



# How IT professionals can prepare themselves to deal with layoffs

The days of learn once and work forever, are gone. We are now in a world where continuous and lifelong learning will become the norm.

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*By Mohan Lakhamraju, Great Learning*

The nature of IT industry is changing where their clients are demanding higher levels of automation and greater leverage on their technology investments.

The IT industry's original business model of deploying armies of programmers and charging for their time is rapidly becoming obsolete. Projects now have either outcome-based pricing or fixed price with high competition.

Therefore, IT companies are trying to achieve more with lesser manpower which is resulting in more automation. The jobs that are most at risk are those that involve routine maintenance and workflow management since these are increasingly getting automated.

Legacy skills like mainframes and software testing are also getting obsolete as newer technologies are getting adopted. The skills that are in demand are broadly in the areas referred to as SMAC - Social, Mobile, Analytics and Cloud.

Digital and Social media marketing is fast taking share from traditional media due to its data-driven nature and measurability. Every application is now moving to mobile, leading to more demand for mobile development. Applications are increasingly moving to cloud from being on

large backend mainframes. Analytics and Data Engineering is permeating every domain.

To deal with the change and to sustain the fluctuations of the job market the professionals need to train themselves in the courses that are high in demand. The days of learn once and work forever, are gone. We are now in a world where continuous and lifelong learning will become the norm.

So, [IT professionals](#) will need to upgrade their skills at least every 3-4 years. They can do this by taking training programs offered by their companies. They can also learn by doing online courses.

For those that are motivated, there are plenty of free online resources to learn from. Those that need help and guidance should choose a more structured program from a reputed institution. The best solution is if they can pick up new skills by themselves on a regular basis. This requires them to follow the latest technology trends and stay up to date with them. Those that do this will be best positioned to convert the threat into growth opportunities.

For many professionals, developing these new skills is a matter of survival and staying relevant in a dynamically changing environment.

For those whose skills are getting outdated, more than ROI, the relevant question is what happens if they do not make the investment. In most of the cases, those that complete the courses properly and develop the new skills are able to transition to newer higher paying jobs and achieve ROI within 1-2 years.

Lastly, disruptive shifts in the IT and Technology industry are not new. They have been happening every decade. So, experienced people in the industry who have worked across decades are already used to seeing these shifts.

It is the younger professionals with less than 10 years of experience that are always caught off-guard because they would not have seen prior shifts and may get too comfortable with what they already know and stop learning. The advice to these young professionals is to make continuous learning a lifelong habit.

*(The author is the founder and CEO of Great Learning. Views expressed above are his own)*

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