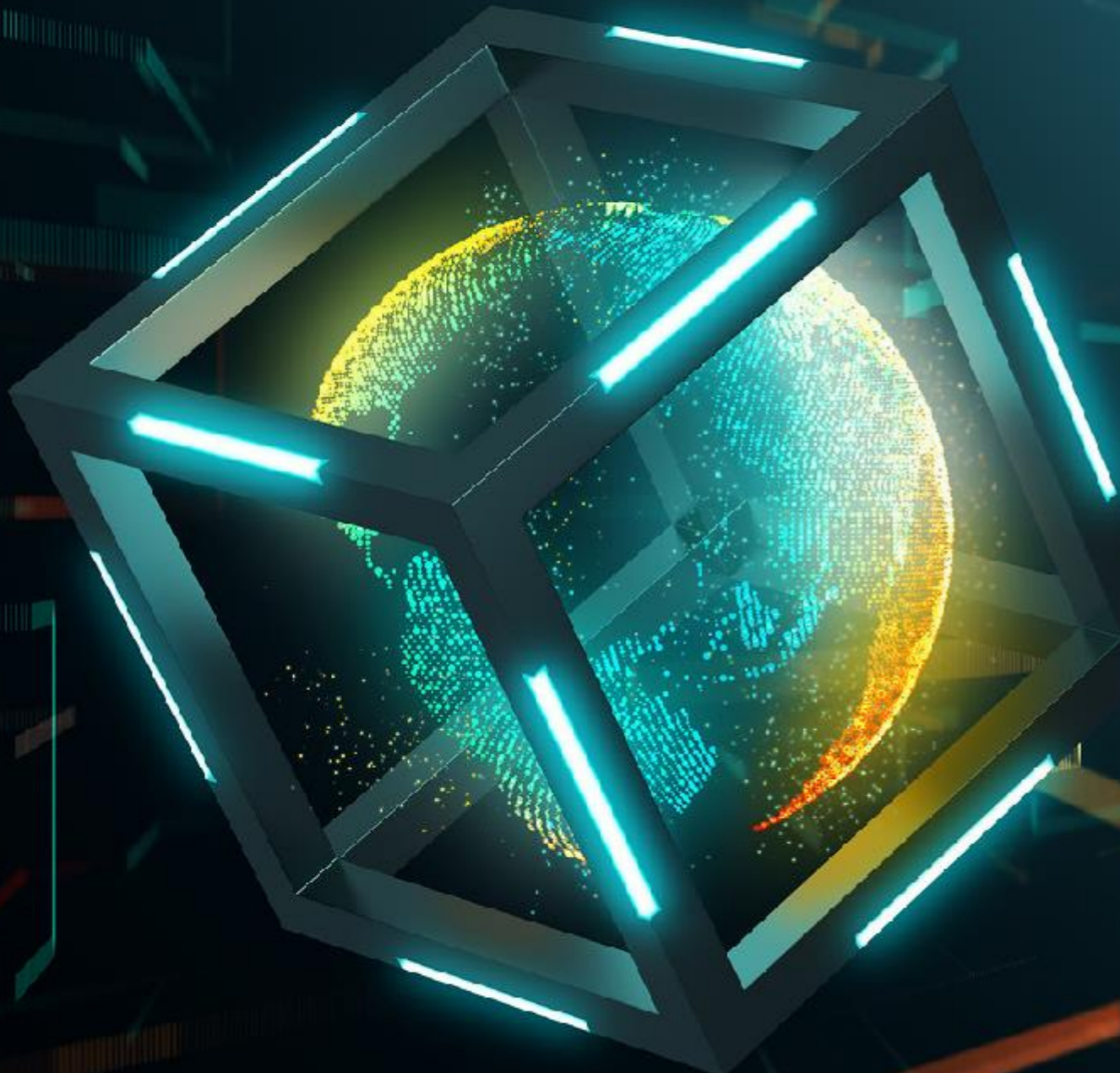




# Your Guide to Future-Proofing Your IT Career



Even if you've got your three to five year career goals meticulously planned out to the last detail, can you honestly say that you're prepared for the future? The job market remains unpredictable, and job roles are changing rapidly. Yet economic circumstances can shift swiftly, forcing you to reevaluate an unfamiliar landscape and adapt your career goals to the new norm.

What's always fascinating is that when these colossal changes occur, there's a smattering of people who, through what seems like uncanny foresight, are able to predict and prepare for significant economic and workforce changes. There's no crystal ball hidden in their closet, so what's the secret? As unsexy as it sounds, it's thorough preparation for the road ahead.

With more than 4 decades of staffing industry experience, we've seen the IT market cycle through phases and drastically reshape job prospects for IT professionals. Those who have thrived in real-time knew the warning signs of seismic shifts in the tech world and were prepared for the consequences to their careers – they also weren't afraid of a little guidance from an experienced staffing partner.

We're providing just that in our guide, "Your Guide to Future-Proofing Your IT Career," which explores the circumstances, challenges, and opportunities of possible developments in the economy and the IT job market:

- "Recessions"
- Full Employment
- Tech Layoffs
- Further Automation (AI)

Though we may not be able to predict which twists and turns are coming in the near future, we can be prepared to thrive when they happen.

# Possibility #1 “RECESSION”

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The U.S. economy has always bounced between booms and busts. In fact, since Consultis opened for business in *1984*, there have been four “recessions”, culminating in the perfect storm that was the Great “Recession”.

The cycle will inevitably come full circle.

What does that entail? Lower gross domestic product, decreased consumer spending, and a rise in unemployment, all which build upon and intensify one another. Despite the consensus that a “recession” is on the horizon, there’s little agreement about when the market direction will reverse.

## The Signs to Watch

Trying to predict a “recession” can be like trying to pick your March Madness brackets. Even with the right data, it might not turn out the way you expected. That’s why we recommend preparation over playing Nostradamus. However, if you’re inquisitive and want to get in the weeds, most economists agree these factors are a barometer of your typical “recession”:

- **The Yield Curve** – This graph shows the difference in interest rate paid for bonds of varying yield lengths, typically two years and ten years. In a healthy economy, short-term interest rates are lower than long-term interest rates, but **negative values tend to precede “recessions”**.
- **Unemployment** – It’s no surprise that unemployment rates go up as the economy goes deeper into a “recession”. However, it’s important to remember this is not an infallible sign. Employment naturally wavers. It’s only when high unemployment persists that we know that we’re heading for a “recession”.

Beyond that, we’ll leave the forecasts to the economists.

## How Does that Impact My IT Career?

During a “recession”, most companies scale back. Demand for their products or services is down, so owners and executives must reduce their budget for hiring full-time employees. As a result, there is usually an increased demand for certain IT work to be performed on an hourly basis through outside contractors, which is more flexible and cost-effective than adding full-time headcount.

That’s why a “recession” is the perfect time to pursue IT contract work. Positions like Developers, UX/UI Designers, Systems Engineers, and Data Analysts (among others) lean toward a contract-to-hire or per project basis.

Another matter to remember is that with a rising unemployment rate, job competition will increase too. Tech professionals will once again need to keep their radar on full alert if they want to find the best jobs for their careers. Recruiters will become more valuable in that equation if you want to avoid sacrificing your personal time for your job search.

# Possibility #2

# FULL

# EMPLOYMENT

A Full Employment Market – the peak of the economic cycle. Unemployment is low, the demand for tech talent is high, and inflation has increased but remains manageable. And just like you can expect more “recessions” in the future, you can expect more instances of full employment.

Whenever the market reaches full employment, qualified workers are at a premium. Your inbox is probably near capacity with messages about great, new job opportunities. You might have even noticed meatier benefits and training programs to attract or retain top employees. According to the [2023 Dice Tech Salary Report](#) - following a year of strong growth, IT salary averages nationwide have continued their upward trend as they increased 2.3% in 2022 to \$111,348. However, as the effects of the economy become more pronounced, wages will escalate to meet the demand.

## The Signs to Watch

The clearest sign is the unemployment rate. In the U.S., policymakers projected that the acceptable rate of unemployment in a full employment economy would be between [4.1% and 4.7%](#). Quit rates also tend to skyrocket at this time. For the market to truly be at full employment, inflation rates need to remain under control. Combine all these factors, and you have the conditions for full employment.

## What to Do

Offers are coming to you. What more can you do? To really feed your IT career some Miracle-Gro, it's important to act strategically with the opportunities you encounter. For example, a full employment economy is the perfect time to pursue new projects and work. Companies are searching for turnkey talent in big data, UI/UX development, cybersecurity, or other in-demand skills – and they are more than willing to offer greater compensation and benefits packages.

Also, this is a great time to increase your technical skills. If you stay in your current job, it's easier to request training opportunities. In fact, the [IT Skills and Salary Report by Global Knowledge](#) highlights that 35% of IT decision makers want to develop stronger teams. This also means even if you do not have the complete technical skills for a position right now, you can work your way toward your dream job – if you prove you are a culture fit. This is where it helps to have a technical recruiter on your side to present you as the perfect talent solution in a competitive market. The fact that you have a strong cultural affinity with the company and an ability to learn quickly is a message better heard from a trusted partner.

# Possibility #3

## TECH LAYOFFS

Getting laid off can be devastating. Stories are posted on LinkedIn from every corner of the world by people who thought they were entering a casual afternoon meeting with their team only to be met with a swift Zoom conversation with HR's finest and no chance to say goodbye to the last chapter of their career.

Tech companies over-hired in the last few years. Now, layoffs are happening at public companies due to the dump in the stock market and a rise in unskilled workers.

It is more important now than ever to have a plan in place in case layoffs happen in your world and you must quickly adjust course. There's even a way to find some benefit and advantage in these moments even if it might not feel like it. The question has become – how do you position yourself to take advantage of them?

## The Signs to Watch

Layoffs can be hard to predict. They can happen at any time but January and December are notorious for job losses as employers review their budgets. Though there is no guaranteed blanket signal of impending layoffs, there are some broader warning signs that might transcend individual cases.

Employees leaving without being replaced is one. Have you noticed executives leaving? C-Suite employees often see the writing on the wall before things go haywire so they have adequate time to make changes. Restructuring, reorganizing, and outsourcing are three key factors. Though they're not [flawless warning signs](#), they're worth keeping tabs on.

## What to Do

When faced with layoffs, you must center yourself and assess your current runway and needs. Take some time to update your resume with achievements at the last several roles. Make a list of the top 10 companies you're targeting to work for and look through your connections to see if you know someone who would be willing to vouch for you internally. This time is the reason that "Networking" is the name of the game. Leverage your network!

Joining network groups that are applicable to your skillset will surround you with like-minded others and can prove to be an invaluable tool. Maybe there's a spot opening up on a team at their company they know of or they saw a posting on their social network that they'd be willing to refer you to – the possibilities of people are endless.

[Recruiters](#) are also here to help you! Reach out to them to see what opportunities they have or if they've seen anything on their network that they'd be willing to refer to you as well. Trust the process!





# Possibility #4 AUTOMATION (AI)

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Is AI the greatest threat to jobs in the tech industry? That's the ironic twist of automation & AI. Researchers were able to find, using job data from the [US Department of Labor](#), that 19% of jobs in the U.S. are threatened by automation and “may see at least 50% of their tasks impacted”. It is important to note that this will result in many jobs being retooled as opposed to eliminated. There are even some positions within the IT industry that might face automation soon, though many will still depend upon human contributions. The difference depends on how quickly technology advances.

## The Signs to Watch

Will your job be automated? [Business Insider](#) has an estimation for your job security. [A study was recently done](#) by researchers from OpenAI and the University of Pennsylvania with the goal of finding what jobs are likeliest to be automated. They concluded that “ChatGPT will most likely impact your job if you work in tech, went to college, and make up to \$80,000 a year”. Of course, jobs in IT are strongly at risk because “programming and writing skills” fall right in line with AI’s capabilities.

Working with experts, [Insider](#) put a list together of roles at the highest risk for automation by AI – which was led by Tech Jobs. Its estimated that the technology will be able to handle the responsibilities and assignments for roles such as (but not limited to):

- Computer Programmers
- Software Engineers
- Data Analysts

## What to Do

If your job falls into the “at risk for automation” category, the most straightforward answer is to start pursuing other skillsets. In fact, the current full employment market is a great way to get some of that training subsidized. Work with either your current employer or one willing to train you and begin transitioning from your old skillset into a new one. Always upskill!

If you’re looking for a little guidance, the [top paying skills](#) are situated in cloud computing and big data industries. If you want to work your way to the top of the dog pile, these skills are the highest paying:

- **MapReduce** – \$146,672
- **Golang** – \$145,672
- **Elasticsearch** – \$143,619
- **Chef** – \$143,188
- **Apache Kafka** – \$142,764

## **Want to Always Be Ready to Achieve Your Career Goals?**

Partner with a staffing team that won't be in and out of your life. At Consultis, we take pride in forging long-term relationships – some have lasted for decades. Our recruiters not only work to keep up with innovation and cutting-edge technology, but maintain a strong connection with you to help accomplish your career and life goals.

Our 4 decades of staffing industry experience have made us experts at connecting tech professionals with opportunities they actually want. Because our clients trust us to deliver the best people, we have an incredible range of direct hire, contract, contract-to-hire, and project-based positions available for you.

We have all the bases covered to help future-proof your career. Contact us today!

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The logo for Consultis Information Technology is centered on the right side of the page. It features the word "CONSULTIS" in a large, white, serif font. Below it, the words "INFORMATION" and "TECHNOLOGY" are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, separated by a white triangle pointing upwards. The background of the right half of the page is a blue-tinted image of a modern office hallway with glass walls and wooden floors.

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