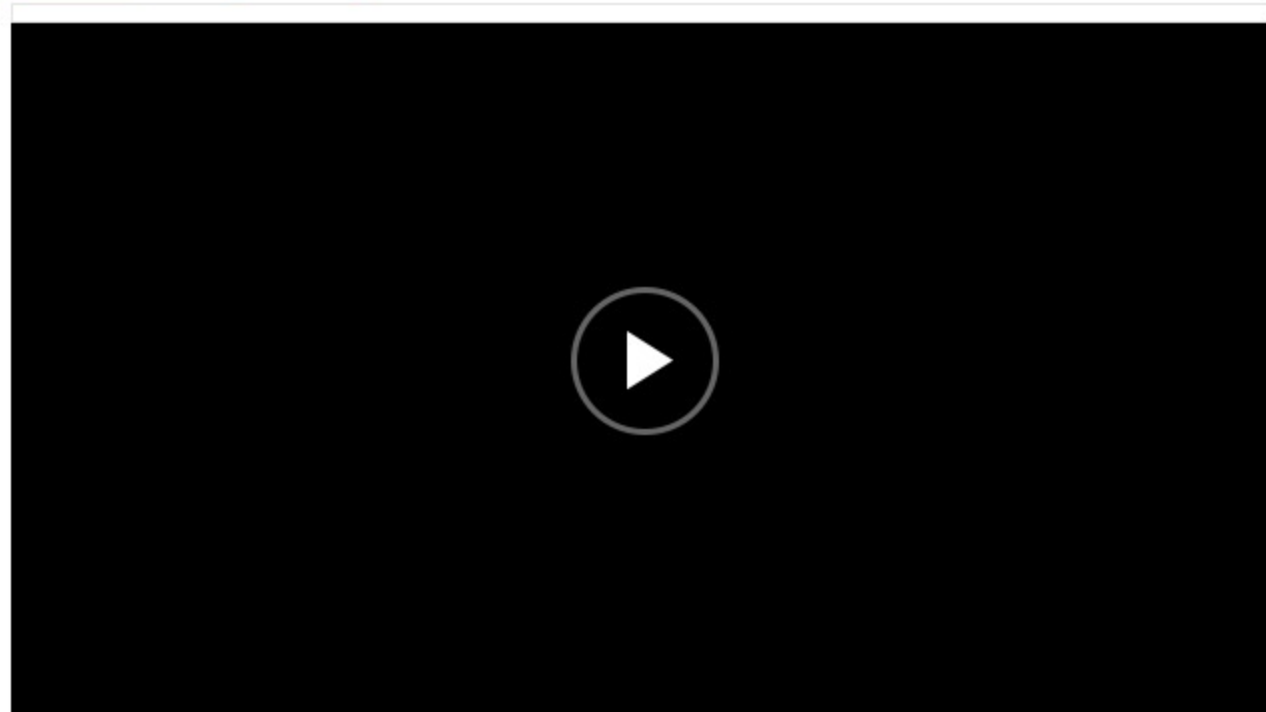


CAREERS

Blue, White, and now New Collar jobs

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Mike Oppenheim is working on sensitive information-- without a degree. The Vice President of IBM said its part of the company's campaign to hire 'New Collar' workers. (KFSN)



Thursday, July 13, 2017 05:46PM

After high school, Mike Oppenheim proudly picked the Marines over college, but wanted to learn a skill he could use once he got out.

"I was a Signals Intelligence Marine."

Fast forward a few years and Oppenheim is now working in the cybersecurity division of IBM.

"Some of the most exciting things that we work on is just really trying to stay on top of what different threat actors are doing, how they're actually changing, ya know, the ways that they target networks."

Mike's working on sensitive information-- without a degree. The Vice President of IBM said its part of the company's campaign to hire 'New Collar' workers.

"Why do we call them new collar? Well, they're not blue collar and they're not white collar. We're looking for people with the right mix of skills and a willingness to learn," said David Barnes, IBM Vice President.

And the company is willing to teach, because analysts predict nearly 2-million unfilled positions in cybersecurity by the year 2022.

IBM has initiatives with the military and is helping to develop specialized tech school programs. There is also a new campaign to reach out to community colleges.

Motivated people with a high school diploma are welcome, too-- and IBM is not alone.

"Right now, we see a skills gap not only in the high-tech world, but we also see it in healthcare, engineering, and manufacturing," said James Goodnow, Co-Author, Motivating Millennials.

Goodnow said new collar jobs are booming because baby boom-ers are retiring in larger numbers than young adults are getting degrees in specific fields.

"What we see is not only a skills gap taking place right now but a skills gap crisis, and smart businesses realize that they have to create the next generation of worker."

Oppenheim said he is happy to be part of the next generation and believes while college is right for many, the skills he has learned are more important than any diploma.

"I would say for 'new collar', you know, it's trying to take non-traditional paths in order to get where you want to be in your career."

Experts said another reason the new collar option is so attractive to millennials, in particular, is that it does not require any crushing student loan debt.

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