

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

You're listening to Work in Progress. I'm Ramona Schindelheim, Editor-in-Chief of WorkingNation. Work in Progress explores the rapidly changing workplace through conversations with innovators, educators, and decision-makers. People with solutions to today's workforce challenges. Technology is touching every aspect of our lives and the job growth in tech continues to be rapid, but not everyone has the same opportunities to enter the tech field. My guest today on Work in Progress is Lisa Gevelber, Vice President and founder of Google's Grow With Google. The initiative is opening opportunities for more people to land high paying jobs. Lisa starts out by explaining how Grow With Google started.

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

We started Grow With Google in October of 2017. And the objective is really to make sure that the opportunities that are created by technology are truly available to everyone. So it's an economic opportunity program that really has two pillars, which is how do we help small businesses succeed, and then how do we help people reach their full economic potential regardless of their background, education, and make sure that they really have opportunities to get great, high paying, high growth jobs.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

Tell me about the first programs. I know Python and the IT support with the first programs through the program. Tell me a little bit about each of those.

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

We started the Google Career Certificate program originally actually to solve a problem that we had at Google, which was how do we find and bring in non-traditional talent who's trained to do IT support at Google. And so, we built a specific training program so that we could successfully bring in non-traditional talent and build out our own workforce. But then, we realized that we had something really special and that we could share this with everyone. And so, we created our very first Google Career Certificate in IT support and made it available to anyone, put it up on Coursera, that was in January of 2018. And since that time we've had 50,000 graduates of our career certificate program. And it's a super robust training program, it's still the training program that we use at Google to train our own IT support professionals. But now, we get to share it with the whole world. The good thing is so many of our students do not have a college degree and are just thriving in these jobs.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

If I wanted to find the program, I'm a job seeker somewhere around the country and I'm thinking, now it sounds like a good time for me to change careers or to get the skills I need to move entry-level. How do I find you?

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

All the Google Career Certificates can be found by either going to Google and typing in Google Career Certificates, or our website URL is grow.google/certificates.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

And, is there any cost to me?

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

So, Google doesn't charge a penny for these courses. They're absolutely free from our perspective, but we do host them on Coursera and Coursera has a small fee. So each of our certificates can be done for \$39 a month. Most people finish in three to six months, so the total cost for most people would be 120 to \$240.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

That's fantastic. And then, once you have the certificate, is there a way to get connected with employers?

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

The best thing about the Google Career Certificate program is actually that it's not just a job training program. We have an employer consortium that is growing by the day. We already have 130 employers in the US who are eager to hire graduates of the Google Career Certificate program, because these employers have an important problem too. There's 1.3 million open jobs in the four fields that we teach the Google Career Certificates. And the employers are out there looking for great talent and ideally also diversifying their workforces. So, the Google Career Certificates is a win for everyone. It helps job seekers get the skills they need for these in-demand, high paying jobs, but it also really helps the employers fill their talent pipeline with non-traditional talent. So, it's really a win for everyone.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

If I'm totally a tech novice, is this for me? Can I learn something that's actually going to put me to work?

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

Absolutely. Nobody was born know and how to do tech. Everybody has to learn it. And the good news is most people are fabulous learners. And some of the career fields that we've chosen are more technical than others, so we now offer the Google Career Certificates in four fields. IT support, which was the original one. But now, we also offer project management, data analytics, what's called user experience design, which is the creative field of how we all interact with websites or apps on our phones. You don't have to be techie per se to get into one of these fields. And all of the Google Career Certificates are developed and taught by Google professionals who have decades of years of experience in the field. So, they know exactly what it takes to be successful in these jobs. And that's what we teach people, right? Our goal is to teach you everything you need to know to be job ready for an entry-level job in one of these four fields.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

After you get an entry-level job, is there any other training through Grow With Google that can help you advance? Or, is it then you have to find the next step on your own?

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

Actually, we connect graduates directly with employers. We do a bunch of things. So first, we know that just because you learned a skill doesn't mean you know how to express it well necessarily on a resume. So, we provide resume templates that are specific to the field. So we're going to help you take the skills that you just learned through the Google Career Certificate, and then translate that onto a piece of paper so that you can show employers what you know, how to do. We also offer free big interview training. And that's a great opportunity for people to practice their interviewing skills on top of having

their resume help. And then we do connect graduates directly with our employer consortium, which includes 130 employers all around the country, all different types of companies.

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

So we have retail companies like a Walmart or a Home Depot, but we also have tech companies, Google of course, is hiring graduates. But so is Intel, so is Infosys, so is Snap. There's a whole range of employers in our employer consortium. And we know that these jobs exist everywhere in our country, right? We picked jobs that were already in-demand, that were in high growing field, so you'd know if you get into this field, you'll have a job for a very long time. You don't have to worry about it going away. And those jobs exist all over the country. You don't have to move to Silicon Valley to get a job as a data analyst, for example.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

What I really find interesting is that Anthem, I think is another one of your, and that's a healthcare company, correct?

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

Yeah. Anthem is one of the employer consortium members.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

Yeah. And that really goes to the point that everything has become tech-centric. It doesn't matter what company, what industry you were in. People they need the internet. There's remote workers. A lot of databases are obviously on the internet. So a data analytics course, an entry-level course, can be very useful. You could use those skills in almost any industry.

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

Absolutely. Data analytics is in-demand everywhere. So pretend you were even working in retail and you loved retail, but you didn't necessarily want to be a store employee forever. There's lots of great jobs in data analytics in retail companies. So you can still combine your passion for retail, but get into a high demand, higher paying role. All the jobs in our career certificate fields are in-demand and high growing, but also high paying. So the average entry-level salary in our four career fields is \$69,000 a year or more. So that's a great jump up if someone had a in-store retail job and becomes a data analyst at a retail firm, that's probably a really great step-up in terms of both income, but also career opportunity.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

And I noticed that part of your rollout of the new certificate programs, you've offered scholarships as well. Tell me a little bit about the scholarships and how to access those.

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

Yeah. We have a 100,000 scholarships that Google is giving for folks to use on these Google Career Certificates. The first 30,000 actually, we're giving directly to workforce development boards around the country to help folks who have been unemployed because of the pandemic. And the rest of the scholarships are being distributed through a network of non-profits that we have created, really phenomenal organizations. There are folks like Merit America, Per Scholas, Goodwill, the YWCA, NPower who works with veterans. So many amazing organizations who are on the frontline and they're really

providing extra wrap around support and a kind of a cohort based learning environments for folks who want that. And so, we're providing the scholarships directly through those non-profit organizations.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

And how are you going about to diversify this workforce? Because we've talked at WorkingNation a lot about in the tech field, in particular, there's a diversity gap in the tech field. How are you trying to close that?

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

Yeah. We've been really excited to see that our first certificate, the one we have the most experience with, in IT support really did a great job of attracting and graduating non-traditional talent in tech. So 53% of our graduates are from non-traditional tech groups. So minorities, veterans, and women. And, we were so excited to see that. And I do think also the partnerships that we have with all these frontline organizations is helping with that as well. They have outreached into lots of underserved communities and they're helping bring folks into the program and encourage them. One of the other things that we're really excited about is that we just announced a partnership with Guild Education. And so, Guild works with Fortune 1000 employers like Walmart, Chipotle, Lowe's, Disney, Discover to help reskill their workforces. And so, through our partnership with Guild, we're helping reskill the workforces of some of those big organizations with tons of frontline workers.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

When you're looking at what your next step for certificates are, how are you finding out which programs? What jobs are in-demand? I'm assuming you're going to add more as you go. So, how are you finding that information? Where are you getting your intel on that?

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

Yeah, so we use a bunch of data sources. We look at job postings. We look at Burning Glass data. And we also look at Bureau of Labor Statistics data as well, to try to see which professions are in-demand, high growing, high paying. And obviously, we're only going to teach things for which Google has expertise because one of the special things about this program as it is entirely built by Google employees with decades of years of experience in those fields. We're going to teach the stuff that we know best. So we find the intersectionality between what's in-demand, growing, and pays well, and what it makes sense for Google to teach. And also, we really care that these are professions that you wouldn't need a college degree for.

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

The reality is they're 80 million American workers in this country without a college degree who feel like good jobs can be out of reach for them. And we wanted to break down that barrier. We wanted to make sure that a college degree was not necessary for economic success in our country. And so, when we built these certificates, we did it with an eye to ensuring that we're building an economy and a job market that really works for everyone. And we're trying to do our part to make sure that people can easily get the skills they need to access these really good jobs.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

Do you have a partnership with Opportunity@Work?

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

We do. Actually, we've been working with Opportunity@Work for years. And most recently, we announced a grant that we're giving them to help do research exactly in this field of expanding opportunity.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

I want to go back a little bit, kind of to the beginning. Have you been involved, Lisa, from the very beginning with Grow With Google? And, how did that get formed? What was the thinking behind that?

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

Yeah, I have actually founded Grow With Google. It's one of my favorite things I've done in my whole life. And the career certificates are one of the accomplishments I'm most proud of actually in my life. So in 2017, we took a step back as a company and we thought about all the good that we do with our products. Providing access to information for everyone, making sure it's universally accessible and useful, and a whole bunch of other things we do with our products. But we knew as a company that we wanted to be contributing in so many more ways, and we wanted to focus on a few areas. And one of those areas was economic opportunity. So we took a step back and we said, how can we use our products and our people, and really think about making a huge impact in terms of economic opportunity, not just with philanthropy, which we do quite a bit of, but in other more systemic ways.

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

And so, we created Grow With Google and launched it in October of 2017. And ever since then, we have really been looking for ways to do a whole bunch of things. But, one of the most important has always been how do we help people without a college degree live up to their full economic potential. And we think we can play a huge role in that, and that these career certificates are materially going to change the opportunity for many folks, because it's not just a training program, right? It's job training plus we've brought the employer network to the table. So, we built our career certificates with employer input and feedback. So we knew, we were building exactly what they want to hire for.

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

And then, we've also brought so many other parts of the ecosystem together. So, we have these non-profit organizations that help folks on the front lines. We also have over a 100 community colleges, and we're just this year entering career and technical high schools as well. So what we've done is really kind of catalyze and knit together the entire ecosystem to ensure that it's so much more than a training program, but that it really will provide economic advancement for so many people.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

So, how long have you been with Google?

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

I just had 11 years.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

And, did you ever think you were going to be part of the workforce ecosystem?

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

Well, it's very funny that you asked that. Because, I won't tell you how many years ago, but many decades ago, when I was in college I worked in Chicago on the summer jobs for youth program there. And my job was to put 125 inner-city Chicago kids to work for the summer. It was a really formative experience to me because I realized the power of giving someone a great job who didn't necessarily grow up in an environment where everyone around them was in thriving jobs. And ever since that moment, I've been super committed to personally doing what I can to help kind of level the playing field of opportunity. So it's definitely been a huge and momentous thing in my life to be able to found the Grow With Google, and to come up with this career certificate program at scale to really make a huge difference. And I think, creating this opportunity for economic mobility for so many people.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

How many people have gone through the certificate program so far?

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

We launched our first career certificate, the IT support certificate in January of 2018. So we've been at it for about two years, and 50,000 people have graduated from that program. We've just in the past two weeks was when we launched the three additional career fields, so it's all super new in those fields.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

If I'm sitting at home, listening to this, what would you say to me to tell me that this is really an opportunity for me that I should pursue?

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

Everyone has so much potential. There's really talent everywhere. But sometimes, we don't think of ourselves in a particular job or maybe thought it was out of reach. But at its heart of hearts, IT support is about problem solving, and project management is about being organized, and user experience design is a little bit about creativity and understanding how people work, right? So these are all skills that lots of people have. They just didn't until now have access to a really accessible training program. So they could learn the additional skills they need to take the skills they already have and kind of put them to work in these high paying fields.

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

And I think what's new and different about what we're doing is the full ecosystem we're bringing to bear to provide access to opportunity. But also the fact that we put all the training you need up online, so that people can access it on their own time at their own pace. A lot of folks just don't have the luxury to sit in a classroom all day, they're working. And so, we really built this program for working people so that it works for them on their schedule. And so, folks have a lot of the skills they need, there's just a lot of knowledge about these fields that we can impart to them through this online medium, which I think is really powerful.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

And then, on the other end of it, they get a certificate that signals to employers the skills that they have.

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

Yeah. The certificate is really powerful because not only was it built by Google experts, but we actually vet the content with other employers. So for example, in the data analytics certificate, we work directly with folks like Deloitte, who gave us some examples of some of the things they use in their training and screening programs, and we built that right into our capstone project. Our certificates have been vetted by employers, that's why 130 of them have signed up to hire our graduates. And actually, some of these companies have started making pretty big hiring commitments around hiring these certificate grads. For example, Better.com is committed to hiring thousands of them. Infosys has committed to hire hundreds of them. We're almost now in a little bit of a horse race for talent here, where employers are realizing they want this talent and they want access to it.

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

So it's really an exciting moment for people who are thinking about a job change, or maybe they're just entering the workforce for the first time. 60% of our IT support graduates come without a college degree, but 40% are also college graduates. And, that's something else that's interesting. I, myself have a liberal arts degree and I know I'm not qualified to be a data analyst. I would need some additional training. And so, I think the great thing about these certificates is that we're seeing lots of folks without degrees access them. But we're also seeing folks who have a degree who maybe wants some specialized training and skills, use this career certificate to get an even higher paying job than they might've gotten otherwise in a field that's definitely in-demand and growing.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

And Lisa, is there anything else that you would like to say that we haven't covered that you think is important that we talked about?

Lisa Gevelber, Grow with Google founder and VP:

Google's just trying to do its part to help make sure we have a more inclusive and equitable economy. I think, we're seeing so much promise and so much progress in this program. We're just want to invite folks who are interested in making a job change or entering the workforce and want to get these skills, please go to grow.google/certificates. We also want to invite employers to join us, and more community colleges, and non-profits. So anyone who has interest, please come to our website. Again, you can also just Google, Google Career Certificates, and you can see how you can sign up as an employer, community college, non-profit, any kind of person who wants to contribute to this work. So, we're just very excited about it.

Ramona Schindelheim, WorkingNation editor-in-chief:

I'm Ramona Schindelheim, Editor-in-Chief of WorkingNation. Thank you for listening.