

Lightcast Impact Report

MARCH 2024



Executive Summary

At Lightcast, our mission is to unlock new possibilities in the labor market.

The world of work is facing unprecedented disruption from technological innovation and evolving workforce demographics, and at the same time, changing worker expectations and economic conditions have brought the labor market into a spotlight it's never seen before. Organizations of every size are facing a mismatch between existing skills and new job requirements, leading to a scarcity of qualified talent for themselves and for those they serve. These dynamics present complex challenges but also opportunities for strategic adaptation and growth. By fostering a skilled and responsive labor force, Lightcast aims to bridge these gaps.

By helping communities, enterprises, and education institutions succeed, our ultimate goal is connecting individuals

with the right skills and right jobs in the right places. These interconnected groups each rely on and contribute to the labor market in unique ways: local leaders need to attract business and guide their local workforces to success, learning providers need to prepare students for meaningful careers, and businesses need to maintain their talent pipelines for the future while supporting their current employees.

We help our clients find success by seeing what others can't, delivering unparalleled insight into real-time trends on workers, skills, and jobs. This report shares the real-world application of how data is being put to work and explores how business, education, and community leaders are impacting society in four key themes.





SERVING DIVERSE AND UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

We want to create a labor market that works for everyone. By identifying and showing how to address systemic biases and gaps in hiring and promotion—including by race, gender, and background—Lightcast insights help strengthen the entire labor market by fostering a diverse and equitable workforce.

Clients are using Lightcast data to close the equity gap: 71% of business clients report an increase in number of applicants from diverse or historically marginalized populations, 71% of community clients report those populations have seen an increase in marketable skills leading to well-paying jobs, and 64% of education clients report an increase in student enrollment for diverse or historically marginalized populations.



CONNECTIVITY WITHIN AND ACROSS GROUPS

Lightcast insight provides a shared language that creates meaningful connections between different groups in the labor market, and even between different teams within the same organization. Businesses, education institutions, and communities all need labor market data, and by serving each of these groups, we can also facilitate new connections between them.

Two thirds (66%) of clients overall indicated that Lightcast products help them integrate labor market data into organization-wide processes, and a majority report an increase in work-based learning opportunities, building new bridges between schooling and the workforce.



EFFICIENT, DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

Any decision made without data is just a shot in the dark: an effective response to changing market conditions requires the ability to efficiently identify trends, challenge assumptions, and anticipate future needs. Lightcast delivers trusted data that its clients use with confidence in making decisions to support and establish a future-ready workforce.

Majorities of clients overall reported that insights gleaned from Lightcast data contribute to faster and more confident decision making (63%), as well as reliance on labor market data to identify trends and challenge assumptions (79%).



UPSKILLING, RESKILLING, AND SKILLS-ALIGNMENT

Skills are the fundamental, base unit of the labor market, allowing everyone involved in it to articulate exactly what they can provide and what they need. A skills-based approach opens the door to new insight into supply and demand about people and jobs—both across the market and within an organization.

Across all business units, survey respondents reported an increase in individuals having more skills better aligned with labor market demand, leading to well-paying jobs.

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Foreword

Data is a powerful tool, because it can provide insight into areas of opportunity otherwise unseen. It can break down bias. It can build a bridge of understanding among stakeholders. It can help someone see something in themselves that they may not know exists. But data doesn't work alone: it needs businesses enabling workers to move into better jobs, communities connecting people to work, and educators aligning and equipping students for career success.

In my time at Lightcast, I have had the immense privilege of hearing powerful stories of how our customers are using data to create positive change in people's lives. In this report you'll find some of these stories, from programs aimed at doubling the percentage of women of color hired into tech to skill-based hiring efforts offering career mobility to 70 million American workers without a college degree. You'll also read firsthand accounts of people moving into better jobs

through data-driven training, creating the ability to buy homes or even start their own businesses.

These stories are the driving force behind our work at Lightcast; we have a passion for providing insights that deliver real impact in the labor market. One of our core principles is to "never lose sight of the human behind the data," and that's what inspired this report. We wanted to better understand how all of our clients are creating an impact—not just in their own organizations, regions, and workforces, but collectively.

This report is a culmination of stories and cutting-edge research, underpinned by survey responses from nearly 1,400 clients using Lightcast analytics. We explore how organizations serve diverse and underrepresented groups, make future-ready decisions, improve connectivity across stakeholders, and use skills to better match people to jobs. With this insight, we have been able to better understand

how we assist our clients in pursuing their missions, while also seeing the impact of our collective effort on the entire world of work.

Looking forward, we know the labor market will continue to shift, as disruptions like AI, skill change, and challenging demographic trends continue to emerge. But no matter the circumstances, our mission remains the same. With the tools, resources, and data to lead the global conversation, we're here to provide insight so that together, we can create a job market that works for everyone.



Cara Christopher
EVP - Marketing,
Lightcast



Introduction

In our day-to-day interactions, we know how specific clients make use of insights, but to create an overall picture of how our clients use Lightcast data to create an impact in their own organizations, we needed a more comprehensive and centralized view, and that's what this report provides.

Looking across the multitude of ways Lightcast serves our clients and the greater labor market, we see our work grouped around four key themes:

1. Serving Diverse and Underrepresented Groups.

Lightcast is committed to illuminating and eliminating the systemic barriers that promote inequality in the labor market.

2. Efficient, Data-Driven Decision Making. Our clients need the best data possible so that they can be successful in the present and ready for

the future, and we're proud to provide it.

3. Connectivity Within And Across Groups. Nobody can succeed in the labor market alone, and so we give our clients the tools and insight they need to connect with stakeholders both internal and external.

4. Upskilling, Reskilling, and Skills-Alignment. The future of work is driven by skills. Skills enable the greatest possible clarity and specificity for everyone in the labor market, and by extension, the greatest efficiency and understanding.

Those four themes provide the structural backbone of this report, with a section devoted to each. These sections go into greater detail about how Lightcast addresses the key theme, and then goes on to explore a collection of stories showing how our Lightcast data and insight have generated real-world impact for

our clients. This includes thought leadership published by Lightcast or alongside other organizations, client spotlights focused on a specific problem being solved, and quotes from partners expressing in their own words how Lightcast helps them achieve their mission.

But beyond the qualitative feedback we've gathered, this report also presents quantitative feedback, collected from a large-scale survey to ask our clients how they use Lightcast and what it means for their organization.

That survey, commissioned from research firm FDR Group and conducted in September and October 2023, consisted of a series of 37 in-depth interviews with Lightcast staff and clients, followed by an online survey with 1,397 Lightcast clients—that is, people who are familiar with Lightcast products or use Lightcast data in their current position—and they were asked about how their organization is

achieving specific goals in their work. Throughout this report, we refer to percentages of clients reporting on a given issue in order to demonstrate the connection between Lightcast insight and the impact our clients are creating in their respective environments. The [FDR Group's survey methodology is available here.](#)

The survey data, in combination with the case studies, research highlights, and other key content, shows how Lightcast pursues its mission in serving our diverse client base and tells us how our insights and dedicated service are creating new opportunities—for everyone.

Who We Serve

Lightcast is a global leader in labor market analytics. Through software, APIs, and consulting, we provide data-driven insight that helps businesses, higher education institutions, and communities make better labor market decisions.

Our tools pioneered the collection and big-data analysis of job postings, and this provides us with the most robust and up-to-date picture possible of the global labor market. In addition to our postings data, we also incorporate proprietary analysis of individual career profiles, as well as other labor market statistics from government sources, so we can provide our customers with the exact collection of data they need.

Enterprise and staffing clients (also referred to as “business” clients in this report) rely on Lightcast to shape their workforce strategy. In hiring, this includes using Lightcast data for competitive analysis on compensation and location planning. In workforce planning, we help clients optimize career pathways for workers, maximize efficiency in deploying resources,

Education

1,000+

Institutions

150+

EdTech Partners

and develop a future-ready workforce.

Education clients prepare students for the workforce. EdTech companies and learning providers need to know what skills employers are looking for so that they can provide students with the education that will best prepare them for labor market success. Colleges and universities also need to know how and where their graduates are finding their place in the labor market, and they use Lightcast to track alumni outcomes.

Enterprise

44

of the Fortune 50

67

of the Fortune 100

10

of the World's Largest Management Consulting Firms

Clients affiliated with economic and workforce development in public sector, referred to as “community” clients, perform a wide range of functions that can overlap with both business and education, and often connect the two. These organizations need an understanding of how their region compares to others, as well as what businesses are growing and will be good candidates to recruit to an area. They're also creating local job boards and connecting their constituents with training and resources to find jobs where they'll achieve their greatest success.

Community

450

Economic Development Organizations

325

Workforce Organizations

40

Industry Associations

65

Federal Agencies and Intermediaries

20

GovTech Partners

Serving Diverse and Underrepresented Groups





“In terms of helping diverse or marginalized populations, Lightcast helps us locate them,” said one enterprise survey respondent. “When we look at a market, a major focus is placed on the economic, race, and ethnicity breakdown of that area and how our products/costs/aid lines up to serve it.”

For the labor market to work as efficiently and fairly as possible, it needs to eliminate barriers and maximize the opportunities for everyone involved at all levels.

Nowhere is this more important than in the way we help our clients serve diverse and historically marginalized populations. Lightcast data provides insights into workforce composition, hiring trends, pay disparities, and career progression. Our analytics highlight areas where diversity is lacking and inequities exist, and this enables our clients to address those gaps. **This is shown in the survey results:**

71%

of enterprise respondents report an increase in the number of applicants from diverse or historically marginalized populations in recent years.

Of these, **72%** attribute at least some of the increase to Lightcast.

71%

of community clients report an increase in the number of people from diverse or historically marginalized populations who gain marketable skills that lead to well-paying jobs.

61% attribute Lightcast for becoming more effective at identifying and promoting in-demand skills and career paths.

64%

of education clients report an increase in student enrollment for diverse or historically marginalized populations.

26% attribute at least some of the increase to Lightcast.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT:

Solving for Diversity: Unlocking Career Pathways for Women of Color Into Tech



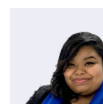
The immense scope of Lightcast data can provide a multifaceted overview of a complex problem. For instance, we collaborated with the tech-education nonprofit NPower to study the underrepresentation of women of color in tech jobs and brainstorm solutions to get more women of color in tech. The findings in the final report, [The Equation for Equality](#), shatter the long-held notion that there is a lack of skilled women of color ready for tech. This study approached the challenge from multiple angles: Lightcast researchers combined data on employment, demographics, skills, and salary throughout the labor market into an accessible and practical final report. Women of color make up 20% of the US population but just 5% of the US tech workforce. And while 225,000 women of color hold tech jobs today, another 470,000 are “tech-eligible,” meaning they have overlapping skills with those needed in the tech industry.

For example, 27% of all office technicians/typists are women of color, and their average salary is \$37,724 per year. There is considerable skill overlap, though, between that occupation and the occupation of data specialist: in both roles, workers are skilled in customer service, data entry, and scheduling. This makes for a relatively easy transition, and an advantageous one: the average salary for a data specialist is \$74,139, and only 14% of workers in that role are women of color.

There are 4.7 million tech workers in the US today and 2.6 million women of color in jobs that use many of the same skills, and with the right training and support, they could transition into tech. Lightcast is uniquely well-positioned to provide this kind of comprehensive analysis, bringing together best-in-class data and a dedication to help people throughout the labor market to flourish.

2.6 Million

women of color could transition into tech roles, make higher wages, and be one step closer in closing an equity gap that exists in tech. Here's one story from the report:



Flower's Journey from Retail to Tech

Flower's journey into tech was far from traditional, and filled with significant hurdles. Facing homelessness and having to put pursuing a college degree on pause after discovering she was pregnant, she started working as a security specialist at a big box general merchandise retailer to provide for her family. After learning about NPower through a friend, Flower decided this was the chance to change her life and to show her children that giving up wasn't an option. She credits NPower for providing her access to professional and mentorship opportunities and helping her build and showcase a robust set of technical skills.

Flower has come a long way in her tech journey from joining NPower and securing an IT internship with Citi to advancing as an Application Development Associate Apprentice at Accenture and has increased her salary by 82%.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Te Ao Māori: Job Postings Show Greater Demand For Cultural Understanding



It's impossible to understand New Zealand without understanding Māori culture and its relationship to the nation's history. Increasingly, Lightcast data has shown that significance is showing up in the workforce and shaping the way business is done. This shift reflects a broader societal acknowledgment of the importance of Māori culture and rights in New Zealand's national identity.

The Indigenous social innovation lab Tokona te Raki found a staggering 755% increase in demand for skills related to "te ao Māori"—the Māori world—in job postings from 2014 to 2023, and the Lightcast office in Christchurch supported the lab's analysis and use of the Labour Insight platform. Te ao Māori

encompasses knowledge of the Māori language (te reo Māori), Māori customs and practices (Tikanga), and an understanding of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi signed between the Māori and the British (Te Tiriti). The demand for Tikanga skills experienced the highest growth, rising 1085%. During the same period, job listings seeking knowledge of Te Tiriti as a workforce skill rose by 288%.

Just like companies around the world are recognizing the value of understanding and integrating diverse cultural perspectives and histories, New Zealand employers are increasingly valuing employees who possess knowledge and skills related to the indigenous Māori culture and the historical and ongoing treaty obligations.

For businesses and organizations, this means not only respecting Māori culture and rights but actively incorporating te ao Māori perspectives into their operations, services, and ethos. For workers and jobseekers, understanding te ao Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi means being better equipped not just for employment, but for engagement with all aspects of New Zealand society.

This trend in job postings shows that New Zealand's job market reflects a deeper societal movement towards reconciliation, recognition of historical injustices, and a commitment to honoring the Treaty of Waitangi's principles—and quantifying that shift is crucial for recognizing its importance.

755%

increase in demand for skills related to te ao Māori

1085%

increase in demand for Tikanga skills

The Weight of Words, with UNESCO: The Glass Ceiling and Gendered Language in Job Postings



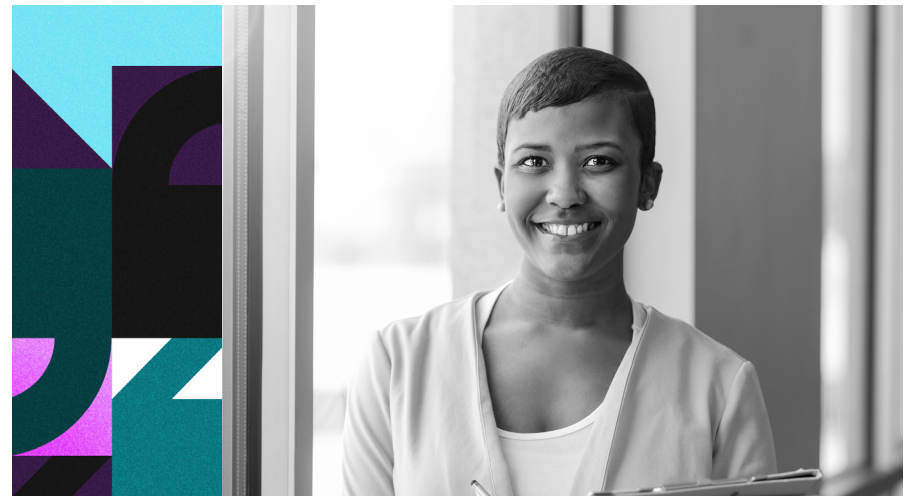
Just like skills, salary, and demographics data can illuminate new career pathways for women in tech, an analysis of job postings themselves reveals important and overlooked trends in the global labor market. Collaborative research between Lightcast and UNESCO reveals that the gendered inflections of the language in job postings is correlated with lower participation in the labor market for women, as well as lower career advancement.

The report, [The Weight of Words](#), finds that language that disfavors women in job postings is present across several countries throughout the world and is negatively correlated with female employment. Job postings for certain occupations and sectors, including jobs in STEM and manufacturing,

are more likely to include male-coded language. The researchers also found that manager-level positions tend to have higher levels of masculine-coded language than non-manager postings, and even in industries where female workers outnumber their male counterparts, women are less likely to become managers than men.

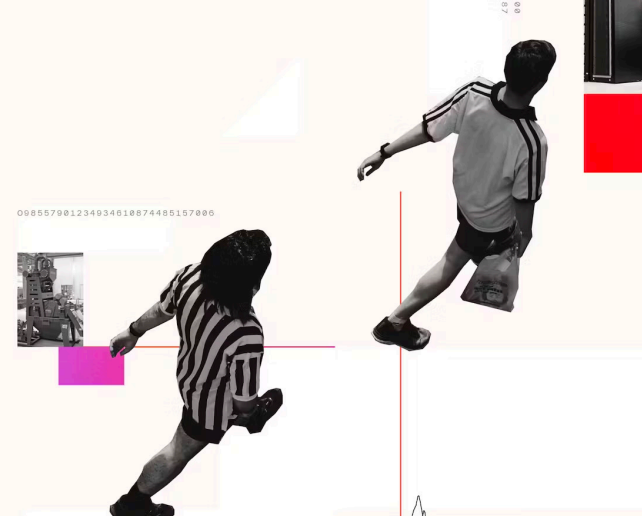
The positive correlation between female employment and the use of female-coded language suggests that the use of words associated with women can have a positive effect on female employment. Industries with a higher proportion of female employees tend to use more female-oriented keywords in their job postings. By using more gender-neutral terms in job postings (especially

in management roles), and by offering more benefits that reduce challenges like childcare, economies around the world can welcome more women into the labor force—benefitting not just those women involved but the entire global labor market.



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

New Opportunities for Adult Learners



Serving diverse and underrepresented groups goes beyond race and gender, also including those who have been traditionally overlooked in the labor market because of their age or other factors. Lightcast has played a key role as organizations in workforce development and education seek to find and prepare the populations they serve for labor market success.

According to a survey testimonial, a nonprofit program aimed at providing work-ready skills to formerly incarcerated individuals used Lightcast data to identify where to focus its programming.

A majority (64%) of education clients in the survey reported an increase in student enrollment for diverse or historically marginalized

populations in recent years, and Lightcast has supported this with continued research into finding and creating new opportunities for adult learners.

As of 2021, there were around 96 million adults in the US with a high school degree who had not completed higher education, compared to just 3.6 million who graduated high school that year. The Lightcast report [Moving Up and Moving Forward](#) shows that those adults can see a 22% greater chance of upward mobility if they choose to return to school, and their average annual salary gain is 140% greater than their peers who don't return to school. And among adult learners, associate's degrees in certain technical fields like engineering

and healthcare are linked to higher rates of upward mobility than some bachelor's degrees.

A focus on building a more inclusive labor market is a central tenet of Lightcast research and offerings in the market. This includes a focus on skills-based hiring, increased immigration in workforce strategy, and opening the door for more individuals to receive training and gain marketable skills for communities and educators. Our commitment to inclusivity not only supports historically marginalized groups, but also strengthens the entire labor market by fostering a diverse, skilled, and equitable workforce.

Adult learners

22%

greater chance of upward mobility

140%

larger increase in average annual salary than those who do not go back to school

Efficient, Data-Driven Decision Making



Better data enables better decisions. The clear insight we provide empowers and enables the organizations we work with to improve efficiency, growth, and future-readiness, both for themselves and for those they serve. Without Lightcast data, our clients might rely on hunches, anecdotes, or "conventional wisdom" about how to serve their markets, students, or regions, leaving them blind to external realities of the labor market. Lightcast removes that ambiguity and provides clarity.

In the survey, clients indicate that Lightcast data and products have been influential in making better decisions.

As all our clients work toward developing a future-ready workforce, they've reported an increase in the number of instances where data-driven insights anticipated future needs or trends in recent years, including:

78%

of education clients

90% of whom attribute at least some of the increase to Lightcast

77%

of enterprise clients

89% of whom attribute at least some of the increase to Lightcast

76%

of community clients report a more nuanced understanding of local labor market conditions and their impact on economic growth and development.

A majority of clients overall (63%) reported Lightcast contributes to faster and more confident decision-making.

"Without access to Lightcast products or data, my organization would have a very difficult time understanding the crucial workforce and industrial trends which guide our decision making," according to a testimonial.



"Without access to Lightcast products or data, my organization would not have the ability to provide accurate data for decision making," reports one testimonial. Another said that "Grant applications, award nominations, and general conversations with potential partners in initiatives have benefited from data sourced from Lightcast."

Business decisions are always driven by some consideration of financial impact, and Lightcast helps make sure our clients are not wasting money and resources. Across each of the three units, a majority of clients report that Lightcast insights have contributed to "more reliance on data-driven insights before investing resources." This includes:

61%

of education respondents

59%

of community respondents

61%

of enterprise respondents

CASE STUDY

J.B. Hunt: Better Benchmarking Keeps Truckers Moving Forward



With a fleet of over 15,000 trucks and 80,000 trailers, J.B. Hunt is one of the largest trucking and transportation companies in the United States. It became a market leader through a best-in-class understanding of efficiency and logistics at every level of the market, and by investing in its people. With over 37,000 employees, the company is deeply committed in making sure its drivers have the support they need to keep the entire operation running smoothly.

Especially after the intense disruption of the pandemic, the trucking industry has suffered from acute turnover: the average is 102%. This makes it difficult for anyone to hire and imperative

for every job offer to be as competitive as it can. A full view of the world of trucker job postings makes that possible.

Setting driver compensation depends on a wide range of factors: pay can increase based on a few keywords or phrases in an advertisement. Lightcast data can identify those keywords and distinguish crucial differences between types of contracts, such as "home on weekends," "over the road," "teams," "touch," and "no touch."

After integrating Lightcast solutions that allowed J.B. Hunt to benchmark its postings and make better offers, the company now enjoys 50% retention—a far cry from turnover over 100%.

"I'd worked with Lightcast in the past, using their profile data to understand supply and demand in different markets," said Lloyd Trader, VP of Driver Hiring at J.B. Hunt. "So when we realized there was room for improvement in how we looked at our potential talent pool, I knew they would have the labor market expertise we need."

18K

drivers hired

50%

retention rate

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

The Demographic Drought: Bridging the Gap in Our Labor Force



Even before the acute labor market shortage of the past several years, Lightcast experts had been sounding the alarm about the population and workforce trends shaping what we call “The Demographic Drought.” As Baby Boomers retire, there aren’t enough younger workers to take their place in the workforce, and the industries facing the worst shortage of workers (service and production jobs) are those who rely most on young or foreign-born workers—two demographics among the least likely to be joining the labor force.

As valuable as this big-picture analysis is, its impact is far more valuable when applied to more focused solutions. In partnership with Presbyterian Homes and

Services, The Minnesota Business Partnership, and SullivanCotter, [Lightcast produced a Demographic Drought report specific to Minnesota](#). The report discovers the total US labor force returned to its pre-pandemic level in August 2020, but as of June 2023, Minnesota still needs 23,000 more people in the labor force to get back to its February 2020 level. On top of that, Minnesota needs an additional 145,000 people to fully recover to where the workforce would have been following its pre-pandemic trend. Part of that is due to immigration patterns; while Minnesota has a relatively high share of international migrants coming in, it’s still losing residents to other states, resulting in relatively low net population growth.

By understanding the overall shape of the demographic drought, and especially the nuances particular to Minnesota, state leaders in business, education, and government are in a better position to address these challenges in the coming years.

In an economy constantly attuned to potential optimization and efficiency, Lightcast provides our

clients with reliable, defensible insight that they can use to make their case to stakeholders and partners. Data is an essential component of any significant decision made in the modern labor market, and that’s where Lightcast is instrumental in our clients’ efforts to making better decisions for those they serve.

145,000

people needed to fully recover Minnesota's workforce

Connectivity Across and Between Groups



Our clients all want to connect the right people with the right jobs, but they each approach it in a different way. Regions want to stay competitive, attract new businesses, and make sure local students can find good jobs without moving away. Education institutions want to give learners the best chance to succeed by understanding what's needed in their industry and in their area, and businesses need to stay ahead of the competition and find every possible advantage to succeed in a fast-changing labor market, from hiring and retention to location planning and everything in between.

That's why a fundamental priority of our work is creating connections, both within groups and between them. Apprenticeships and work-based learning are perfect examples, serving as a bridge as individuals make the transition from learners to workers. Employer-sponsored training programs do the same in reverse, connecting employees with education providers.

The transformative impact of this work is evident across all sectors.

In education, **73%** of respondents reported an increase in employer interest for collaboration, while **72%** noted a rise in students selecting market-aligned programs, underscoring Lightcast's influence in aligning education with real-world market demands.

In community leadership, **78%** reported an increase in collaborative partnerships, and **65%** observed a rise in work-based learning opportunities, indicators of Lightcast's role in nurturing an ecosystem where growth, learning, and community needs converge.

Businesses, too, report more connections growing—**59%** of respondents reported an increase in employee engagement with learning management systems, and **54%** noted a rise in work-based learning opportunities offered to students. These numbers reflect a strategic shift, as organizations are increasingly leveraging Lightcast data to fuel informed, agile, and responsive talent development and market alignment strategies.

Even within the same organization or industry, data can provide a shared language that can help make connections. Different teams might disagree on the way to approach a hiring or development issue, but using Lightcast data allows our clients to make a reliable, data-driven decision, not based on hunches or internal hunches or baseline assumptions. Among survey respondents overall, **66%** reported Lightcast contributes to the integration of labor market data into organization-wide processes.

Why does this matter? In a world marked by perpetual change, the ability to adapt, anticipate, and innovate is crucial. For regions, this means creating an

environment where talent thrives and industries flourish. For educational institutions, it's about molding a curriculum that mirrors and predicts market evolution. For businesses, it's about pioneering market shifts and also shaping them.

Lightcast doesn't just provide data; it empowers stakeholders to make new connections and informed decisions, ensuring a labor market that's robust, responsive, and inclusive for all.

Every Lightcaster, and everyone we serve, wants to create a job market that works for everyone, but none of us can do it alone.



From The Survey

66%

Two thirds of survey respondents overall said insights gleaned from Lightcast products contribute to integrating labor market data into organization-wide processes.

52%

Over half of respondents overall said Lightcast contributes to improved partnerships and collaborations among communities, educational institutions, and employers.

73%

of education respondents reported an increase in the number of employers or economic/workforce development organizations interested in working with their institution to align programs to market needs.

78%

of community respondents reported an increase in the number of partners their organization collaborates with.

66%

of education respondents reported an increase in work-based learning opportunities available, and 54% of enterprise respondents reported an increase in work-based learning opportunities provided to students.

"Without access to Lightcast products or data, my organization would struggle to be clear on the skills employers need and the availability of skills in each region," said one testimonial. "[Insights gleaned from Lightcast products give us] greater alignment between org/institutional priorities and programming with in-demand skills/training in regional economic areas. Greater understanding of how to prioritize efforts for greater individual/community impact," said another, and one also added that Lightcast allowed them to create or expand apprenticeship programs and non-credit credential offerings.

Within organizations internally:

65%

of community respondents and 57% of enterprise respondents credited Lightcast for richer internal conversations about how to maximize labor market data to meet company goals. 62% of education respondents said Lightcast led to richer conversations among administrators, faculty, and staff about the value of labor market data.

"HR Professionals are the silent heroes. They labor every day trying to figure out the right job for the right person. If we can do the right research with the right data and the right partners, we can help those HR professionals do their job better, and take care of all these employees in the world, making it a slightly better place for all of us."



Bill Pelster

Co-Founder of The Josh Bersin Company

CASE STUDY

Princeton University



Students at Princeton University's Graduate School have access to some of the most accomplished faculty and the best academic resources possible. Yet even as the school helps students break new ground while pursuing their field of study, it also needs to prepare them for what's next—and for PhD students, that's traditionally in academia. But when labor market data revealed that roughly half of the school's graduates pursued other kinds of work after graduating, the school created GradFUTURES, a program leveraging Lightcast insights to show students the vast spectrum of career possibilities—enabling greater connectivity between The Graduate School and the world of work.

"If there are limited numbers of faculty opportunities, then yes, our graduate students are going to be well-prepared to compete for those limited opportunities," said Eva Kubu, associate dean of school and director of GradFUTURES. "But future of work trends have considerably widened the aperture of opportunity for PhDs and can really broaden the impact of doctoral training beyond the tenure track. Graduate students are at the forefront of creating new knowledge and solutions to the world's greatest challenges. We're making sure they are aware of the full range of possibilities where they can contribute their expertise in myriad ways that serve humanity."

Lightcast data is fundamental to those goals. When the school's 3,200 students across 43 distinct programs can see how the skills and competencies they acquire through their doctoral training

connect to new possibilities after Princeton (whether in academia or beyond), they can see more clearly how to pursue those opportunities, and move forward with confidence.



Tearing the Paper Ceiling

Alongside 50+ Partners, Lightcast Is Changing How Employers See People Without College Degrees



The connection between education and the workforce is one of the most crucial in the labor market, and too often, it's a stark division that doesn't align students and jobseekers with the training or opportunities that would benefit them. Apprenticeships are one way to fill that gap.

Over 50 organizations, including Lightcast, have joined The Ad Council and Opportunity@Work in the campaign to [Tear the Paper Ceiling](#), supporting the 70+ million US workers without a college degree (Skilled Through Alternative Routes, or STARs) to secure higher-paying jobs and other new possibilities throughout the labor market.

[“The Changing Face of Apprenticeships,”](#) research from Lightcast and Opportunity@Work, outlines the current landscape of apprenticeships in the US and, using Lightcast data on job posting demand and career pathways, highlights which occupations could benefit most from more apprenticeships.

Nearly 40% of new registered apprenticeships are for roles that historically require a college degree. When employers make jobs more accessible through apprenticeships, they see more, and more diverse, workers in their talent pipeline while also enabling economic mobility and success for STARs. Apprenticeships have long

been a way for employers to find the talent they need and workers to gain training and skills to last their entire career. While there are relatively few apprenticeships today, their number is growing. These new apprenticeships create more opportunities for STARs and can serve as a model that employers can follow to acquire the talent they need.

40%

of new registered apprenticeships are for roles that historically require a college degree.

CASE STUDY

Employ Prince George's: How Workforce Development Goes Beyond A Job

Over the past five years, Prince George's County, Maryland, has served over 90,000 job seekers and 8,500 businesses, directly helping over 15,000 residents secure employment. Walter Simmons is the man who makes that possible: as Workforce Development Board Director for Prince George's County, Maryland, and founder of Employ Prince George's, Inc., he has consolidated and streamlined the workforce development process in the county and transformed it into a hub of regional growth.

"We are a data-driven system and organization," [Simmons said](#). "And Lightcast, year after year, has provided us the data that is driving our strategy, driving our programs, driving our services, and driving our fiscal investments in the Prince George's County economy...You're paying for a service, but you also are entering a partnership where someone is as invested in your success as they are their own success. And that's why I chose Lightcast."



I met with a young person who had been working at McDonald's but then we connected him to a plumbing certification, and he parlayed that into a plumbing apprenticeship with a union, and then suddenly he was getting union wages and benefits at the age of 20. He got a starting salary of \$56,000 and in a couple of years now he's at \$80,000.

But then he came back to us at Employ Prince George's and he said "Hey, I need help buying a car." And I said "Man, we're in workforce development, we're not in car sales." But he said something so simple, it opened my mind so much: he said "Well, nobody in my house has a car. Then I come to your building, I see all these cars. So I feel like you all are pretty good at buying cars."

So you know what we did? We went out that weekend, and we took him to car lots, and we helped him get a car. And then I talked to him a couple of years later, and he said "Hey, Mr. Simmons, I just bought a house." And then he came to me recently and said "I started my own business."

So we took this young man who came in with no direction but an interest and an aptitude to be great. He just needed direction. And at Employ Prince George's, we have the data and the connections to give him that direction, that key to his economic future. We got him a livable wage, family-sustaining job. He bought a car. He started a career. He grew within that career. And he bought a home. And now he's becoming an entrepreneur.



Walter Simmons, Workforce Development Board Director and founder of Employ Prince George's

All In on Skills: Upskilling, Reskilling, and Skills-Alignment



Every person has their own set of skills, every job requires certain skills, and when those two pieces fit together, the labor market works for everyone.

By starting with skills, businesses can understand who to recruit and how to develop their workforce, educators can see how to best prepare their students, and regions can play to their strengths as they continue to grow.

We are seeing skills take a front seat in strategic job matching. First, respondents report success using the framework of skills: education and community customers report an increase in individuals gaining “marketable skills that lead to well-paying jobs.” Among enterprise respondents, **59%** reported seeing an increase in the number of applicants whose skills are aligned with market demand; **77%** attribute at least some of the increase to Lightcast.

Secondly, clients appear to be employing a skills-based approach in how they understand the labor market. About one

in three (**37%**) education respondents report seeing more faculty members adjusting their courses with an eye toward emerging skills and labor market demands, enterprise respondents are upskilling (**60%**) and reskilling (**50%**) their workforces with a clearer view of career pathways, and three in five (**61%**) community respondents have observed their own organization becoming more effective at identifying and promoting in-demand skills and career paths.

Skills are the base unit and common language of the labor market. Using job titles or any other means to understand supply and demand in the market creates an unnecessary level of abstraction and sacrifices clarity. Discussing skills themselves allows everyone to say exactly what they mean, and ask for exactly what they want. This minimizes miscommunication, enabling a job market that works, with greater efficiency, for everyone.

“Skills provide a shared language that can expand opportunity for all workers. Using this common language, employers can identify exactly what they need and workers can articulate exactly what they offer. In practice, this means that strategies like skill-based hiring, which focus on skills rather than degrees, can help expand the supply of available talent and help maximize efficiency so everyone can succeed.”



Ken Mehlman, KKR Global Head of Public Affairs and Co-Head of KKR Global Impact

From The Survey

Across all industries, survey respondents reported an increase in individuals having more skills better aligned with labor market demand.

76%

of community respondents report an increase in the number of people gaining marketable skills that lead to well-paying jobs.

77% attribute at least some of the increase to Lightcast.

70%

of education respondents report an increase in the number of students gaining marketable skills that lead to well-paying jobs.

74% attribute at least some of the increase to Lightcast.

59%

of business respondents report an increase in the number of applicants whose skills are aligned with market demand.

77% attribute at least some of the increase to Lightcast.

60%

of respondents overall report that Lightcast insights have contributed a great deal to the use of taxonomies (including skills, occupations, and titles) to create the best matches between the jobs and talent available.



When asked how their work would change without Lightcast products or data, survey takers responded that their organization would:

“Struggle to be clear on the skills employers need and the availability of skills in each region.”

“Have fewer insights about in-demand skills for companies hiring in their area.”

“Lack the information it needs to shape future curriculum to labour market needs leading to mismatch between our provision and the skills people need for work”

Skills In Action



At [Boston University](#), PhD students needed a language to talk about the skills they were building. It found its solution in digital badges: microcredentials give students a vocabulary to articulate the skills they've learned in their education in a format employers understand. The platform BU uses for this new approach was Badgr (now part of Canvas), which uses the Lightcast Open Skills Taxonomy to see the relationship between different skills and how they relate to one another and also to real-world job postings.

"Our PhD students are with us for at least five years, and they learn so much," said Sasha Goldman, Director of PhD resources at BU. "Whether those abilities are within their discipline or more broadly applicable, a skills-based approach gives them the language to articulate just how valuable their education was, no matter their next steps."



[The Indy Chamber](#), which supports business and commerce in Indianapolis and throughout central Indiana, has made a commitment to supercharge talent attraction and workforce development for the region, and they're using skills to do it.

"I wake up every day thinking about skills, workforce, education, and everything else for Indianapolis and our region," says Kate Pangallo, Senior Director of Talent and Strategic Partnerships at the Chamber. "If we could identify and understand skill strengths and gaps that were unique to our region, we would be able to give ourselves a competitive advantage amongst our peer cities."

To make that possible, the Indy Chamber commissioned a Regional Skills Analysis from Lightcast. In that analysis, Lightcast experts draw from our own proprietary database of labor market analytics and contextualize this data to produce a comprehensive report showing precise labor market trends and outlooks for a region. This created opportunities to connect different industries in ways that business leaders might not have considered—seeing overlap, for instance, between the skills needed Indianapolis' automotive industry and other kinds of manufacturing, even like commercial food production.

By investing in a regional skills analysis, The Indy Chamber made it possible for the entire region to understand the skills their workers have and what skills local businesses need, making the whole community stronger.

Simply offers a business platform that allows HR leaders to “rightskill” their workforce—ensuring that employees have all the right skills they need to succeed in their role and help the company thrive. This works through identifying the skills already present in the organization so that it can better deploy resources and fill skills gaps.

Simply does this by connecting external labor market data with internal data gathered through the HR tools companies already use. Naturally, they needed a source of reliable, accessible labor market data to make this possible.

“We had a choice. Do we either start scraping this by writing our own algorithm and coming up with it from scratch and it being rubbish?” asked John Guy, Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer at Simply.

“Or do we partner with what we believe and researched to be the best labor market data that is publicly available as in, was accessible to us?”

They chose the latter, and they chose Lightcast. This ultimately means that the large enterprise employers that make up Simply’s customer base can quickly get the insights they’re looking for on location strategy how to best optimize their workforce for today and tomorrow.



Lightcast and BCG: Studying Skills Disruption



For years, Lightcast has partnered with Boston Consulting Group as they use our insight to help guide the world's top brands. In ["Shifting Skills, Moving Targets, and Remaking the Workforce,"](#) we found that skill demand for the average job have changed 37% in the last five years—which means that the jobs that everyone has and is hiring for are changing beneath their feet.

The research pinpoints exactly how 680 occupations are changing. The jobs that are changing fastest include accounting supervisor, advertising/promotions manager, marketing assistant/associate,

software developer/engineer, and solar engineer—and digital skills are driving that change (by contrast, physical occupations have generally changed the least). The rapid pace of skill change is one of the most persistent and significant trends demonstrating the need for the most up-to-date and accurate labor market data possible.

["Competence Over Credentials"](#) approaches skills from a different angle, demonstrating the rise of skills-based hiring. This practice, which removes college degree requirements from job postings in favor of specific competency requirements, is one Lightcast

has long advocated for because it eliminates the obstacles that keep individuals without a college degree from being hired in certain jobs and advancing in the workforce once they're hired.

The new research uses our expansive, data-driven approach to understand where and how successfully skills-based hiring is being applied throughout the labor market. It relies on in-depth interviews with over a dozen hiring experts, and also analysis of over 22 million job postings.

Since rapid technological change has required employees to

dynamically upskill and reskill, again and again, a static college degree looks less relevant. The research also found that those hired on the basis of skills get promoted at a rate comparable to that of traditional hires. Also, skills-based hires are more loyal to their employers: they have a 9% lengthier tenure at their organizations than traditional hires, and when organizations are struggling to find the talent they need, they must explore different ways to fill open positions. Skills provide the answer.

Conclusion

When the labor market doesn't work, companies can't find talent, and people can't find opportunities. Learning providers need to see the future of work today in order to prepare the leaders of tomorrow. Businesses need a strategy to grow and stay ahead of the curve in a fast-paced world. Community leaders need alignment to create opportunities and prosperity for their region.

By using our data to create connections between these groups, we enable better, faster decisions, help our clients serve diverse and underrepresented groups, and use skills to deliver clarity and unlock new potential.

People are at the heart of everything we do, and our data powers research, innovation, and

growth all over the globe at the highest levels of government, business, and education. And we're here to help navigate them: our job is to illuminate the exact solution our customers need to make a difference—nothing more, nothing less.

When the right people have the right jobs, companies succeed, communities thrive, and educators can empower new generations with unlimited possibilities. Lightcast delivers solutions for all three sectors, so that together, we can create **a job market that works for everyone.**

See more about how Lightcast creates opportunities in the labor market at lightcast.io





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