

THRIVING IN AN AI-DRIVEN FUTURE: Defining Critical Skills and Tools as Jobs Evolve



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AI



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Executive Summary

How is technology changing the ways we work, and what skills are needed to be successful? In a world of rapidly changing job requirements, having the right skills and certifications are key for new hires, seasoned professionals, and managers alike.

This IDC Infobrief explores which key skills and tools are most critical to success in an age of AI everywhere. The study equally targeted roles in IT and line of business areas like marketing, sales, HR, operations, and finance. And while technical skills are important, employees equally need effective ways to communicate, collaborate, and drive productivity.

This IDC InfoBrief will address **how and why enterprises should invest in both technical and human skills development — within and across IT and LOB roles.**



62%

of organizations using/piloting generative AI (GenAI) plan to use it to generate insights across data sources.

Challenges in Today's AI-Driven Environment: Skill Sets



Ongoing skills shortages: finding the right talent with the right skills



Speed of technology adoption: new tools and ways of working



Emergence of GenAI as a key disruptor to traditional job skills



Knowing the right skill sets for current and future job roles



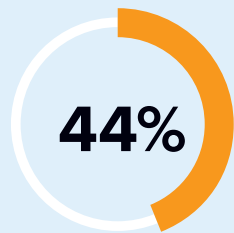
Inability to upskill and cross-skill current employees to meet demand



Education is behind industry needs — making it difficult for new grads to meet skills requirements

How Will Generative AI Impact the Future?

No other technology in recent memory has captured the imagination of employers and workers like GenAI.



44% of employers said that GenAI will be somewhat or very important for new hires to know.

Most likely to be training employees in GenAI

- ▶ Regions: North America and Latin America
- ▶ Industries: Professional Services and Finance

Of organizations using/piloting GenAI:



62%

plan to generate insights across data sources.



50%

plan to generate or draft content.



49%

plan to perform chat analysis/summary.

The problem?



42%

have no plans to train employees in AI in the foreseeable future.

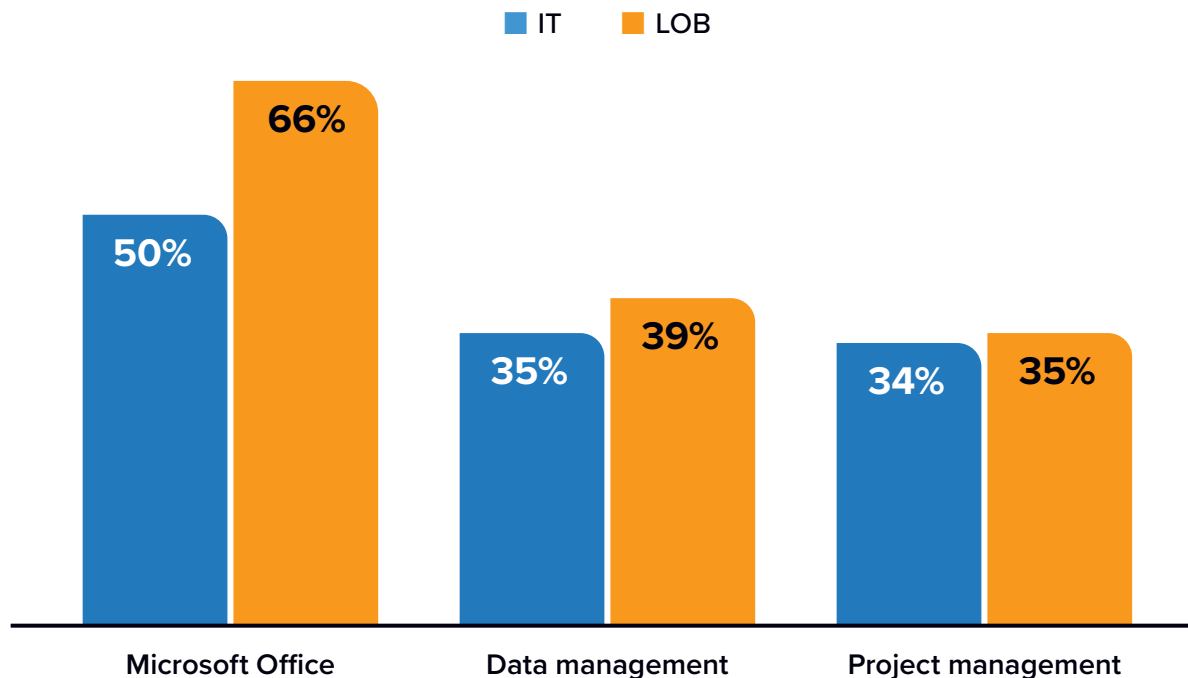
Key Technical Skills: Microsoft Office

As technologies such as artificial intelligence become increasingly pervasive, proficiency in productivity tools embedded with GenAI will be a key competitive differentiator for LOB and IT employees.



Top Technical Skills

(% of respondents)



- ✓ Proficiency in Microsoft Office was ranked the **most important technical skill for professional success across IT and business leaders** — significantly ahead of the next listed skill.
- ✓ **100% of respondents who said Microsoft Office is important** for communication and collaboration are using it every day.

For an accessible version of the data on this page, see [Supplemental Data](#) in the Appendix.

Collaboration Meets Productivity: Microsoft Teams

Enduring skills of communication and collaboration are even more important as job roles are rapidly evolving. No surprise, productivity applications remain a top priority across both LOB and IT.



Across IT and LOB roles, two of the top 3 tools and applications to know for work include Microsoft Teams and Microsoft Office.



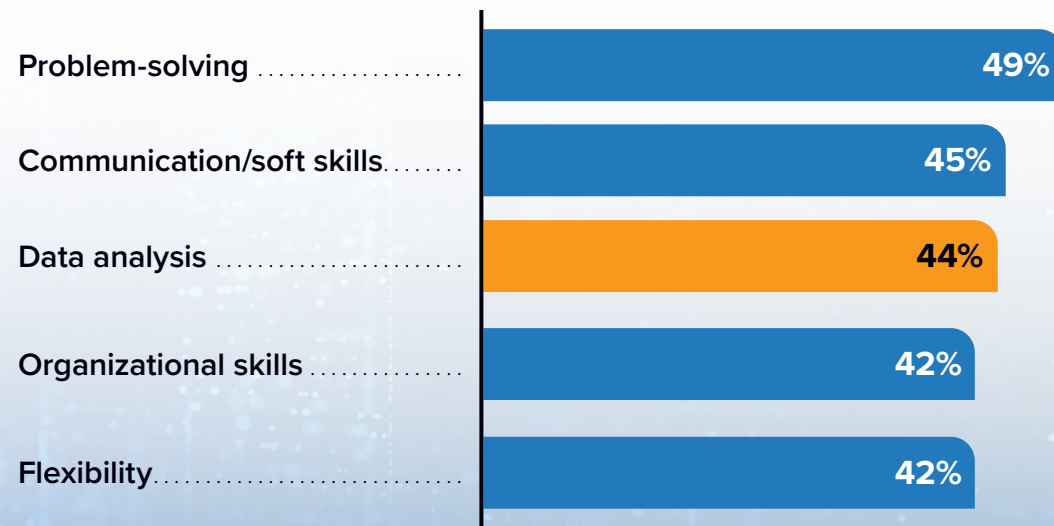
Technology Is Not Enough: Importance of Human and Business Skills

In an era of continuously evolving criteria for entry level jobs, managers and new hires are mostly aligned on the most important business skills for professional success. Problem-solving, communication, and organizational skills are important, as are flexibility and data analysis.



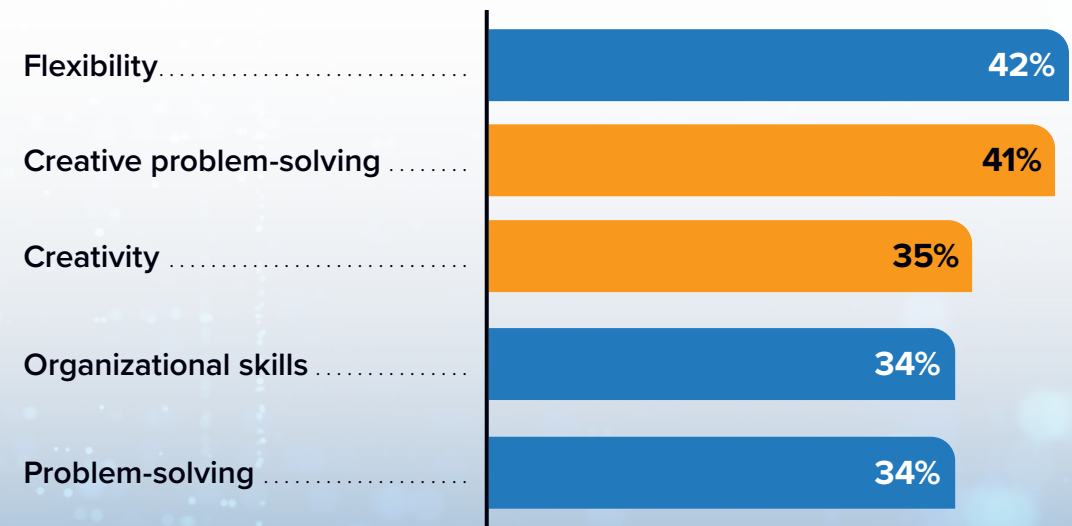
Experienced Professionals/Managers

(% of respondents)



New Professionals

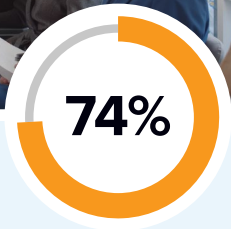
(% of respondents)



The Importance of Certifications

Vendor certifications are as important, if not more, than academic degrees for hiring new professionals, and they have a positive impact on career mobility, engagement, and salary.

IT and LOB managers' responses on the value of credentials/vendor certifications for career readiness and longer-term outcomes:



say certification is important or very important when hiring entry level or new career applicants.



say certification is as important, if not more, than academic degrees.



say vendor certifications offer greater career mobility.

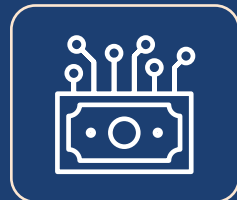


say certifications lead to more engaging roles and higher pay.

Essential Guidance



Align your organization around **key skills for business and IT, focusing on communication**, collaboration, and productivity.



Plan to invest in GenAI technology and training to support it as new job roles increasingly demand this as a critical skill to apply across IT and business roles.



Reinforce the importance of key human and business skills such as problem-solving flexibility, and data analysis — recognizing that employee experience levels will influence perceptions of most needed skills.



Consider which vendor certifications are most important in both new hire assessments and upskilling/cross-skilling of existing employees.



Partner with educational institutions to encourage better skills alignment for graduates preparing to move into business and technical roles.



Appendix: Supplemental Data

The table in this appendix provides an accessible version of the data for the complex figure in this document. Click “Return to original figure” below this table to get back to the original data figure.

SUPPLEMENTAL DATA FROM PAGE 6

Top Technical Skills

	IT	LOB
Microsoft Office	50%	66%
Data Management	35%	39%
Project Managment	34%	35%

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About the IDC Analyst



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Amy Loomis is Research Vice President for IDC's worldwide Future of Work market research service. In this role, Amy covers the growing influence of technologies such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, robotics, augmented and virtual reality, and intelligent process automation in changing the nature of work. Her research looks at how these technologies influence workers' skills and behaviors, organizational culture, worker experience, and how the workspace itself is enabling the future enterprise.

[More about Amy Loomis, Ph.D.](#)

Message from the Sponsor



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