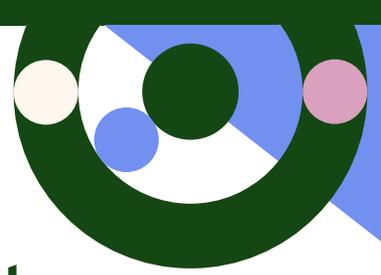




- The Problem With Job Training, and How to Fix It

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# The Problem With Job Training, and How to Fix It



For years, people who are new to the workforce have gotten hired in much the same way: They go to school, develop some skills, and then apply for jobs. Employers collect resumes from applicants, invite some for an interview, and select the candidate who seems like the best fit.

**But the fact is, this is not the best way to recruit and hire early talent.**



## The Problem With How We Recruit and Train

It may sound heretical to question the traditional method of collecting resumes, hiring, and training early talent. But this approach is broken and badly in need of repair. Here are three reasons why the hire-then-train model needs to be replaced:

### 1 It Is Ineffective

Once hired, it is incumbent on organizations to train employees. Even though most employers rarely extend job offers to candidates without a four-year college degree, the education most people receive isn't directly applicable to the jobs they seek upon graduation. Imagine a recent graduate with a business administration, marketing, or sociology degree. They certainly built skills during their time at university, but it's unlikely any of it was directly related to a particular job at a specific company, or even

a given industry. In fact, only 14% of students believe college provides the skills needed to be a success in the workplace.<sup>1</sup> This isn't the fault of higher education — it's simply not equipped to meet the challenge of this task.

But the fact remains that an undergraduate education fails to provide adequate training for early career applicants. And employers agree. In fact, 100% agree that it is important to find new ways to get students desk-ready.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Voice of the Student Study (1,700 global participants), Forage, 2021.*

<sup>2</sup> *"How to Innovate Campus Recruiting in the Brave New World of Early Talent," NACE Webinar, Attendee Poll, February 12, 2021.*

## 2 It Wastes Resources

College and university curricula can't possibly account for the multitude of differences across all employers. The result is a lengthy and costly process of bringing new hires up to speed. How long is the process? It can take up to two years before a new hire is fully productive, according to [one study](#).



What makes slow onboarding and training processes a pressing issue is the cost. Not only must employers pay new hires for months or years before they begin making a substantive contribution, but supervisors and mentors must also dedicate significant time to guiding them along the way. This all culminates in the average cost of new hires reaching US\$6,110.<sup>3</sup> And this doesn't even include the investment that goes into developing and implementing the various intern or graduate programs that onboard these new starters.

<sup>3</sup> "Cost-Per-Hire Varies by Way Employers Calculate Budget," National Association of Colleges and Employers, October 2019.

## 3 It Is Inequitable

Decades of research explain how hiring practices — and the education system that is meant to prepare early talent — are inequitable. The barriers facing early talent throughout the education-to-workforce journey are many. For instance, [tuition and fees at four-year institutions](#) cost students in the U.S. over US\$28,000 per year. The tremendous expense of attending university means that many full-time students must work to cover the costs, with [27% clocking more than 20 hours per week](#) on average during the academic year. The result is that students with fewer resources have less time and energy to devote to their studies and cannot afford the time or monetary cost of pursuing extra help that could buoy their grades. As a result, the process of accessing opportunities to build professional qualifications is inaccessible to many and is often reserved for well-resourced students.



of college students work more than 20 hours per week during the academic year

Traditionally, candidates with degrees from prestigious universities [get paid significantly more](#) on average but [perform only slightly better](#) in their work. This means that a fancy degree isn't necessary for professional success, even though these types of candidates receive an unequal share of available opportunities. In other words, the ways that most early talent is hired and trained today are inherently inequitable.

# The Solution: Train Then Hire

When colleges are the primary source of new talent, companies bear the burden of job training. The vast majority of students — 98% — believe they could benefit from more practical training.<sup>4</sup> And the research on new-hire productivity supports their observations. If students could have access to relevant job training, new hires would contribute more quickly, and companies would save time and money.

## Preskilling Is a Changemaker

Preskilling — building skills relevant to work with a given employer before applying for a role or being hired as an employee — can help new hires contribute faster, increase organizational efficiency, and improve business outcomes. It's a win-win for new talent and employers.



Traditionally, the primary means for preskilling has been internships. It is true that these positions can help early talent preskill and make informed career decisions. After all, interns are able to get a feel for an employer and gain relevant skills that can help them acclimate more quickly to an entry-level position later on. But, the reality is that this system is woefully inadequate because — in addition to being inaccessible to the vast majority of early talent — it's hard for employers to find enough motivated and qualified internship candidates who can in turn become full-time hires. In fact, [a recent survey from NACE](#) found that only 57.4% of internship participants want to continue working with an organization once the experience concludes — a poor result given the investment required to hire and train interns.

The problem with the internship method of preskilling is that it assumes students know

what internships to apply for, are able to get hired, and find they'd like to pursue full-time employment with the company they intern for. In reality, there are far more people interested in gaining internship experience — any internship experience — than there are positions available. What's more, applicants are more likely to be hired [if they already have experience as an intern](#). In other words, one must have already had an internship to get one.

If a company hires only a handful of interns each year, the number of applicants with relevant experience for full-time positions will be extremely limited. A robust preskilling program, on the other hand, can increase the number of qualified entry-level applicants substantially. And why not? After all, each employer has specific needs, so they are best placed to provide the kind of training emerging talent needs to be competitive.

<sup>4</sup> Voice of the Student Study (1,700 global participants), Forage, 2021.

## Train Then Hire: Here's How It Works

Employers may feel skeptical about the train-then-hire model of preskilling. That's understandable. It may sound to some like we are recommending companies take on hundreds, or even thousands, of interns each year, which could cause a logistical nightmare.

But preskilling is entirely virtual, and therefore infinitely scalable. When employers help early talent preskill, they create a training program that highlights a specific entry-level position, a particular division of the organization, or the company as a whole. To do this, employers create a series of hypothetical tasks that participants must complete in order to earn their preskilling certification from that company.

**While the tasks participants complete are not real, they feel real because they are designed to mirror real-life work scenarios. This allows participants to not only gain a clear understanding of the skills required to do the job but also provides opportunities to build those skills in the process.**

Train-then-hire programs allow employers to leverage free, open-access virtual platforms that simulate work experiences. These programs in turn empower early talent to pursue exciting positions, gives them the confidence to apply for these positions, and prepares them to succeed in the workplace once they're hired.



# Preskilling Benefits Everyone: Recruiters, Students, and Faculty

With an on-demand train-then-hire program, early talent can preskill with a given company at their own pace and at no cost. This means that regardless of a person’s location or socioeconomic status, they can access the kind of pre-hire training that will help them land a better job and build a fulfilling career — but it also means that employers will have increased access to the best emerging talent.

## More Sustainable Than Internships

Employers can’t possibly provide enough internship experiences to create a preskilled pipeline of early talent to fill all of their entry-level positions. Additionally, early talent can’t be expected to know after one or two internship experiences — assuming they’re able to access one — that the company they’ve selected is right for them. This is why virtual train-then-hire experiences are so critical.

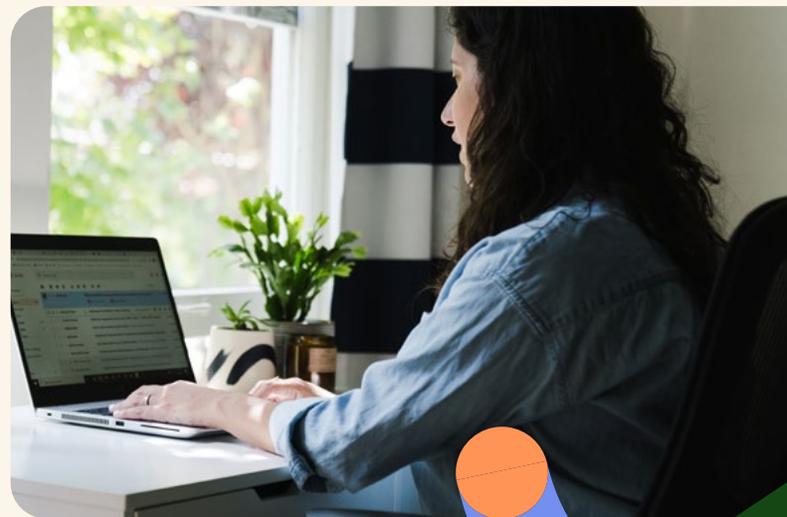


By placing workplace-specific training at the center of recruiting efforts, employers can shift from *telling* emerging talent what they do to *showing* them.

Virtual job simulations are effective, far-reaching, and accessible. Because these programs are online, self-paced, and free to participants, many barriers to entry are removed, access is broadened, and opportunities to build skills and experience are significantly increased.

## A Powerful Tool for Recruiters

Preskilling through virtual job simulations gives employers an opportunity to tout the benefits of working at their company. Participants are a captive audience that wants to know what it’s like to work at their company. Even better, by placing workplace-specific training at the center of recruiting efforts, employers can shift from telling emerging talent what they do to showing them. And, in doing so, companies develop a pipeline of qualified talent that will make informed and empowered decisions on where they’d like to work.





## Level-up College and University Classrooms

Colleges are a primary source of emerging talent for employers around the world, and a college degree is required for many positions. In fact, 52% of employers rarely extend job offers to candidates without a four-year college degree.

However, colleges and universities are simply not designed to serve as a mechanism for helping students develop the knowledge and skills required for highly specialized careers. Colleges do teach students important skills, and many institutions provide career services to fill the void of career readiness. It's simply impossible, however, to accommodate for the nuances that make each employer unique, in addition to also providing students with a well-rounded education.

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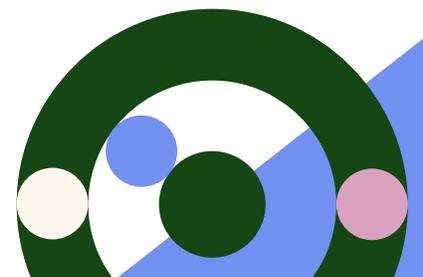
The experience is terrific, and it gives our students real-world, industry-relevant experiences that get them on a fast track to a job.

— Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

But with virtual job simulations, faculty can provide students with access to hundreds of projects. By incorporating these self-directed programs into coursework, faculty are able to introduce students to an important tool that can help them build the skills and experience they need to reach their individual professional goals.



# A Job Training Solution for Everyone



With a train-then-hire program, early talent can participate in self-paced preskilling with an array of companies free of charge. Preskilling allows a broader range of candidates to enter the job market with knowledge of what employers do, what qualities companies look for in candidates, and — most important — a head start on developing the skills new hires need to succeed on the job. For instance, [88.5% of candidates feel more confident](#) during interviews after completing a virtual job simulation. They're also at least twice as likely to land a job at a partner company after completing their virtual job simulation.

But preskilling doesn't just unlock opportunities for emerging talent. Companies in the U.S. spend over [\\$150 billion each year on employee learning](#), with a substantial chunk of this dedicated to onboarding new hires. With pre-hire training, companies can dedicate resources to preskilling talent, ultimately making job training and the hiring process more efficient, effective, and equitable.



**88.5%** of candidates feel more confident during interviews after completing a virtual job simulation.

&

They're **2x** as likely to land a job at a partner company.

## Meet Forage.

We provide candidates, regardless of their circumstances, with the means to experience what it's like to work at some of the world's top employers like BCG, Citibank, or GE. Our [virtual job simulations](#) empower students to find their right career fit, while enhancing their skills and work-readiness along the way.

For companies, it flips the hire-then-train model. It allows them to use workplace-specific training (rather than generic industry training), en masse, as a recruiting tool. In doing so, they build a diverse network of current or future candidates and leverage high-fidelity signals to nurture, engage, and hire the best-fit talent (who are conveniently preskilled in the role before they even start!).

**By being open-access and virtual, company partners like JPMorgan, EA, and SAP benefit from:**

- A 24/7/365 virtual campus presence through Forage's university relationships
- Moving away from merely describing what they do, to illustrating what they do in an interactive simulated environment — helping them stand out from their competitors
- Immediate and far-reaching goodwill by opening their doors to help train the workforce of the future and level the playing field

Contact us to learn more at [theforage.com](https://theforage.com).



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