



**The New Path from Education to Employment:  
Apollo Lightspeed Launches Balloon to Connect Revolutionary Online Learning Skills and Courses  
with In-Demand, Career-Relevant Skills**

*Microsoft, EMC, Adobe, Amazon Web Services and other major employers join global leader in higher education to connect tech career seekers with employers' needs*

PHOENIX, March 4, 2014 – To address and solve the growing skills gap between individuals seeking careers and employers seeking a well-trained workforce, Apollo Lightspeed LLC™, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Apollo Education Group, Inc. (NASDAQ: APOL), today launched **Balloon™**, an online career skills and learning marketplace featuring many of the world's leading technology companies and education providers. Balloon addresses the growing gap between career-seekers' skills and employers' talent needs by helping users identify customized career paths, understand the knowledge and skills required by employers along that path, and, then learn from the right courses to improve their chances in a competitive labor market. Balloon's initial focus is on providing a course and skills marketplace to support the \$3 trillion global technology industry, with plans to expand into additional career fields.

"The technology sector is desperately seeking the next generation of skilled employees and business leaders. After talking to more than 25 leading technology companies, we founded Apollo Lightspeed to launch career-focused education programs that specifically address the needs of global employers and the hundreds of millions of worldwide learners in need of better real-life skills, higher education and training" said Greg Cappelli, chief executive officer of Apollo Education Group. "With Balloon, we are directly connecting advanced technology companies with individuals seeking the knowledge they need to help advance in their careers. Balloon demonstrates our ongoing commitment to listen to employers and then match their needs with the best learning platforms that fit the career goals of students. Balloon has the potential to create an incredible pipeline of well-prepared future employees that will help solve the shortage of skilled employees facing technology companies globally."

"At Adobe, our people are our greatest assets. We're committed to investing in educational partnerships with companies like Apollo Education Group," said Lambert Walsh, vice president of Adobe Global Services, Adobe. "The Balloon marketplace will be a valuable resource in advancing the knowledge of Adobe's technologies in the workforce, ultimately helping students acquire the skills they need to excel in their careers."

With a growing catalogue of more than 14,000 technology courses and training programs from a variety of education providers, and a database of more than 146,000 current and recent career listings, Balloon connects individuals seeking specific skills valued by leading technology companies to online learning offerings aimed at delivering those skills to learners. Built to include online learning offerings from technology industry leaders – including Adobe, Amazon Web Services, EMC and Microsoft – Balloon is first available for the global technology market, with plans to expand into additional career fields.

"Microsoft is proud to participate in the launch of Apollo Education Group's Balloon Platform," said Carrie Francey, senior director Microsoft. "For more than two decades, Microsoft has been a leader in the

training and certification ecosystem focused on closing the skills gap by providing career-ready professionals into the marketplace. Balloon provides a dynamic approach to anyone hoping to build or enhance a career in the technology industry.”

“Balloon addresses a critical need in the technology employment marketplace today - narrowing the skills gap between higher education and the job market,” said Rob Wrubel, chief innovation officer of Apollo Education Group and president of Apollo Lightspeed. “We have developed a dynamic marketplace of online courses that help individuals acquire specific skills that employers have told us they need in future employees. We believe we are driving a new model of education for the future, based on insights gleaned over decades of pioneering distance education.”

U.S. organizations spent \$164.2 billion on employee learning and development in 2012, according to the recently-released findings of the American Society for Training and Development’s (ASTD) 2013 State of the Industry report. There is an overwhelming market demand for qualified, trained individuals with the skills employers seek. Balloon provides a comprehensive catalog of relevant education resources to help individuals develop the skills they need to get the career they want and to help connect employers with qualified candidates.

In addition to courses from leading technology companies, Balloon’s comprehensive marketplace provides access to the world’s largest catalogue of tech courses from other key sources of educational content-- traditional academic institutions, corporate training organizations and new online learning platforms, including Code Academy, Udemy, PluralSight and New Horizons—among others. Balloon also includes courses and online learning offerings from leading tech employers, including Adobe, Amazon Web Services, EMC, and Microsoft.

“With the increased adoption of cloud computing and Big Data technologies, education and training are critical. As both a provider of advanced technical education, and an employer seeking skilled technical employees, it is easy to see the benefits that a marketplace like Balloon provides,” said Tom Clancy, vice president, EMC Education Services. “EMC is happy to be working with Balloon to create a new avenue for bringing our industry standards-based technical curricula to the marketplace and expanding the industry’s pool of skilled technical professionals.”

A November 2013 online survey<sup>1</sup> of approximately 300 IT and technology hiring managers found that:

- 73 percent have a hard time finding qualified applicants in IT/technology
- 95 percent believe that ongoing education and skills development is critical for IT/technology candidates and even more so for current employees
- 94 percent have turned down candidates at least in part due to a deficiency in specific skills areas

“At Amazon Web Services, we believe the technology industry will benefit from innovative solutions like Balloon, which help create new skilled workers and help connect those workers with employment opportunities around the world,” said Maureen Lonergan, director of training and certification at Amazon Web Services (AWS). “We are excited to make our training content available to potential candidates through Balloon to offer them another channel through which to gain AWS certification.”

More information for individual learners and companies seeking to partner with Apollo Lightspeed can be found at the online marketplace, [www.Balloon.com](http://www.Balloon.com).

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<sup>1</sup> Apollo Lightspeed IT Hiring Manager Survey, November 2013

Apollo Lightspeed also plans to introduce individual skills assessments for learners based on their education, employment history and career goals, and seeks to deliver a customized marketplace matching careers with specific, relevant skills and online learning offerings that directly tie to those skills.

### **About Apollo Education Group, Inc.**

Apollo Education Group, Inc. is one of the world's largest private education providers and has been in the education business since 1973. Through its subsidiaries: University of Phoenix, Apollo Global, Institute for Professional Development, Western International University and College for Financial Planning, Apollo Education Group offers innovative and distinctive educational programs and services, online and on-campus, at the undergraduate, masters and doctoral levels. Its educational programs and services are offered throughout the United States and in Asia, Australia, Latin America and Europe, as well as online throughout the world. For more information about Apollo Education Group, Inc. and its subsidiaries, call (800) 990-APOL or visit [www.apollo.edu](http://www.apollo.edu).

### **About Apollo Lightspeed**

Apollo Education Group created Apollo Lightspeed LLC in 2013 to launch and grow innovative products and services with the speed, focus and boldness of a high-growth startup. Its ultimate vision is to transform the distribution, pricing and consumption of learning worldwide, and to create learning experiences that are light-years ahead of what's currently available. Apollo Lightspeed's groundbreaking initial venture, Innovator's Accelerator, teaches business executives how to cultivate innovation within themselves and their organizations. Designed and taught by some of the world's leading authorities on innovation— Innovator's Accelerator provides insights and tools through a multimedia learning platform to help turn executives into innovators ready to be the catalyst for change. For more information about Apollo Lightspeed LLC, visit <http://www.apollo.edu/learning-platforms/lightspeed.html>.

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