

DOW JONES, A NEWS CORP COMPANY

DJIA **25369.43** -0.32% ▼

S&P 500 **2805.51** -0.47% ▼

Nasdaq **7632.17** -1.36% ▼

U.S. 10 Yr **-3/32 Yield** 2.967% ▼

Crude Oil **70.13** 2.10% ▲

Euro **1.1715** 0.51% ▲

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers visit <http://www.djreprints.com>.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/employers-eager-to-hire-try-a-new-policy-no-experience-necessary-1532862000>

BUSINESS

Employers Eager to Hire Try a New Policy: 'No Experience Necessary'

Inexperienced job applicants face better odds in the labor market as more companies drop work-history and degree requirements



Companies are lowering the bar on degree and work-history requirements for many jobs. A job seeker, left, shook hands with a representative at a career fair in Brooklyn, N.Y., in February. PHOTO: GABBY JONES/BLOOMBERG NEWS

By Kelsey Gee

Updated July 29, 2018 1:14 p.m. ET

Americans looking to land a first job or break into a dream career face their best odds of success in years.

Employers say they are abandoning preferences for college degrees and specific skill sets to speed up hiring and broaden the pool of job candidates. Many companies added requirements to job postings after the recession, when millions were out of work and human-resources departments were stacked with résumés.

Across incomes and industries, the lower bar to getting hired is helping self-taught programmers attain software engineering roles at Intel Corp.

[INTC +0.29%](#) ▲ and GitHub Inc., the coding platform, and improving the odds for high-school graduates who aspire to be branch managers at Bank of America Corp. [BAC +1.00%](#) ▲ and Terminix pest control.

“Candidates have so many options today,” said Amy Glaser, senior vice president of Adecco Group, a staffing agency with about 10,000 company clients in search of employees. “If a company requires a degree, two rounds of interviews and a test for hard skills, candidates can go down the street to another employer who will make them an offer that day.”

Ms. Glaser estimates one in four of the agency’s employer clients have made drastic changes to their recruiting process since the start of the year, such as skipping drug tests or criminal background checks, or removing preferences for a higher degree or high-school diploma.

Cutting job-credential requirements is more common in cities such as Dallas and Louisville, where unemployment is lowest, Ms. Glaser said, as well as in recruiting for roles at call centers and warehouses within logistics operations of retailers such as Walmart Inc. and Amazon.com Inc.

In the first half of 2018, the share of job postings requesting a college degree fell to 30% from 32% in 2017, according to an analysis by labor-market research firm Burning Glass Technologies of 15 million ads on websites such as Indeed and Craigslist. Minimum qualifications have been drifting lower since 2012, when companies sought college graduates for 34% of those positions.

Long work-history requirements have also relaxed: Only 23% of entry-level jobs now ask applicants for three or more years of experience, compared with 29% back in 2012, putting an additional 1.2 million jobs in closer reach of more applicants, Burning Glass data show. Through the end of last year, a further one million new jobs were opened up to candidates with “no experience necessary,” making occupations such as e-commerce analyst,

purchasing assistant and preschool teacher available to novices and those without a degree.

It all marks a sharp reversal from the immediate aftermath of the financial crisis, when employers could be pickier. Economists say job requirements were harder to track then, because many companies didn't post positions publicly and many résumés weren't delivered electronically.

Now, recruiters say, the tightest job market in decades has left employers looking to tamp down hiring costs with three options: Offer more money upfront, lower their standards or retrain current staff in coding, procurement or other necessary skills.

Rodney Apple, president of SCM Talent Group LLC in Asheville, N.C., said if companies won't budge on compensation, experience or education requirements, he walks away.

"We tell them, 'I'm sorry, but we can't help you fish for the few underpaid or unaware applicants left out there,' " he said. SCM finds workers for dozens of small and midsize companies seeking supply-chain managers and logistics and warehouse operators across the U.S. Mr. Apple said talent shortages are more extreme than he has seen in nearly 20 years of recruiting.

Average wages have climbed steadily in the past year, but rising prices of household goods have made those pay raises less valuable to workers, keeping pressure on employers to increase salaries or re-evaluate their target hire.

To attract more entry-level employees, toy maker Hasbro Inc. [HAS -0.97%](#) ▼ divided four marketing jobs, which it previously designed for business-school graduates with M.B.A.s, into eight lower-level positions. The new full-time roles included a marketing coordinator, retail-planning analyst and trade merchandiser, all involving more routine activities supporting higher-level staff in the division.

Hasbro hiring managers originally sought candidates with a two-year

degree for the jobs but ultimately dropped any college requirement, a spokeswoman said. The Pawtucket, R.I. company received more than 100 applications and hired nine people.

The new shift, called “down skilling,” bolsters a theory articulated by Alicia Modestino, a Northeastern University economist: When more people are looking for work, companies can afford to inflate job requirements to find the best fit—and did so as unemployment spiked in 2008.

As college graduates and midcareer professionals raised their hands for jobs as hotel managers and bookkeepers after the recession, hires with more qualifications took a larger share of positions normally filled by the 75 million U.S. workers who lack a college degree.

After the recession, Terminix raised the bar for over 1,000 pest-control branch- and service-manager positions to require a two-year degree or a bachelor’s degree. In January, it reversed course and made degrees “preferred” but not mandatory, said Betsy Vincent, senior director of talent acquisition.

Anthony Whitehead worked for five years as a Terminix branch manager in Florida before he was promoted to regional director in early July. That position now accepts candidates with college degrees or equivalent experience, helping Mr. Whitehead clinch the role despite his earlier decision to enter the military instead of college.

Mr. Whitehead, 35 years old, said his approach to jobs requiring a degree has been “apply anyways if I have the right experience, and then have the education conversation if I need to,” he said, acknowledging his luck in working for companies like Terminix with flexible requirements.

RELATED

- Inflation Is Eating Away Worker Wage Gains (July 12, 2018)
- Facing Historic Labor Shortages, Companies Snap Up Teenagers (April 16, 2018)
- These Companies Will Pay You to Learn Your Job (Oct. 17, 2017)

A lot of employers are loosening college

requirements even as the proportion of Americans with a bachelor’s degree continues to rise. Bank of America Corp. currently has 7,500 job openings world-wide and fewer than 10% require a degree, said spokesman Andy Aldridge. Mr. Aldridge said a surprising number of jobs could be filled by

nongraduates, including most of the bank's tellers and employees handling customer-service and fraud-protection calls from cardholders.

Newsletter Sign-up

Real Time Economics

The latest economic news, analysis and data curated weekdays by WSJ's Jeffrey Sparshott.

[SIGN UP](#) [PREVIEW →](#)

In June, the bank unveiled plans to hire 10,000 more retail workers from low-income neighborhoods over the next five years, with or without degrees, said Chris Payton, head of talent acquisition.

Not every company is relaxing requirements: Economists say positions that require high levels of technical expertise, such as information security, still need advanced

knowledge.

The tech industry has been quick to dismiss credentials like a bachelor of arts degree as irrelevant, especially in emerging fields such as data analytics, where demand for talent has risen faster than universities can churn out new graduates.

GitHub, recently acquired by Microsoft Corp., said it hasn't required college degrees for most positions in years. Degrees are optional for many "experienced hire" positions at chip maker Intel, which also has a "tech grad" job category the company describes as fitting candidates with relevant classroom or work experience from technical programs, such as coding boot camps.

Intel's career website advertises roles, including a lab employee testing experimental devices in Santa Clara, Calif., and a components researcher improving the semiconductor process in Hillsboro, Ore., as available to candidates with a two-year degree, military training or other nondegree certifications.

Corrections & Amplifications

Intel's career website advertises a position for a components researcher in Hillsboro, Ore. An earlier version of this article incorrectly said the opening

was in Ohio. (July 29, 2018)

Write to Kelsey Gee at kelsey.gee@wsj.com

Appeared in the July 30, 2018, print edition as 'Help Wanted, Degree Not Needed.'

Copyright ©2017 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers visit <http://www.djreprints.com>.