

RESEARCH INSIGHTS PAPER

The 2022 State of Splunk Careers Report

Global Survey Highlights the Positive Career Impact of Splunk Upskilling

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Executive Summary

Forging Greater Career Stability, Amidst Increasingly Unstable Times

At the closing of 2022, as businesses and organizations continue to make their return to pre-pandemic levels of activity, new business-climate challenges emerge, such as rising inflation, deteriorating financial market stability, and recession concerns (which we will not debate whether, at the time of this writing, the global economy is officially now experiencing). All these factors give rise to a continued need for employees to strengthen their footholds around job stability and potential earning power. Conversely, companies will continue to maximize their ability to unlock the economic value of their data, produce enhanced analytics, and gain efficiencies via automation. Those tools that can provide these capabilities benefit both the enterprise they service, and the staff trained to use them. The hypothesis tested in this research is that as IT administrators, cybersecurity professionals, developers, and business analysts increase their proficiency with such solutions, the more they can positively affect their careers and organizations.

The 2022 Splunk User Career Impact Report is the latest entry in a continuing effort by Splunk, in partnership with TechTarget's Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG), to understand how advanced data skills affect Splunk practitioners' career prospects. This third and expanded survey of Splunk practitioners includes the perspectives of 609 employed Splunk practitioners, up from 383 in 2021. The survey covered earning power, promotability, and proficiency, and it shows us in no uncertain terms that businesses continue to value employees that can use data to answer business questions. Quantitative data captured in the survey was complemented by qualitative anecdotes reported by respondents and quoted throughout this report. For more details, see the *Research Methodology* section at the conclusion of this report, which includes some significant distinctions in demographic shifts.

Key Findings

- **Splunk users ascribe numerous benefits to learning Splunk:**
 - Between two-thirds and three-quarters of users explicitly credit learning Splunk with increasing their job security, boosting their influence among their teams, changing their professional focus to a more interesting area, and compounding their earning power.
 - The most proficient Splunk users are more likely to benefit. They are: 37% more likely to report an uptick in influence, 37% more likely to have earned a promotion, 31% more likely to have changed their focus area to something more interesting, and 28% more likely to credit their hiring to their Splunk capabilities.
 - 86% of all respondents feel their competencies with Splunk are helping them keep up with inflation.
- **In addition to direct (causal) benefits, Splunk use correlates to impressive career progress (and particularly among those most proficient):**
 - Splunk users across IT, application development, and cybersecurity all earn a premium relative to secondary research-driven benchmarks.
 - Splunk users of a **high proficiency** (compared to those with an **adequate/beginner level of proficiency with Splunk**):
 - Earn a 48% premium relative to their peers in the same age cohort.

- Are 26% more likely to have received a merit-based increase in the last 12 months.
 - Have seen a 50% larger pay increase, on average.
 - Receive more recognition in terms of being selected to work on special projects.
- **Skilling up with Splunk is correlated to increased feelings of satisfaction, security, and their value to the organization:**
 - Splunk users of a high proficiency (compared with those with an adequate/beginner level of proficiency with Splunk):
 - Are 2.4x more likely to be very satisfied with their job.
 - Are 3.3x more likely to strongly agree that their employer values them appropriately.
 - Are 4.2x more likely to be very confident in their ability to find suitable employment quickly, if needed.

Inflationary Concerns Stoke the Flames of Economic Unease and Job Insecurity

The global economy is on the precipice of a recession (some would argue it has already begun). You don't have to hold a PhD in economics to realize that consumers and businesses alike are experiencing a rise in inflation. You need only compare the surging costs of the same goods and services purchased over the last year. This trend essentially defines inflation—the consistent, gradual rise in prices for goods and services throughout the economy. The pains associated with growing inflation are shared by both corporate America and the average consumer alike. At the consumer level, family budgets tighten and disposable income decreases (as costs rise), along with ensuing adversity. On the corporate side of the fence, the rise in material costs of goods and labor, along with rising interest rates (and therefore rising cost of borrowing), meant to slow down inflation, often result in decreased hiring, as well as a rise in cost of goods/services produced and sold.

In July 2022 in the US, the unemployment rate dropped to 3.5%, returning to pre-pandemic levels. However, inflation increased 8.5% over the prior 12 months.¹ This rise in costs, paired with shrinking economic output (as measured by GDP), may signal the end of the job-seeker's ability to command competitive salaries widely enjoyed during the Great Resignation of 2021. Where industries were once feverishly trying to recover from the widespread unemployment and job transitioning during the pandemic, rising inflationary concerns, compounded by (still persistent, if not diminished) supply chain challenges, and the adverse, downstream effects of the war in the Ukraine have created a confluence of expensive pricing challenges to businesses. And these challenges are being felt today.

Many companies, especially those less mature and/or lacking significant capital reserves, that survived the pandemic are now finding themselves at the mercy of these current economic challenges, resulting in decreased hiring or, worse, a quiet yet growing number of layoffs. The following list represents just a handful of the growing list of (technology) companies that have experienced layoffs (as a percent of their workforce): *Data Robot* 26% (AI), *SafeGraph* 25% (AI/ML), *OneTrust* 25% (cybersecurity), *Robinhood* 30% (1,013 - FinTech), *Snapchat* 20% (multimedia IM tech), and *MasterClass* 20% (EdTech).²

Making the Connection Between Advanced Data Skills and Competitive Compensation

Rare is the worker (in any industry, any position) that is not interested in earning more money. While job stability is nice, the ability to earn more as an employee (either in a current or future role) is far more alluring. Those employees who manage to invest in themselves, to always push learning, to hone their crafts, and become more efficient in their daily routines, will almost always find themselves with greater responsibility, job stability, and earning potential. One of the surest ways to accomplish this is to be at the forefront of maximizing whatever business tools and resources are available; especially when they help expedite processes, reduce potential for human error, and increase analytical capabilities. For those in tech-centric roles, specifically IT administration, application development, cybersecurity, and analytics, Splunk usage and certification provide this sort of advantage. Within the context of this research, 61% of all respondents used Splunk primarily for security operations, while 60% used it for IT operations.

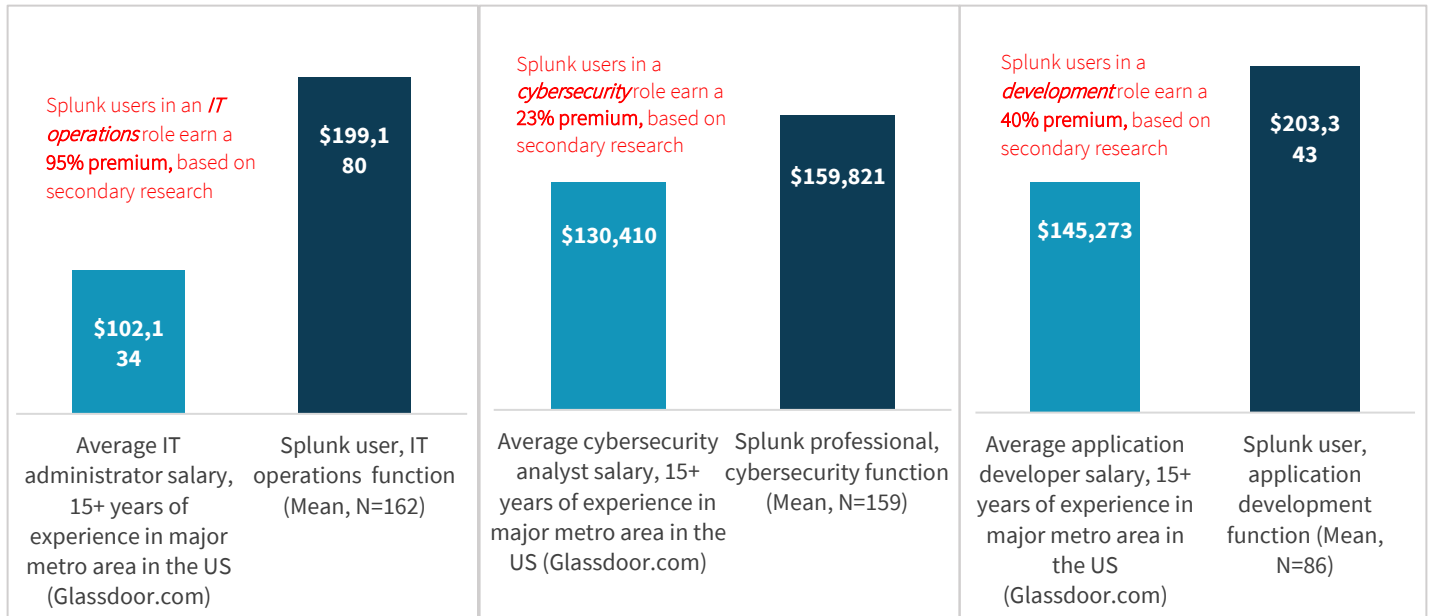
Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) research shows that there is a distinct link between Splunk users and competitive salaries when compared against the average U.S. salary of similar personas. When reviewing the following data (see Figures 1-5), it is important to recall that the Splunk usage data essentially reflects a *correlation* with increased compensation, not a definitive *causation* to the comparative differences in compensation.

¹ Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Economic News Release, [Employment Situation Summary](#), October 2022.

² Source: Crunchbase News, [Tech Layoffs In 2022: The U.S. Companies That Have Cut Jobs](#), October 2022.

Figure 1. Splunk Users Tend to Earn More Than Their Generalist Peers, Based on Secondary Research

What is your current total annual compensation inclusive of base pay (salary or regular hourly compensation), variable compensation (overtime, commission, etc.), and bonuses (\$US)? (Mean)



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

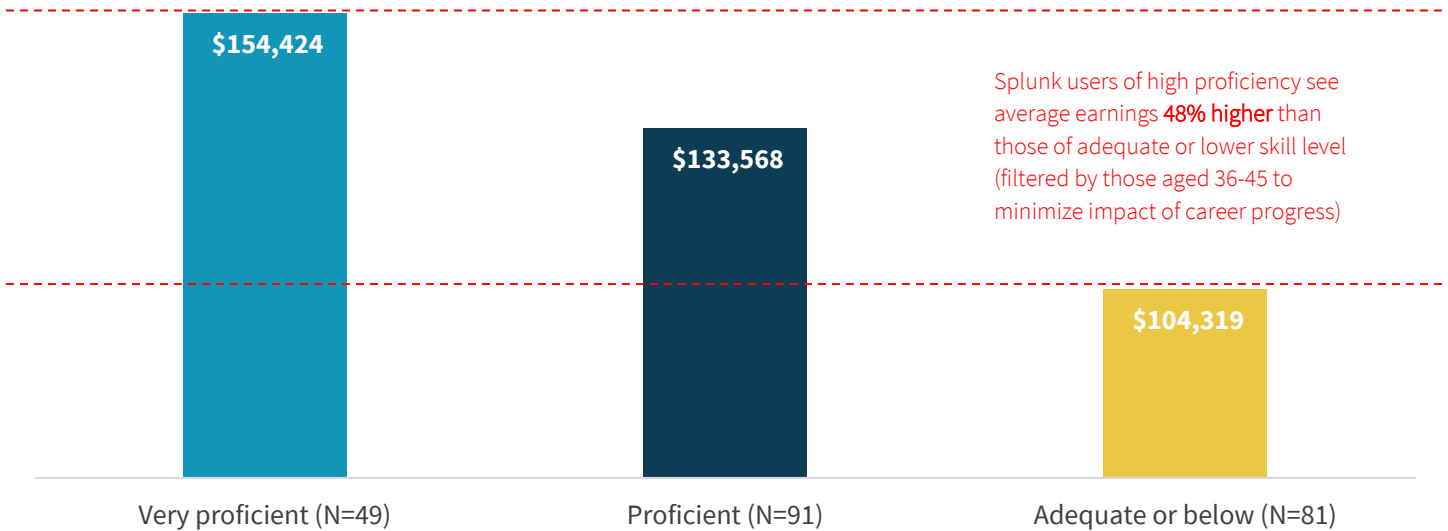
Data reveals that amongst the three primary personas targeted for this research (IT operations, cybersecurity, and application development), those who were Splunk users enjoyed, on average, a 53% premium on compensation compared to the U.S. average for similar job functions. Those in IT operations roles that used Splunk were exceedingly more likely to enjoy higher compensation, earning 95% more than the U.S. average IT operations' salary (\$199,180 with Splunk > \$102,134 U.S. IT operations average).

Salary Distinctions Increase When Levels of Splunk Proficiency Are Factored In

The data indicating employees' potential to garner more competitive salaries extends beyond whether or not an employee uses Splunk. It also dives deeper into exploring salary weighed against the levels of proficiency by Splunk users. Survey questions were asked to assess skill level and proficiency with Splunk, with responses categorized as one of three: very proficient (n=124), proficient (n=287), or adequate or below (n=198). Unsurprisingly, those respondents between 36 and 45 years of age (filtered by this age group to minimize standard deviation in salary for those older versus those younger) designated as *most proficient* were found to enjoy earnings 48% higher than those of adequate or lower skill level (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Skilling up with Splunk: Compensation Trends

What is your current total annual compensation inclusive of base pay (salary or regular hourly compensation), variable compensation (overtime, commission, etc.), and bonuses (\$US)? (Mean, age 36 to 45)



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Confidence in Splunk Competencies Quells Concerns Around Inflation

As inflation continues to rise, so too does market instability. With this instability often follows organizations’ tightening their belts and needing to find cost savings where they are able, such as a reduction of expenses, often resulting in layoffs. In August 2021, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that 314,000 people within the “professional and business services” space were laid off. In August of 2022, this had increased to 364,000, or a raise of almost 16%.³

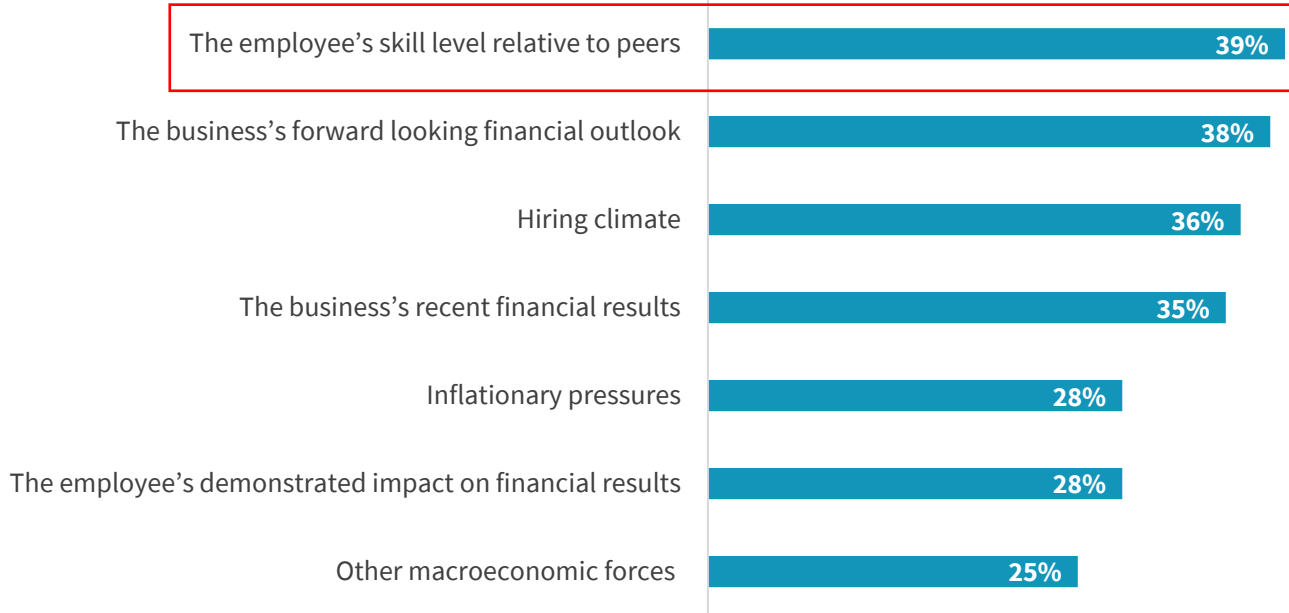
While there is no silver bullet available to employees to defend themselves against the prospect of being laid off, vaunted training and enhanced skill sets do help to position said employees as being more attractive and less expendable. Research from Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) validates the premise that one of the prevailing considerations that employers take into consideration for salary increases is, in fact, evaluating employees’ skill levels relative to their peers. This was the top response (39%) when respondents were posed with the question, “Which of the following factors do you believe your organization evaluates most closely when formulating compensation adjustments for its employees?” (see Figure 3). That being said, more than four-fifths of all Splunk users indicated that their employer values their Splunk-based skills. However, those most proficient strongly agree 3.3x more often than their less-skilled peers that their company recognized this benefit.

“Splunk as my primary skill changed my career dramatically. It helped me explore a lot and learn many things...I continue to explore Splunk [training].”

³ Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Economic News Release, [Layoffs and discharges levels and rates by industry and region, seasonally adjusted](#), October 2022.

Figure 3. Identifying the Principal Considerations for Compensation Adjustments

Generally speaking, do you think your Splunk skills are helping you earn a salary that keeps pace with increases in cost of living? (Percent of respondents, N=609)

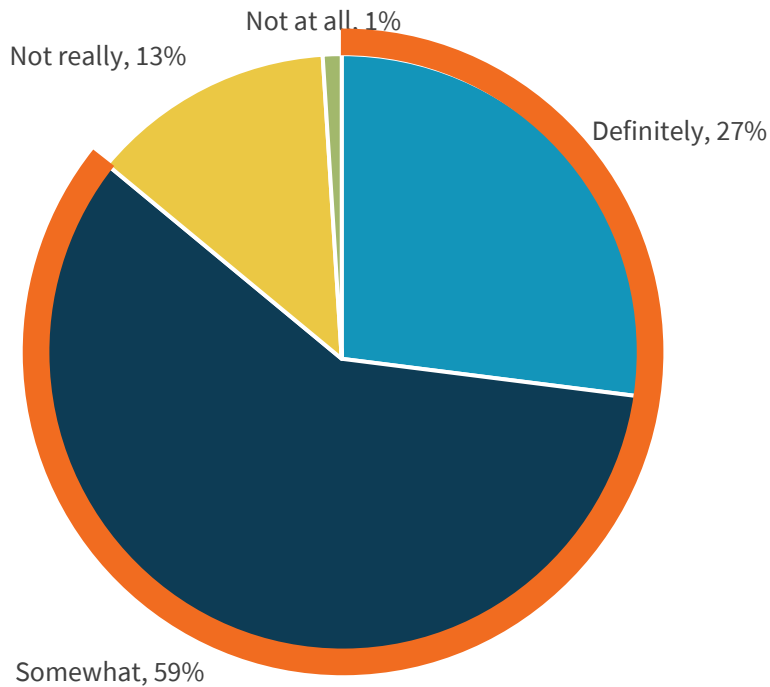


Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Splunk users believed that their competencies are a potential differentiator between other candidates and provide more insulation from being laid off. The significance of this response is that it highlights one of the few variables to compensation and salary that employees can affect. All other responses were dictated by corporate performance or external/economic factors. Additionally, respondents firmly believe that Splunk skills benefit compensation considerations.

Figure 4. Do Splunk Skills Help Keep Salary Commensurate with Increased Cost of Living?

Generally speaking, do you think your Splunk skills are helping you earn a salary that keeps pace with increases in cost of living? (Percent of respondents, N=609)

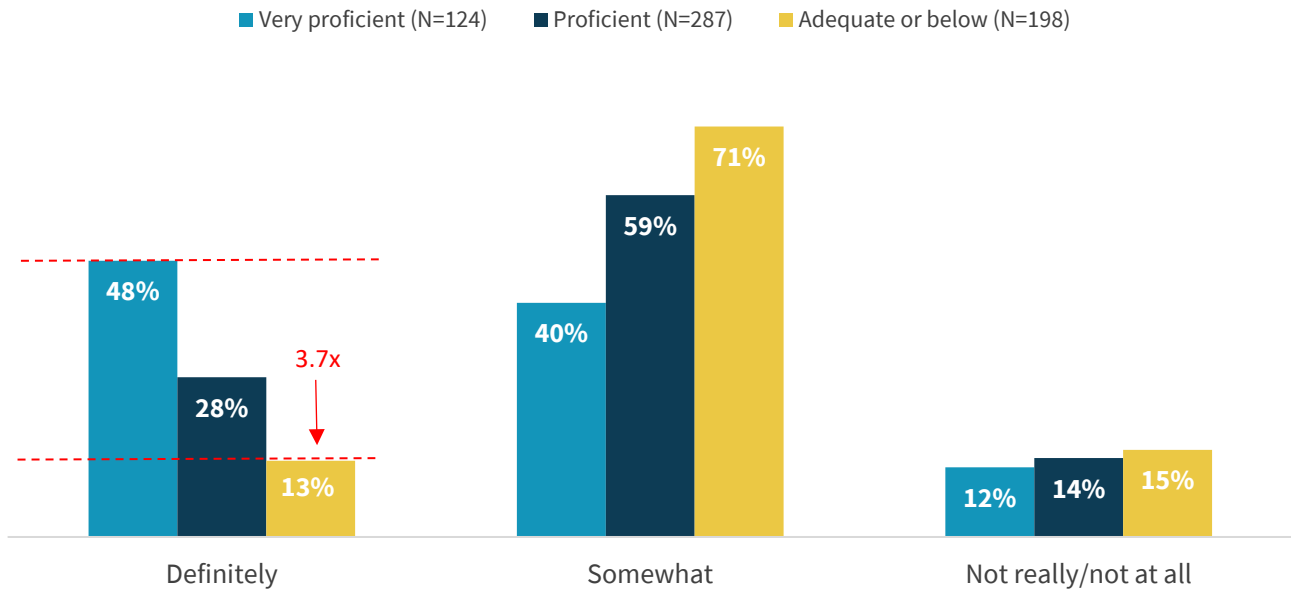


Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

When asked, 86% of all respondents felt their competencies in Splunk are helping them (definitely, somewhat) earn a salary that keeps pace with the cost of living in a material way (see Figure 4). This is an affirmation that Splunk users (especially those most proficient) are enjoying a definitive ROI and are better positioned to ride out the mounting inflationary pressures and recession-based anxiety. Those that are most proficient “definitely” see these skills as helping to keep salary levels competitive 3.7x more frequently than those with lesser skills, even as inflation continues to rise (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Combating Inflationary Concerns with Competitive Competencies

Generally speaking, do you think your Splunk skills are helping you earn a salary that keeps pace with increases in cost of living? (Percent of respondents)



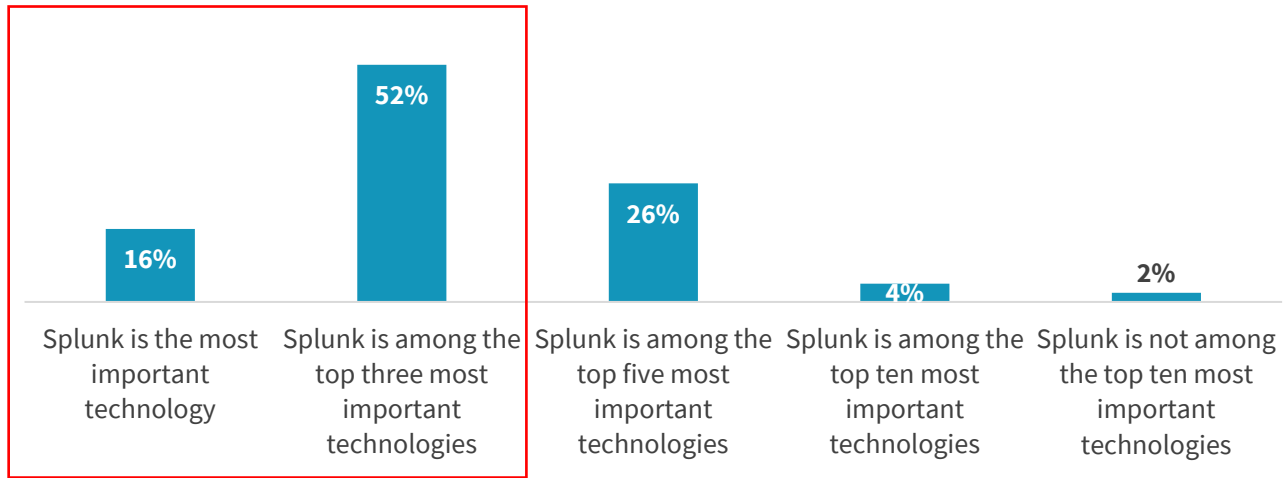
Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Identifying the Skills and Benefits Enjoyed with Splunk Proficiency

Up to this point, attention has been placed on IT personas being able to achieve greater job stability and potentially enjoy more competitive compensation. Now we shine a light on the benefits, competencies, and skill sets enjoyed as Splunk users or via Splunk certifications. Before quantifying the benefits and varying levels or degrees of success, it’s worth reiterating that the two most heavily engaged Splunk end user personas are cybersecurity and IT operations. Splunk solutions offer the potential to enhance security, drive resiliency, and unlock innovation at scale. Their value resonates across the market, as evidenced by over two-thirds of all respondents that indicate that Splunk is one of the top-three most important technologies to master (see Figure 6), while those most proficient are 2.6x more likely to say it is number one.

Figure 3. Ranking the Value of Splunk Mastery

Where do you rank Splunk in importance to your career relative to other technologies you must continue to learn and master? (Percent of respondents, N=609)



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

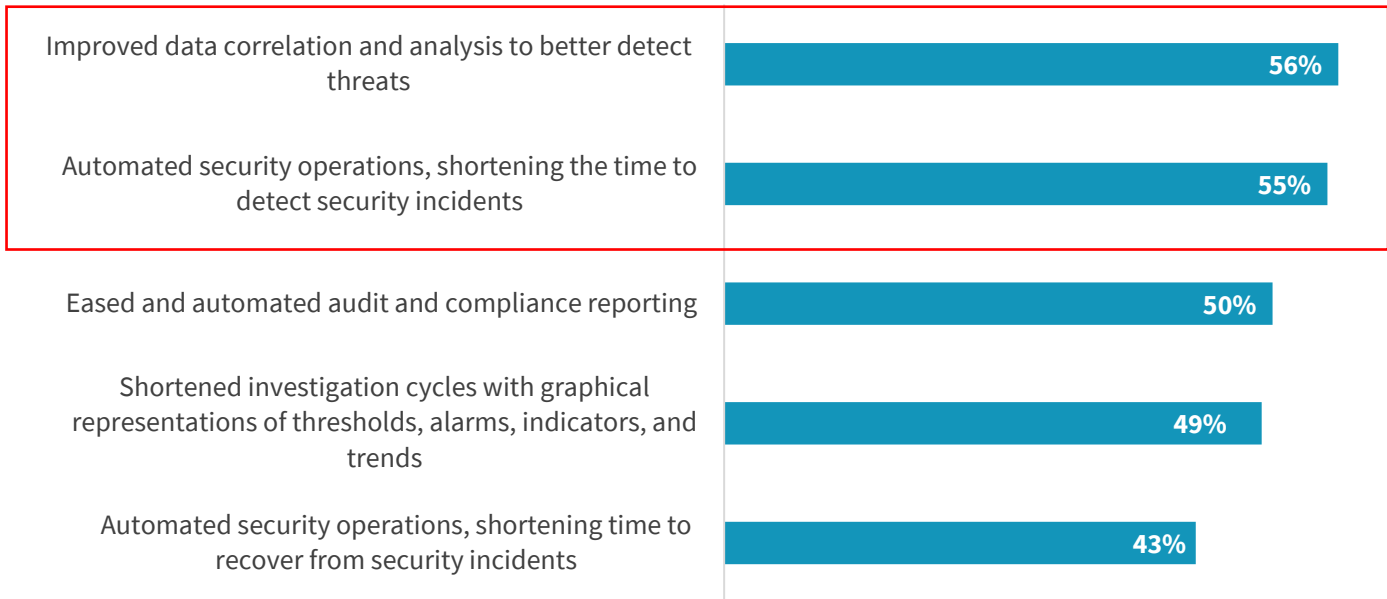
Strengthening Security and Observability

Suffice to say, in the IT world, minimizing exposure to risk and threats is paramount. As threat landscapes continue to evolve, maximizing capabilities to detect and analyze potential threats is, therefore, crucial. To this effect, when asked how Splunk helps security personnel (n=374) positively impact the business, 56% of respondents felt that Splunk improved data correlation and analysis to better detect threats, followed closely by the 55% of respondents who felt that Splunk’s automated security operations shorten the time to detect security incidents (see Figure 7).

“[I] dabbled with Splunk as a pen tester/red teamer for reporting, which got me moved to threat hunting [in] Detection Engineering. As a result, Splunk has molded my career in the last 6-7 years.”

Figure 7. Splunk Solutions’ Attractive Capabilities in Cybersecurity Use Cases

**How is Splunk helping security operations personnel positively impact the business?
(Percent of respondents, N=374, multiple responses accepted)**



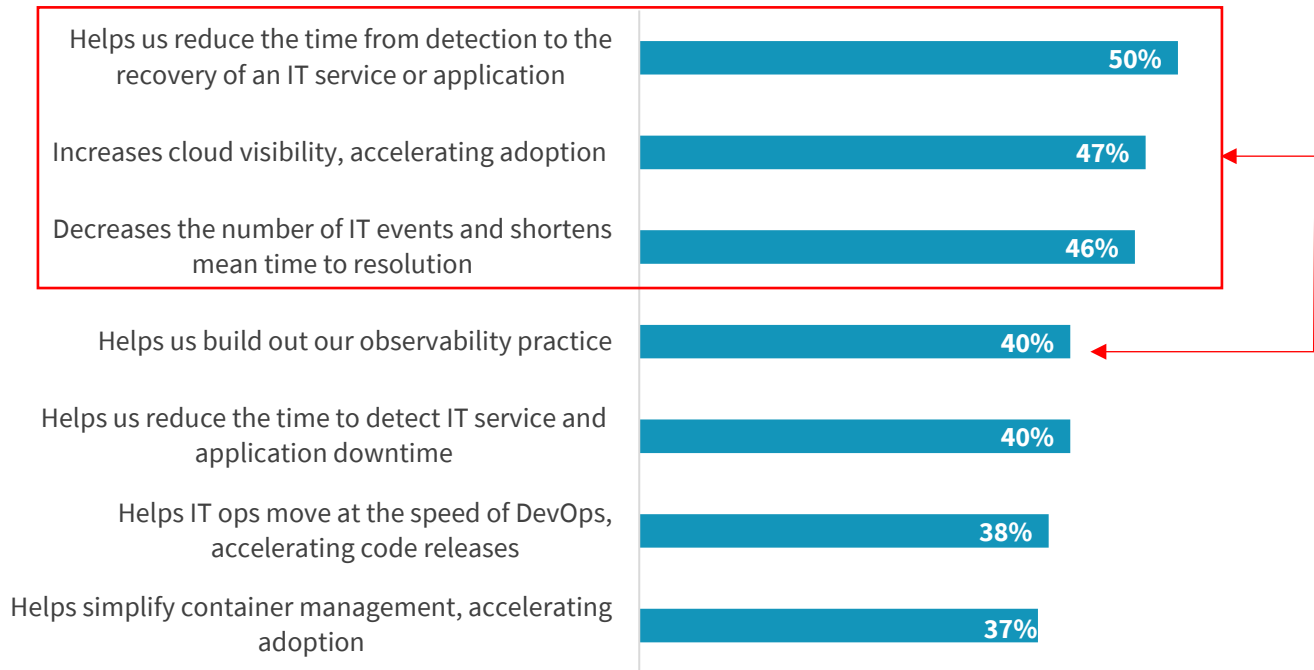
Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Splunk tools not only increase organizations’ ability to improve their security posture but also have the potential to help IT operations (n=367) elevate observability. By improving observability, IT operations teams increase data quality while reducing the potential for data-incident downtime. Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) found that 40% of IT operations respondents indicated Splunk is helping to specifically build out their observability practice. However, it is also positively impacting elements associated with observability, such as reducing the time from detection to recovery of an IT service or application (50%) and decreasing volume of IT events and reducing their resolution time (46%) (see Figure 8).

“It’s given me the ability to easily show the value of the data we are collecting in Splunk.”

Figure 8. Improving Observability and Other IT Operations Advantages

**How is Splunk helping IT operations personnel positively impact the business?
(Percent of respondents, N=367, multiple responses accepted)**

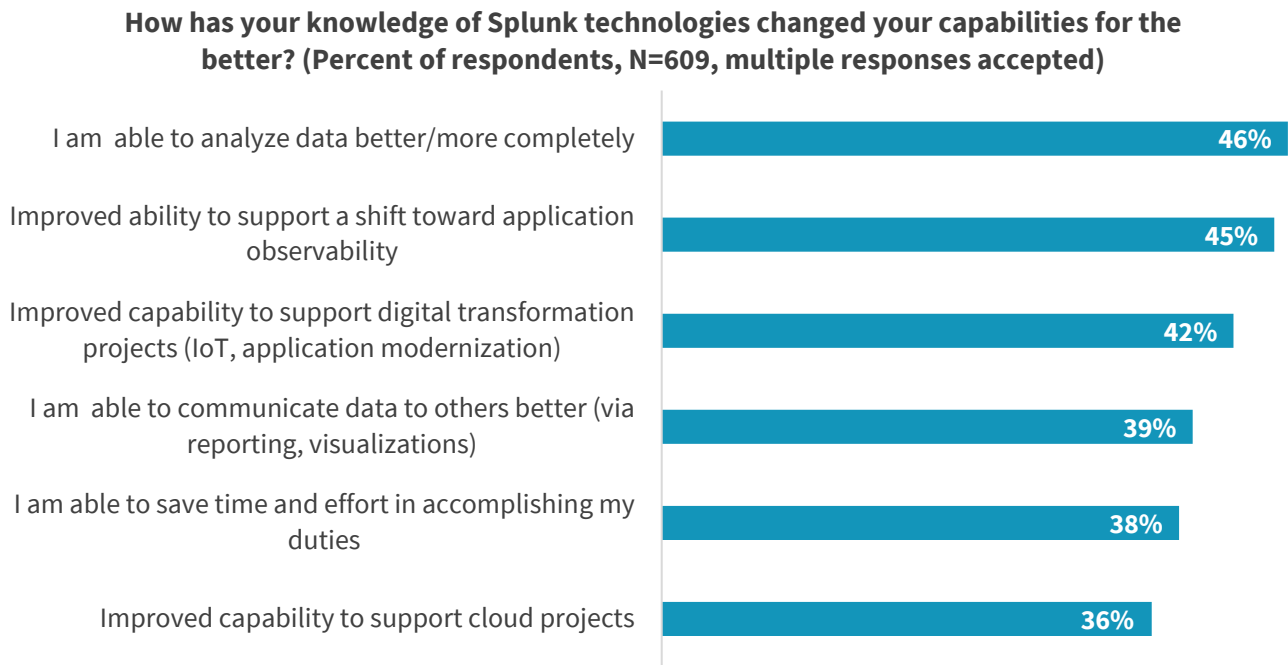


Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Improved Skills Equal Improved Performance

The benefits of Splunk training do not simply reside with employees, of course, but also with the organizations they service. Supporting certification, edification, and training around Splunk solutions strengthen organizations’ workforces as well as corporate initiatives and departmental objectives. For example, top among responses as to how respondents’ knowledge of Splunk technologies changed capabilities for the better, Splunk is often seen as having improved users’ ability to analyze data (46%). Positioning users to better support transformative initiatives in the areas of observability (45%) and digital transformation (42%), amongst others, however, were also top responses reported by respondents surveyed (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Practical Applications of Splunk Skills Beneficial to IT Initiatives



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

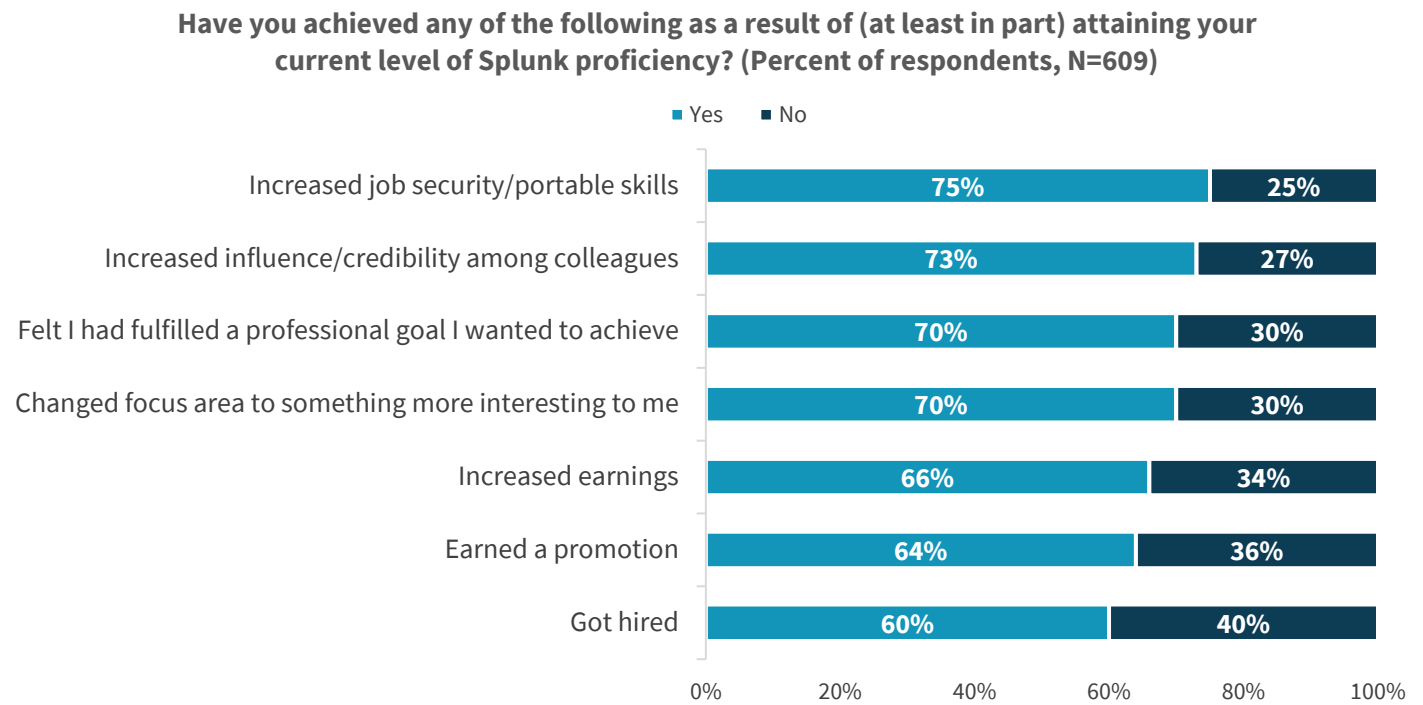
The comprehensive, enterprise-wide benefits of Splunk were also reaffirmed by 89% of all respondents who indicated that they believe their company is definitely, or probably, in a stronger competitive position as a result of their Splunk usage. In short, Splunk frequently drives IT, security, and application development benefits, which combine to put the organization at a competitive advantage. As is usually the case in business, organizations investing in best-in-class tools and talent tend to outperform their peers. IT, cybersecurity, and application development professionals today must know how to ingest, analyze, and make effective decisions based on data. Splunk practitioners are confident that they have this skill, that they drive benefit for their employers, and that employers recognize this benefit.

Increased Career Satisfaction and Trajectory

Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) asked respondents what direct benefits they have seen in their careers as a result of their Splunk capabilities. The most frequently reported benefits relate to job security: the respondent’s effectiveness and their portable skills (see Figure 10). With recession concerns riding inflationary coattails, increased job security will continue to flourish, along with any effort that helps strengthen employee’s viability.

“Mastering Splunk has pushed me into an Architect position within our group that manages our Splunk infrastructure.”

Figure 10. Career Benefits Attributed to Splunk Skills



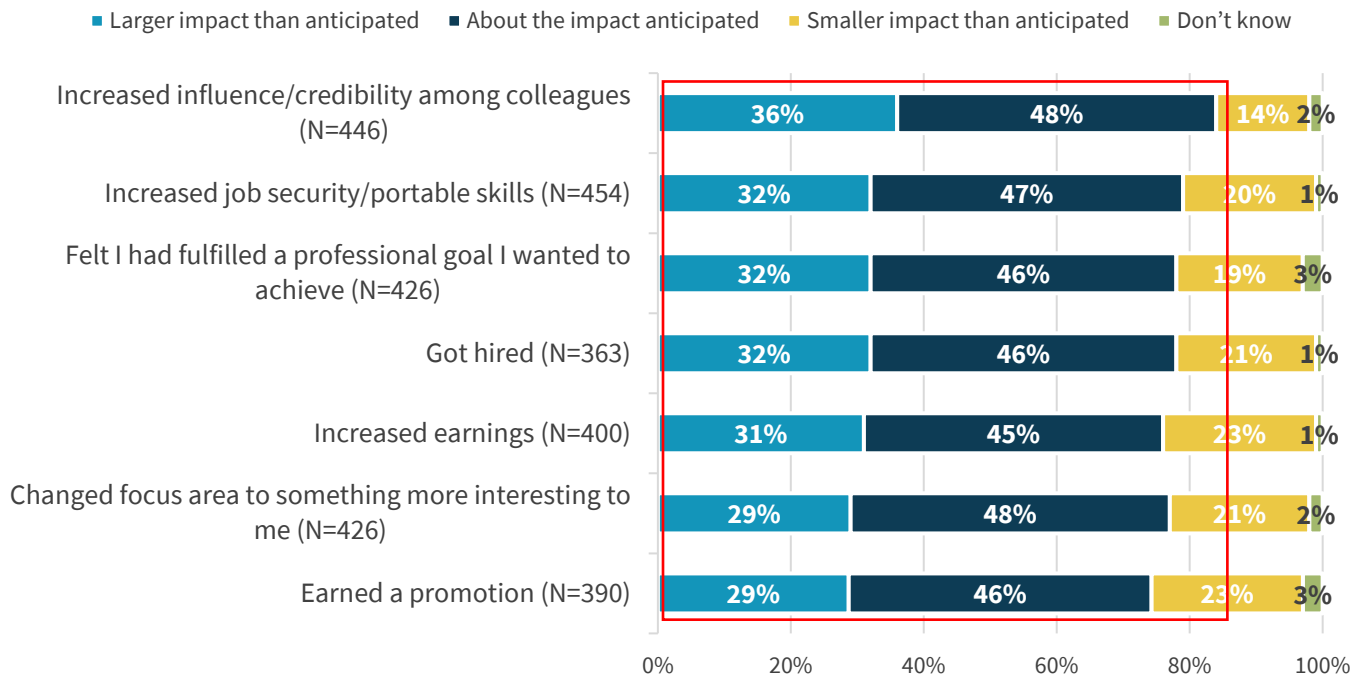
Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

By improving their ability to complete day-to-day tasks, many employees are positioned to tackle new and more interesting tasks. For example, 70% of practitioners said their knowledge of Splunk empowered them to change their professional focus to something more interesting to them. Similarly, 70% felt they had fulfilled a professional goal to which they aspired.

However, respondents are not only finding benefits because of their Splunk knowledge, but the magnitude of the benefits is exceeding their initial expectations. Looking in aggregate at the top seven varying benefits being achieved, on average, 82% of all respondents found that learning Splunk either exceeded or met their expectations tied to career outcomes (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Splunk Certification and Training Delivering Beyond Expectations

Earlier you reported learning Splunk has helped you professionally in the areas below. For each, was the impact of learning Splunk bigger, smaller, or about what you expected? (Percent of respondents)



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

From the perspective of career impact, the top response of Influence/credibility among colleagues is particularly attractive, as this represents another ROI that employees can achieve individually. This, in itself, is a recognition of an employee’s commitment to expanding their knowledge base and competencies (which fundamentally is embraced by any organization striving for success). As previously discussed, data reflects that how employees’ skill sets are perceived against their peers is invariably one of the main contributing factors to compensation considerations. Positively affecting influence positively affects perception.

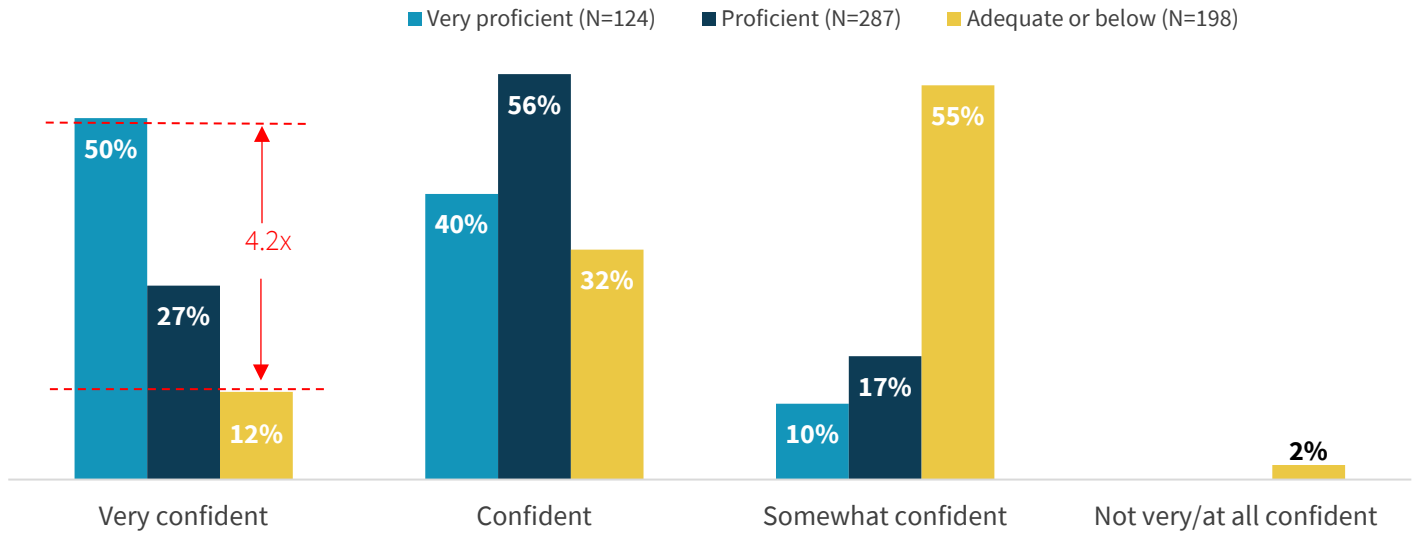
Confidence to Make Career Changes

Whether in hopes of testing the job-market waters and parlaying valuable IT skills, swept up in the momentum of the Great Resignation, preparing for an inflation-driven recession, or perhaps (sadly) having been laid-off or involuntarily discharged, those individuals with Splunk training have a confidence in their ability to find new employment if/when the time comes. The research shows that the value of the Splunk skill sets is portable. While 72% of all Splunk users were either confident or very confident in their ability to find a comparable job, if necessary, highly proficient Splunk users are 4.2x more likely to be very confident (see Figure 12).

“Splunk has provided me the confidence to come up and solve new queries for customer requirements.”

Figure 4. Splunk-user Proficiency Versus Confidence in Ability to Find New Work

If you were to leave your current job (voluntarily or involuntarily) today, how confident are you in your ability to find a new job with comparable/better responsibilities and compensation within a 3-month period? (Percent of respondents, N=609)



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Conclusion

Splunk solutions have proven enterprise-wide IT advantages, from enhanced, automated security capabilities to expanded IT and application observability, and so much more. While such capabilities are undeniably advantageous to corporations, learning how to maximize Splunk solutions benefits the employee as well. Investing in employees’ skill sets is investing in a stronger workforce. Conversely, investing the time and resources to better one’s competencies around best-in-class solutions, such as Splunk, clearly correlates to quantifiable gains for personnel.

The ability to transfer the valuable Splunk skill sets gained at one organization to another organization creates a significantly broader range of suitable roles and companies, at competitive offerings for employees proficient in Splunk. It helps ensure these employees’ attractiveness both as internal and external candidates and factors positively into their future earnings potential. However, it again should be re-emphasized that obtaining high proficiency in Splunk products is not a guarantee of higher future earnings but is rather a foundation to build upon from the perspective of career learning/advancement of valuable skills.

In such turbulent times, in such a competitive environment, it behooves companies and individuals alike to prepare themselves for the uncertainty of things to come. But what does seem certain is that proficiency in Splunk tools helps to place IT security, operations, and developers on a path toward success for both companies and employees, alike.

Research Methodology

Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) conducted a comprehensive survey of Splunk practitioners residing in North America (83%), Europe (3%), Asia Pacific (12%), Latin America (1%), and the Middle East (1%) between June 1, 2022 and June 20, 2022. ESG distributed the survey, along with Splunk, which promoted it as well within the Splunk community. Key industries represented include technology, manufacturing, finance, construction, and communications and media, among others. All respondents were provided an incentive to complete the survey in the form of cash awards and/or cash equivalents.

Much of the data in this report focuses on employed practitioners (N=609 total respondents). Additionally, respondents reported that they were currently using Splunk products. The margin of error on a sample size of N=609 is + or - 4 percentage points.

Disparate circumstances and conditions over the last three years have made a true apples-to-apples, year-over-year analysis challenging. Not to say the data doesn't exist; it does and is robust. However, it is worth noting the world-shaking changes between the climates of pre-pandemic 2020, mid-pandemic/great-resignation 2021, and "post" pandemic 2022, plus historic inflation (and burgeoning recessionary attributes) reflects a condensed, hyper-turbulence as not yet seen this century (even the Great Recession didn't have to compete simultaneously with a global pandemic and foreign aggression reeking of Cold War consequences). That being said, there were specific demographic shifts captured in the research, which too, lends itself more toward an apples-to-oranges YoY reflection. Some of these shifts were the following:

1. More North American-centric respondent base: 63% in 2020, 55% in 2021, 83% in 2022.
2. Younger respondents: 32% over 45 years old in 2020, 16% in 2021, 3% in 2022.
3. Less relevant work experience: 41% with 20+ years of experience in 2020, 14% in 2021, 2% in 2022.
4. Less frequent Splunk usage: 57% used Splunk continuously in 2020, 42% in 2021, 17% in 2022.
5. Less Splunk experience: 43% had 5+ years of experience with Splunk in 2020, 22% in 2021, 26% in 2022.
6. Different organization profile: 44% worked at companies with <5,000 employees in 2020, 44% in 2021, 84% in 2022.

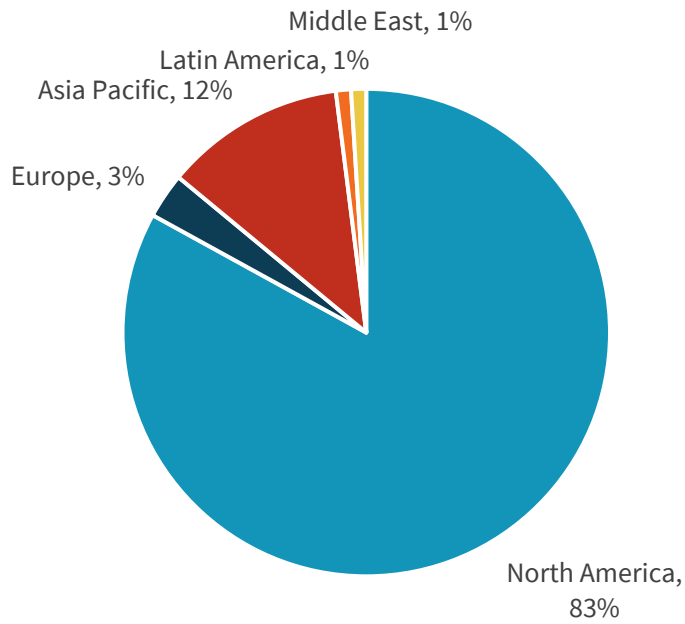
For these reasons, this paper focuses on the current state of the market when it comes to the views of Splunk practitioners, rather than heavily analyzing shifts observed year-over-year.

Figures 13 - 16 detail the demographics of the respondent base discussed in this report.

Note: Totals in figures and tables throughout this report may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 13. Location of Represented Splunk Practitioners

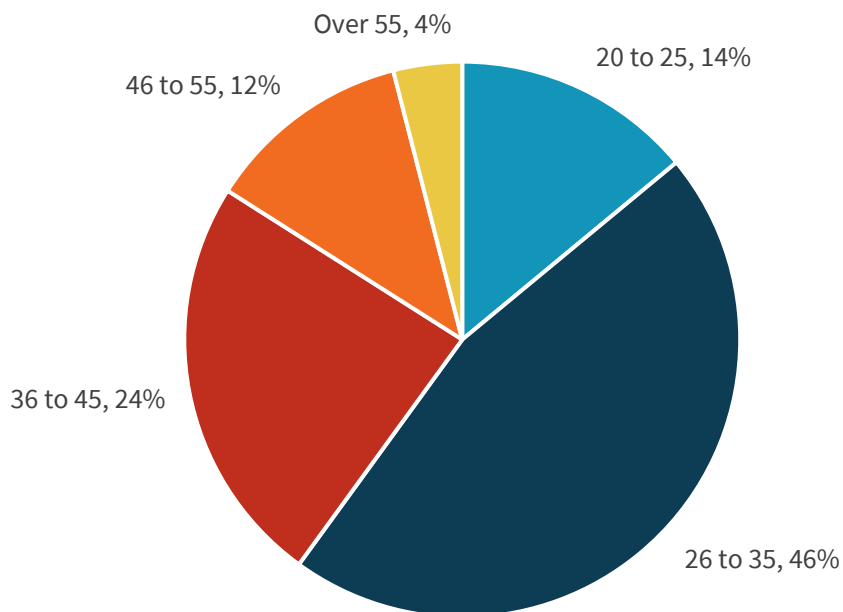
Respondents by region. (Percent of respondents, N=609)



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Figure 54. Respondents by Age

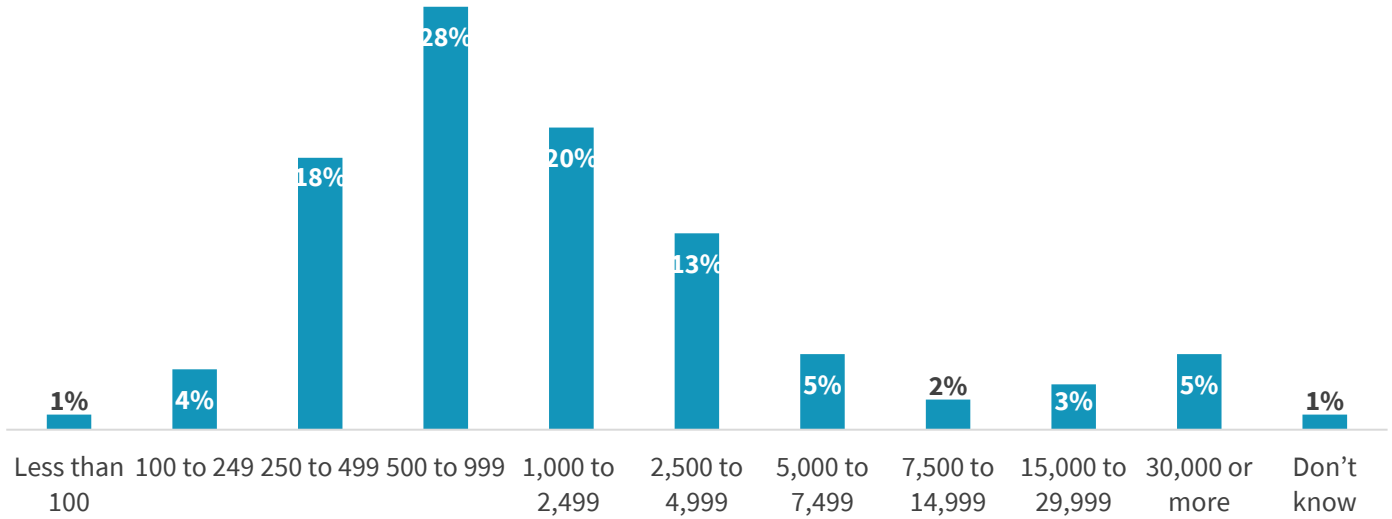
Please select your age group. (Percent of respondents, N=385)



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Figure 65. Respondents by Company Size

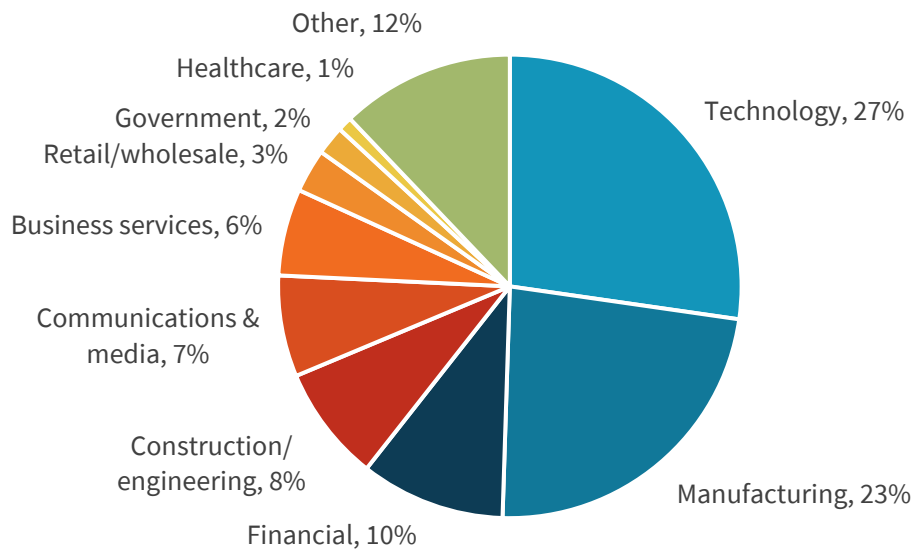
How many total employees does your company have worldwide?(Percent of respondents, N=593)



Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

Figure 76. Respondents by Industry

What is your company's primary industry? (Percent of respondents, N=593)




Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

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