In-School Tech Training Leads To Lucrative IT Careers

(NAPSA)—Students who want to make the grade in the job market study the trends and tailor their education accordingly.

A noteworthy example of this is the number of students taking in-school tech training. Even though recent data suggests that unemployment is at its highest level in four years, there are still jobs for students specialized in information technology (IT).

According to CompTIA, the Computing Technology Industry Association, the technological advances and the rapid growth of the high-tech field has created a need for qualified technicians. Many of these IT positions are viable career opportunities for students just graduating from high school or community college.

"Although many companies are currently undergoing layoffs, they are still in a bind to find IT workers with highly specialized skills," said Mary Harris, CEO of the International Association for Human Resource Information Management (IHRIM). "Now, young, determined students have an opportunity to begin a lucrative career in IT."

Many U.S. schools are now introducing new programs to better prepare students for IT careers, and have sought the guidance of technology associations such as CompTIA to assist

Certification can make it easier to enter the IT workforce.

in course development.

"We see so many young students who opt out of the traditional four-year degree in computer science. Instead, many of these students choose to attend these technology training programs while in high school or community college, earn a variety of IT certifications and successfully enter the IT workforce," said John Engman, director of CompTIA's workforce development program. "Businesses are now discovering the higher level of skill and value produced by certified IT professionals, no matter what their age."

A recent study by CompTIA indicates more than half of both CIOs (51 percent) and HR professionals (54 percent) would hire a new technician with a certification, but no professional work experience.

As the importance and value of

IT training becomes more apparent, more schools are providing the technical certification that validates the training they offer.

For example, VUE, an electronic testing services company, locates over one-fifth of its authorized testing centers in high schools, colleges and universities, and has seen a 27 percent growth in this number in the past year.

Schools such as Polk Community College, a VUE testing center in Winter Haven, Fla., offer classes that train students pursuing IT certifications such as CompTIA's vendor-neutral A+™, Network+™ and i-Net+™ CompTIA. These certifications offer proof to employers that students have the baseline technology skills necessary to succeed in entry-level IT positions.

The benefits of certifications are also beginning to appeal to underrepresented groups such as minorities, women and people with disabilities.

"Our programs have seen a 10 percent increase in enrollment by women within the past year," said Mark Brown, a program manager at Polk Community College. "Word is getting out that you don't have to move mountains to enter the field of IT."

For more information on IT training and certification, visit CompTIA or VUE's Web sites at www.comptia.org and www.vue.com.