

Kiwis need additional pathways to acquire tech skills - IBM

Auckland NZ, 6 October 2020 – (IBM: NYSE) A national skills strategy to better prepare Kiwis for careers in the digital economy is needed to unlock the potential of its tech sector and support New Zealand’s post-COVID-19 recovery, shows an IBM study released today.

Lack of skills is the main barrier (37%) identified by Kiwis as their reason for not considering moving into a role in tech, and also presents a potential hurdle for over half (56%) of those who would consider moving into the tech workforce.

Lack of skills is a barrier to over half (54%) of Kiwis who would like to change to a tech career, as well as a significant reason stopping people from even considering a job in the sector.

Two in five (44%) Kiwis not already working in the sector would consider a career in technology, and the primary motivation among almost two thirds (63%) of them is that the skills will always be in demand. One in five (19%) are now more likely to consider a career change after seeing businesses and education moving online during COVID-19.

Among people who identify lack of skills as the reason for not considering moving into technology, high course and study costs (57%) and lack of time due to work and family commitments (34%) are the greatest barrier to gaining those skills right now.

The research comes as IBM offers two new free online learning platforms to Kiwi job seekers; SkillsBuild Reignite, and Open P-TECH for students, which provide flexible, ‘bite sized’ learning content in increasingly in-demand fields such as cybersecurity, blockchain, Artificial intelligence and cloud system administration.

IBM launched SkillsBuild Reignite in response to the global outbreak of COVID-19, recognising that trends like digital transformation which were already evident in the economy have accelerated, making new business capabilities and workforce skills necessary.

Mike Smith, Managing Director, IBM New Zealand, says New Zealand’s economy is becoming increasingly digital and job seekers need fresh skills to take advantage of opportunities in our growing tech sector.

“SkillsBuild Reignite offers a practical way to retrain and build up a base in some of the latest business and digital skills. The learning is at your own pace and at no cost, to help get more Kiwis a step closer to a new career and address the skills gaps our industry faces here in New Zealand.”

Completing the courses leads to ‘micro-credentials’ known as digital badges being awarded, which demonstrate progress and attainment to potential employers.

IBM found that nearly two thirds of New Zealand employers would hire someone with non-traditional certifications in technology and business skills. Internationally, micro-credential style learning is popular because of new, emerging tech roles that do not always require a traditional bachelor’s degree.

Mr Smith is encouraging aspiring tech workers to earn 'micro-credentials' as a way to expand their career options while attracting people from a wider range of backgrounds to a growing, economically important industry hungry for more skills.

IBM has made two learning platforms available for free. SkillsBuild Reignite (skillsbuild.org/reignite) is designed for job seekers, while Open P-TECH (PTECH.org/open-P-TECH) is for students aged 14 – 20 years. Both platforms offer digital learning content from IBM and its industry partners.

SkillsBuild Reignite learners can tap into over 370 learning activities with learning pathways for topics such as cyber security, data analytics and AI, cloud administration, and web development.

According to industry association [NZTech's 2019 Annual Report](#), the technology sector employs 8% of NZ's workforce and generates 9% of the country's exports.

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Survey methodology:

Perceptive conducted an online survey through the August 2020 Omnibus which surveys a minimum of n=1000 New Zealanders using a nationwide sampling framework. The results are then weighted to Statistics New Zealand census gender, age and location to give a representative sample of the population. This survey collected a total of n=981 responses from New Zealanders, which have been analysed and presented within this report.
