

AI Skills and Talent Gaps Widen as Innovation Accelerates: New Skillsoft Report

Skillsoft's IT Skills and Salary Report highlights the importance of skill building as businesses strive to keep pace with rapid technological change driven by AI

DENVER--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- [Skillsoft](#) (NYSE: SKIL), a leading platform for transformative learning experiences, today released its [2023 IT Skills and Salary Report](#). Based on insights from more than 5,700 global IT professionals, including leaders and staff members, the report examines the state of the IT industry, underscoring the pressing need for workforce upskilling and reskilling given the rapid advancement of AI and machine learning (ML) technologies.

Key findings include:

- AI and ML are the biggest areas of focus for IT leaders, though 43% rate their teams' AI and ML skill sets as low.
- One-in-three IT leaders are struggling most with finding qualified AI and ML talent.
- The top driver of skills gaps is the rate of technology change outpacing training programs.
- Last year, 45% of IT professionals said management did not see a tangible benefit from training. Just 15% now say the same, as skill building becomes a business imperative.
- 97% of IT leaders say certified staff adds value to their organization.
- IT professionals' top reason for skill building is to prepare their organization for new technology, especially as generative AI (GenAI) becomes more advanced.

"With AI accelerating disruption at an unprecedented pace, the need for workforce training has never been more obvious and consequential," said Orla Daly, Chief Information Officer, Skillsoft. "Organizations are at a critical point where they need to be deliberate and proactive about building skills and capabilities – especially related to AI – or risk falling behind in the coming year. Interactive training experiences where professionals learn by doing will unlock rich possibilities, creating business value while increasing team member engagement and morale."

Increasing scope and efficacy of training.

Skill development is a critical piece of the puzzle for building a competitive organization, though more work is needed to optimize training among technology teams. Only 37% of IT professionals report receiving training "most of the time" when their employers invest in new technology. Additionally, compared to last year, 40% more IT leaders say their organization is not investing enough in professional development and 80% more say their current training programs are not effective at developing the skills they need.

This presents a missed opportunity for strengthening business outcomes and talent retention. IT professionals who receive training report improved work quality (62%), a greater sense of engagement (47%), and faster job performance (45%). Meanwhile, 82% of IT professionals say training is extremely or very important to their career and a lack of development was the top factor that drove respondents to change employers in the last year.

Taking a “whole-person” approach to development.

“Hard” or technical skills have traditionally been prioritized in the IT industry, while “soft” or power skills can fall by the wayside despite being essential for adapting and augmenting transformative technologies, especially GenAI. IT professionals rank team communication (40%), interpersonal communication (21%), and emotional intelligence (13%) as the three most important skills for IT leaders to have. However, just 6% of IT leaders said leadership skills will be a key area of investment moving forward, and only 7% said the same about power skills.

With 72% of IT leaders ranking their existing teams’ leadership skills as medium to low, there is a significant gap between training needs and priorities in this critical area. This presents a major opportunity for businesses to build well-rounded IT professionals by providing leadership training as a differentiator to drive greater innovation, growth, and efficiencies.

Building next-generation skilling programs.

Skills gaps, talent shortages, and technology transformation are challenges impacting IT departments. However, they are all obstacles that can be remediated with a well-orchestrated training program that blends multiple modalities and content types. According to IT professionals, the most important features of a training program include quality of content (55%), opportunities for hands-on practice (50%), and multiple learning methods (38%). Online, on-demand training is the most popular learning modality among IT professionals this year (59%), followed by online live training (46%) and impromptu training at work (31%). Additionally, IT professionals leverage a variety of learning resources ranging from employer training subscriptions (35%) and certification prep guides (25%) to online communities (24%).

For additional insights and takeaways for organizations to optimize training within their technology teams, download the [2023 IT Skills and Salary Report](#).

Report Methodology:

Skillsoft's 2023 IT Skills and Salary Survey was conducted online from May to September 2023 using the Qualtrics XM Platform. Skillsoft and the sponsors of this report distributed survey invitations to professionals around the world. The report was sponsored by Google Cloud, Nutanix, ISACA, Microsoft and CompTIA. The survey was made available in blogs, newsletters, social media and Skillsoft website. After cleaning the data, the survey yielded 5,711 complete responses from IT decision-makers and staff worldwide. The survey was tabulated using the Qualtrics XM Platform.

About Skillsoft

Skillsoft (NYSE: SKIL) delivers transformative learning experiences that propel organizations and people to grow together. The Company partners with enterprise organizations and serves a global community of learners to prepare today’s employees for tomorrow’s economy. With Skillsoft, customers gain access to blended, multimodal learning experiences

that do more than build skills, they grow a more capable, adaptive, and engaged workforce. Through a portfolio of best-in-class content, a platform that is personalized and connected to customer needs, world-class tech and a broad ecosystem of partners, Skillsoft drives continuous growth and performance for employees and their organizations by overcoming critical skill gaps and unlocking human potential.

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