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Innovate+Educate

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Employment Tech Summit Draws Nation's Largest Employers, Venture Capitalists, Startups and Tech Giants Working to Tackle Growing Skills-Gaps

Walmart, AT&T, Hilton, Strada Education Network, LinkedIn among participants at the Fifth Annual Close It Summit; participants will explore the role of emerging technologies in hiring, training, and talent strategies

CHICAGO, IL – Innovate+Educate (I+E), today, announced its [lineup of speakers](#) for the 5th Annual Close It Summit, which will be held at Chicago's historic Palmer House Hilton from September 25 – 27, 2017. Each year, the Summit brings together a diverse, cross section of participants, including chief learning and HR officers, education providers, philanthropists, investors. On September 27, former U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, will present Penn Foster high school diplomas to graduates of Chicago CRED, a unique program which exemplifies the potential for new educational models to create economic opportunity for job-seekers.

"Employer reliance on degrees and other proxies for pedigree in the hiring process is not only hampering economic growth – it is destroying the American Dream for too many job seekers," said Ryan Craig, author of *College Disrupted: The Great Unbundling of Higher Education* and co-founder of University Ventures. "The shift toward competency-based hiring has massive potential to unlock economic opportunity; but it requires unprecedented cooperation among educators and employers. Close It is the only conference where educators and employers come together."

This year's Summit, themed "Shift Happens: Revolution," is focused on the role of emerging technologies and strategies in creating pathways to social and economic mobility through the assess, hire, train and advance framework. Panel topics include the role of skills-based hiring and assessment, digital credentials, as well as new approaches to training and educational benefits.

Top venture capital firms like University Ventures, The Vistria Group, and GSV Acceleration Fund will be there to discuss The Shift they see happening in learning and technology, where it's heading, and what tools are necessary to better invest in workforce.

"Technology is the critical foundation from which competency-based training, hiring, and education can thrive," said Innovate+Educate CTO Stephen Yadzinski. "Our aim is to focus the discussion on how technology can remove friction in the labor market, connect individuals to training, and support pathways that result in sustained economic security for millions of Americans."



The Summit, which is expected to draw over 600 participants, will kick-off with the release of the latest findings from the Strada-Gallup *Education Consumer Pulse*, during a panel moderated by The *Wall Street Journal's* Doug Belkin.

Support for the 2017 Close It Summit comes from Strada Education Network, ACT, Walmart Giving, Rockefeller Foundation, AT&T, University of Maryland University College and other supporters.

About Innovate+Educate:

I+E is a national non-profit implementing evidence-based, employer-led strategies to drive competency-based training and hiring for in-demand jobs. Their vision is to create multiple pathways to employment, and their focus is on industry driven solutions to education and employment. I+E is led by a Board of Directors from top industries across 35 states. www.Innovate-Educate.org.