



# 2024 LABOR MARKET OUTLOOK

Professional &  
Business Services

# The State of Professional & Business Services

The professional and business sector is the largest employment category in the U.S., followed closely by the public sector and healthcare. It is also growing faster than average, having expanded by 25% over the past decade, compared with 16% growth in employment overall, as employment opportunities have moved from manual labor-intensive production sectors to more knowledge-intensive service sectors.<sup>1</sup> The sector now employs nearly 23 million people as software developers, accountants, lawyers, general managers, administrative assistants, researchers, and the like, in the kinds of white-collar office jobs most affected by the recent shift to remote work and most susceptible to disruption by artificial intelligence in the coming decade.

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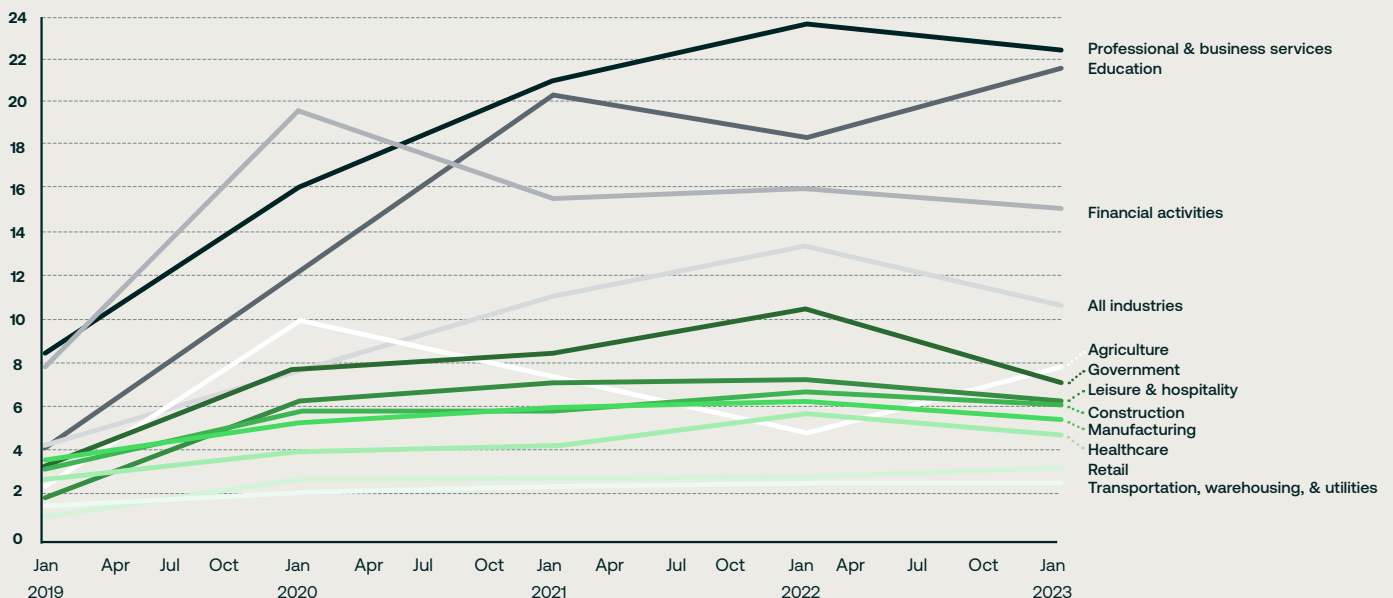
The white-collar jobs most transformed by the recent shift to remote work are also most susceptible to disruption by artificial intelligence and most likely to experience a productivity explosion.

-Julia Pollak,  
ZipRecruiter Chief Economist

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## Remote job opportunities are most prevalent in the professional and business services sector

% of job postings on ZipRecruiter offering remote or hybrid work, by sector



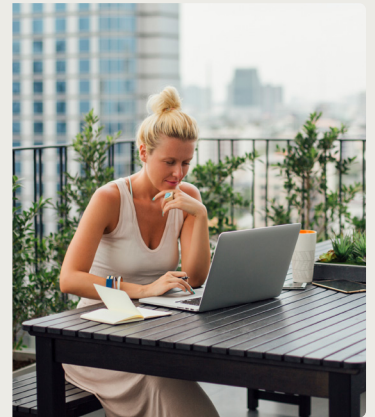
Source: ZipRecruiter, Inc., internal data, Jan. 2019 - Oct. 2023.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics, Dec. 8, 2023.

## Three Trends to Watch

### 1. Remote work

Remote work has taken off in professional and business services, especially since the pandemic. The rise of remote work has made business roles more flexible and, therefore, substantially more attractive to workers than ever before, attracting large numbers of applications per role. Remote work has also given companies access to a wider talent pool across the country and beyond its borders. Together, those factors have reduced recruitment and retention difficulties for employers across the sector but increased the importance of management best practices and the adoption of integrated enterprise software solutions.



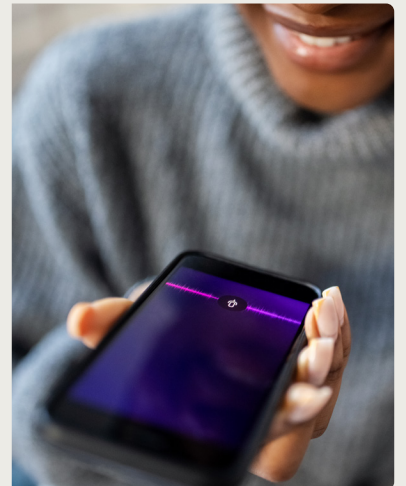
### 2. The software revolution

The rise of software and Software as a Service (SaaS) has not only streamlined business processes and fostered collaboration but also fundamentally altered required skill sets and job roles across various industries, as ZipRecruiter job posting data clearly shows. The number of coding languages and software tools listed as skill requirements in job postings proliferates every year. While software has undoubtedly replaced some jobs—as in the case of online travel booking platforms reducing demand for travel agents—business roles have grown rapidly over the past decade rather than being automated away. Many “new-collar” jobs have been created that no longer require traditional degrees but rather require workers to demonstrate expertise using a set of platforms or software tools and willingness to acquire new digital skills as technology advances. Slower-to-adapt industries, like the public sector, healthcare, and education, are belatedly embarking on the kind of software transformation seen previously in sales and marketing.



### 3. Artificial intelligence

AI-related job openings on ZipRecruiter have grown rapidly over the past decade. There is some evidence that the companies hiring AI talent have reduced hiring in non-AI positions, but employment levels in those companies have not changed overall, according to recent research.<sup>2</sup> That is likely because AI is currently able to replace some job tasks, but not entire jobs, and because it raises productivity, which fuels growth and creates new jobs. In early studies, generative AI has been found to raise productivity by narrowing the productivity gap between the highest and lowest performers.<sup>3</sup> That finding suggests that generative AI could lower barriers to entry in some occupations and relax the labor supply constraint currently hindering so many employers.



<sup>2</sup> Daron Acemoglu, et al, “AI and Jobs: Evidence from Online Vacancies,” NBER Working Paper 28257, Dec. 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Erik Brynjolfsson, et al, “Generative AI at Work,” NBER Working Paper 31161, April 2023; and Shakked Noy and Whitney Zhang, “Experimental Evidence on the Productivity Effects of Generative Artificial Intelligence,” March 1, 2023.

## Fastest-growing major occupations in professional, scientific, and technical services

Largest 20 occupations in the professional, scientific, and technical services sector, ranked by % growth in employment between 2012 and 2022.

Occupation	Employment in 2012	Employment in 2022	% Growth
1 Marketing & Sales Managers	60K	159K	167%
2 General & Operations Managers	197K	398K	102%
3 Computer & Information Systems Managers	90K	180K	100%
4 Miscellaneous Sales Representatives, Services	124K	245K	97%
5 Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists	118K	230K	94%
6 Management Analysts	202K	336K	66%
7 Software & Web Developers, Programmers, & Testers	615K	886K	44%
8 Computer Support Specialists	186K	255K	37%
9 Paralegals & Legal Assistants	201K	268K	34%
10 Customer Service Representatives	134K	178K	34%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2012 - 2022.

## Top-performing markets

Based on average # of applies per posting

Job seekers in professional and business services on ZipRecruiter express greatest interest in these markets:



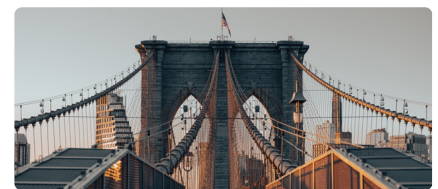
Los Angeles, CA



Boston, MA



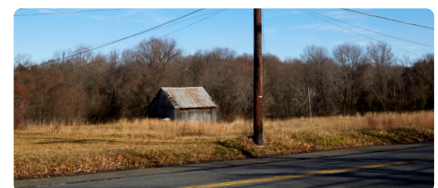
Salt Lake City Metro Area, UT



New York, NY



Chicago, IL



Greater Upper Marlboro Area, MD

Source: ZipRecruiter, Inc., internal data, Jan. 1, 2023 - Oct. 24, 2023; markets and roles with over 100 postings.

## Industry Snapshot

### Fastest-growing job titles

Based on change in job postings, 2022 to 2023

Demand for these roles rose between 2022 and 2023:



Artificial Intelligence/  
Natural Language  
Processing Data  
Scientist



Endpoint  
Application  
Engineer



Cybersecurity/  
Information  
Security Architect



Data Analyst,  
People Analytics



Strategic Account  
Manager

Source: ZipRecruiter, Inc., internal data, Jan. 1, 2022 - Oct. 24, 2023; roles with over 100 postings.

### Top-performing job titles

Based on average # of clicks per posting

Job seekers on ZipRecruiter express the highest interest in these roles:



Virtual Assistant



Data Entry  
Processor



Game Tester



Remote Recruiter



Legal  
Transcriptionist

Source: ZipRecruiter, Inc., internal data, Jan. 1, 2023 - Oct. 24, 2023; roles with over 100 postings.

# Attracting the Workforce of Tomorrow

## What workers want

Job seekers like business services roles for the financial security and career advancement they provide, and seek out roles that aren't stressful.



Financial security



Opportunities for career advancement



Paid vacation



Stress free



Job security

Source: ZipRecruiter Q3 2023 Job Seeker Confidence Survey.

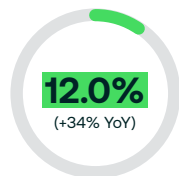
**48.8%**

of professional & business service job postings on ZipRecruiter list soft skills.

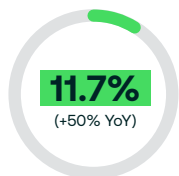
Source: ZipRecruiter, Inc. internal data, Jan. 1, 2023 - Oct. 24, 2023.

## Trending benefits

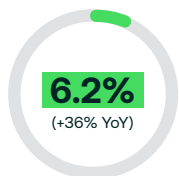
Mentions of benefits in job postings on ZipRecruiter



Paid time off



Retirement benefits



Tuition assistance

Source: ZipRecruiter, Inc. internal data, Jan. 1, 2022 - Oct. 24, 2023.

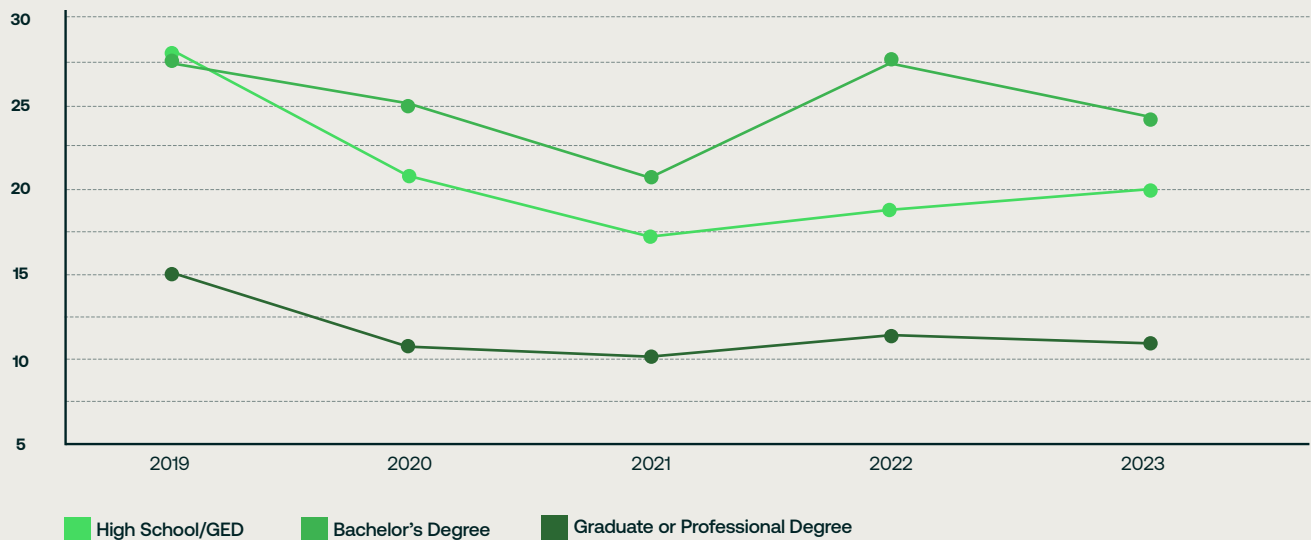
**23.0%**

of professional & business service job postings on ZipRecruiter are remote.

Source: ZipRecruiter, Inc. internal data, Jan. 1, 2023 - Oct. 24, 2023.

## Evolving job requirements

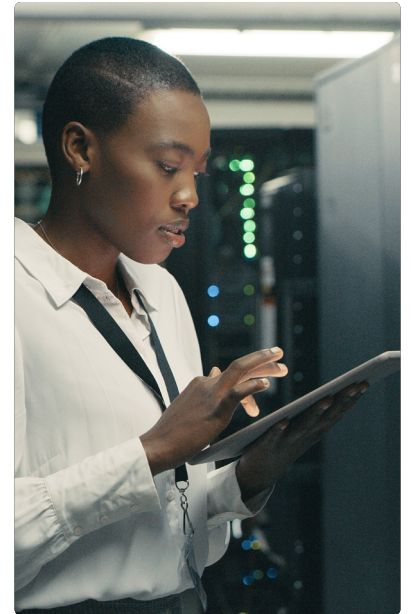
Education requirements for business services jobs fell between 2019 and 2021 and have partially rebounded since, but are still lower than before the pandemic.



Source: ZipRecruiter, Inc., internal data, Jan. 1, 2019 - Oct. 24, 2023.

## Women in Professional and Business Services

The professional and business services sector in the U.S. is roughly gender-balanced and has been since the Labor Department started collecting relevant data in 1990, with women making up 46% of workers.<sup>4</sup> On average, female representation tends to be growing fastest in the business service sub-industries that are adding the most jobs overall. Across 74 industries within the sector, for example, the share of women employees has risen in 46 industries and fallen in 28 industries since 1990, with the changes fairly modest in most cases. Larger swings have taken place in marketing consulting (where the share of women employees has risen nearly 12 percentage points) and management consulting (+9ppt), graphic design services (+12ppt) and architectural services (+9ppt), janitorial services (+11ppt), and investigation and security services (+9ppt). Meanwhile, travel agencies and temp agencies, which were once majority female, have become more gender-balanced, both seeing the female share decline by almost 8 percentage points. Women could become even more prevalent in the sector by the end of the decade as women's labor force participation rises overall and more women graduate with computer-related degrees.



### ZipTips

#### To attract and retain top talent in professional and business services:

##### 1. Follow evolving best practices for managing remote workers

As companies continue to experiment and learn, there is significant variation when it comes to the degree of remote work flexibility they offer workers and the strategies they use to encourage collaboration. Employers should follow the emerging research on best practices and survey employees at all levels to learn which approaches work best for each team.

##### 2. Adopt a comprehensive change management strategy

With frequent changes to business processes and technological solutions, employees can experience fatigue. Employers can modernize more quickly and effectively if they engage employees early and often, articulate a compelling vision, offer support for needed reskilling and upskilling, and learn from feedback.

##### 3. Build successful AI teams

Incorporating generative AI into a company's operations requires a multidisciplinary team with expertise in various areas, including artificial intelligence, machine learning, data science, software engineering, user experience, ethics and compliance, and cybersecurity. It typically also requires a significant investment in upgrading existing data collection and management processes. Since AI experts with experience developing successful products are still rare, prepare to face stiff competition for external talent. Consider building teams comprised of external experts where needed, along with upskilled internal talent.

##### 4. Stay informed on AI advances

Many observers initially speculated that AI tools would make superstar employees many times more productive, enabling companies to replace multiple lower-productivity employees with one superstar. Recent studies examining the effects of access to generative AI tools on customer support employees and writers have found the opposite—that top performers see little improvement while less-productive employees reap large productivity gains. That finding has very different implications for staffing. The productivity effects of generative AI tools will likely differ across functions and roles, with implications for staffing plans and recruitment efforts.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics, December 8, 2024.