



The Base of the Pyramid: Entry-Level Employment Across U.S. Firms

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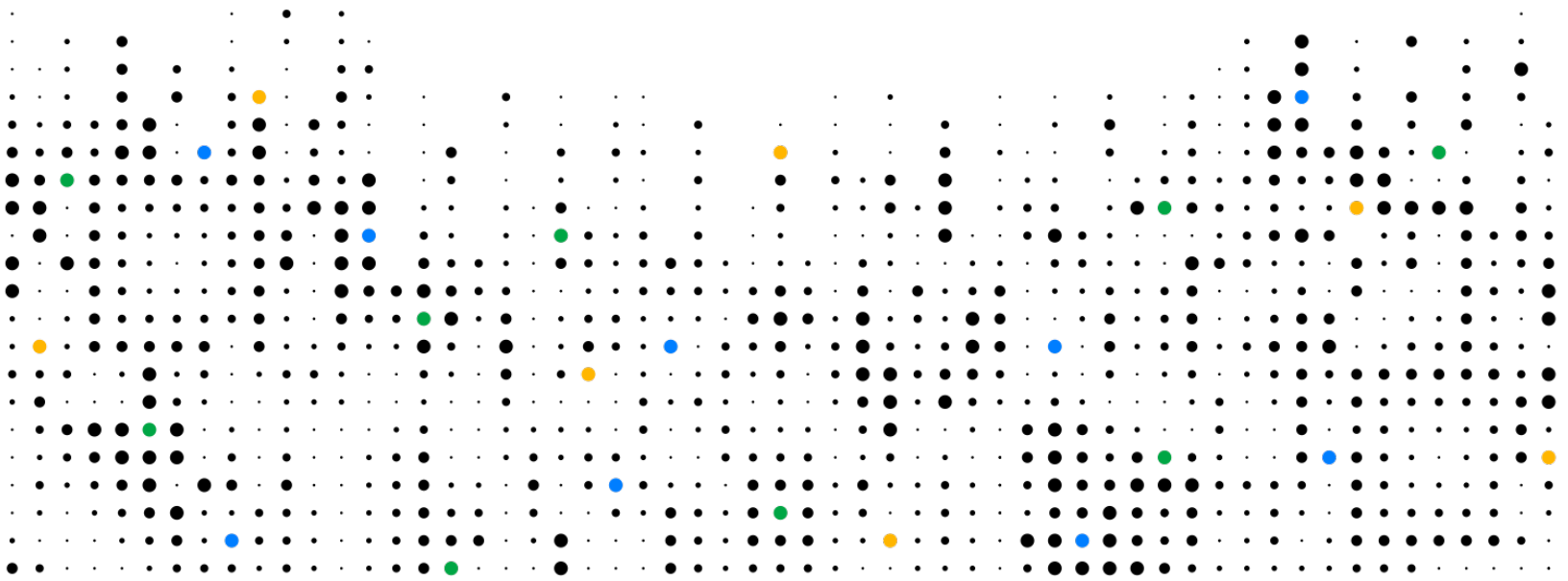
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The Base of the Pyramid: Entry-Level
Employment Across U.S. Firms



Entry-Level Employment Across U.S. Firms

KEY INSIGHTS

- Entry-level roles remain dominant across firms of all sizes: Despite narratives that companies are shedding entry-level workers, LinkedIn data shows most U.S. firms maintain a pyramid structure, with more entry-level than senior employees.
- Firm size matters: Small businesses (200 or fewer employees) have a 57% higher share of entry-level workers compared to senior roles, while very large companies (over 10,000 employees) show only a 15% difference.
- Entry-level concentration varies by industry: Financial Services, (33%), Technology, Information and Media (39%), Consumer Services (39%) have the smallest shares of entry-level workers. In contrast, Accommodation and Food Services (52%), Education (52%), and Hospitals and Health Care (51%) have the largest.
- Across industries, entry-level share is leveling out: After rising from 2020 to 2022, the average share of entry-level workers across industries stabilized from 2023 to 2025, with most industries seeing no change.
- Across job functions, entry-level share is flat or shrinking: At very large companies, the average share of entry-level workers in roles such as Accounting and Legal roles declined in both periods (2020 to 2022 and 2023 to 2025).



PYRAMID-STRUCTURE COMPANIES STILL DOMINATE

Despite the narrative that entry-level roles are disappearing, LinkedIn data finds that from January 2016 to August 2025, entry-level employees comprised the largest share of employees within a company, averaging around 40-45% of employees for all companies analyzed.

Medium-sized companies (201-10,000 employees) had the largest average share of entry-level workers each year from 2016 to August 2025. Very large companies of over 10,000 employees had the smallest average share of entry-level employees since 2021.

share of entry-level employees (+2.3 percentage points) from 2016 to 2025. This is followed by small companies (2200) at +2.1pp, large companies (1,001-10,000 employees) at +1.2pp, and medium-sized companies (201-1,000 employees) at +0.7pp.

Among individual-contributor (non-management) roles, entry-level workers are more prevalent in smaller companies compared to larger ones. Comparing the share of only entry-level and senior workers (excluding management) from 2016 to 2025, we find that small businesses consistently had the largest gap between the share of entry-level workers compared to senior-level workers, while the opposite is true for very large companies.

Entry-level remains the largest share across all company sizes

Very large companies (over 10,000 employees) experienced the greatest increase in their average

Average Share of Entry-Level Employees by Company Size

% of Entry-Level Employees by Company Size (# of Employees)

Year	2-200	201-1,000	1001-10,000	10,000+
2016	41.7%	44.3%	43.0%	41.1%
2017	42.2%	45.1%	43.8%	42.0%
2018	42.6%	45.6%	44.4%	42.6%
2019	43.1%	45.9%	44.9%	43.0%
2020	43.2%	45.4%	44.4%	43.5%
2021	43.8%	45.6%	44.6%	43.7%
2022	44.2%	45.4%	44.4%	43.1%
2023	44.4%	45.2%	44.3%	43.1%
2024	44.1%	45.2%	44.4%	43.7%
2025	43.9%	45.0%	44.2%	43.4%

Source: LinkedIn Economic Graph

Small Businesses Employ More Entry-Level Than Senior Workers

Difference in Average Share of Entry-Level vs. Senior-Level Employees

Year	2-200	201-1,000	1001-10,000	10,000+
2016	47.7%	31.0%	17.5%	7.8%
2017	49.3%	34.2%	20.7%	11.2%
2018	51.1%	36.2%	23.3%	12.5%
2019	53.0%	37.7%	25.7%	13.7%
2020	53.0%	35.6%	23.5%	15.9%
2021	55.7%	36.4%	24.1%	16.3%
2022	57.4%	36.0%	23.6%	12.7%
2023	58.2%	35.2%	23.5%	12.6%
2024	57.2%	35.1%	23.7%	16.2%
2025	56.5%	34.3%	22.7%	15.0%

Source: LinkedIn Economic Graph



ACROSS ALL INDUSTRIES, THE AVERAGE SHARE OF ENTRY-LEVEL WORKERS IN A COMPANY IS LEVELING OUT

On average, entry-level employees make up the largest share of employees for every industry in the U.S. in 2025. The share of entry-level workers ranges from over 50% across companies in Accommodation and Food Services (52.2%), Education (51.6%), and Hospitals

and Health Care (51.0%) to under 40% for Technology, Information, and Media (38.7%), Consumer Services (38.6%), and Financial Services (32.9%) companies.

From 2020 to August 2025, the share of entry-level workers within companies grew in most industries except Farming, Ranching, Forestry (–2.3%), Education (–1.0%), Consumer Services (–0.8%) and Government Administration (–0.8%).

Average Share of Entry-Level Employees by Company Size

% of Entry-Level Employees by Company Size (# of Employees)

Industry	Share of Entry-Level Workers
Accommodation and Food Services	52.2%
Education	51.6%
Hospitals and Health Care	51.0%
Government Administration	50.7%
Farming, Ranching, Forestry	50.4%
Retail	47.9%
Construction	47.0%
Entertainment Providers	45.4%
Wholesale	44.8%
Transportation, Logistics, Supply Chain and Storage	44.6%
Real Estate and Equipment Rental Services	44.5%
Manufacturing	44.4%
Utilities	42.4%
Oil, Gas, and Mining	41.2%
Administrative and Support Services	41.1%
Professional Services	39.8%
Technology, Information and Media	38.7%
Consumer Services	38.6%
Financial Services	32.9%

Source: LinkedIn Economic Graph

Percent Change in Average Share of Entry-Level Workers by Industry (2020-2025*)

Industry	% Change
Accommodation and Food Services	+4.6%
Administrative and Support Services	+3.8%
Professional Services	+3.0%
Real Estate and Equipment Rental Services	+3.0%
Financial Services	+2.9%
Retail	+2.4%
Technology, Information and Media	+2.2%
Transportation, Logistics, Supply Chain and Storage	+2.1%
Oil, Gas, and Mining	+2.0%
Utilities	+1.5%
Manufacturing	+1.3%
Entertainment Providers	+0.9%
Wholesale	+0.7%
Hospitals and Health Care	+0.6%
Construction	+0.2%
Government Administration	-0.8%
Consumer Services	-0.8%
Education	-1.0%
Farming, Ranching, Forestry	-2.3%

Source: LinkedIn Economic Graph

Note: (*) 2025 only includes data up to August 2025.

Looking more closely at the breakdown by year, it becomes apparent that growth in the share of entry-level workers is mostly from 2020-2022, which coincides with the increase in overall hiring during the same time. For example, Technology, Information, and Media companies' average share of entry-level

workers grew 2.4% from 2020 to 2022 but subsequently declined 0.9% from 2023 to 2025. It is also worth noting that fall 2022 marked the launch of ChatGPT, which sparked a surge in generative AI adoption.

Percent Change in Average Share of Entry-Level Workers by Industry and Year (2020-2025*)

Industry	2020-2022	2023-2025*
Accommodation and Food Services	+4.6%	-1.0%
Professional Services	+3.6%	-0.7%
Administrative and Support Services	+3.5%	-0.3%
Retail	+3.0%	-0.8%
Financial Services	+2.9%	-0.1%
Real Estate and Equipment Rental Services	+2.7%	0.0%
Technology, Information and Media	+2.4%	-0.9%
Transportation, Logistics, Supply Chain and Storage	+2.4%	-0.1%
Entertainment Providers	+2.3%	-1.2%
Wholesale	+2.2%	-1.4%
Manufacturing	+2.0%	-0.6%
Oil, Gas, and Mining	+1.6%	-0.5%
Utilities	+1.4%	-0.8%
Construction	+1.2%	-1.0%
Hospitals and Health Care	+1.1%	-0.6%
Consumer Services	+0.6%	-1.3%
Farming, Ranching, Forestry	+0.6%	-1.8%
Education	+0.0%	-0.7%
Government Administration	-0.1%	-0.7%

Source: LinkedIn Economic Graph

Note: (*) 2025 only includes data up to August 2025.

Percent Change in Average Share of Entry-Level Workers by Function and Year (2020-2025*)

Industry	2020-2022	2023-2025*
Accounting	-5.0%	-4.0%
Administrative	1.0%	0.0%
Arts and Design	-1.0%	-2.0%
Business Development	2.0%	-3.0%
Community and Social Services	3.0%	-1.0%
Consulting	10.0%	-2.0%
Customer Success and Support	1.0%	2.0%
Education	0.0%	0.0%
Engineering	-2.0%	0.0%
Finance	1.0%	0.0%
Healthcare Services	3.0%	0.0%
Human Resources	4.0%	-3.0%
Information Technology	0.0%	0.0%
Legal	-4.0%	-6.0%
Marketing	-1.0%	-2.0%
Media and Communication	-2.0%	-3.0%
Military and Protective Services	-3.0%	-2.0%
Operations	0.0%	0.0%
Product Management	-5.0%	-3.0%
Program and Project Management	-2.0%	0.0%
Purchasing	0.0%	-3.0%
Quality Assurance	-2.0%	-2.0%
Real Estate	-4.0%	-5.0%
Research	2.0%	1.0%
Sales	2.0%	1.0%

Source: LinkedIn Economic Graph

Note: (*) 2025 only includes data up to August 2025.

AT VERY LARGE FIRMS, THE AVERAGE SHARE OF ENTRY-LEVEL WORKERS ACROSS JOB FUNCTIONS IS FLAT OR SHRINKING

Finally, we analyze the change in the share of entry-level workers across 26 job functions at very large companies (with over 10,000 employees). Overall, the picture is one of stagnation or decline. From 2020 to 2022, a few job functions saw modest gains, including Consulting (+10%), Human Resources (+4%), and Community and Social Services (+3%), however, most changes were small or negative. In the 2023 to 2025 period, the trend turned more uniformly downward: Legal (-6%), Real Estate (-5%), and Accounting (-4%) experienced the steepest declines, while previously growing areas like Consulting and Human Resources reversed into contraction. Only Customer Success and Support (+2%) and Research (+1%) showed any positive movement in recent years.

Taken together, these shifts suggest that at very large firms, entry-level roles are not expanding and, in many functions, are shrinking, in line with a disproportionately sharp downturn in overall hiring at the largest firms.

FINAL THOUGHTS AND NEXT STEPS

Our data shows that entry-level workers no longer make up a growing share of the workforce across industries and company sizes, even though diamond-shaped structures have yet to appear. This abrupt change likely stems not from demographic shifts—which will eventually reduce the supply of entry-level workers—but from companies choosing to grow or shrink entry-level roles at the same pace as other positions. [Today](#), U.S. entry-level hiring has slowed more than overall hiring, signaling weaker demand for these workers. As a result, entry-level candidates face fewer opportunities to gain experience and move into senior roles. Whether this new alignment between entry-level and senior growth marks healthy rightsizing or a troubling trend remains unclear.

In future reports, we will investigate whether this trend is more pronounced in occupations that are vulnerable to AI disruption, such as software engineering. Additionally, we will explore whether the timing of AI adoption within companies is connected to their reduced hiring of entry-level workers.



Methodology

DATA AND PRIVACY

This body of work represents the world seen through LinkedIn data, drawn from the anonymized and aggregated profile information of LinkedIn's 1+ billion members around the world. As such, it is influenced by how members choose to use the platform, which can vary based on professional, social, and regional culture, as well as overall site availability and accessibility. In publishing these insights from LinkedIn's Economic Graph, we want to provide accurate statistics while ensuring our members' privacy. As a result, all data show aggregated information for the corresponding period following strict data quality thresholds that prevent disclosing any information about specific individuals.

COMPANY SIZE

A company's size in a particular year is determined by the 12-month average number of LinkedIn members who listed an active position in the listed company for the 12-month period up to August of that year. For example, a company's size in 2025 is the 12-month average number of LinkedIn members from August 2024 to August 2025. We split company sizes into 4 main categories: small (less than 200 employees), medium (201-1,000 employees), large (1,001-10,000 employees) and very large (10,001+ employees).

ENTRY-LEVEL AND SENIOR-LEVEL EMPLOYEES

In this report, entry-level employees are defined as LinkedIn members who are within the organizational structure of a company and individually contribute with basic training and guidance. Senior-level employees individually contribute with advanced knowledge and without immediate guidance.