Assessing Outcomes, Efficacy and Value

CompTIA training and certification review

CompTIA.org

92%

Steps ahead in tech career progression post CompTIA certification[1]

#1

CompTIA ranks #1 in aggregate job posting volumes citing a technical certification in the US market[2]

92%

Training and academic partners affirming CompTIA is a leading brand for industry-recognized training and certification[3]

91%

Access to more career choices and tech job roles with potential employers post CompTIA certification[4]

93%

Training and academic partners affirming CompTIA unlocks potential and expands opportunity[11]

89%

Retention measure of CompTIA certified professionals still working in tech after five"[6]

94%

Customers rating CompTIA quality higher than alternative certification providers[13]

93%

Positive salary gain expectation post CompTIA certification[8]

83%

Net promoters recommending CompTIA (versus only 4% not likely to recommend)[9]

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About CompTIA

The Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA) is the world's leading vendor-neutral information technology (IT) certification and training body. CompTIA is a mission-driven organization committed to unlocking the potential of every student, career changer or professional seeking to begin or advance in a technology career. Millions of current and aspiring technology workers around the world rely on CompTIA for the training, education, professional certifications and thought leadership that give them the confidence and skills to work in tech.

CompTIA Certifications
CompTIA Learning and Training
CompTIA Career Explorer
CompTIA Spark
CompTIA Member Communities and Councils
CompTIA Academic and Delivery Partner Program

Introduction

The focus on outcomes, efficacy and value is more critical than ever in the training and certification space. A confluence of factors pushed already important concepts further in the direction of prioritizing meaningful and innovative approaches. The pendulum swings of economic uncertainty over the past few years coupled with seismic shifts in demographics, a rethinking of the value of higher education, and the embracing of trends such as skills-based hiring and alternative pathways all contribute to a hunger for solid data and guidance around outcomes, efficacy and value.

As a mission-driven organization, CompTIA is passionate about unlocking the potential of every student, career changer or professional seeking to begin or advance in a career in technology. Our measure of success is outcomes. From the small wins in overcoming the confidence gap to the life-changing effects of reaching the next rung on the career ladder, CompTIA defines success through the achievements of the audiences we serve.

CompTIA's *Assessing Outcomes, Efficacy and Value of Training and Certification* report provides an in-depth review of the data used to assess the outcomes, efficacy and value of CompTIA training and certification programs.

CompTIA analyzes millions of data points each year to understand the many direct and indirect effects of career progression over time. This entails using longstanding training evaluation frameworks, such as the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation across four dimensions, as well as evaluation metrics developed by CompTIA to provide additional insights.

See report methodology page for more details.

1 Assessing career readiness to career success progression

S tarting, advancing or changing careers is unpredictable under the best of circumstances. Even with the ever-growing sophistication of employment tools available to job seekers and hiring companies, there can still be a fair amount of "right place, right time" luck in the process.

To capture this nuance, CompTIA uses a metric known as "steps ahead." The concept is straight forward – the degree to which earning a CompTIA industry-recognized certification generates forward momentum.

Ninety-two percent of CompTIA certified professionals report moving at least one step ahead in their career progression at the 6-month post-certification evaluation point. This may entail the steps ahead momentum that comes with a stronger resume, the confidence to apply for a broader range of jobs or landing an interview with an employer requiring CompTIA certification. Bigger steps ahead may mean a new job, new responsibilities or a promotion. For most, however, it is the sum of smaller steps ahead that build on one another to achieve successful outcomes.

93%

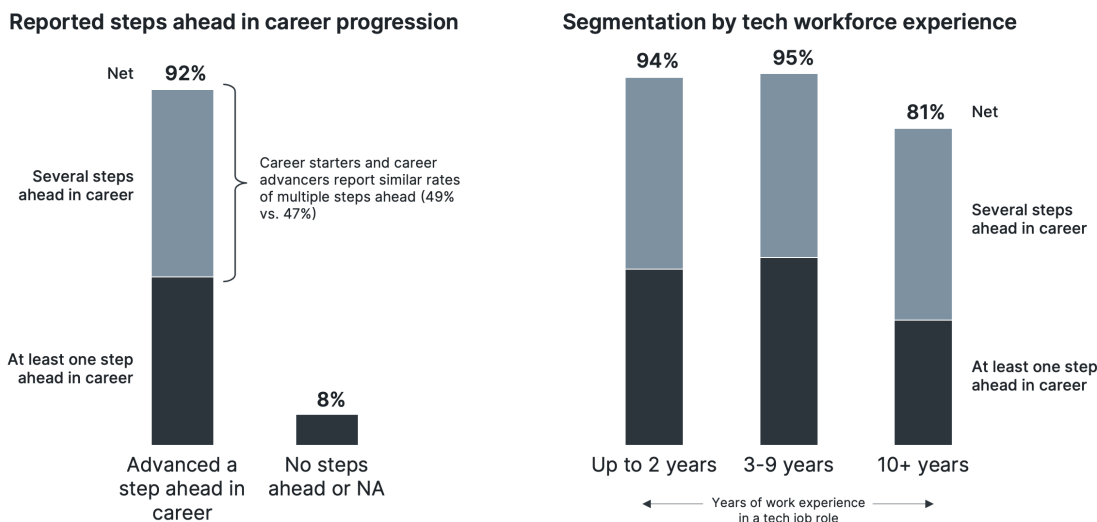Steps ahead in career progression among CompTIA Security+ professionals[1]

> ❝ **CompTIA will have an unmatched impact on my career.**
>
> — Security Analyst, Federal Government

Career starters, the segment of certification earners seeking to enter the tech workforce, report progressing about the same number of steps forward as the career advancers, those in the tech workforce seeking promotion (49% vs. 47%). The steps ahead rate was similar across the portfolio of CompTIA certifications.

CompTIA positions career starters and career advancers for success

Reported steps ahead in career progression

Net 92%

Several steps ahead in career

Career starters and career advancers report similar rates of multiple steps ahead (49% vs. 47%)

At least one step ahead in career

8%

Advanced a step ahead in career | No steps ahead or NA

Segmentation by tech workforce experience

94% | 95% | 81% Net

Several steps ahead in career

At least one step ahead in career

Up to 2 years | 3-9 years | 10+ years

◄— Years of work experience in a tech job role —►

Source: CompTIA post-certification tracking research | waves I and II 2024 | Overall n=1,000 | Smaller n for subsegments
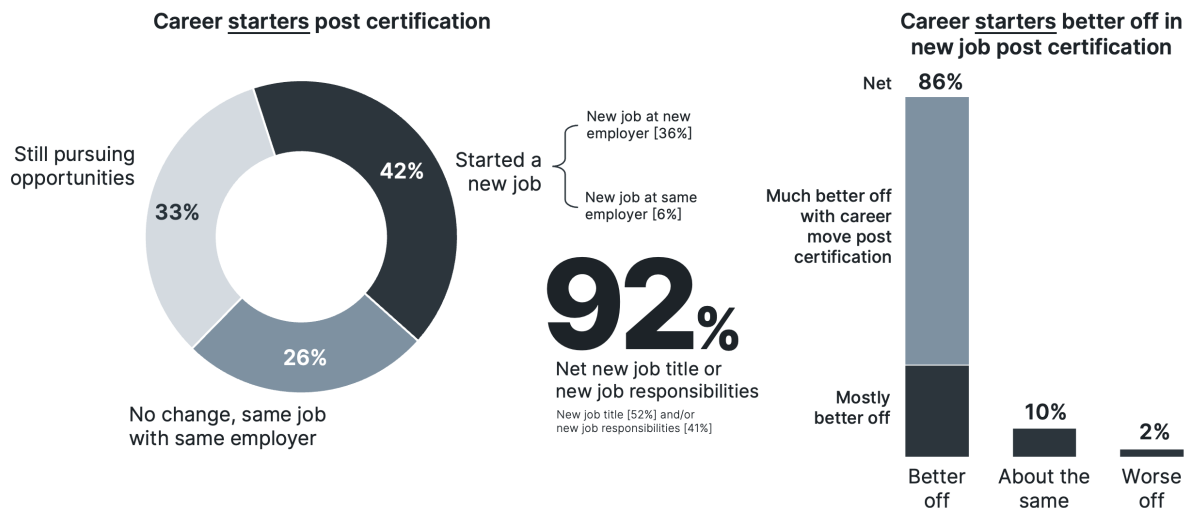
Given the differences in backgrounds and career stage, it naturally follows career starters and career advancers will have different experiences and expectations. At the 6-month mark after earning a CompTIA certification, 42% of career starters report starting a new job. Twenty-six percent report continuing with their current employer and 33% continuing to pursue or evaluate opportunities.

For some career starters it may take an internship, freelance work, on-the-job training, a more robust project portfolio or related to develop the type of work experience hiring employers like to see. As noted previously, certain reality checks must be kept in mind given the vagaries of career progression.

Among those starting a new job post CompTIA certification, the vast majority (86% net) report being better off in their new role – and for some, a new life trajectory.

CompTIA certifications a catalyst for starting or advancing in a career in technology

See accompanying data for reasons job seekers opted to stay with current employer | Career start or advancement may occur well after the 6-month mark

Career starters post certification

42% — Started a new job
- New job at new employer [36%]
- New job at same employer [6%]

26% — No change, same job with same employer

33% — Still pursuing opportunities

92%
Net new job title or new job responsibilities
New job title [52%] and/or new job responsibilities [41%]

Career starters better off in new job post certification

Net 86%
- Much better off with career move post certification
- Mostly better off

Better off

About the same 10%

Worse off 2%

Source: CompTIA post-certification tracking research | waves I and II 2024 | Overall n=1,000 | Smaller n for subsegments

Career advancers report similar rates of starting a new job (41%) at the 6-month post certification mark, which further breaks down to about 28% starting a new job with a new employer and 14% starting a new job with their existing employer. The remaining segments include 50% continuing with their same job and employer and small subsegment still pursuing or evaluating opportunities. New jobs inevitably come with new job titles and new responsibilities (92% rate among career advancers).

The rating of satisfaction indicates a better off score of 75% net, which is slightly lower than the career starter rate; not surprising given career advancers are further along in their career and hold stronger positions around the factors most important to work and life happiness.
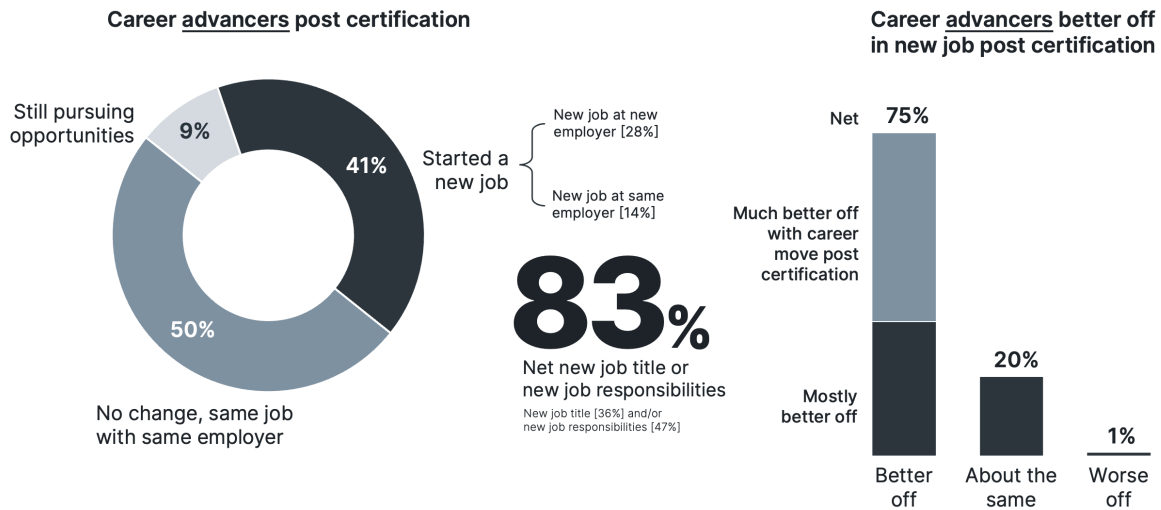
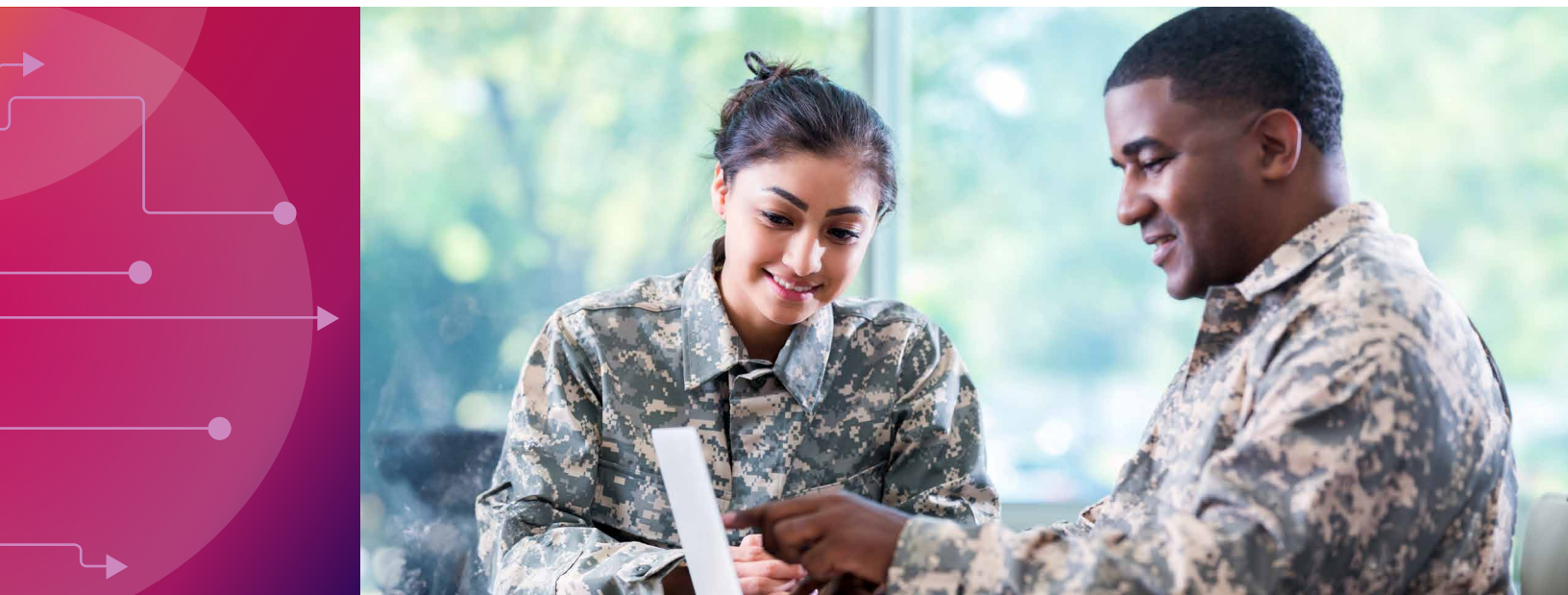> **CompTIA has expanded my career focus and vision. It has been a huge added bonus to my skill sets.**
>
> — Technical Services Professional, Media & Entertainment Company

CompTIA certifications are a catalyst for starting or advancing in a career in technology

See accompanying data for reasons job seekers opted to stay with current employer | Career start or advancement may occur well after the 6-month mark

Career <u>advancers</u> post certification

Still pursuing opportunities — 9%

41% — Started a new job
- New job at new employer [28%]
- New job at same employer [14%]

50%

No change, same job with same employer

83%
Net new job title or new job responsibilities
New job title [36%] and/or new job responsibilities [47%]

Career <u>advancers</u> better off in new job post certification

Net — 75%

Much better off with career move post certification

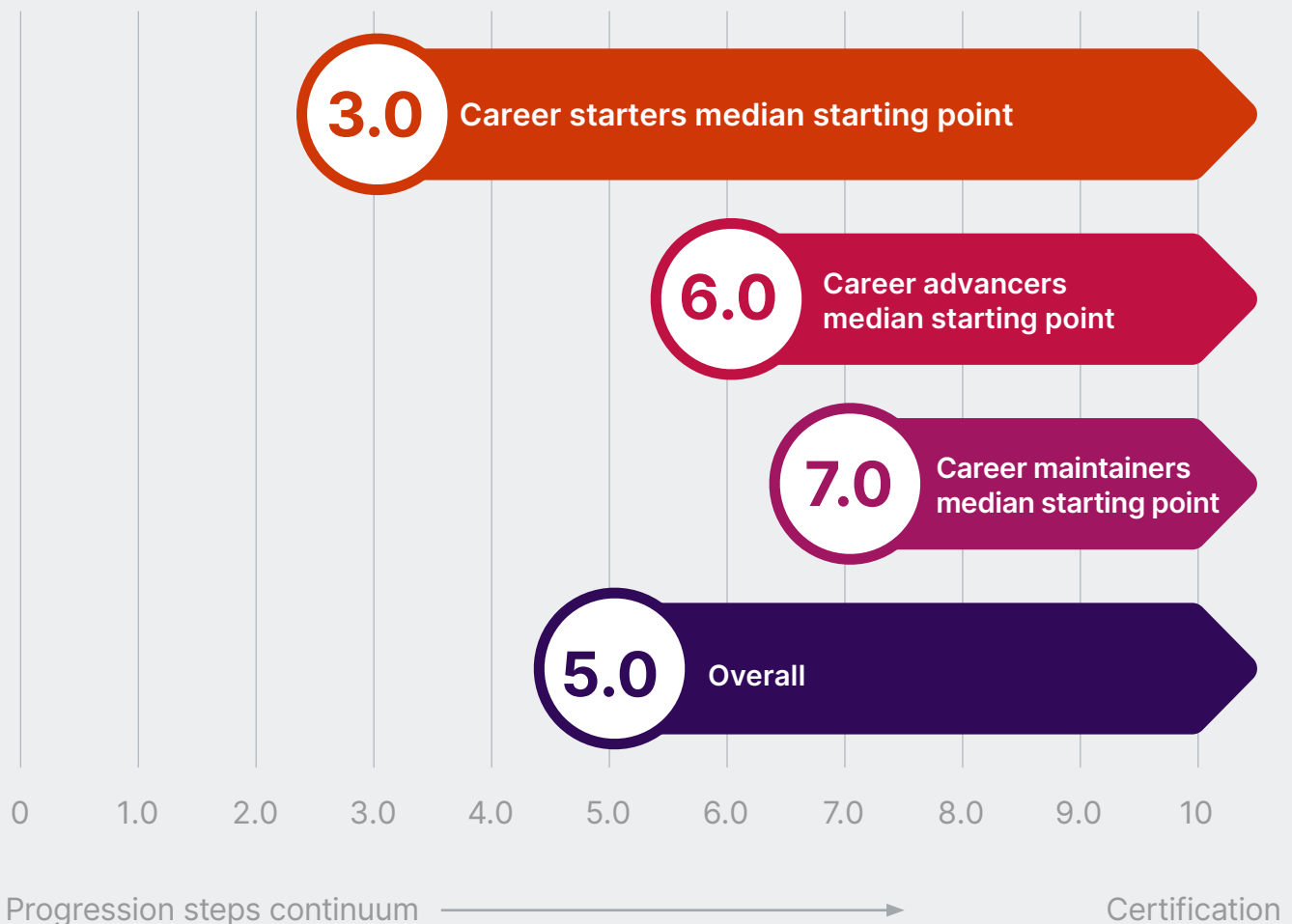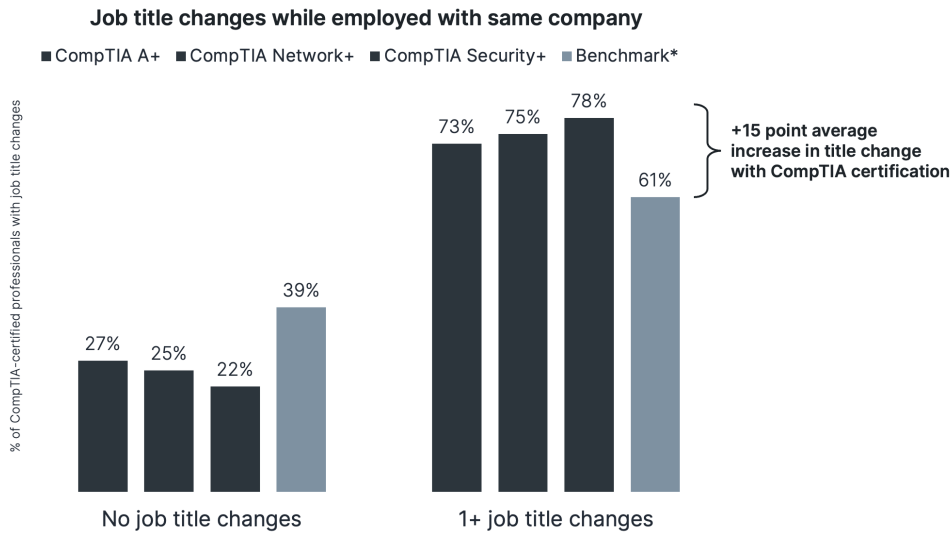Mostly better off

Better off

About the same — 20%

Worse off — 1%

Calibrating the starting point of career progression

Why is there a need to calibrate starting points in assessing career progression? Simply put starting points differ. Ultimately career success may require reaching the conceptual end point of earning a CompTIA certification (a value of 10). Career starters report a median self-assessed starting point of 3.0, which yields a conceptual steps forward distance of +7.0. In comparison, career starters who are further along in their careers with more work experience report a median self-assessed starting point of 6.0, which yields a conceptual steps forward distance of +4.0.

This type of calibration is useful in providing positive encouragement and building confidence. Imagine a scenario of a career starter at a 3.0 advancing to a 9.0. Although falling short of earning a CompTIA certification in this conceptual model, the hypothetical career starter gained an impressive +6.0 steps ahead (numerically greater than the career advancer). Through additional training refreshers or practice tests perhaps the career starter progresses the final step to certification.

3.0 Career starters median starting point

6.0 Career advancers median starting point

7.0 Career maintainers median starting point

5.0 Overall

0   1.0   2.0   3.0   4.0   5.0   6.0   7.0   8.0   9.0   10

Progression steps continuum ⟶ Certification

Employees who earn a CompTIA certification are more likely to earn a bump in job title

Job title changes while employed with same company

■ CompTIA A+　■ CompTIA Network+　■ CompTIA Security+　■ Benchmark*

No job title changes
- 27%
- 25%
- 22%
- 39%

1+ job title changes
- 73%
- 75%
- 78%
- 61%

} +15 point average increase in title change with CompTIA certification
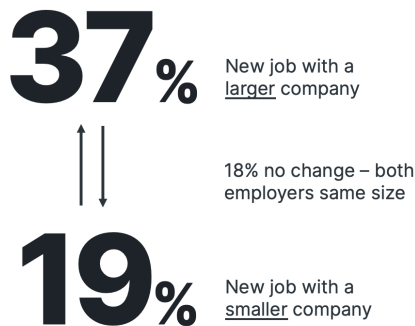
Source: Lightcast | Employment outcomes study commissioned by CompTIA | 2023

When extending the time horizon to five years, the positive outcome of a job title increase is even more notable with the majority of CompTIA certified professionals advancing. Moreover, CompTIA certifications tend to outperform the benchmark of those in similar job roles without an industry-recognized certification.
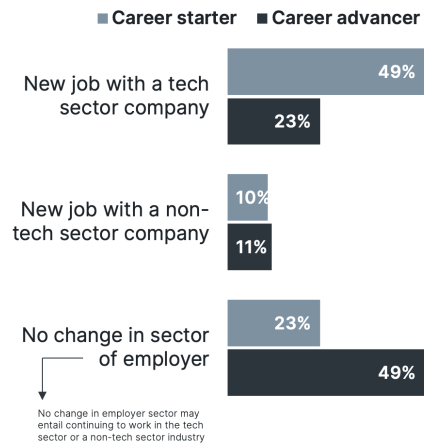
Other examples of career mobility and transitions involve CompTIA certified professionals taking a new job with a larger company (37%), or conversely, starting with a smaller company (19%). Relatedly, transitions occur with moves into the tech industry by taking a job with a technology company, or conversely, moving into one of countless industry sectors across the US economy employing tech workers.

Company size and sector transitions post CompTIA certification

Employer size transitions:
small to large and large to small

37% New job with a <u>larger</u> company

⇅ 18% no change – both employers same size

19% New job with a <u>smaller</u> company

Industry sector transitions

■ Career starter　■ Career advancer

New job with a tech sector company
- 49%
- 23%

New job with a non-tech sector company
- 10%
- 11%

No change in sector of employer
- 23%
- 49%

No change in employer sector may entail continuing to work in the tech sector or a non-tech sector industry

Source: CompTIA post-certification tracking research | waves I and II 2024 | Overall n=1,000 | Smaller n for subsegments

Expanding opportunity and dispelling myths about working in tech

Expanding opportunity and dispelling myths about working in tech remains a core priority of CompTIA. Portrayals in the media and mistaken perceptions by many often result in the assumption that most technology professionals work in Silicon Valley for the notable "big tech" companies or hot venture-backed startups.

In truth it's the complete opposite. The majority of technology professionals (about 58%) work in industry sectors across the US economy. Manufacturing, finance, healthcare, entertainment, government, education and the list goes on of sectors employing the majority of the tech workforce.

While the tech sector does employ a sizable portion of the tech workforce there is far more geographic and company size diversity than what may be apparent. Outside of the major city tech hubs, there are under the radar cities in every state across the country where small, medium and large tech companies employ tech professionals.

See CompTIA's State of the Tech Workforce for detailed tech workforce profiling data across states and metro areas.

Career mobility segmentations post CompTIA certification

Career mobility 6 months post certification	Total	CompTIA A+	CompTIA Security+	CompTIA Network+	CompTIA Other net	< 4 year degree net	4 year degree+ net
New job with a new employer	31%	34%	31%	33%	32%	31%	29%
New job with same employer	9%	9%	9%	10%	10%	9%	10%
Net new job	40%	43%	40%	43%	42%	39%	40%
No change, same job with same employer	40%	39%	42%	42%	46%	40%	43%
New job title	41%	44%	39%	43%	39%	42%	37%
New job responsibilities	42%	44%	44%	42%	43%	43%	42%
Net job title and/or job responsibilities	81%	89%	82%	85%	81%	85%	79%

Source: CompTIA post-certification tracking research | waves I and II 2024 | Overall n=1,000 | Smaller n for subsegments
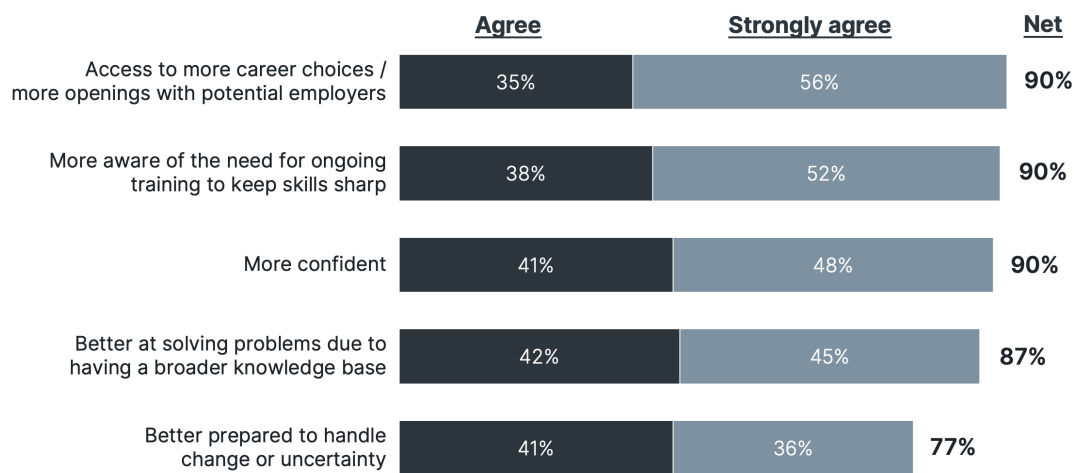
Top areas of new job responsibilities[10]

- Working with more advanced tasks / more advanced technologies
- Training staff
- Innovation or product / process improvement
- Strategic planning
- Managing staff or leading teams

Continuing with the steps ahead thread, there are undoubtedly facets of outcomes, efficacy and value that are difficult to quantify. It may stem from data collection challenges, timing or lag effects, or even blind spots individuals may have in recognizing the less tangible steps of progression.

A few additional data points CompTIA tracks confirms the role of factors such as confidence and soft skills in career progression. A lack of confidence may manifest itself in overt and insidious ways. The classic case of imposter syndrome may deter qualified candidates from applying for a higher-level role, seeking promotion or even considering potentially pursuing a career in technology.

Soft skills, also referred to as durable skills or professional skills, continue to grow in importance among employers. With the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI), skills such as critical thinking, judgement, agility and empathy become even more essential. High majorities of those earning CompTIA industry-recognized certifications report being more adept at problem solving (87% net) and more comfortable navigating change (77% net).

CompTIA certifications drive value on technical and soft skills fronts

	Agree	Strongly agree	Net
Access to more career choices / more openings with potential employers	35%	56%	90%
More aware of the need for ongoing training to keep skills sharp	38%	52%	90%
More confident	41%	48%	90%
Better at solving problems due to having a broader knowledge base	42%	45%	87%
Better prepared to handle change or uncertainty	41%	36%	77%

Source: CompTIA post-certification tracking research | waves I and II 2024 | Overall n=1,000 | Smaller n for subsegments

> **"**I feel more confident in my skills having passed my CompTIA certification.
>
> — Data Analyst, Educational Institution

The confidence gap and why it matters

CompTIA describes the confidence gap as the perceived barriers that discourages consideration for working in technology. According to CompTIA's [Job Seeker Trends research](#), approximately 59% of the career intent reports experiencing some facet of a confidence gap. The top discouraging factors include perceived lack of math or science skills, concern over starting too far behind, concern over lacking a 4-year degree and general concern about the unknowns of working in a technology job role. Similar confidence gap rates apply to high school students, which in the aggregate, means millions of students and career changers are self-selecting out of consideration for working in technology. For employers it means a smaller pool of candidates and losing out on potentially great candidates who pursue other fields.

CompTIA [Career Explorer](#) informs and inspires students and career changers to overcome the confidence gap. Career Explorer uniquely brings together the best of smart data tools with documentary-worthy video profiles where stories of career perseverance come to life. Career Explorer provides another lever to expand opportunity and unlock the potential of those seeking guidance in starting or advancing in their career.
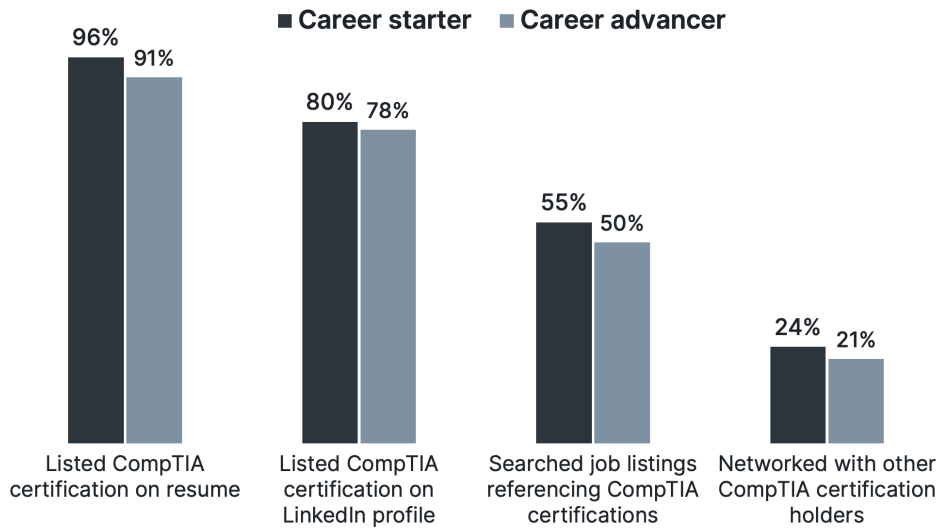
2 | Assessing career pursuit tactics

Achieving major outcomes is a function of achieving many small outcomes. Understanding the steps career starters and career advancers take in the pursuit of their end goals provides contexts in assessing forward momentum or stalled momentum.

The research confirms near universal attention to resume updates among career starters (96%) and career advancers (91%), ensuring they leverage the CompTIA industry-recognized brand when applying for jobs or networking. A similarly high percentage update their LinkedIn profiles to include CompTIA certifications, which for some employers is the platform carrying the most weight in candidate evaluations.

Yes, these could be characterized as obvious steps when preparing for a job search, but nonetheless, a good confirmation CompTIA-certified professionals are generally diligent in adhering to best practices. Two opportunities for improvement are further tailoring job search strategies and potentially doing more to network with CompTIA alumni.

Job pursuit steps taken post CompTIA certification

■ Career starter   ■ Career advancer

	Career starter	Career advancer
Listed CompTIA certification on resume	96%	91%
Listed CompTIA certification on LinkedIn profile	80%	78%
Searched job listings referencing CompTIA certifications	55%	50%
Networked with other CompTIA certification holders	24%	21%

Source: CompTIA post-certification tracking research │ waves I and II 2024 │ Overall n=1,000 │ Smaller n for subsegments

Among those not starting a new job within six months of post certification, 65% of career starters report unsuccessful attempts, while 7% had offers but decided to stay in their current position. The remaining 28% of career starters report taking no action, which could be a function of wanting to pursue additional training, improving their workforce experience profile, or perhaps, waiting for the right time in balancing family or personal responsibilities.

For career advancers, only 38% report applying for a new job unsuccessfully. A far larger 52% took no action. As professionals further along in their career many presumably have a different or higher set of criteria for pursuing an advancement opportunity.
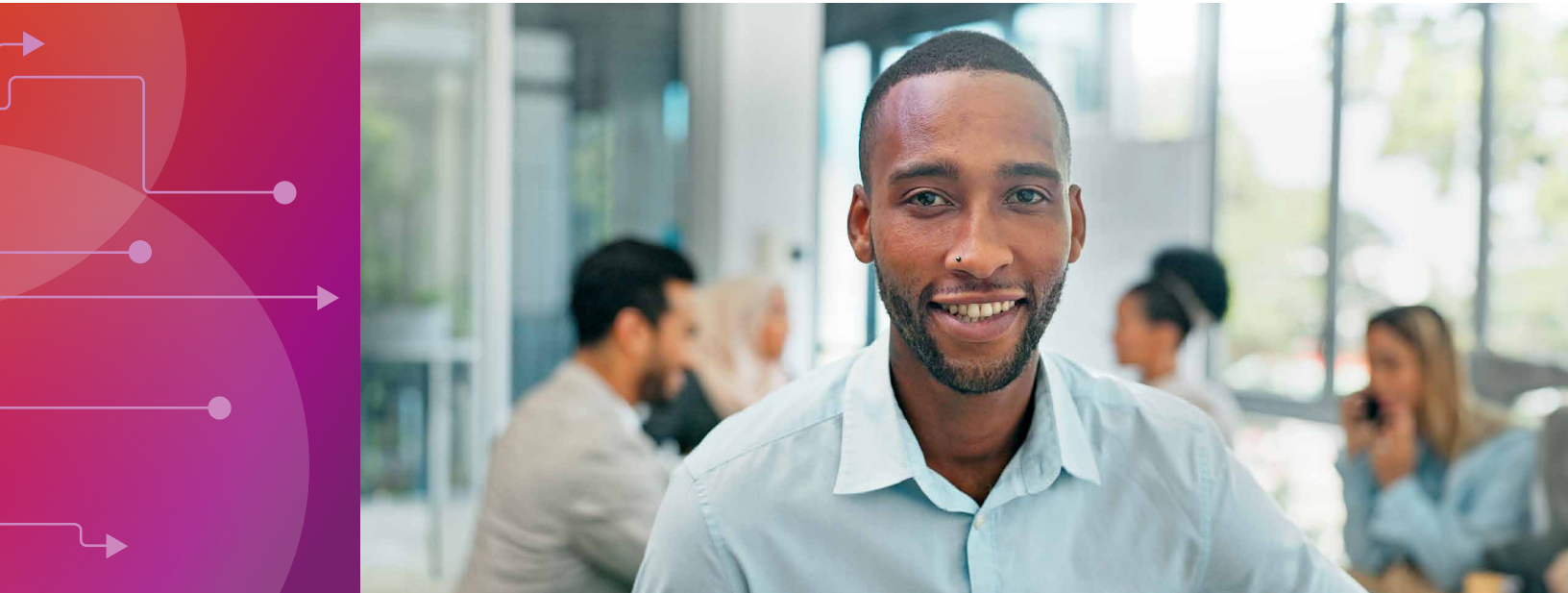
> **"**
> **Hands down, CompTIA demonstrates their positive commitment to the process of education.**
>
> — **Executive Director, Workforce Development Partner**

3 Assessing retention and career stickiness metrics

Hiring trends regularly dominate news cycles. The steady stream of releases such as the monthly employment report from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, company hiring or layoff announcements, and CompTIA as well with the monthly Tech Jobs Report, keep hiring trends front and center. This focus sometimes overshadows the equally important topic of retention.

CompTIA research of HR professionals confirms retention is indeed a key imperative. In a still tight labor market for tech talent, minimizing employee turnover and proactively addressing the known reasons employees quit is good for business on many fronts. Retention is especially critical for career starters and underrepresented segments in the tech workforce. An exit from the tech workforce at this stage may mean a permanent loss of a potentially quality worker from the labor pool.
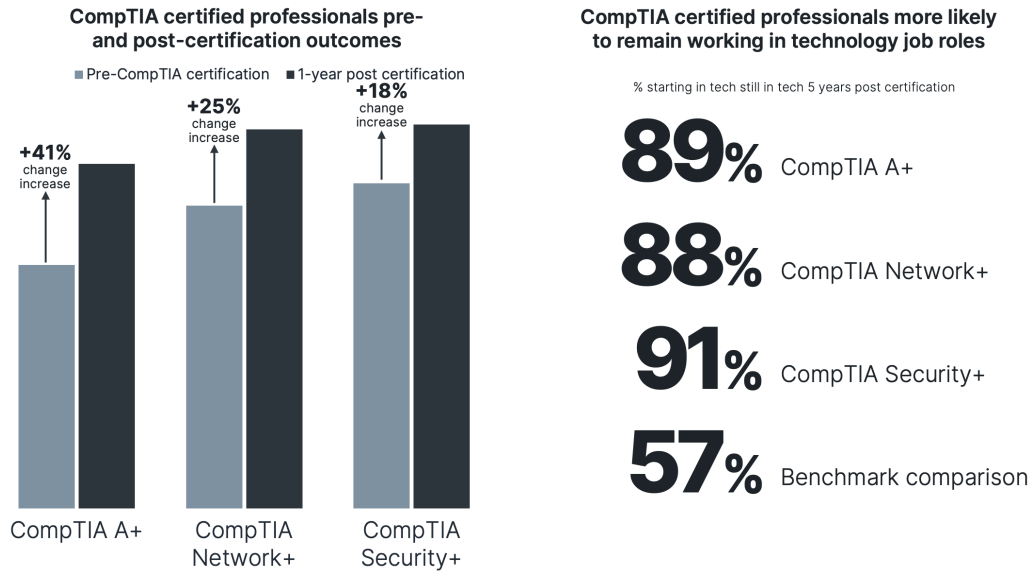
91%

CompTIA Security+ professionals that remain working in a technology job role 5 years post certification[6]

A largescale employment outcomes study conducted by Lightcast indicates once CompTIA-certified professionals get started in a tech career they are more likely to still be working in tech five years later compared to the benchmark. In the cast of CompTIA Security+ the retention rate of 91% far exceeds the benchmark rate of 57%.

CompTIA certifications provide a valuable on ramp into tech careers…and retention over time

CompTIA certified professionals pre- and post-certification outcomes

■ Pre-CompTIA certification ■ 1-year post certification

+41% change increase — CompTIA A+

+25% change increase — CompTIA Network+

+18% change increase — CompTIA Security+

CompTIA certified professionals more likely to remain working in technology job roles

% starting in tech still in tech 5 years post certification

89% CompTIA A+

88% CompTIA Network+

91% CompTIA Security+

57% Benchmark comparison

Source: CompTIA post-certification tracking research │ waves I and II 2024 │ Overall n=1,000 │ Smaller n for subsegments

While this data provides an aggregate view and there could be situational turnover within a specific employer, it does suggest a lower rate of exiting the technology profession among CompTIA-certified professionals. Coupled with the prior data covering career progression, this is a healthy labor market dynamic. Entrants get a start in a technology profession, advance through experience and perhaps additional training or certification, which expands the depth of higher end expertise while opening up entry level roles for the next wave of career starters.

4 | Assessing salary gains and earnings potential

Measurement and assessment of salary data tends to be one of the more difficult domains of labor market analysis. Beyond job role characteristics, there are factors to account for across location, cost of living, hours worked, industry sector, bonuses or other forms of compensation, and the time value of money. Although the mindset is changing among younger workers, there remains the added challenge of sensitivity around earnings with few workers or companies willing to voluntarily share compensation details.

Data compiled by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics is an excellent source for salary data at a macro level, but there are lags and gaps in the level of detail. Supplementary sources such as salary surveys, salary data included in employer job postings and imputed data from other sources provide additional layers of insight. Unfortunately, there is not a single perfect source providing both a comprehensive labor market overview with sufficient underlying detail to understand the many nuances of salaries and compensation.

82%
CompTIA A+ certified professionals reporting positive salary gains[7]

With these caveats in mind, CompTIA's post certification tracking research provides directional guidance around the "before" and "after" of salary changes. At the 6-month post certification mark, 76% of CompTIA certified career starters and 80% of career advancers report experiencing positive upward movement in their earnings. This could be a function of a higher salary accompanying a new job or promotion, a bonus or related additional compensation.

CompTIA certifications position career starters and career advancers for future salary gains
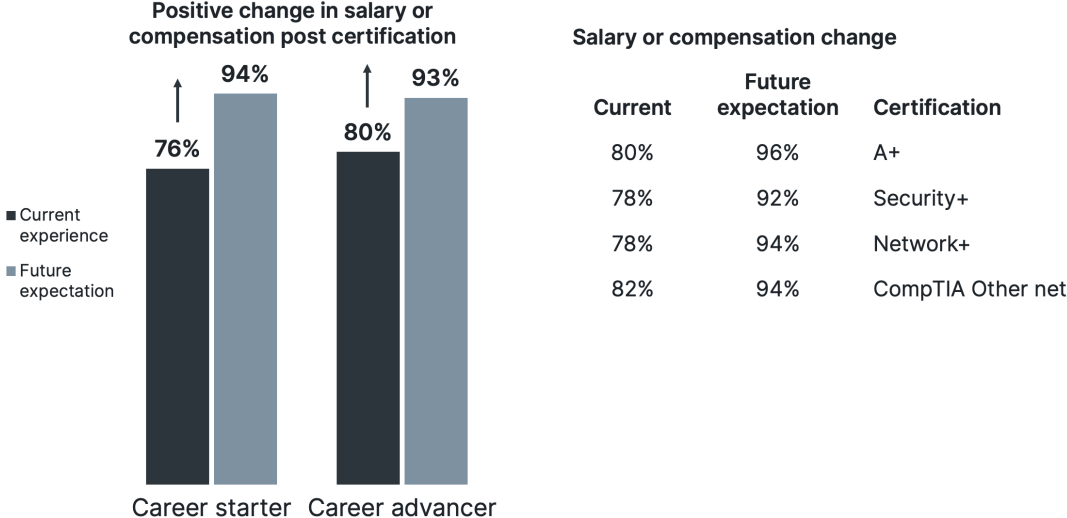
Positive change in salary or compensation post certification

	Current	Future expectation
Career starter	76%	94%
Career advancer	80%	93%

Salary or compensation change

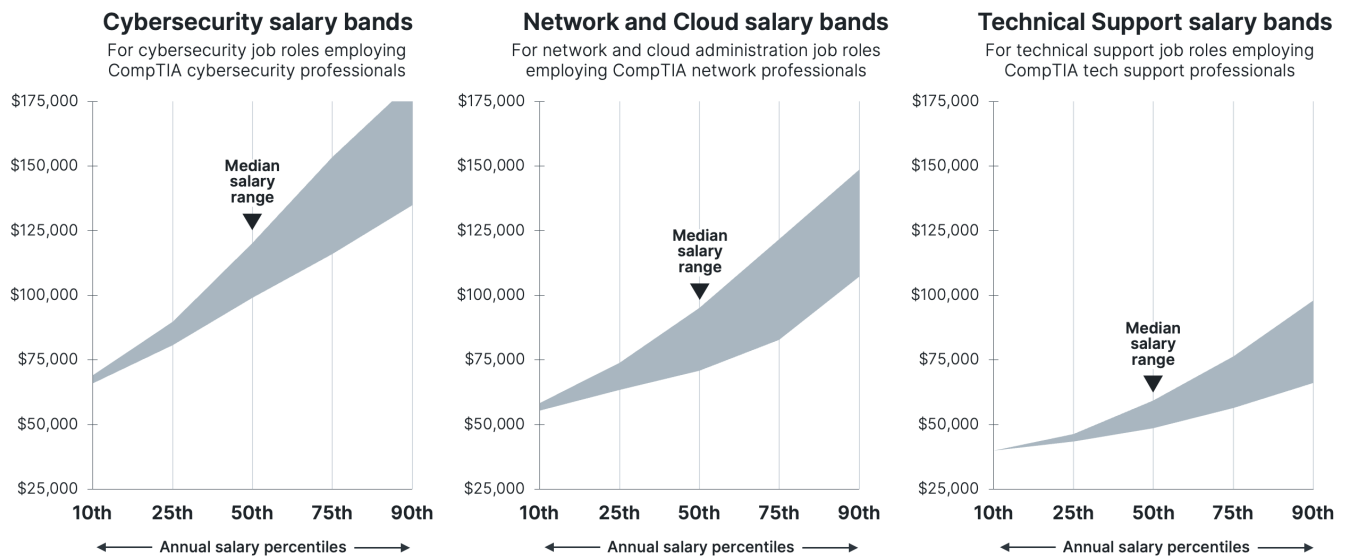| Current	Future expectation	Certification
80%	96%	A+
78%	92%	Security+
78%	94%	Network+
82%	94%	CompTIA Other net

Source: CompTIA post-certification tracking research | waves I and II 2024 | Overall n=1,000 | Smaller n for subsegments

The forward-looking component of the measure conveys an expectation of future salary gains. Ninety-four percent of career starters and 93% of career advancers anticipate salary growth over time, in part, due to a career trajectory set in motion by CompTIA industry-recognized certifications.

A review of salary percentiles illustrates the typical earnings pathways tech workers may expect. There are always exceptions where someone may leap ahead in earnings, but for the majority, earnings gains from the 25th percentile to the 50th percentile and beyond come over time through experience, skill and the value provided to the company. Of course, it can be frustrating for some. A career starter eager for promotion and higher pay may find it frustrating to have to "pay your dues," not fully realizing the value of experience that comes with taking on new projects, working in teams, handling difficult customers and more.

CompTIA certified professionals are well positioned to grow earnings over course of career

Salary bands across all levels of workers from entry level to intermediate to expert

Cybersecurity salary bands
For cybersecurity job roles employing CompTIA cybersecurity professionals

Median salary range

$175,000
$150,000
$125,000
$100,000
$75,000
$50,000
$25,000

10th   25th   50th   75th   90th

← Annual salary percentiles →

Network and Cloud salary bands
For network and cloud administration job roles employing CompTIA network professionals

Median salary range

$175,000
$150,000
$125,000
$100,000
$75,000
$50,000
$25,000

10th   25th   50th   75th   90th

← Annual salary percentiles →

Technical Support salary bands
For technical support job roles employing CompTIA tech support professionals

Median salary range

$175,000
$150,000
$125,000
$100,000
$75,000
$50,000
$25,000

10th   25th   50th   75th   90th

← Annual salary percentiles →

Source: CompTIA analysis of US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Lightcast and Skillsoft salary data

Salary, more than a number

One other important consideration in using earnings as a measure of efficacy and value is the nuance of quantity and quality. It is not always as simple as claiming quantity – a higher salary, proves efficacy. The pandemic reset expectations for many around the meaning of work and life priorities. Examples abound of individuals willing to forgo higher earnings for gains in quality of life, such as the opportunity to work remotely or work for a mission-driven organization with a great corporate culture. The other calculation involves the ratio of total compensation to total hours on the job, with tradeoffs sometimes occurring whereby accepting lower total compensation may mean working fewer hours at a higher hourly rate.

In labor market circles, there continues to be a number of shortcoming in career progression salary analysis. Efforts from CompTIA and others can hopefully continue to push for more expansive measures of outcome, efficacy and value.
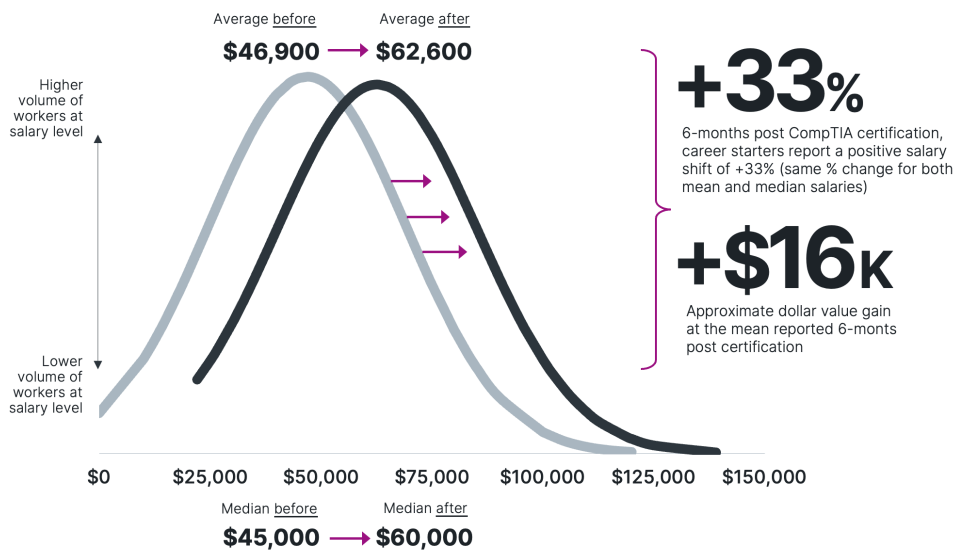
In the aggregate salary data tends to be normally distributed, which produces a bell-shaped visualization. The leftmost and rightmost tails are the low incidence salaries that are very low or very high. The greatest concentration of salaries occurs at the peak of the curve.

As noted previously factors such as location or industry sector significantly affect salary data analysis and interpretation. The accompanying charts depicting the "before" and "after" salaries of career starters and career advancers provide directional guidance in the aggregate, but are not intended to cover every permutation of salary progression analysis.

As a component of CompTIA's post-certification tracking research, this sample of data is approximately representative of the career starter and career advancer segments. The data will not be directly comparable to Bureau of Labor Statistics or other sources representative of the total tech workforce or specific segments or geographies of the tech workforce.

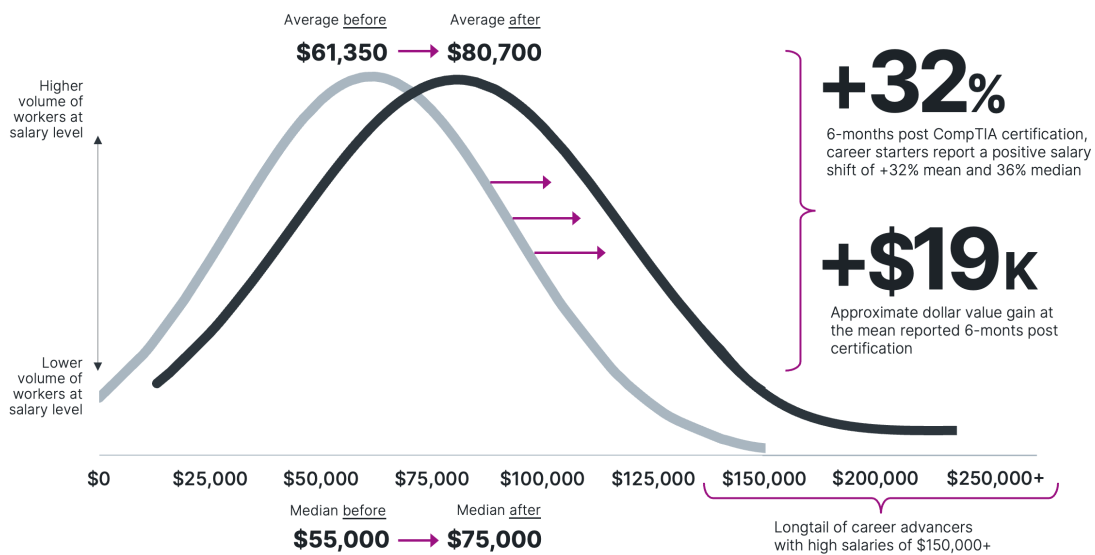## Career starters "before" and "after" salary progression post CompTIA certification

Salary distribution curves for career starters | individuals starting out in tech or career change into tech

Average *before* **$46,900** → Average *after* **$62,600**

Higher volume of workers at salary level

Lower volume of workers at salary level

+33%

6-months post CompTIA certification, career starters report a positive salary shift of +33% (same % change for both mean and median salaries)

+$16K

Approximate dollar value gain at the mean reported 6-months post certification

$0 $25,000 $50,000 $75,000 $100,000 $125,000 $150,000

Median *before* **$45,000** → Median *after* **$60,000**

Source: CompTIA post-certification tracking research | waves I and II 2024 | Overall n=1,000 | Smaller n for subsegments

Career advancers "before" and "after" salary progression post CompTIA certification

Salary distribution curves for career advancers | individuals working in tech seeking promotion or advancement in their tech career

Average _before_ → Average _after_
$61,350 → **$80,700**

Higher volume of workers at salary level

Lower volume of workers at salary level

+32%

6-months post CompTIA certification, career starters report a positive salary shift of +32% mean and 36% median

+$19K

Approximate dollar value gain at the mean reported 6-monts post certification

$0 $25,000 $50,000 $75,000 $100,000 $125,000 $150,000 $200,000 $250,000+

Median _before_ → Median _after_
$55,000 → **$75,000**

Longtail of career advancers with high salaries of $150,000+

source: CompTiA post-certfication tracking research | waves and I1 2024 Overall n=1,000 | Smaler n for subsegments

Pilot study finds CompTIA certifications boost earnings

Northern Virginia Fast Forward Program post-credential wage assessment pilot

	Gain in wages on top of prior base earnings 6 months post certification	
	$ gain	**% gain**
★ **CompTIA Linux+**	**+$25,707**	**+44%**
Certified Ethical Hacker	+$25,666	+67%
★ **CompTIA Network+**	**+$21,519**	**+64%**
AWS Certified Solutions Architect (Associate)	+$20,939	+30%
★ **CompTIA Security+**	**+$18,541**	**+70%**
Pharmacy Technician (NHA)	+$16,117	+151%
★ **CompTIA A+**	**+$13,180**	**+50%**
Certified Billing and Coding Specialist (CBCS)	+$12,706	+84%
Certified Nurse Aide (CNA)	+$11,166	+126%
Clinical Medical Assistant (NHA)	+$10,863	+83%

On both a numeric and percent change basis, CompTIA certifications perform well compared to others credentials

Source: Northern Virginia Fast Forward Program post-credential wage assessment pilot | Virginia Community College System (VCCS)

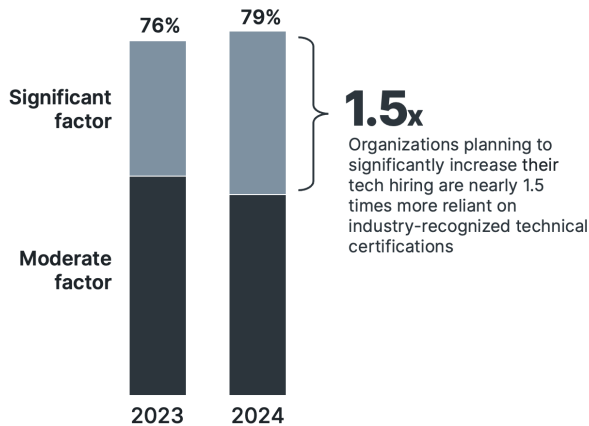# 5 Assessing employer demand and use of industry-recognized certifications

Now in its fifth year of publication, CompTIA's *Workforce and Learning Trends* is a go to source of tracking data and insights from the perspective of HR professionals. The 2024 release includes expanded international coverage across seven countries.

Seventy-nine percent of companies report factoring industry-recognized technical certifications into the hiring process in identifying or evaluating candidates. This represents a 3-point increase over the net rate of the prior year, 76% to 79%. The companies most aggressively hiring tech workers are about 1.5 times more reliant on industry-recognized technical certifications.

HR professionals value industry-recognized certifications for their alignment to specific tech job roles, skills or competencies. This metric also experienced an increase over the 2023 rate (+4-point increase).

HR professionals increase reliance on Industry-recognized technical certifications

Certifications factor into identifying and evaluating candidates during hiring process

76% (2023) **79%** (2024)

Significant factor

Moderate factor

1.5x

Organizations planning to significantly increase their tech hiring are nearly 1.5 times more reliant on industry-recognized technical certifications

2023   2024

Top areas of value provided by industry-recognized technical certifications

1 Alignment to specific job roles, skills or competencies
⎤ +4 point increase vs. 2023 rate

2 Meet regulatory requirements / compliance needs

3 More up-to-date assessment of technologies than 4-yr degrees

4 Time savings in skills-based hiring evaluations of candidates

5 Industry-recognized validation is important to company philosophy
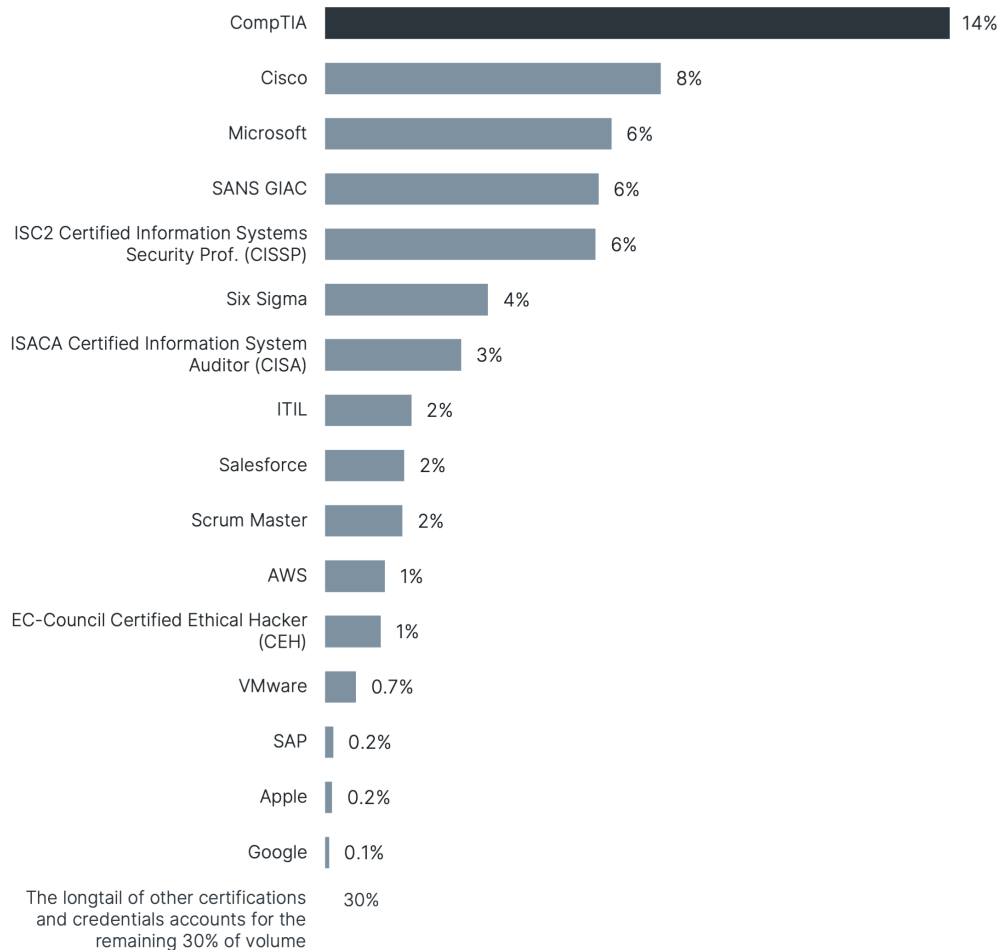
Source: CompTIA Workforce & Learning Trends | 2024 release | n=500 US HR professionals

Employer job postings referencing certifications provides further corroboration of their use in the hiring process. During 2023 US employers deployed nearly 3 million job listings to recruit talent across technology job roles. Approximately 35% of these listing cite one or more of the market leading industry-recognized technical certifications. It is then a longtail of secondary credentials, which includes adjacencies such as driver's license or for certain government or military jobs a security clearance.

Relative to its peer group, CompTIA has the largest aggregate of volume of job listings specifically citing a CompTIA certification as a job requirement. This volume translates to approximately 14% of the market, roughly equal to the total of next two largest certifying bodies.

Summary of employer hiring intent via job postings citing CompTIA certifications

Aggregate data covering 2023 time period | US market | See methodology for explanatory context around use of job posting data

Certification	Percentage
CompTIA	14%
Cisco	8%
Microsoft	6%
SANS GIAC	6%
ISC2 Certified Information Systems Security Prof. (CISSP)	6%
Six Sigma	4%
ISACA Certified Information System Auditor (CISA)	3%
ITIL	2%
Salesforce	2%
Scrum Master	2%
AWS	1%
EC-Council Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH)	1%
VMware	0.7%
SAP	0.2%
Apple	0.2%
Google	0.1%
The longtail of other certifications and credentials accounts for the remaining 30% of volume	30%

Source: CompTIA analysis of Lightcast job posting data | 2023 time period

The job posting data in the accompanying chart depicts employer requirements for certifications and related certificates. It excludes requirements specifying a skill, such as Microsoft Excel or PowerPoint. When tallying skill-level data, the output will result in a different rank order of certification providers.

Like any data source there are certain caveats and limitations with employer job posting data. Job posting data can be thought of as both the "wisdom of the crowds" and the "shortcomings of the crowds" in how employers hire. Employers do indeed make mistakes in job postings. This may entail over-spec'ing whereby an employer may unknowingly specify high-level skills and credentials for an entry-level position. Or it may entail simple mistakes made by busy HR managers trying to keep up with hiring. For example, erroneously specifying an outdated credential or positioning it incorrectly in the job ad. Consequently, there is a degree of "noise" in job posting data at the skill and credential level which may understate or overstate certain values to some degree. See methodology for more detail.

6 Assessing customer and partner satisfaction measures

Comp TIA works with thousands of training, academic, workforce development and corporate partners. This ecosystem provides students, career changers and tech professionals access to training and certification wherever, whenever and however they choose to train and certify.

Partnership creates a virtuous circle of shared mission and outcomes. A commitment to best-in-class training and industry-recognized certifications enables CompTIA and its valued partners to equip students, career changers and professionals with the tools they need to succeed throughout their career in technology.

92%

Percent of training and academic partners affirming CompTIA is a leading brand for industry-recognized training and certification[11]
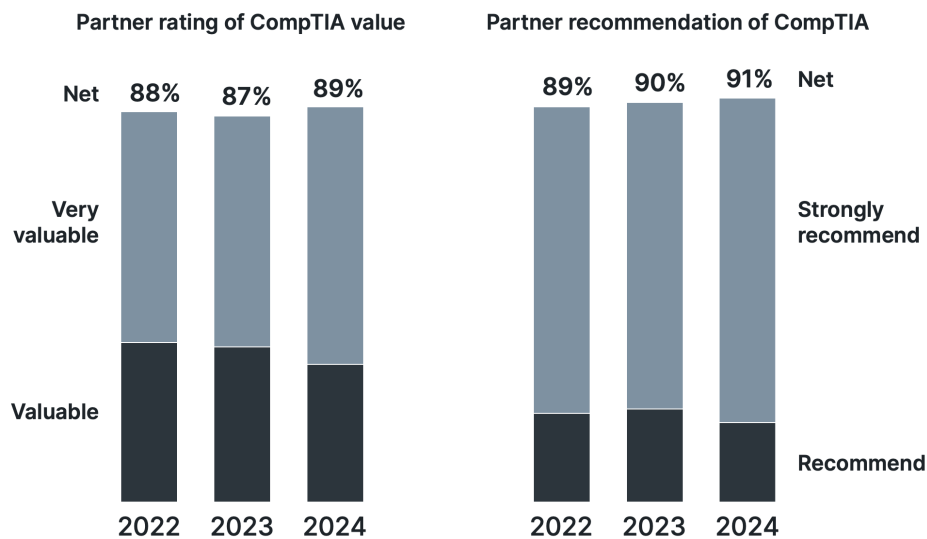
> **"** The CompTIA Partner program has provided us with greater exposure and set us apart as a recognized training provider.
>
> — President/CEO, Training Company

Partner assessment of CompTIA value

Partner rating of CompTIA value

	2022	2023	2024
Net	88%	87%	89%

Very valuable

Valuable

Partner recommendation of CompTIA

	2022	2023	2024
Net	89%	90%	91%

Strongly recommend

Recommend

Source: CompTIA annual satisfaction research of authorized partners (CAPP) │ n=935 CompTIA academic and training delivery partners
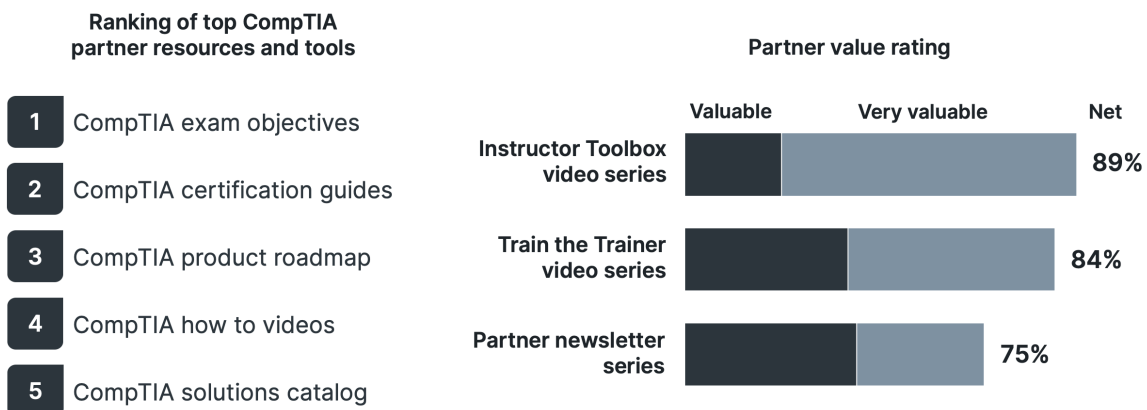
93%

Percent of training and academic partners affirming CompTIA unlocks potential and expands opportunity[11]

> "The CompTIA Instructor Network is a great place to meet other educators and discuss how they deliver their material. I can always learn something new about how to approach our students and educate them in the best manner possible.
>
> — Lead Cybersecurity Instructor, Training Provider

Partner assessment of CompTIA value continued

Ranking of top CompTIA partner resources and tools

1. CompTIA exam objectives
2. CompTIA certification guides
3. CompTIA product roadmap
4. CompTIA how to videos
5. CompTIA solutions catalog

Partner value rating

	Valuable / Very valuable	Net
Instructor Toolbox video series		89%
Train the Trainer video series		84%
Partner newsletter series		75%

Source: CompTIA annual satisfaction research of authorized partners (CAPP) │ n=935 CompTIA academic and training delivery partners

92%
Customer satisfaction rating of CompTIA[12]

94%
Customers rating CompTIA quality higher than alternative certification providers[13]

Methodology

The CompTIA research team collects, processes and analyzes millions of data points each year. Many CompTIA research studies are recurring to enable longitudinal trending over time. Other studies are situational and may focus on specific areas of investigation. CompTIA also incorporates external data inputs from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Lightcast, IDC and others.

CompTIA's post-certification exam tracking survey is a census of all exam takers. Supplementary data collection occurs each quarter to provide additional context around career progression, career profiling, earnings and more

As with any type of quantitative survey, sampling error is present and will be higher for subsegments of the post-certification dataset. While non-sampling error cannot be accurately calculated, precautionary steps were taken in all phases of the survey design, collection and processing of the data to minimize its influence.

Please see the methodology pages of CompTIA's *Workforce and Learning Trends*, *Job Seeker Trends* or other CompTIA research cited in this paper for background specific to those studies.

The primary source CompTIA subscribes to for job postings data is Lightcast, the global leader in labor market analytics. Lightcast aggregates employer job posting data from more than 65,000 unique sources daily including job boards, company websites, and other sources. In the aggregate Lightcast processes hundreds of millions of hiring data points into usable intelligence.

Lightcast is the best in the business in job posting analytics, but like any data source, there are limitations. Job posting data serves as a useful indicator of employer hiring intentions, but it is not a 1:1 measure of actual job demand. For instance, a single job vacancy might be advertised multiple times, or a company might reconsider its hiring needs after posting. Additionally, some job postings may represent multiple positions, while others may not result in a hire due to internal promotions or alternative recruitment strategies.

Lightcast data processing techniques will catch and correct many sources of potential error, but at the scale and velocity of data found in job postings, there will always be certain limitations. While the numeric volumes will vary by some 'margin of error' factor, generally the directional signal is proportionally correct.

CompTIA is a member of the market research industry's Insights Association and adheres to its internationally respected Code of Standards. Please direct any questions about the content of this report to research@comptia.org.

Sources

[1] CompTIA post-certification tracking research │ 2024 │ Steps ahead net 6-months post-certification

[2] Lightcast employer job posting data │ 2023 time period

[3] TechValidate survey administered independently to CompTIA training, academic and workforce partners │ 2023

[4] CompTIA post-certification tracking research │ 2024 │ Agreement net

[5] CompTIA post-certification tracking research │ 2024 │ Contributing factor net 6-months post-certification

[6] Lightcast employment outcomes study │ 2023

[7] CompTIA post-certification tracking research │ 2024 │ 6-months post-certification

[8] CompTIA post-certification tracking research │ 2024 │ 6-months post-certification

[9] CompTIA post-certification tracking research │ 2023-2024 │ Global

[10] Among those starting a new job 6-months post CompTIA certification

[11] Source: CompTIA satisfaction research of authorized partners (CAPP) │ Agreement net

[12] TechValidate survey administered independently to CompTIA customers │ 2024 │ Satisfaction net

[13] TechValidate survey administered independently to CompTIA customers │ 2024 │ Higher than competitors net

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