happen. And so what are the horizontal platforms that can support them? Opportunity@Work

is doing interesting things with the Opportunity Marketplace. YearUp's doing some interesting things. How do we think about these horizontal solutions that can lift all boats, rather than asking each of these incredibly well-intentioned providers to figure out every part of a vertically integrated problem set? So I think that that's going to be another big leap forward.

# 1 More Coalitions Meeting the Moment

## **Rework America Alliance**

Launched in August 2020, the Rework America Alliance is a cross-sector collaboration building “a new system of worker training for the digital economy” offering everything from insights into high-mobility job opportunities for displaced workers to criteria for the most effective training programs. Partners in this effort, convened by the Markle Foundation, include the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta; employers such as Google, IBM, Microsoft, McKinsey, and Walmart; the National Building Trades Union; leading nonprofits such as the National Urban League and UnidosUS; and tech companies such as PAIRIN and other developers of educational and training platforms.

## **NextChapter by Guild**

Guild partners with Fortune 1000 employers and leading academic institutions to offer courses and degree programs to employees through their companies’ tuition reimbursement

plans. Unveiled in May 2020, Next Chapter is a new model of outplacement in which companies partner with Guild to offer career navigation, training, support services, and job placement for laid-off and in-transition workers. Hiring partners include Walmart, Unity, Paschall Truck Lines, Gainsight, Instacart, Chipotle, and TTEC.

## **Opportunity Marketplace**

An initiative launched in 2020 by Opportunity@Work, Opportunity Marketplace is a “recommendation and reputation engine” for workers who are “skilled through alternative routes”—or STARS. Powered by Workday and supported by Walmart, the Gates Foundation, and the Irvine Foundation, this platform matches employers to trusted training providers to quickly identify qualified job candidates for entry level tech roles. The platform has launched in California and Washington, DC.

## Systems Harnessing Advanced Technologies to Focus on Workers

Throughout the market, we're seeing career navigation companies focused on building solutions that go beyond facilitating transaction-based experiences (job matching, talent sourcing, and assessments, for example) and instead offer jobseekers a more sophisticated and personalized array of features as they navigate job, career, and education and training options.

### **Data-Driven, Personalized Insights Give Workers a GPS to Their Future of Work**

Rapid advances in big data processing and aggregation combined with AI-powered assessment technologies are driving the development of career navigation tools that enable experiences specific to the individual. These new systems provide personalized insights as workers and learners explore and navigate career options and pathways. Tools such as Drafted and Fuel50 embrace the reality of frequent job transitions in complex

job and labor markets, helping career-changing workers identify opportunities that the last generation of career navigation technologies might have missed.

### **Workers and Employers Now Have the Same Data**

Historically, employers have had an advantage over workers because they have ready access to data about salaries, demand for labor, typical career progression pathways, and other employment and hiring trends, while workers had limited access to similar insights into their market value, earning potential, or opportunities for career advancement. In recent years, sites like LinkedIn, Glassdoor, Indeed, Comparably, and others have begun to level the playing field for workers by sharing more of this information, especially data that was easily quantifiable or accessible via existing systems and sources, such as employee reviews. Now, innovative career navigation platforms are creating even more opportunities to uncover and share data

to help jobseekers make decisions about their careers. Some, like Blendoor and Jobcase, compile findings through their own analysis, while others crowdsource insights from information provided by site users.

### **Online Peer Communities Offer Support**

An increasing number of the most innovative companies promote community as a central element of their career navigation platforms. Some tailor their offerings to specific populations, as Fairygodboss does for women. Others directly ask users to support and mentor one another, as Career Karma does. These platforms offer more than impersonal user reviews or advice boards, and instead foster direct interaction among people who share similar interests and concerns and are working through similar questions. They remind users that they are not alone in their career journeys and give them a way to share valuable information and insights in real time.



## 3 Impact Employers Driving Innovation

Businesses are fundamentally redesigning how they think about attracting, developing, and retaining employees. It's no longer “nice” to be a company that thinks beyond quarterly earnings and shareholder returns, it's a business imperative. JFF calls these companies Impact Employers because they tackle today's challenges by adopting business strategies that make a positive impact on workers, communities, and the bottom line.<sup>8</sup>

Impact Employers know that quality human capital experiences at all stages of a career—from recruitment and onboarding programs to supports and career advancement opportunities for current employees—are good for workers and good for the bottom line. These businesses are playing a powerful role in shaping the career navigation technology market, whether by driving demand for stand-alone worker-centered tools or encouraging the acquisition or development of worker-centered features in a wide range of products and platforms.

### **Equity and Worker Experience Lead Innovation and Adoption**

A growing number of employers are strategically focused on finding diverse candidates, effectively onboarding new hires, and helping current employees develop new skills and capabilities so they advance in their careers. They are also helping workers with career decisions and transitions. These Impact Employers are shaping the career navigation market by proactively developing HR tools and services designed to foster a healthy workplace culture, encourage worker engagement, and better equip managers to grow as leaders. And this trend is spurring broader adoption of sophisticated tools. For example, Blenddoor and Fuel50 find that their offerings are quickly gaining traction among employers because they support talent, diversity, and equity priorities.

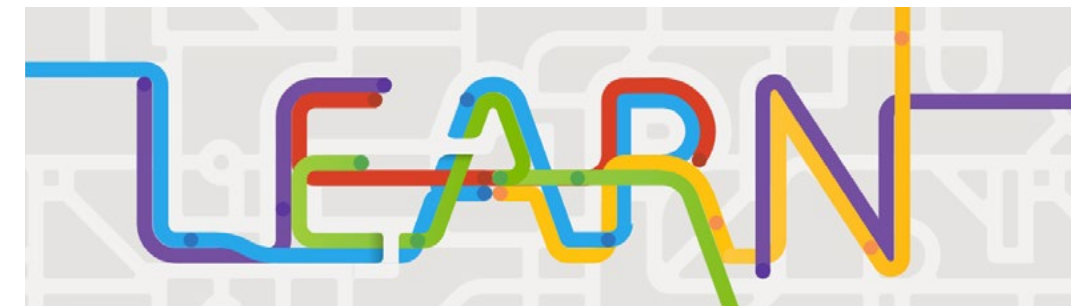
## 4 Big IT Companies Entering the Market

Big enterprise IT companies are increasingly introducing tools focused on frontline, entry-level, unemployed, and disconnected workers, leveraging their scale and expertise to extend their reach into this largely untapped market. Notable examples include:



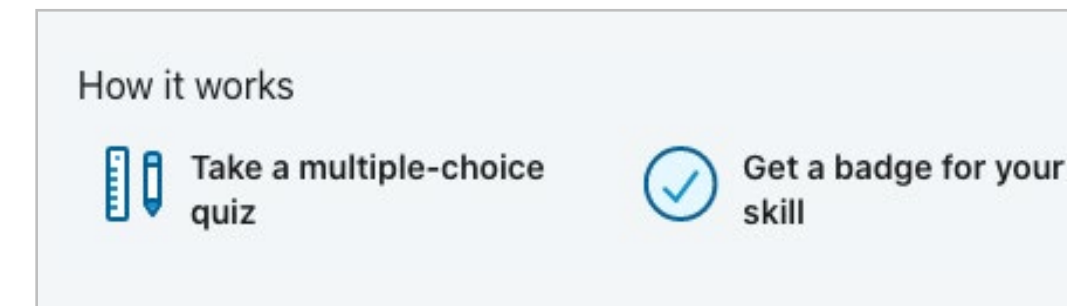
### Grow With Google

A Google initiative offering wide array of tools and resources, including training and certification programs, content to guide jobseekers, and targeted supports for veterans and military families, aspiring tech workers, and entrepreneurs



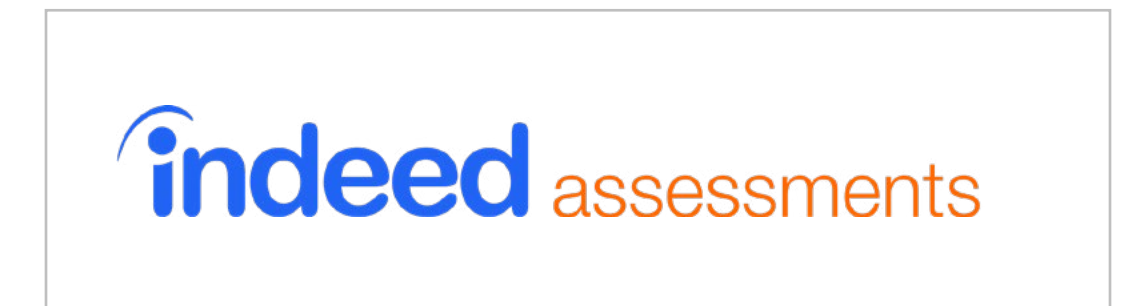
### Microsoft Learn

A platform offering training, Microsoft certifications, and other content that allows learners to tailor their training and development pathways to their skill levels and areas of interest



### LinkedIn Skill Assessments

A resource that LinkedIn members can use to quickly validate their skills and display “verified skill” badges in their LinkedIn profiles



### Indeed Assessments

A library of test modules and analytics that employers can integrate into job postings to evaluate candidates' skills

We expect to see increased adoption of these tools across employers and systems. We also expect to see the introduction of additional enterprise solutions targeting the education and workforce markets. Amid all of this activity, we expect that smart tools solving niche challenges for employers will be attractive acquisition targets for larger, comprehensive platforms designed to provide one-stop solutions.

## Incumbents Wielding Latent Power

Public intermediaries such as workforce boards and two- and four-year colleges have the power drive wide-scale adoption of career navigation technologies, because they touch so much of the job-seeking population in their areas. But the systems that intermediaries use have to check many boxes to meet public funding requirements that often vary by jurisdiction—adding complexity to the product design process and constraining innovation. Still, some leading companies have found a way to move the needle.

Incumbent vendors continue to shape the career navigation field. One example is **Geographic Solutions, whose flagship product, Virtual OneStop**, has become a staple of workforce development agencies and American Job Centers, touching millions of unemployed workers, especially now, during the pandemic. Even though it must adhere to federal and

state regulations and funding requirements, Geographic Solutions has upped its game in recent years, introducing mobile-accessible tools, integrated labor market data, and resources such as job search, connections to education, and unemployment insurance management.

While no survey of career navigation tools can overlook powerful incumbents like Geographic Solutions, more flexible public requirements could help make the ecosystem more hospitable to innovation—especially when innovation helps providers do an even better, more equitable job of reaching and serving unemployed and disconnected jobseekers.





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# Innovation and Investment Opportunities

*There's still more to do.*

We believe the best technology can revolutionize the way we live and work—helping people be more efficient and productive, opening access to new information and opportunities, and allowing us to solve bigger problems than we ever dreamed possible. To effectively navigate the fast-changing future of work and careers—a future that's already upon us—we encourage technologists, entrepreneurs, and investors to continue innovating, keeping in mind the objectives on the following page.



**We need solutions that follow workers throughout their careers** with proactive, not reactive, guidance on how best to continually navigate the changing future of work. Many career navigation tools are designed to be used at certain pivotal moments in a worker's life: high school or college graduation or when "it's time" to find a new job. What if these tools worked proactively, periodically prompting workers to assess whether their career paths are meeting their needs or notifying them that their jobs might be at risk of automation?

**We need new delivery mechanisms and business models** to ensure that this guidance reaches all workers, especially those in frontline or blue-collar jobs and

those who may not have full or equitable access to digital technology. Intermediaries offering career navigation tools and guidance often route workers through specific entry points, such as a college career services center or an American Job Center. What if workers had access to these services everywhere they turned? Many states allow people to register to vote at department of motor vehicles offices. What if people could find their next careers there, too?

**And we need better data to undergird these innovations.** Companies as varied as Google and Career Explorer are building tools that provide insights to individual workers by analyzing the massive troves of data available in people's profiles and

preferences settings. However, as many developers of career navigation tools look for efficient data sets to use as they rush to market, there are still too many solutions that use traditional data sources, such as government statistical reports, as the foundation of their career guidance offerings. With so many systems relying on the same type of data, sophisticated personalization will be harder to achieve. We predict that the companies that emerge as true breakouts will be the ones that use data in new and creative ways, making career navigation technologies more specific and relevant to individuals.

# Innovators to Watch

## *Companies Poised for Scaled Impact*

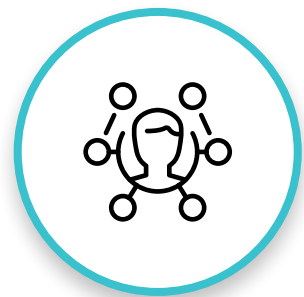
From the more than 1,000 companies and organizations we reviewed in the recruiting, employment, and career planning sectors, we chose 18 Innovators to Watch.

Innovators to Watch are a select group of organizations that represent market trends and distinguish themselves from other forward-looking companies by their potential to create significant, business-aligned social impact. Each offers a potentially transformative innovation or is led by inspiring founders and teams that we believe in.

### Activities



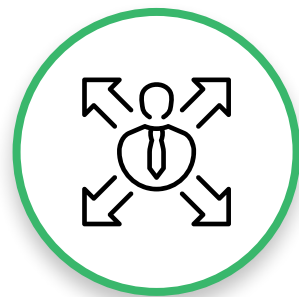
**Discover**



**Connect**



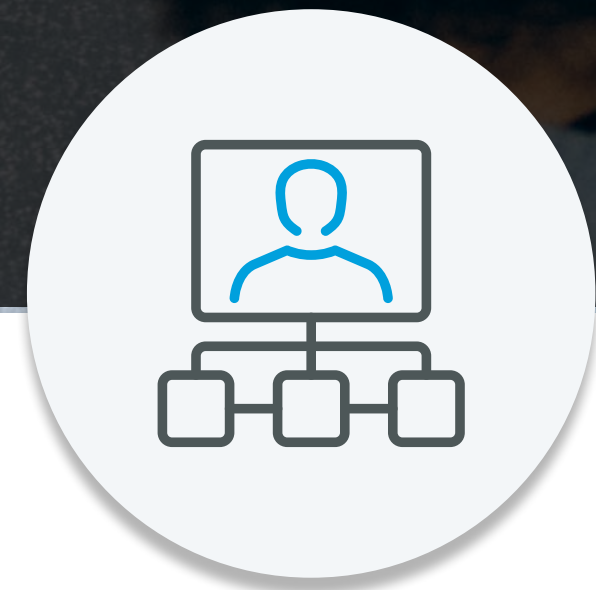
**Position to  
Succeed**



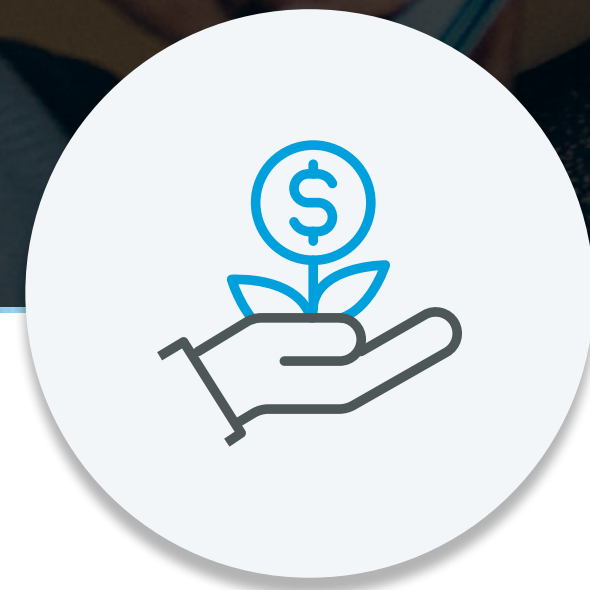
**Develop**



## Here are just a few of the key characteristics of our Innovators to Watch:



They develop systems that **benefit users in many ways**, offering assessments, data and information, direct connections to work, peer communities, development of social capital, talent management systems, job search tools, support for diversity hiring, and features that promote work/life balance



They range from **seed stage enterprises that have raised \$2 million or less to a private-equity-backed** venture with nearly \$150 million invested



All were **founded within the past 11 years**—more than half within the past six years



More than 60 percent were founded or are led by teams that include women or people of color, including **two companies founded and led by Black women**



**They're located across the country**—in Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Denver, Los Angeles, Nashville, New York, San Francisco, and Vancouver



blendoor.com • Founded in 2014

**KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS**

- Skills/Traits-based job matching
- Anonymized profiles
- Identity-relevant company ratings

**MEASURES OF IMPACT**

**250%**

Improvement in diverse representation from screening to interview

**6X**

Increase in qualified candidates who identify as Black, indigenous, or a person of color.

**1 million +**

Diverse candidates in the Blendoor pipeline: 61% Women, 11% LGBTQ, 42% Black, 23% Latinx, 7% Disabled, 5% Veterans

**What does Blendoor do?**

Blendoor is an inclusive talent marketplace that aims to mitigate unconscious bias in the hiring process. Its analytics software sources job candidates from strategic partners, universities, and its own job matching platform and then shares them with recruiters anonymously—without names, ages, or photos. Blendoor tracks the progress of candidates from underrepresented populations, helping to determine whether unconscious bias on the basis of race, gender, LGBTQIA identity, veteran status, or physical ability impacts hiring decisions.

Blendoor also offers a tool called BlendScore, which synthesizes publicly available data to rate a company’s diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) performance based on talent acquisition, talent management, demographic data, and other measures, including supplier diversity and compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act.

**Who is Blendoor built to work for?**

Blendoor’s customers are companies seeking to diversify their workforces. Its systems offer data and insights to foster accountability, drive improvements in the hiring process, and

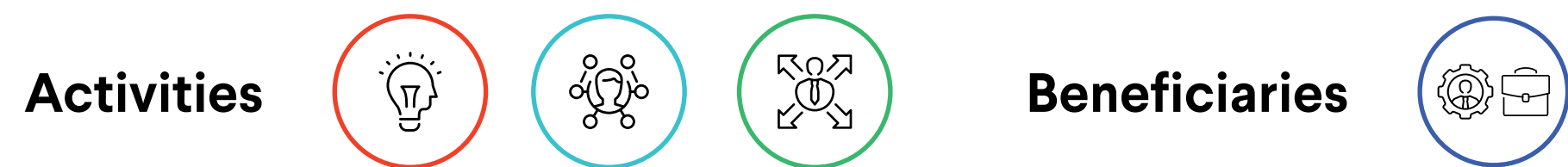
inform a broader DEI strategy. Individuals benefit too: Jobseekers can sign up for a service that uses the Blendoor algorithm to find jobs they’re well-suited for and assess potential employers for fit. And current employees can use Blendoor’s tools to assess how well their companies are living up to their DEI commitments.

**How does Blendoor drive social and business impact?**

Diverse workforces attract talent and drive revenue growth. But biased hiring processes can stymie even well-intentioned efforts to diversify, denying opportunities to high-potential workers and increasing the risk that an organization’s brand or reputation will be tarnished. Blendoor’s data-driven approach helps impact employers improve and gives prospective employees information that helps them determine whether they would truly feel welcome in a new role.

**Why did JFF select Blendoor?**

Blendoor’s strategy reflects a number of trends we identified, including companies’ increasing focus on diversity and the need for more information to level the playing field for workers. Blendoor also walks the walk with a very diverse team and a CEO, Stephanie Lampkin, who is widely respected as a thought leader in the market.





careerkarma.com • Founded in 2018

**KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS**

- Training program matching
- Peer community and mentorship
- Access to supports and resources

**MEASURES OF IMPACT**

**100,000+ people**

have used Career Karma’s platform since the company launched.

**Thousands**

of Career Karma users have been placed into jobs

**3-5 programs**

On average, Career Karma users are accepted to between three and five training programs.

**What does Career Karma do?**

Career Karma offers workers personalized matches with job training programs and connects them to a community of peers, mentors, and coaches. It’s currently focusing on helping users find coding boot camps. Interested users complete an assessment to identify their interests and career goals and then get a tool kit to prepare for entrance exams. They are also connected to a network of people who pursued similar paths and can share guidance on navigating challenges. At every step, platform users are asked to serve as mentors for those coming along behind them. Career Karma’s long-term goal is to support 1 billion people over 10 years.

**Who is Career Karma built to work for?**

Job training programs pay Career Karma to help them find qualified applicants, allowing Career Karma to offer recommendations and social network services to workers for free.

**How does Career Karma drive social and business impact?**

Career Karma is focused on opening up IT career pathways for workers—mostly women and people from underrepresented communities—who aren’t being connected to opportunities in tech through education or other systems. Its platform and peer mentorship supports can help workers overcome barriers, such as a lack of access to child care, that often block people from taking part in training programs. In a new initiative called Reskill America, Career Karma aims to raise \$500,000 to give away more than 5,000 laptops to people who need them in order to pursue tech training opportunities.

**Why did JFF select Career Karma?**

Career Karma’s model is worker-centered, highly scalable, and growing rapidly. All of this signals a new approach to navigating career options that combines vital information about pathways and training options with a robust social network component to ensure that users get support and resources when they need them most.



# CareerExplorer

by sokanu

careerexplorer.com • Founded in 2012

## KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS

- Career assessment and matching
- 1,000+ detailed career and degree profiles
- Peer community
- Member benefits for discounted education and training programs from leading providers

## MEASURES OF IMPACT

### 15 million people

projected to be served by CareerExplorer in 2020

### 1.5 million

Career assessments and match sets projected to be delivered in 2020

## What does CareerExplorer do?

CareerExplorer by Sokanu helps people find and pursue their best career fits through a free 30-minute assessment of interests, past experiences, and personality. The platform then draws on job satisfaction data from millions of prior assessment-takers to provide users with ranked lists of career profiles that include job descriptions, salary scales, and training pathways. Users who pay for a premium membership can access a complete list of their career matches and additional insights on why they may or may not be well suited for a given career. And CareerExplorer’s new membership service includes a community network for peer and expert support, as well as discounts on training programs, career coaching, and other services.

## Who is CareerExplorer built for?

CareerExplorer is primarily designed for college and high school students and parents, as well as workers in career transitions. Individual premium memberships are \$48 per year, with a discounted rate of \$36 per year for students. Group pricing is available to school career centers and private counselors. Higher education users include the University of

Pennsylvania, the University of Miami, the Center for Career Development at Princeton University, and many others.

## How does CareerExplorer drive social and business impact?

With its freemium model and library of career profiles, CareerExplorer provides a baseline level of service to any assessment-taker, and its offerings are available to lower-income jobseekers through education systems. The company is looking for ways to offer longer-term supports, such as yearly check-ins on users’ development and career fits.

## Why did JFF select CareerExplorer?

CareerExplorer is one of the most complete and accessible consumer-focused products we have seen, and it’s highly rated by users. Because of its scale and robust data collection efforts, CareerExplorer is increasingly positioned as a competitor to O\*Net and other traditional sources of occupational data. In 2016, Sokanu was a technical sponsor of the U.S. Department of Education’s Reach Higher Career App challenge, offering app developers API interfaces that they could use to integrate its assessment technology into their solutions.

Activities



Beneficiaries





explore.drafted.us • Founded in 2014

**KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS**

- Job search
- Nominations
- Pandemic-responsive connections to work

**MEASURES OF IMPACT**

**50%**

Drafted customer Lola.com, a travel management app, saw a 50% reduction in the time it takes to hire a new employee.<sup>9</sup>

**\$70,000**

Lola.com saw its cost to hire reduced by \$70,000 with Drafted.<sup>9</sup>

**2X**

Drafted customer Karat doubled the rate of referred candidates who reached the interview stage.<sup>10</sup>

**What does Drafted do?**

Drafted’s core product is a recruiting and referral platform that searches employee networks to source open roles. The platform integrates outreach and tracking tools, syncs with the client’s applicant tracking system (ATS), and disregards demographics and educational vectors to remove bias. Drafted also offers a solution to help companies manage external referral programs that reward non-employees for referrals, and a “network intelligence” tool to identify candidates’ points of connection within the company, which can help refine talent-sourcing approaches.

Additionally, in an innovative and rapid response to the economic crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, Drafted built and deployed a free app, the Layoff Network, designed to help displaced workers connect with relevant opportunities for re-employment. Presently, there are more than 3,200 employers hiring from a pool of more than 11,000 active jobseekers on the Layoff Network, as well as numerous real-life success stories and examples of positive outcomes.

**Who is Drafted built to work for?**

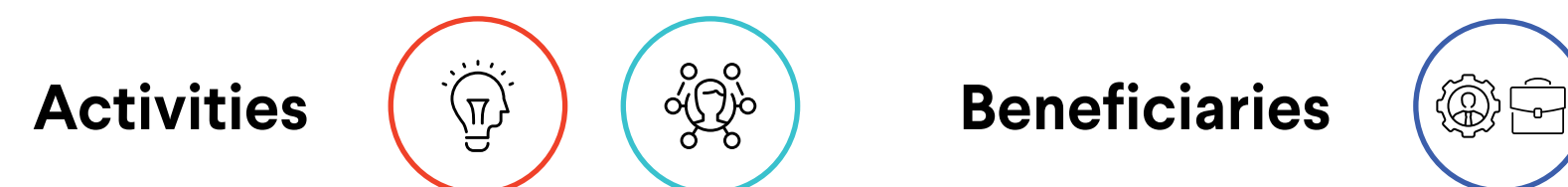
Drafted’s enterprise software-as-a-service (SaaS) platform is built for employers seeking to tap into their employee networks to bolster talent sourcing. The Layoff Network targets unemployed and recently laid-off workers.

**How does Drafted drive business and social impact?**

The Layoff Network is an excellent example of a purpose-built tool that’s leveraging a solution designed for employers to offer immediate, tangible benefits to jobseekers—making connecting to work through networks dramatically more efficient, and putting people back to work faster.

**Why did JFF select Drafted?**

Drafted stands out based on its deployment of the Layoff Network. Public safety measures in response to the pandemic have instigated the largest worker displacement event in our nation’s history, and ethical offboarding<sup>11</sup> is more important than ever. The Layoff Network demonstrates how a nimble organization can have meaningful impact by rapidly developing solutions.







eightfold.ai • Founded in 2016

**KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS**

- Job search
- Nominations
- Pandemic-responsive connections to work

**MEASURES OF IMPACT**

**19%**

Increase in hiring of female job candidates<sup>12</sup>

**Half**

Share of employees with specialized skills slated for workforce reduction who instead could be offered appropriate jobs in other departments<sup>13</sup>

**> 700,000**

Number of job openings available on Eightfold's Talent Exchange

**What does Eightfold do?**

Eightfold’s comprehensive “talent intelligence platform” draws on deep-learning artificial intelligence to improve companies’ hiring, candidate experience, retention, and diversity efforts. The platform aggregates billions of data points—from individual candidates’ resumes to publicly-available labor market data and enterprise data on employee performance—to automate, personalize, strengthen, and remove bias from recruiting, hiring, and internal mobility activities.

In April 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing economic disruption, Eightfold partnered with FMI (the Food Industry Association) and McKinsey to launch Talent Exchange, a free, highly-scalable platform to bridge the gap between companies going through massive layoffs and those seeking to hire rapidly.<sup>14</sup> The platform matches workers in transition to new openings based on skills and prior experience, and it recently added career navigation and training tools.

**Who is Eightfold built to work for?**

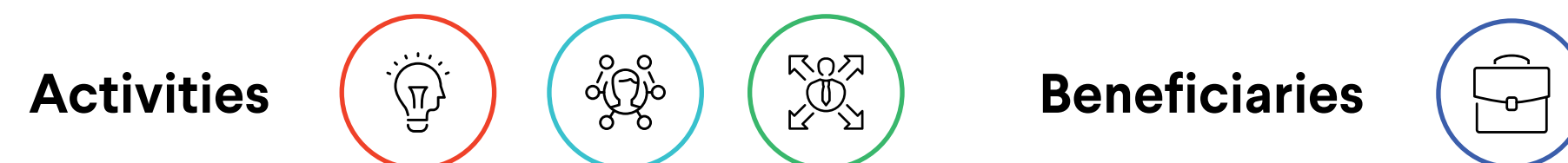
Eightfold helps employers improve talent acquisition, development, management, and experience for their teams. Workers do stand to benefit from the capabilities Eightfold provides to employers, and especially from the Talent Exchange, but its primary focus is on the corporate customer.

**How does Eightfold drive business and social impact?**

Eightfold says it is turning talent management “into a competitive advantage,” increasing the number of qualified candidates and reducing time to hire. Its solution is also driving significant benefits for workers, including increased recruitment and hiring of diverse candidates, as well as growth in internal redeployment and mobility.

**Why did JFF select Eightfold?**

Eightfold is a far-reaching, in-depth solution that’s at the vanguard of partnerships to connect displaced workers to new opportunities amidst the twin economic and health crises of 2020.





fairygodboss.com • Founded in 2015

**KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS**

- Job search
- Peer community
- Employer data and information

**MEASURES OF IMPACT**

**12 million +**

Number of women who turn to Fairygodboss each year

**2-3X**

Year-over-year growth rate from 2016 to 2019

**What does Fairygodboss do?**

Fairygodboss is the largest career community for women, with an online platform and social network that helps women navigate their careers. Fairygodboss offers a variety of free resources, such as job listings, anonymous company reviews, interview tips, company benefits, webinars, and access to virtual recruiting events.

**Who is Fairygodboss built to work for?**

Fairygodboss is built for women, by women. Users create profiles on Fairygodboss in order to access tailored job matches and engage with each other through a community feed. Users also have access to databases that provide company ratings and reviews, salary scales, and additional resources and data on employers’ policies and practices—all of which helps professional women actively understand which prospective employers will be a good fit for them.

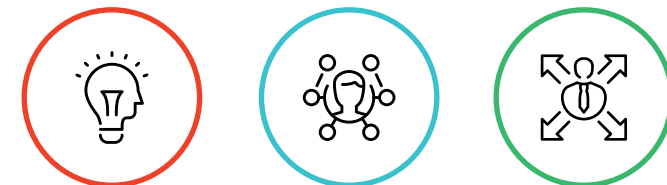
**How does Fairygodboss drive social and business impact?**

Fairygodboss empowers women by providing hard-to-find information about companies, reducing the asymmetry in access to information and data that often exists between employers and workers. Since it launched, Fairygodboss has also developed relationships with more than 150 corporate partners that are committed to improving gender diversity in their workplaces by actively recruiting more women. Its ultimate goal is “true gender equality in the workplace.”

**Why did JFF select Fairygodboss?**

Fairygodboss exemplifies the power of community and information as tools that can help professionals ethically grow and progress in their work lives. By focusing on a particular population segment, Fairygodboss aims to help improve the workplace for all women by bringing more transparency to prospective employees and advancing gender equality.

**Activities**



**Beneficiaries**





fuel50.com • Founded in 2013

**KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS**

- Career pathing and skills gap analysis
- AI-driven growth journeys
- Connect to gigs and opportunities
- Feedback and mentorship

**MEASURES OF IMPACT**

**50%**

Fuel50 clients saw a 50% drop in voluntary attrition within 3 months.<sup>15</sup>

**26-point uptick**

A major North American bank saw its employee engagement metric grow from 53% to 79%.

**+40%**

Increase in internal talent mobility within 2 years of deploying Fuel50.

**What does Fuel50 do?**

Fuel50 helps companies transform their talent development strategy by matching employees to internal career path opportunities based on their skills and talents. Through skill gap analysis, connections to mentors and learning opportunities, 360-degree feedback, gig assignments, and AI-driven growth journeys, Fuel50 also provides organizations with powerful workforce data to inform strategic business decisions.

In addition to FuelMarketplace, the company has also launched FuelFutures - an offboarding platform that helps workers with outplacement transition and career development assistance, as well as personal coaching and additional resources.

**Who is Fuel50 built to work for?**

Fuel50’s customers are forward-thinking companies seeking to drive performance—and reduce attrition—by helping

current employees identify internal growth and career development options and pathways, instead of feeling the only way to advance their career is by leaving for other opportunities.

**How does Fuel50 drive social and business impact?**

Beyond its positive impacts on employee engagement and productivity, internal mobility efforts help workers grow and find advancement opportunities without the stress and financial disruption of an external job search -- saving workers and their families money, energy, and time.

**Why did JFF select Fuel50?**

The skills needed to be successful at work are changing at a dizzying pace, and incumbent workers are at high risk of being left behind. Fuel50 is leading the way in internal mobility, demonstrating how technology can help companies more effectively uncover rising star and prepare for their future workforce needs within their current talent base.

**Activities**



**Beneficiaries**





good.co • Founded in 2012

**KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS**

- Assessment
- Job matching
- Employer data and information

**What does Good&Co do?**

Good&Co has developed a career guidance app aimed at matching workers’ personalities with best-fit careers and the corporate cultures of individual companies. Its three-minute career quiz yields one of 16 individual personality archetypes, such as “Advocate,” “Mastermind,” and “Straight Shooter,” and generates a “fit score” for job matches with like-minded companies. The company has also developed publicly-available organizational culture profiles for a number of leading companies based on the responses of assessment-takers who work at those companies. Each profile is matched to one of 19 corporate culture archetypes, such as “Intergalactic Explorers,” “Timeless Empire” and “Park Rangers.”

**Who is Good&Co built to work for?**

Good&Co is built to deliver benefits to workers and employers. Its free culture quiz is designed to empower people by offering insights into their own characteristics and

those of current or prospective employers, enabling users to make more-informed career decisions. Good&Co also offers an enterprise solution, Pro, which unlocks additional analysis on the personality traits of high-performing teams and how a new employee might contribute to team culture or diversity.

**How does Good&Co drive social impact?**

Good&Co is a mission-driven organization focused on transforming careers and recruiting. The company seeks to empower people to make better career decisions and to help companies shape their cultures affirmatively.

**Why did JFF select Good&Co?**

Good&Co is a notable example of the trend we see toward greater transparency and information-sharing that benefits workers. It stands out especially inasmuch as it seeks to build objective measures of workplace culture—an attribute that, despite being notoriously abstract and defined by assessments of a non-transparent body of information, can have a significant impact on employee satisfaction and productivity.

**Activities**





jobcase.com • Founded in 2009

**KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS**

- Job search
- Peer community
- Content and other resources

**MEASURES OF IMPACT**

**110 million**

Registered members in Jobcase’s community

**20 million**

Monthly active unique members

**No. 3**

Jobcase reports that, according to ComScore’s rankings, it has the third-heaviest traffic volume among career services sites.

**What does Jobcase do?**

Jobcase is a social media platform designed to empower and advocate for workers by combining equitable access to better, more meaningful job opportunities with a menu of personal and community supports designed to help users navigate hiring processes and workforce systems. Members provide advice, feedback, and inspiration to one another. Jobcase aspires to one day reach 1 billion members and offer an international platform, an increased depth of engagement for its members, and an industry-leading hiring experience for employers.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Jobcase launched a resource center to help members navigate the complexities of filing for unemployment and deal with the realities of workplace discrimination, lack of access to child care, food insecurity, and the threat of eviction.

**Who is Jobcase built to work for?**

Jobcase exists primarily to serve workers, but helping employers is a vital part of its model. Its revenue model is based on helping employers with high-volume hiring and finding candidates for hard-to-fill jobs. Referral fees from employers and other work/

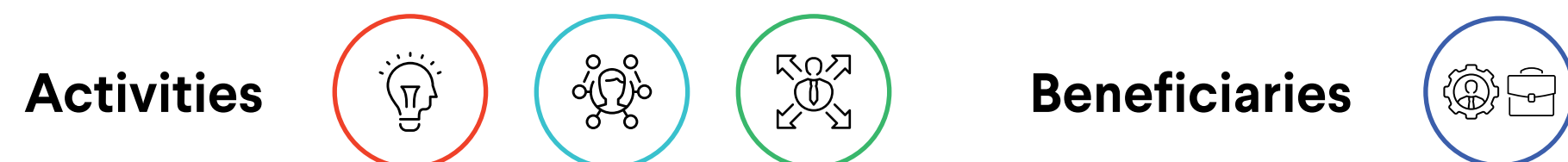
life-oriented services allow the company to focus on its mission—to advance the needs of workers. Jobcase’s unique, scalable platform serves primarily frontline, blue-collar, hourly, and non-college-educated workers.

**How does Jobcase drive social and business impact?**

In addition to helping employers find great-fit candidates, Jobcase harnesses the scale of its member community to advocate more broadly for worker-centered employment practices and policies, celebrating companies that excel and encouraging action by companies that have room to improve. Jobcase also has its own internal suite of initiatives to ensure that employees walk the company’s worker advocacy talk.

**Why did JFF select Jobcase?**

Jobcase stands out for its holistic approach to work/life support, and for its commitment to broader impact through worker advocacy and community partnerships. The platform brings people together to talk openly about career navigation anxieties and challenges, as well as social and economic barriers. As Chief Financial Officer Beth Clymer told us, “People don’t just need the tool, they need the person standing beside them saying, ‘I did this too, and here’s what I learned.’”





jobwell.co • Founded in 2017

**KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS**

- Job search tools and resources

**MEASURES OF IMPACT**

**1,200**

Monthly Active Users

**15%**

Week 1 Retention

**147**

Countries with Users

**What does Jobwell do?**

Jobwell is a patent-pending task management tool for the job search, allowing job-seekers to keep track of each job they apply for, their stage in the hiring process, deadlines, and next steps, with a similar interface for networking activities such as reaching out, following up, and staying engaged. The platform incorporates tips and best practices, and is integrated with Google Jobs to allow job searching directly through the platform.

**Who is Jobwell built to work for?**

Jobwell serves jobseekers by giving them tools and guidance to help them manage their search more efficiently and effectively. The tool provides school-specific benefits such as networking pathways to students and alumni, and Jobwell sees career services partnerships as a potential growth pathway. Jobwell is currently free to use.

**How does Jobwell drive social impact?**

Jobwell’s mission is to help people take control of their careers, and is working to help workers make smarter choices in navigating their job search and career paths to optimize their career potential and fulfillment. This includes putting tools into job-seekers’ hands to help them better manage the uncertainty and frustration that is part of the search process, but it also includes helping workers connect dots to build, nurture and leverage their networks to facilitate career development and lifelong learning.

**Why did JFF select Jobwell?**

Jobwell’s team has a stated commitment to social impact, and the tool is solving a critical pain point for jobseekers: the combined challenge of determining the right steps to take throughout a job search and keeping track of that search once it starts. We will be intrigued to watch Jobwell as it further develops its business model and grows.

**Activities**



**Beneficiaries**





landit.com • Founded in 2014

**KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS**

- Career development tools and resources

**What does Landit do?**

Landit is a career development platform that offers workers recommended actions, curated resources, connections to coaches, profile reviews, showcased accomplishments, and other supports. The platform’s freemium individual membership includes a core set of resources, such as a personalized “career playbook” and step-by-step guidance for activities such as developing a personal brand or a personal board of advisors, with add-on offerings such as individual coaching and resume-drafting services at an additional cost. The company also offers an enterprise solution to help companies to attract, develop, and retain high-potential talent, and it is specifically committed to supporting diversity in the workplace and the success of women.

**Who is Landit built to work for?**

Landit is designed for both workers and employers. In addition to its individual membership model, it sells companies an integrated employee engagement and development platform designed to increase engagement,

improve retention, and provide workers with tools to develop and improve overall performance. The platform also provides insights into challenges facing workers who come from underrepresented populations.

**How does Landit drive social and business impact?**

Landit is explicitly focused on increasing the success of women and people from underrepresented populations in the workplace. Accordingly, it aims to enable companies to attract, develop, and retain high-potential talent from diverse populations.

**Why did JFF select Landit?**

Landit is focused on engaging underrepresented groups across a wide array of career development skills. Led by a diverse founding team, the company has shown promise based in part on its strong funding track record and its potential for growth; this is especially exciting, because Black women entrepreneurs are frequently underrepresented in venture investing.

**Activities**



**Beneficiaries**





mentorspaces.com • Founded in 2020

**KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS**

- Mentorship from industry insiders
- Internship and job referrals
- Access to vetted resources and company information
- Peer-to-Peer networking

**MEASURES OF IMPACT**

**10,000**

Active students and recent alumni in the Mentor Spaces network

**47**

Partnerships with historically Black colleges and universities

**200**

Traditional universities represented among current community members

**What does Mentor Spaces do?**

Mentor Spaces is a virtual mentorship platform designed for underrepresented students and early-career professionals from diverse backgrounds. Members are identified as either Proteges or Mentors. Proteges sign up for particular chat rooms, or “spaces,” based on their desired career path, prospective employer, or topics of interest, such as negotiating or decision-making. Within these spaces, they ask questions that are answered by Mentors who share advice or expertise. Mentor Spaces argues that enabling asynchronous exchange of information makes mentorship scalable in a way that would be difficult with one-to-one interaction alone, allowing early-career workers from underrepresented populations to expand their knowledge and build social capital.

**Who is Mentor Spaces built to work for?**

Mentor Spaces offers value to both individuals and enterprises. The company encourages employers such as Goldman Sachs, Slack, and Microsoft to think of mentorship as a strategy for sourcing talent from underrepresented populations, as well as a professional development and

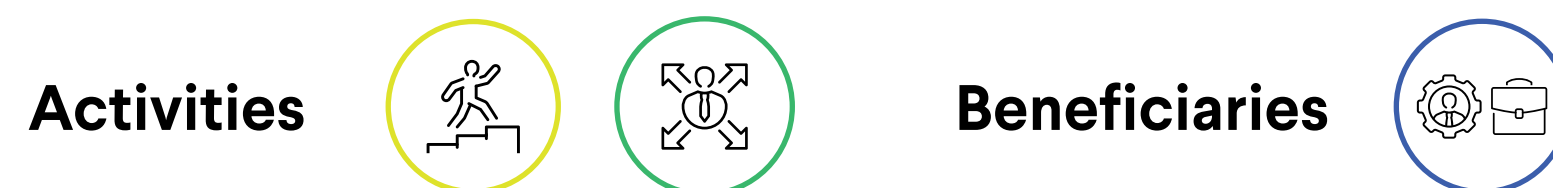
engagement opportunity for current employees. To reach more Mentors and Proteges, Mentor Spaces forges partnerships with higher education institutions, especially historically Black colleges and universities, such as Spelman College, and nonprofits such as the National Black MBA Association.

**How does Mentor Spaces drive social impact?**

Mentor Spaces is explicitly focused on advancing the careers of historically underrepresented talent by expanding access to opportunities and strengthening social capital. At the same time, the platform helps employers strengthen employee engagement and monitor diversity, equity, and inclusion targets.

**Why did JFF select Mentor Spaces?**

Mentor Spaces’ focus on mentorship and developing social capital for workers aligns with key themes JFF has identified as essential for successful career navigation. Mentor Spaces also stands out for its attention to Black employees and Proteges.







mybestbets.org • Founded in 2014

**KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS**

- Assessments
- Decision-making framework
- Quality criteria for career pathways
- Social capital development

**MEASURES OF IMPACT**

**77%**

Users more likely to choose a career pathway with training or education component than direct placement into entry-level job

**76%**

Users develop Career and Education Plans that meet Best Bet Criteria

**97%**

Users served are Youth served are from low-income backgrounds

**What does MyBestBets do?**

MyBestBets is an interactive web and mobile application incubated by JFF that helps low-income, under-credentialed young people make good decisions about their “Best Bet” for career pathways—choices that ideally lead to a in-demand, family-sustaining job that map to career advancement through training and/or higher education. A “Best Bet” pathway includes a vetted, high-quality postsecondary education or job training program that aligns with a student’s interest, as well as with regional employment needs. The platform is deployed through education and workforce systems and intermediaries that focus on opportunity youth (young people ages 16-24 who are not connected to school or work).

**Who is MyBestBets built to work for?**

MyBestBets was built in collaboration with young people and school and career counselors to help them interact and work together more effectively. The platform helps youth assess their needs, talents, and interests; gather hard-to-discover intelligence about postsecondary and career information; and

organize and track their progress towards goals; and it helps coaches tailor offerings to individual learners and improve career counseling strategies.

**How does MyBestBets drive social impact?**

Unlike many career discovery tools, MyBestBets is explicitly designed to meet the needs of underserved youth. Through deployment at scale via partnerships with the U.S. Department of Labor, MyBestBets is reaching tens of thousands of young people, with the potential for long-term, sustainable impact.

**Why did JFF select MyBestBets?**

JFF co-created MyBestBets because, as Best Bet Services director Clare Bertrand has written, “young people who deserve the most support usually receive the least guidance.” MyBestBets’s blend of interactive technology, labor market data, employer input, and personal coaching and supports, as well as its emphasis on providing young people with tools and better information to drive decision-making, makes it a compelling offering for intermediaries working to support underserved youth.





pairin.com • Founded in 2012

**KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS**

- Assessments
- Job matching
- Supports and resources

**MEASURES OF IMPACT**

**> 90%**

Retention rate over 12 months of employment in career pathways offered by PAIRIN partner Activate Workplace Solutions<sup>16</sup>

**3X**

Increases in worker income over 12 months of employment in career pathways offered by PAIRIN partner Activate Workplace Solutions<sup>17</sup>

**What does PAIRIN do?**

PAIRIN matches individuals to optimal careers, professional development opportunities, and jobs with its highly accurate and detailed soft skills assessment and science-based software-as-a-service (SaaS) products. The PAIRIN Survey measures 102 attributes in less than 10 minutes, and PAIRIN’s My Journey platform personalizes career, education, and development recommendations based on individuals’ unique abilities, situations, and life stages. My Journey also facilitates direct connections to state government resources, and offers assessments, tools, and applications that support career navigation task management. PAIRIN’s vision is to be the No. 1 provider of career exploration and professional development solutions for states that implement K-12 and adult workforce offerings on a single platform.

**Who is PAIRIN built to work for?**

The PAIRIN platform is deployed in partnership with regional workforce boards and state governments—including those of Colorado and Virginia—and delivers a fully articulated user

experience that includes assessments, recommendations, and matches for services, training, and employment. Its longitudinal assessment tool measures coachable, changeable behaviors and mindsets, and can provide critical insights to counselors so they can help people accelerate growth and development in areas where they want to make the most progress.

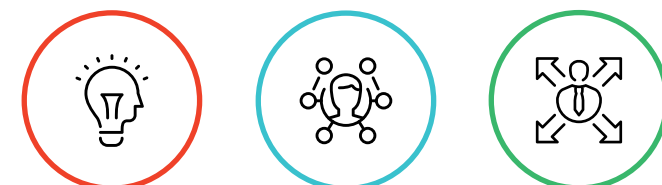
**How does PAIRIN drive social impact?**

PAIRIN is purpose-built to help frontline and middle-skill workers and jobseekers with personalized career navigation support and guidance. It is a founding partner in the Rework America Alliance, a coalition-led response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Why did JFF select PAIRIN?**

JFF selected PAIRIN based on its worker-centered focus, strong product execution, and growth in the market. JFF is an investor in PAIRIN through the Employee Technology Fund (ETF@JFFLabs), and PAIRIN recently participated in the JFFLabs Assessments Impact Accelerator cohort.

**Activities**



**Beneficiaries**





steadyapp.com • Founded in 2017

**KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS**

- Actionable, data-driven income insights and analysis
- Career navigation
- Income boosters
- Emergency financial resources

**MEASURES OF IMPACT**

**> 2 million**

Registered users as of July 2020

**8-10%**

Median increase in members' earnings

**> \$5 million**

Provided to members through Income Boosters and cash grants in 2019

**What does Steady do?**

Steady is a free membership-based “income intelligence platform” that maps income data from workers’ bank accounts against their employment history, skills and experience, and geography to connect them with good-fit jobs and careers that pay higher wages. Leveraging partnerships with providers of financial products and services, Steady offers “income boosters”—payments that Steady makes to financially insecure members to help them address key pain points, perhaps by opening a checking account with no overdraft fees, for example. As the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Steady expanded its range of supports for members, adding emergency cash relief, free telemedicine subscriptions, and regional universal basic income pilots.

**Who is Steady built to work for?**

Steady is designed for the tens of millions of U.S. workers contending with low earning levels and income volatility. It integrates financial management and literacy supports with recommendations that point workers toward higher earnings and better-fit job opportunities. An innovative business model enables Steady to generate revenue through its partnerships;

Steady shares referral fees with members who take advantage of partners’ offers.

**How does Steady drive social impact?**

Social impact is an inextricable part of Steady’s model. Its mission is to put the power of data back into the hands of low- and moderate-income workers, and to help its members advance collectively by sharing information and building community. “We want to only make money when we succeed in improving people’s financial lives,” says Founder Adam Roseman.

**Why did JFF select Steady?**

Steady stands out based on its unique combination of skills and experience in value-mapping based on community data-driven AI, career navigation, and financial support capabilities, and for successfully demonstrating the viability of creative, market-based solutions that need not rely on financial relationships with employers. Especially amidst the economic disruption of 2020, which is fueling massive growth for the platform, Steady’s ability to reliably and directly increase workers’ income is a powerful differentiator.





stellaremploy.com • Founded in 2016

**KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS**

- Job matching
- Automated interview scheduling
- Assessments

**MEASURES OF IMPACT**

**30%**

Average increase in retention after using StellarEmploy

**10%**

Average increase in worker productivity using StellarEmploy

**86%**

Percentage of jobseekers who agree or strongly agree with the findings of StellarEmploy's assessments

**What does StellarEmploy do?**

StellarEmploy's recruitment platform helps high-volume employers connect with and retain hourly workers. The process is driven by a candidate questionnaire aligned to competencies demonstrated by current high-performers. Process automation and deep learning algorithms match potential employees to open entry-level jobs based on current workers' 30-day satisfaction ratings and length of time on the job. This results in quality hiring based on job fundamentals and real-life data.

**Who is StellarEmploy built to work for?**

StellarEmploy works with employers with large, often-hourly workforces, like distribution warehouses and contact centers. It combines the benefits of pre-hire assessments with an applicant tracking system that streamlines communication and engagement with job candidates.

**How does StellarEmploy drive social and business impact?**

StellarEmploy sets low-income, frontline workers on a path to professional success by placing them in jobs where they are likely to excel. This benefits employers by increasing both worker retention and performance. Its system helps candidates use detailed information on job requirements to assess fit, and offers job recommendations based on jobseekers' strengths. It is also designed to eliminate bias from the hiring process and expand diversity in the applicant pool.

**Why did JFF select StellarEmploy?**

Compared with similar platforms that we've seen, StellarEmploy goes to greater lengths to eliminate bias from the hiring process. For example, the company carefully designs its surveys to ensure that they will be reliable across a diverse hiring pool. The company takes a data-driven approach and ensures that job candidates have the information they need to decide whether a role is a good fit for them.





traitify.com • Founded in 2011

### KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS

- Assessments
- Job matching
- Data on job fit

### MEASURES OF IMPACT

**97%**

Percentage of applicants for jobs at a major quick-service restaurant chain who said the experience of using Traitify increased their desire to work for the company.

**54%**

Reduction in involuntary turnover

**35%**

Increase in job performance

### What does Traitify do?

Traitify’s visual, mobile-optimized platform assesses jobseekers’ personalities and identifies suitable careers in less than two minutes. Users select “Me” or “Not Me” in response to a series of images paired with short captions like “Overcoming Obstacles,” “Nose to the Grindstone,” or “Outgoing.” Designed with high-volume workforces in mind, the assessment is accessible on any mobile or desktop device and yields a completion rate of 96 percent. Traitify is also currently launching an offering called Traitify Engage, which helps companies support, engage, and develop employees and furloughed workers amidst the global COVID-19 pandemic.

### Who is Traitify built to work for?

Employers use Traitify to optimize their recruiting, hiring, and employee engagement efforts. Traitify’s solutions help companies match jobseekers’ interests to open roles, assess candidate fit to help hiring managers prioritize, and enable managers to help employees develop their skills by working on personalized content and exercises that target areas in which

an employee has room to improve. Traitify is used across a wide range of jobs and in a number of fields, especially in high-volume, high-turnover industries, and it serves frontline, middle-skill, and contingent workers alike in more than 200 organizations.

### How does Traitify drive social and business impact?

Traitify is purpose-built to put candidates first. Starting with an engaging, accessible user experience, it offers post-assessment feedback to users that allows employers to demonstrate that they care for job candidates and want to set them up for greater success in their career journeys. Traitify has taken careful steps to ensure that its assessments minimize bias and adverse impacts for underrepresented groups.

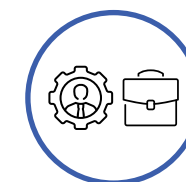
### Why did JFF select Traitify?

Traitify stood out because of its product’s innovative design and the strength of its performance for hourly, high-volume workforces, and especially because of its ability to share feedback with assessment-takers.

Activities



Beneficiaries





youscience.com • Founded in 2012

**KEY FEATURES FOR WORKERS**

- Assessments
- Job matching
- Data on job fit

**MEASURES OF IMPACT**

**> 1 million**

More than 1 million Precision Exams certification tests have been administered

**> 669,000**

YouScience has helped more than 669,000 students uncover their natural talents and best-fit careers

**5,200**

Schools have implemented YouScience aptitude and career discovery or industry-recognized certifications

**What does YouScience do?**

YouScience aims to support learners with career guidance, skills validation through certifications, and connections to employers. Its assessment tool uses psychometrically-valid brain games—which YouScience argues are more accurate than self-reported interests—to uncover students’ natural talents (or aptitudes) in areas that are relevant to career choices, such as inductive reasoning, spatial visualization, and interpersonal style. It then builds a profile that draws on these “performance measures of aptitude” to provide users with personalized matches to a range of career options. It also generates affirming and actionable language that students can use to discuss their assets on resumes, during interviews, and on college applications. In February 2020, YouScience merged with Precision Exams, which builds industry-recognized certifications to help learners show employers that they have the real-world skills companies need.

**Who is YouScience built to work for?**

YouScience works with school systems and universities to generate enhanced, expansive career discovery and mapping tools that are primarily for high school and middle school

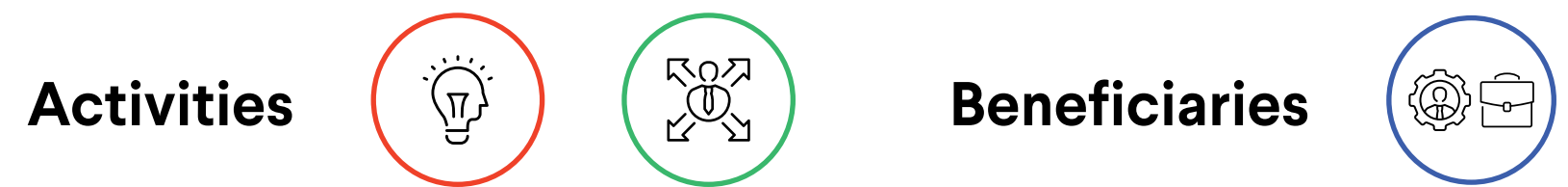
students, but also for young adults. The company’s online portals provide detailed feedback for students, as well as school and career counselors, teachers, and principals. In addition to its assessments, YouScience offers in-depth analytics that can help schools, local chambers of commerce, and other programs match learners to specific pathways or other opportunities.

**How does YouScience drive social and business impact?**

YouScience aims to “make the American dream available to anyone regardless of race, gender, background,” and is committed to helping learners build confidence. Its profiles are designed to cut through gender norms and societal biases to ensure that all students understand their full potential and are aware of the in-demand careers for which they are a good fit.

**Why did JFF select YouScience?**

YouScience’s aptitudes-based approach to assessments is compelling, and its school-based delivery model broadens its reach. The company’s partnerships, like those with chambers of commerce, are good vehicles for matching diverse pools of workers with employer needs.



# Career Navigation Technology Landscape

Tools and platforms that help workers, employers, and the intermediaries that support them find, connect with, secure, and develop opportunities and talent.

## Workers

**Discover**

**Connect**

**Position to Succeed**

**Develop**

## Employers

**Discover**

**Connect**

**Position to Succeed**

**Develop**

## Both Workers and Employers

**Discover**

**Connect**

**Develop** SOCIAL CAPITAL & DIVERSE CANDIDATES

**Position to Succeed**

## Intermediaries

**Discover**

**Connect**

**Develop**



**“There has never been a more urgent moment to connect people to work—but for too many workers, career navigation resources are ineffectual or simply nonexistent.”**

—Maria Flynn, President and CEO, JFF



# Conclusion

Many career navigation technologies today offer jobseekers better information about the knowledge, skills, abilities, and connections they need for a career that will unlock economic opportunity and personal growth. They help workers find right-fit jobs by matching their strengths and experience to open roles, and help employers improve their hiring processes and talent retention rates by better understanding what signals to pay attention to and what kinds of engagement yield the best results.

But what if career navigation technologies went beyond the essential—but ultimately transactional and limited—task of connecting workers to jobs and jobs to workers? What if they helped strengthen our economy and our communities—by empowering workers to master the art and science of career navigation itself, deepening their long-term engagement with their own career development and setting

them up for a lifetime of personal fulfillment and economic mobility? What if they helped create a better future of work—by helping more employers to recognize workers as the engines of their businesses and build more inclusive talent management practices?

To do this, career navigation tools need to offer more than just surface information about careers: a basic job description, some labor market data that indicates the industry is “in demand,” and the credential or degree that might be required. Workers need to be able to get a streamlined, personalized picture of advancement opportunities, transferable skills, access to mentors and other networks (their own or new), and myriad other elements that make up an individual’s experience of, and within, the labor market. And they need to be positioned to mobilize this multidimensional information to make better career choices.



**Clare Bertrand**

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## CONCLUSION

Good career navigation skills, paired with accessible modern technologies, can not only increase the dexterity with which workers are able to access the right knowledge and skill-building opportunities; they can also expand workers' bargaining power, helping them make the strongest possible case for the value they bring to future employers.

*Here are some ideas for the career navigation platform of the future:*

### **Expand the Idea of a “Network”**

#### **Asset-based approaches to building social networks**

From the entry level to the more advanced stages of one's career, a vibrant, diverse network allows for greater mobility across the labor market because it allows individuals to see, and be seen as candidates for, opportunities to which they might not otherwise have access. Yet many career navigation platforms and products give certain backgrounds or experiences (such as full-time, on-campus college educations) priority access to certain “nodes” in the network. That approach can create unintentional barriers to entry for people who haven't had certain experiences or come

from less-privileged backgrounds, perpetuating professional networks of exclusivity and signaling that other potential sources of network connections are of lower value.

Technology companies can build asset-based approaches that recognize, honor, and activate the resources embedded within diverse social networks outside of education and jobs. Enabling workers to marshal and capitalize on their local social capital can reveal loose ties that benefit the worker, expand talent pools, and build new data dimensions (such as character references, occupational skills and competencies, and unpaid community service caring for someone in need or helping a neighbor run a small business, for example) that can lead to more equitable career navigation experiences for all users.

## CONCLUSION

### **Intermediaries as long-term allies**

For many workers, career navigation that leads to economic mobility requires establishing trust and ongoing involvement with local institutions and organizations. Yet many workers engage with institutions and organizations such as workforce agencies, community-based organizations, training providers, and other intermediaries with short-term goals in mind—and they aren't encouraged to do otherwise. Long-term connections with these intermediaries are key to building an extensive network of contacts that facilitate opportunities for employment and career advancement.

Career navigation tools can help career navigators understand the importance of maintaining these connections. This could take the form of guidance or tips about how to make use of community resources. Or—keeping in mind the need for robust data privacy protections—platforms could be more proactive, triggering reminders or nudges to users about organizations, agencies, or companies they had previously engaged with, months or years ago, to make them aware of new training and career pathways. This suggests a new way of operating for these intermediaries; perhaps there is a role for innovative new labor organizations as well.

### **Value Career Navigation as an Explicit Skill**

#### **Building and validating skills that can signal job-oriented strengths**

Career navigation platforms could be designed to strengthen a worker's growth mindset, ability to set long-term goals, stay organized, think critically, make sense of data and data sources, and communicate effectively. Workers (who, of course, are also learners) are not born with these skills and competencies. In situations where individuals may not have previously received support in building these skills, innovative platforms could not just point jobseekers in the direction of training, but

## CONCLUSION

also capture and celebrate what jobseekers are learning while navigating their career paths.

For example, if a job is labeled “hot” or “in-demand,” what does that mean? What can and cannot be trusted about that label and the data supporting it? An individual who wrestles with questions like those and successfully comes up with answers might get a badge for validating data and demonstrating the ability to make a data-driven decision. Even more exciting, such experiences underscore the degree to which the skills that make workers good at navigating their careers are often the same skills that make them good workers.

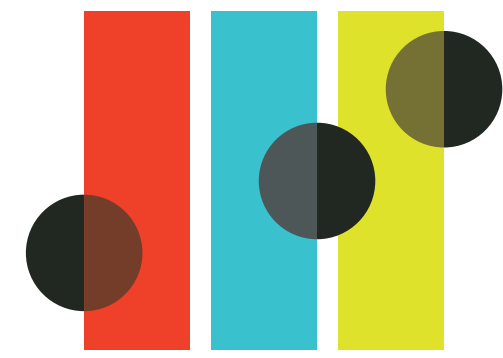
### **Using information to help workers identify best-fit careers**

Career navigation platforms can use data to uncover opportunities for users based on general “good jobs” criteria (high-growth, living wage, and advancement opportunities) and individual concerns (Can I get to the job? Is there a trajectory for advancement? Does the employer offer benefits that support my family’s needs?).

“Good jobs” criteria baked into a career navigation tool can empower workers of all levels to understand short- and long-term options in the context of a framework for advancement—especially if the tool is easy to use and understand. Having these criteria as a widely-available touchstone would enable all workers to go from

economically insecure to economically mobile by asking the right questions and insisting on inclusive talent practices—leveling the playing field for everyone.

Career navigation platforms of the future should be designed to take a more expansive approach to helping users build networks, enabling them recognize and hone the skills that are essential to career navigation, and using “good jobs” criteria to point them toward truly good jobs. To build pathways to opportunity for all, innovative developers of career navigation technologies must design tools that support advancement, not just access. It’s what workers deserve, and—especially in a time of global disruption and crisis—it’s what our economy needs.



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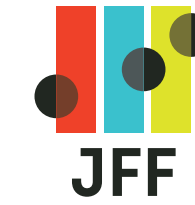
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“One of the keys to an inclusive recovery will be expanded access to technology that helps businesses build advancement solutions for workers. **These technologies must also support workers in building digital skills and networks that enable them to navigate the complex landscape of careers decisions—especially for people hardest hit by job losses, including those with lower incomes, women, and underrepresented people of color.** JFF’s analysis provides a roadmap to guide stakeholders, companies and employees, investors and intermediaries, through the career navigation technology market that’s ready for innovation today.”

—Naria Santa Lucia, General Manager, Digital Inclusion, Microsoft



# Endnotes

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