

20 best paid jobs of the 21st century

Written by Johan Nylander

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Career Advice from The Swedish Wire.

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More employers today are offering training to fill open positions, so job seekers can look for retraining opportunities to help them get jobs in growing fields. Many of those fast-growing jobs can be found in the book "Best Jobs for the 21st Century," by Laurence Shatkin.

The list shows the potential for those looking to pursue a career in the medical, information technology, engineering or legal professions. It's no surprise that many of the top jobs on the list require advanced education or training.

Shatkin compiled the list based on annual median earnings, ranked from highest to lowest. This means that for each position, half of all workers earn more than the salary listed and half earn less. Earnings may vary drastically based on level and years of experience, location and other factors.

Following is a list of the 20 best-paying jobs of the 21st century*:

1. Oral and maxillofacial surgeons** perform surgery and related procedures on the hard and soft tissues of the oral and maxillofacial regions to treat diseases, injuries or defects. □ Annual median earnings: \$166,400-plus
2. Orthodontists* examine, diagnose and treat dental malocclusions and oral cavity anomalies. The design and fabricate appliances to realign teeth and jaws to produce and maintain normal function and to improve appearance. □ Annual median earnings: \$166,400-plus

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3. Physicians and surgeons work in a number of medical and surgical specialties. They include allergists, cardiologists, dermatologists, emergency physicians, gastroenterologists, ophthalmologists, pathologists and radiologists. □ Annual median earnings: \$165,279

4. Chief executives determine and formulate policies and provide overall direction of companies or private- and public-sector organizations within guidelines set up by a board of directors or similar governing body. They plan, direct or coordinate operations with the help of subordinate executives and staff managers. □ Annual median earnings: \$165,080

5. Dentists diagnose and treat problems with teeth and tissues in the mouth, and give advice and care to help prevent problems. They provide instruction on diet, brushing, flossing, the use of fluoride and other aspects of dental care. They remove tooth decay, fill cavities, examine X-rays, place protective plastic sealants on children's teeth, straighten teeth and repair fractured teeth. □ Annual median earnings: \$141,040

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6. Architectural and engineering managers plan, direct or coordinate activities in such fields as architecture and engineering or research and development in these fields. □ Annual median earnings: \$119,260

7. Prosthodontists construct oral prostheses to replace missing teeth and other oral structures to correct natural and acquired deformation of mouth and jaws, to restore and maintain oral function, such as chewing and speaking, and to improve appearance. □ Annual median earnings: \$118,400

8. Podiatrists diagnose and treat disorders, diseases and injuries of the foot and lower leg. □ Annual median earnings: \$118,030

9. Natural sciences managers plan, coordinate and direct research, design and production activities. They may supervise engineers, scientists and technicians, along with support personnel. These managers use their knowledge of engineering and natural sciences to

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oversee a variety of activities. □ Annual median earnings: \$116,020

10. Computer and information systems managers plan, direct or coordinate activities in such fields as electronic data processing, information systems, systems analysis and computer programming. □ Annual median earnings: \$115,780

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11. Petroleum engineers devise methods to improve oil and gas extraction and production and determine the need for new or modified tool designs, and they oversee drilling and offer technical advice. □ Annual median earnings: \$114,080

12. Marketing managers plan, direct or coordinate marketing policies and programs, such as determining the demand for products and services offered by a company and its competitors and identifying potential customers. They develop pricing strategies with the goal of maximizing the company's profits or share of the market while ensuring that its customers are satisfied. Marketing managers oversee product development or monitor trends that indicate the need for new products and services. □ Annual median earnings: \$112,800

13. Lawyers represent clients in criminal and civil litigation and other legal proceedings, draw up legal documents, or manage or advise clients on legal transactions. They may specialize in a single area or may practice broadly in many areas of law. □ Annual median earnings: \$112,760

14. Pharmacists distribute prescription drugs to individuals. They also advise their patients, physicians and other health practitioners on the selection, dosages, interactions and side effects of medications, as well as monitor the health and progress of patients to ensure that they are using their medications safely and effectively. □ Annual median earnings: \$111,570

15. Air traffic controllers control air traffic at airports and the movement of air traffic between altitude sectors and control centers according to established procedures and policies. They also authorize, regulate and control commercial airline flights according to government or company regulations to expedite and ensure flight safety. □ Annual median earnings: \$108,040

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16. Political scientists study the origin, development and operation of political systems and may study topics such as public opinion, political decision-making and ideology. They may also analyze the structure and operation of governments and other political entities. Political scientists may conduct public opinion surveys, analyze election results or analyze public documents. □ Annual median earnings: \$107,420

17. Physicists conduct research into physical phenomena, develop theories on the basis of observation and experiments and devise methods to apply physical laws and theories. □ Annual median earnings: \$106,370

18. Financial managers plan, direct or coordinate accounting, investing, banking, insurance, securities and other financial activities of an organization. □ Annual median earnings: \$103,910

19. Airline pilots, co-pilots and flight engineers pilot and navigate fixed-wing, multiengine aircraft, usually on scheduled air carrier routes, for the transport of passengers and cargo. They require Federal Air Transport certification and rating for the specific aircraft type used. They include regional, national and international airline pilots and flight instructors. □ Annual median earnings: \$103,210

20. Computer and information research scientists conduct research into fundamental computer and information science as theorists, designers or inventors. They also develop solutions to problems in the field of computer hardware and software. □ Annual median earnings: \$100,660

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*Salary data based on figures from "Best Jobs for the 21st Century," which used figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Job descriptions were pulled from the BLS.

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******The top two jobs in dentistry are marked as \$166,400-plus because the BLS doesn't report on salaries higher than that. According to Shatkin, the American Dental Association reported in 2009 that the median earnings of dental specialists were more than \$342,000.

Justin Thompson is a writer and blogger for CareerBuilder.com and its job blog, The Work Buzz. He researches and writes about job search strategy, career management, hiring trends and workplace issues. Published in collaboration with CareerBuilder.