

## **IBM Study: 2021 Voluntary Job Changes and Skills Growth on the Rise, Bringing Employer Challenges for Attracting and Retaining Workers**

### **IBM expands SkillsBuild, online learning program to help job seekers and others succeed**

ARMONK, N.Y., Feb. 25, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- A new [study](#) from the IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)) Institute for Business Value (IBV) revealed that one in four consumers surveyed globally plan to switch employers in 2021. Even as the economy saw the loss of global working hours equivalent to 255 million full-time employees in 2020,\* the study shows voluntary job changes and skills development are still top of mind in today's labor market as employees may be seeking career changes due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study of more than 14,000 adults globally also showed that many of those who voluntarily made job changes in 2020 may be on the move again in 2021 for many of the same reasons. Findings included:

- One in five employees surveyed voluntarily switched employers in 2020. Of those surveyed who said they switched employers, more than half were generation Z (ages 18-24) (33%) and millennials (ages 25-39) (25%).
- Of the 28% of surveyed employees who plan to switch employers in 2021, the need for a more flexible work schedule or location and increased benefits and support for their well-being were cited as top reasons why.
- 1 in 4 surveyed employees indicated they plan to switch occupations in 2021.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has changed employees' expectations of their employers, and leaders should take a more empathetic and personalized approach to attracting and retaining talent, especially for Gen Z and Millennial candidates and employees who may be more likely to make voluntary employer or occupation changes," said Amy Wright, managing partner, IBM Talent & Transformation. "That can include developing tailored learning plans and career paths for employees, fostering inclusive and flexible cultures and removing bias in hiring with the help of technologies like AI."

### **Employees want work-life balance and career advancement opportunities**

Work-life balance and career advancement opportunities topped the list of attributes surveyed consumers said were important for their employer to provide. More than 40% of consumers surveyed also said the ethics and values of their employer were important to engage them, and 36% of consumers surveyed said they valued

continuous learning opportunities.

### **A perception gap exists between employers and employees on their skills**

According to a [2019 IBV study on the global skills gap](#), 45% of organizations surveyed shared that they can't find the skills they need. However, the IBV study released today showed greater confidence from workers, with 87% of employees surveyed believing they already have the necessary skills to meet their job/employment goals in 2021. Despite this confidence, most employees are still planning to pursue paths to grow their skills for the future.

- 58% of consumers surveyed said that they plan to take continuing education courses this year, mostly online versus in person.
- 25% percent of consumers surveyed indicated their reskilling or upskilling goals for 2021 included enrollment in a formal degree, certification or badging program.
- Approximately 30% of generation Z and 30% of millennial respondents surveyed said they'll enroll in a formal degree, certification or badging program, which were the largest percentages compared to other generation groups surveyed.
- More than 1 in 4 generation Z respondents surveyed say they'll pursue an apprentice opportunity, which was the largest percentage compared to other generation groups surveyed.

### **IBM expands SkillsBuild, a free online learning platform**

To help individuals build skills for the future, IBM has expanded [SkillsBuild](#) to the United States.

SkillsBuild is a no-charge and open online learning program that is designed to empower job seekers and others with professional workplace readiness and technical skills. Its key differentiators include a wide portfolio of interactive courses in languages that include English, French, German, Japanese and Spanish, and the ability for job seekers to tap personal coaching tools, complete portfolio-building projects, and earn credentials to showcase their skills to potential employers.

Learners accessing the platform can conduct a self-assessment of employment interests and aptitude, helping them identify and connect with a learning path that fits their skill set. Learning paths and badges cover areas such as cybersecurity, data analysis, customer service, workplace skills like collaboration and presentation, and job application essentials, among others. Some of IBM's content contributors include Fortinet and Red Hat.

"The COVID-19 pandemic, combined with rapid technological developments, is profoundly changing the workplace. At the same time, businesses are increasingly seeking to build strong and diverse talent

pipelines," said Justina Nixon-Saintil, IBM Vice President and Global Head of Corporate Social Responsibility. "IBM SkillsBuild is designed to give aspiring professionals a powerful set of resources at no charge to help them cultivate meaningful careers that they can be proud of."

### IBV Study Methodology

To better understand consumers' plans and motivations for leaving or staying with their employers and investing in their own professional development, IBM surveyed more than 14,000 adults in January 2021 across nine countries: Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Mexico, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The full study is available at: <https://www.ibm.com/thought-leadership/institute-business-value/report/employee-expectations-2021>

\*According to the [International Labour Organization](#), in 2020, 8.8% of global working hours were lost relative to the fourth quarter of 2019, equivalent to 255 million full-time jobs.

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