

## Cutting Edge Practices in Workforce Development

**Author: Stephanie Colosi**

Despite the bright glow of prosperity that seems to shine over the Bay Area, thousands of people remain unemployed or *under-employed*; shut out because they lack the right training, skills and connections to employers. As the region's leading job placement and training agency for more than 40 years, [JVS](#) knows the stark truth: without proper training and skills, good jobs and career progression are unobtainable, wages stagnate and families slip into poverty.

Compounding this problem is the lack of good entry-points for skilled, educated individuals without recent work experience. While the technology sector provides high-wage high-growth opportunities to those with the right education and connections, middle-wage jobs with career growth potential are more difficult to find.

For people who have been out of work for 6 months or more, the need for training is urgent. A Brookings study reported that people out of work for this amount of time have only an 11% chance of returning to full employment. JVS's [Skills to Work in Technology](#) programs are designed to help job seekers relaunch their careers with technical skills and job search support. The 4-month Salesforce Administrator Training in particular is helping Bay Area job seekers to bridge gaps that are preventing them from grabbing hold of the first rung on a career ladder within the region's celebrated technology sector.

The free, full-time program [was recently covered in the San Francisco Chronicle](#) and is boasting impressive results: in the first cohort, 95% of graduates received their Salesforce Administrator Certification, and another 6 went on to receive their Salesforce Developer Certification. Unlike similar training programs, JVS goes beyond these certifications by also providing training on the core IT analyst and "people" skills needed to be a highly effective Salesforce Administrator. The training culminates with a paid internship where participants apply their new skills to a workplace setting while also building references and professional contacts. The program is followed by job search support.

Supervisors of the internship sites have been impressed by the Salesforce Admin interns:

"[Our intern] immediately hit the ground running. It was clear that she had been trained really well, and she asked some thoughtful questions around a Salesforce project that we had been struggling with for months that we hadn't been able to address, simply due to a shortage in bandwidth. Our intern took the challenge on immediately, meeting with staff stakeholders independently and devising a solution for us in our sandbox, which we just put into production shortly after she finished her internship. We were truly grateful to serve as a host site for JVS and appreciate the true amount of progress our intern made in such a short period of time." – Rolland Janairo, Director of Finance and Administration at World Savvy

JVS selected the Salesforce Administrator training as its first Skills to Work in Technology program based on two main criteria: 1) growing and ubiquitous demand for this role in a variety of industries, 2) ability to successfully train clients without in-depth technical backgrounds.

Partnerships are key. The Salesforce Academic Alliance supports the program through supplying curriculum. JVS has also enlisted a Technology Leadership Council composed of representatives from PayPal, Salesforce, Facebook and others to guide the program. Employers regularly interact with the participants throughout the program, giving them exposure to professionals with a range of positions and seniority levels. These professionals offer career advice, demos, technical lectures and discussions on the Salesforce Ecosystem (a term Salesforce uses to describe the mix of Salesforce, companies who

use Salesforce, companies who develop apps for Salesforce, and consultants). These professionals also conduct mock interviews and network with the participants.

The participants are long-term unemployed and come with a range of experience: sales, IT, marketing, operations, office management, technical support and other areas of expertise that, when combined with Salesforce Administration, would produce a very marketable job candidate.

By the end of the program, participants are able to walk and carry themselves as Salesforce Administrators. The first cohort was able to show their expertise at Salesforce's Dreamforce conference last fall, where they were recognized as peers within the Salesforce community. The confidence boost helps, especially for people who have been out of work for 6+ months, and will translate to ongoing networking, interviews and promising career opportunities.