



Seven bright-outlook careers

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Every year, the Occupational Information Network, or O*Net, lists dozens of emerging careers. Developed for the U.S. Department of Labor, O*Net recognizes these "bright outlook occupations" because they offer some of the strongest job opportunities and best career prospects. Here are eight bright-outlook careers from the July 2011 O*Net update.

Sustainability Specialist

As companies assess and reassess their impact on the environment, they must rely on professionals like sustainability specialists to help them devise more energy- and resource-efficient ways to perform tasks. A bachelor's degree in environmental sciences, environmental engineering or a related field is required; a master's degree is desirable. Median annual salary was \$62,450 in 2010, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Search Marketing Strategist

Online marketing has rapidly transformed how businesses reach customers, and it shows no signs of slowing down. Search marketing strategists develop search-engine optimization (SEO) campaigns to increase visibility of and drive qualified traffic to a company's website, among other tasks. A B.A. or B.S. in marketing

or IT is required. Experience in developing Web pages and SEO is helpful. The median annual search marketing strategist salary was \$79,240 in 2010, according to the BLS.

Document-Management Specialist

The downsizing trend has created job opportunities for document-management specialists. Understaffed IT and administrative staff rely on document-management specialists to alleviate bottlenecks caused by inefficient document systems. A bachelor's degree in business administration is required, along with experience in information systems and several years of experience working in record-keeping or other administrative roles. The 2010 median document-management specialist salary was \$79,240, according to the BLS.

Validation Engineer

A validation engineer tests systems used in manufacturing to make sure that complicated machinery and processes work as accurately as possible. Much of the job growth will coincide with the growing green sector, as validation engineers will be needed to design and test new green technology. A bachelor's or master's degree in manufacturing engineering and several years as an entry-level validation technician are usually required. Validation engineers earned a

median salary of \$90,270 in 2010, according to the BLS.

Geneticist

In 2003, the Human Genome Project inaugurated a new field of recording, reading and interpreting genetic information that can lead to illness and disease. As the field grows, so do opportunities and new jobs for geneticists — from laboratory geneticists who specialize in DNA testing to clinical geneticists who hold medical degrees. The median annual salary was \$68,220 in 2010, according to the BLS. Salary, which can vary widely, is most often determined by academic degree: M.S., Ph.D. or M.D., according to the American Society of Human Genetics.

Patient Representative

The growing complexity and fragmentation of health care has created many new jobs advocating on behalf of patients. Patient representatives, also called patient advocates, help patients and their families to understand health-care options and assist them in navigating the overwhelming insurance maze. The newly created National Association of Healthcare Advocacy Consultants states that most patient representatives make the jump from nursing or social work. However, an increasing number of two- and four-year colleges are offering programs in patient advocacy. The BLS

reported median annual pay at \$30,460 in 2010.

Ophthalmic Medical Technologist

These technologists work under an ophthalmologist to obtain vision measurements for glasses and to administer eye exercises. They also take medical histories from patients, conduct diagnostic tests and provide contact-lens instruction. A two-year degree in ophthalmic medical technology, or two years as an ophthalmic assistant, is required. Salary depends on experience and the clinical setting. The median annual salary was \$38,460 in 2010, according to the BLS.

This career, like many new health-care jobs, results from siphoning off tasks from higher-paid professionals, says Laurence Shatkin, career information expert and author of *The Sequel: How to Change Your Career Without Starting Over*. "The trend of off-loading tasks onto lower-paid workers and then professionalizing those jobs into careers is likely to continue as a cost-saving measure in health care," he tells Monster.com.

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