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The C-Suite Perspective

Executive Insights from the
IT Skills and Salary Report

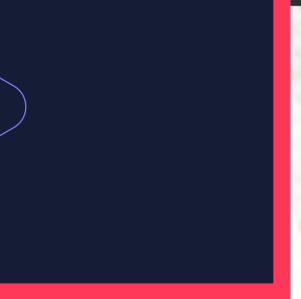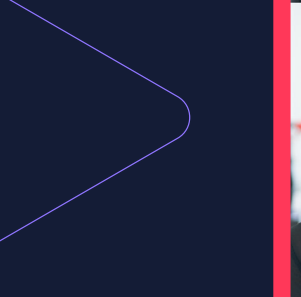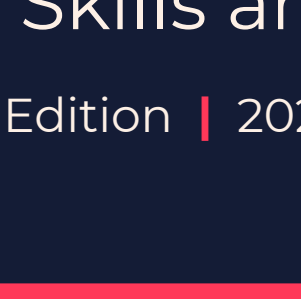3rd Edition | 2025

Table of Contents

Welcome

Very few would argue the fact that technology's evolving more rapidly than ever. Yet, the challenges facing IT's C-suite leaders have remained strikingly consistent.

Welcome to the 2025 C-Suite Perspectives Report.

Insights for this report come from Skillsoft's annual IT Skills and Salary survey, a comprehensive study of technologists worldwide. This report shares and analyzes the data of respondents who reported working as executives, including CIOs, CISOs, CTOs and several others. It's meant to help executives gain insight into everything from job security to talent development.

After analyzing this year's results, we found that many of the top concerns identified in our report last year are still front and center. From navigating skill gaps and cybersecurity threats to the ongoing struggle to attract and retain top talent, the pressures that top executives face persist.

This raises important questions about current strategies and investments. Are they ineffective? And, if so, what are some of the alternatives?

Many core issues remain the same. But subtle shifts are beginning to emerge. This year, more executives feel secure in their roles (50% compared to 41%). Confidence may have increased, but slightly more executives are also considering new roles. A growing demand for flexibility and work-life balance — often in the form of remote or hybrid work — appears to be a factor. In this report, we take a deeper look into why executives may look afield for a new role, how they're faring at their current employer, and whether their efforts to curb longstanding challenges may be better spent elsewhere.

A YEAR OF REFLECTION AND RECKONING

One encouraging trend is the growing value of certifications. There's a notable increase in their perceived worth. In fact, 25% of executives estimate the annual value of certifications to be $30,000, up from 17% last year. It's clear that investing in skills development isn't optional anymore — it's strategic and necessary.

AI: FROM AWARENESS TO INTEGRATION

Two years ago, generative artificial intelligence (AI) became the center of everyone's attention, but the conversation held more questions than answers. In 2024, there was still a sense of uncertainty surrounding AI — its potential, its applications, and how it fit into overarching strategies. Today, AI is an integral part of not just IT but business operations in general.

Where AI is concerned, we've witnessed a move from awareness and exploration to active integration into daily workflows. Even the most thorough understanding of AI isn't enough; executives must develop actionable plans that meet both IT and organizational goals. And, teams must be equipped with the most current skills if AI is to live up to its potential.

Leaders don't seem as worried about AI's risks and rewards but instead must focus on use cases. How can they train their teams to work alongside AI technology? How can they manage security risks associated with AI deployment? And, how can they maximize efficiency and productivity gains?

The demand for AI-specific skills has become a key focus of investment, both in technical development but also workforce transformation.

THE PERSISTENT CYCLE OF SKILL GAPS

While AI continues to capture attention, a fundamental issue still afflicting IT leaders is the constant cycle of skill gaps, which remains among their leading concerns. There's increased awareness, but executives still struggle with skills acquisition. And, the ripple effect on IT teams is apparent — from increased stress and burnout to slower project timelines and higher operational costs. Leaders often find themselves stuck in a balancing act: they're asked to drive innovation and simultaneously address skills and a talent shortage.

The reasons reported for skill gaps have stayed consistent: hiring challenges, rapid tech advancements, and a lack of training investments. But, the impact has become even more pronounced. The effects of skill shortages don't just include increased inefficiencies and stress, but also increasing security liabilities, declining customer satisfaction, and waning innovation.

Closing these gaps is more urgent than ever as technological change widens the deficit between what workers are capable of and what businesses need.

That's why executives shouldn't rely solely on hiring new employees to fill these gaps. The key is to invest in reskilling, upskilling, and certifying existing talent. This must become a core component of IT strategy.

Not only will this bridge current — and future — gaps, but it will enable organizations to build a more agile, adaptable workforce that can survive and, more importantly, thrive in the face of rapid technological change. In this year's *C-Suite Perspective Report*, we dive deep into the challenges — and opportunities — today's IT executives face. We explore their thoughts on talent acquisition, skill development, and how new technologies like AI are being deployed in the workplace. While many of the challenges may seem familiar, the ways in which executives are addressing them have evolved.

Let's take a closer look at how today's IT leaders are positioning their teams for success.

Executive Insights

This year, we found that IT leaders are focused on many of the same themes we discussed in last year's report. However, their responses reveal subtle shifts in priorities, skill gaps, employee hiring and retention, and job mobility.

WHAT CHALLENGES REMAIN THE SAME?

Workload, resources, and budget constraints continue to dominate the challenges faced by IT's C-suite leaders. Last year, these factors were also central concerns, reflecting ongoing pressure on IT organizations to deliver results despite operating with limited means.

Talent retention and talent recruitment are still key challenges, though their relative ranking has shifted. While workload (41%) and lack of resources (37%) are now the top challenges, talent retention and talent recruitment are still significant concerns at 34% and 33% respectively.

CURRENT CHALLENGES AT WORK

Challenge	%
Workload	41%
Resource and budget constraints	37%
Talent retention	34%
Talent recruitment	33%
Skill gaps	29%
Employee morale	28%
Lack of work-life balance	25%
Executing with urgency and excellence	24%
Team or communication	24%
Developing stronger teams	24%
Unclear job roles and responsibilities	22%
Innovation and change management	22%
A lack of effective leadership	22%
Lack of equity in pay	18%
Hybrid or remote work policies	18%
Lack of training or professional development	17%
Lack of inclusion	14%
Access to emerging technology or tools (Ex., ChatGPT)	14%
Lack of equity in opportunity	12%
Lack of diversity	11%
None	8%
Harassment	7%
Other	3%

Skill gaps remain a top issue for the C-suite, affecting 29% of executives, compared to 33% last year. The leading cause of skill gaps: Executives struggle to attract candidates with the right skills.

In addition, 39% report they cannot pay what candidates demand, and 38% acknowledge that the rapid rate of tech change exceeds their ability to develop the right skills in their teams.

These findings reinforce that while hiring remains tough, the underlying issue is also about talent development and adapting quickly enough to tech advances.

TOP REASONS BEHIND SKILL GAPS

Reason	%
We struggle to hire candidates with the skills we need	45%
We cannot pay what candidates demand	39%
Rate of technology change exceeds skills development programs	38%
We have not invested enough in training	30%
We struggle to retain employees	30%
Our current training is not effective	21%
We have not anticipated the skills we need	20%
Other	10%

HIRING CHALLENGES AND UNFILLED POSITIONS

This year, executives report a broad range of unfilled positions, with 26% having three unfilled roles in the past 12 months, and 12% reporting five or more unfilled positions. These statistics reveal an ongoing struggle to fill critical roles within IT departments, creating pressure on existing staff to manage ever-increasing workloads.

In fact, hiring remains challenging for many C-suite executives. Thirty-seven percent find it somewhat difficult to hire talent; and 14% find it extremely difficult. Only 7% of executives report that hiring is extremely easy, showing that while the demand for skilled talent is high, the pool of qualified candidates remains small and/or difficult to navigate.

As expected, the difficulty in hiring ties directly to skill gaps. Thirty percent also mention the lack of investment in training. This signals more work must be done to elevate the importance of learning as a means of supporting business strategy. Still, a significant gap between the demand for skilled professionals and the available talent pool is unmistakable.

UNFILLED POSITIONS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

23%
12%
17%
26%
22%

■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 or more

EASE OF HIRING

7%
13%
14%
37%
29%

■ Somewhat difficult
■ Neither easy nor difficult
■ Extremely difficult
■ Somewhat easy
■ Extremely easy
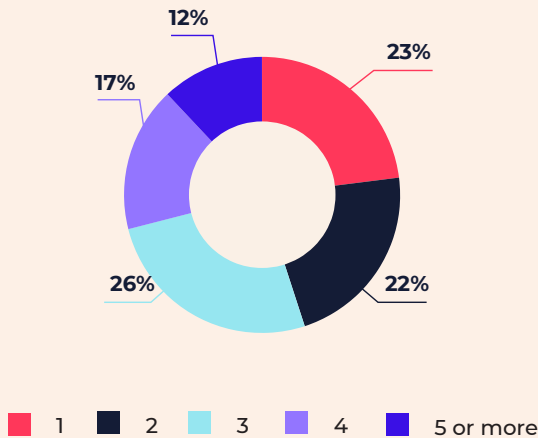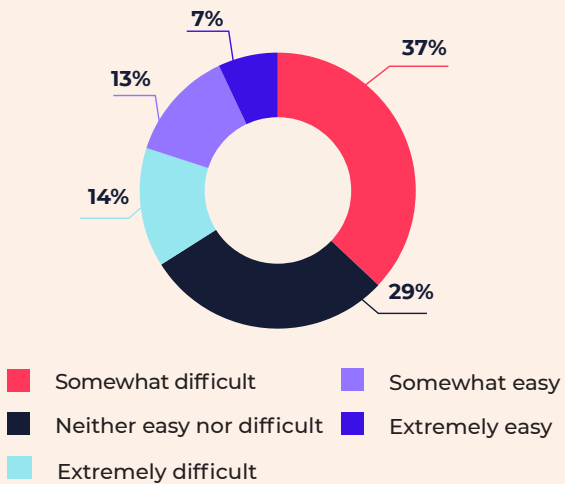
THE ROLE OF SKILL GAPS: ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT AND RESPONSES

While hiring remains problematic, skill gaps continue to impact organizations in various ways. The most conspicuous consequences reported are: increased stress on existing employees (52%), longer project durations (48%), and higher operating costs (41%). Notably, 40% of executives also report that skill gaps expose their organizations to increased vulnerability from a security standpoint. And, the ongoing inability to fill gaps limits innovation and the ability to meet business objectives, impacting overall performance. Findings like these reinforce how vital it is to develop new skills and capabilities.

Leaders rely on multiple strategies to bridge gaps. Seventy-nine percent of executives plan to train existing employees to fill skill gaps, compared to 48% who plan to hire additional staff with the necessary skills or certifications.

There's also growing interest (31%) in using AI and other technologies to augment workflows and offset some of the operational impact of skill shortages. While, 32% are considering hiring third-party vendors or consultants to provide temporary support.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACTS OF SKILL GAPS

Increased stress on existing employees	**52%**
Increased project durations, slower resolution times	**48%**
Increased operating costs	**41%**
Increased security vulnerabilities and risks	**40%**
Decreased ability to meet business objectives	**39%**
Declining customer satisfaction	**33%**
Decreased innovation in developing new products or services	**31%**
Increased talent acquisition costs	**23%**
Loss of business to competitors	**23%**
Loss of revenue	**20%**
Other	**2%**

HOW EXECUTIVES PLAN TO HANDLE SKILL GAPS

Train my existing people	**79%**
Hire additional staff with the skills or certifications	**48%**
Hire third-parties for support (Vendors, consultants, etc.)	**32%**
Artificial Intelligence (Generative AI, ChatGPT, etc.)	**31%**
No plan	**3%**
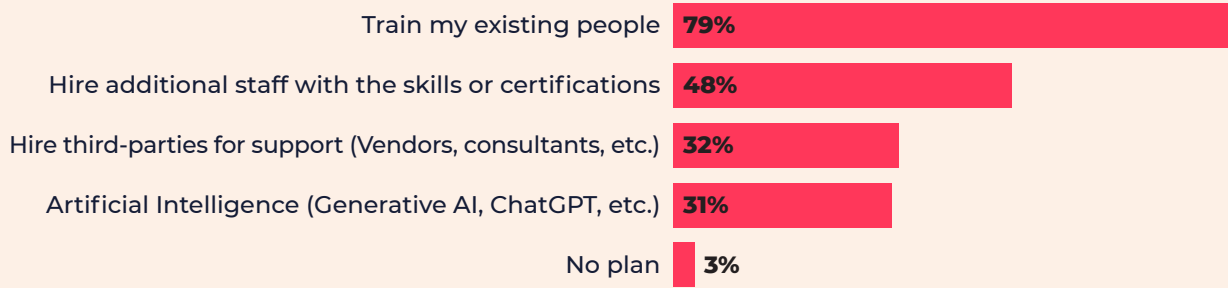
EMPLOYEE TURNOVER: JOB SECURITY AND CAREER MOBILITY

While job security remains strong for most C-suite IT executives, with 86% reporting feeling "extremely good" or "somewhat good" about it, employee turnover continues to be a concern.

The likelihood that an IT executive will look for another position in the next 12 months shows a mixed picture: 25% of executives are somewhat likely to seek new opportunities, while 21% are extremely likely to leave their current roles, driven by individual career objectives, better growth opportunities, or dissatisfaction with their current positions.

LIKELIHOOD TO LOOK FOR ANOTHER POSITION IN 12 MONTHS

9%
26%
19%
25%
21%

- Extremely unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Extremely likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely

JOB SECURITY

5%
9%
50%
36%

- Extremely good
- Somewhat good
- Neither good nor bad
- Somewhat bad

JOB SATISFACTION

7%
1%
9%
45%
38%

- Somewhat satisfied
- Extremely satisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied

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THE C-SUITE PERSPECTIVE
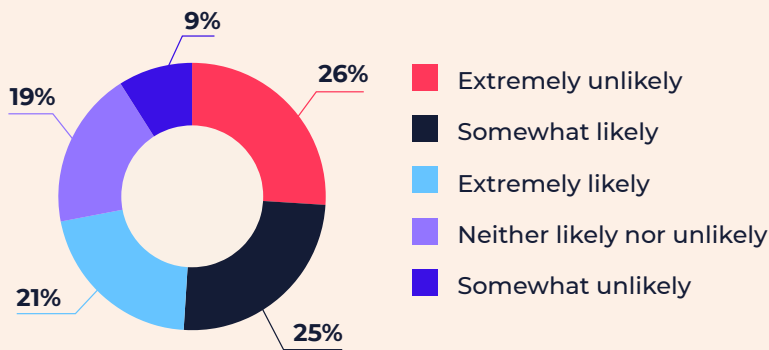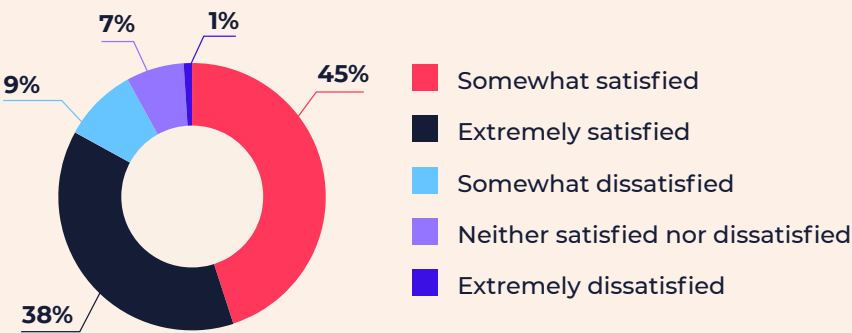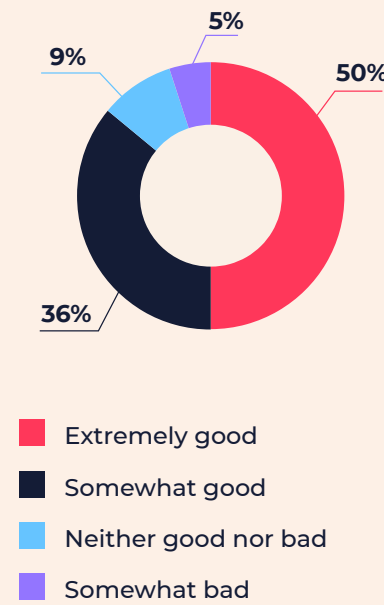
The top reasons cited for seeking a new role include remote or hybrid work options (43%), work-life balance (40%), and flexible hours (40%). Compensation and benefits also remain significant motivators. Thirty-three percent of IT executives specify a lack of training, growth, and development as a factor influencing the decision to move, echoing last year's findings that skilling and career development are crucial to retention — even at executive levels.

This year's survey also offers insights into job role mobility, with 45% of respondents indicating they would consider changing job roles for a better use of their skillset. Another 39% would consider it because of department or company management, and 35% for promotion or increased compensation. Additionally, 31% report they would move due to a lack of work-life balance or because their existing role is being phased out or impacted by automation (20%).

FACTORS FOR CHANGING EMPLOYERS

Factor	%
Remote or hybrid work options	43%
A lack of work-life balance	40%
Flexible working hours	40%
Increase in compensation	38%
Company benefits	35%
A lack of training, growth and development	33%
Department or company management	30%
A lack of equity in opportunities	30%
A lack of equity in pay	28%
Organization didn't support IT	25%
Poor company performance	23%
A lack of company resources	20%
The use of artificial intelligence (AI) to augment or replace jobs	20%
Laid off	18%
Other	8%

FACTORS FOR CHANGING JOB ROLES

Factor	%
Better use of current skill set and capabilities	45%
Department or company management	39%
Poor organization performance	37%
Promotion	35%
Increase in compensation	35%
A lack of company resources	33%
A lack of work-life balance	31%
Organization didn't support my team	27%
A lack of training, growth and development	25%
A lack of equity in pay	25%
Cover unfilled role or responsibility gap	22%
Existing role is being phased out or automated	20%
A lack of equity in opportunities	20%
AI replaced my role	18%
AI impacted my role	18%
Upskilled or reskilled to meet organization's needs	16%
Other	4%

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THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

The link between certifications and higher earnings continues to grow. Twenty-five percent of executives believe that certified staff can add $30,000 or more annually to the organization's value.

Another 16% report that certifications contribute between $15,000 and $19,999, while 15% estimate the added value at $10,000 to $14,999 annually.

These responses suggest that professional certifications are increasingly seen as an important — and measurable — investment for both employees and employers, providing significant returns in terms of compensation and organizational success.

ESTIMATED ANNUAL VALUE OF CERTIFIED STAFF

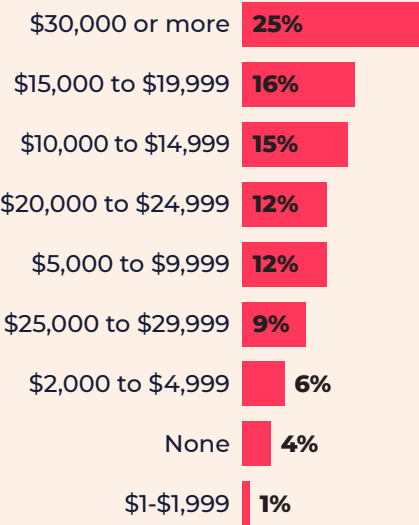|	
$30,000 or more	**25%**
$15,000 to $19,999	**16%**
$10,000 to $14,999	**15%**
$20,000 to $24,999	**12%**
$5,000 to $9,999	**12%**
$25,000 to $29,999	**9%**
$2,000 to $4,999	**6%**
None	**4%**
$1-$1,999	**1%**

LOOKING AHEAD: PLANS AND STRATEGIES

As IT departments continue to grapple with the challenges of skill gaps, unfilled positions, and job mobility, training and skilling programs are moving to the forefront of more strategic plans. This emphasis on training aligns with the broader trend of preparing workforces for the future, which proves critical in times of rapid, continuous change.

However, the hiring challenges and unfilled positions still facing IT leaders continue to impact organizational performance. As security risks, increased stress, and slower project timelines continue to hinder productivity, the emphasis on certifications and AI tools to streamline operations is expected to grow.

In conclusion, while the challenges facing IT executives remain familiar, certifications, AI, and strategic training offer solutions to mitigate the impacts of skill gaps. In the future, the demand for skilled IT professionals will only grow. So, organizations must invest in their workforce if they want to meet the demands of increasingly complex, tech-driven markets.
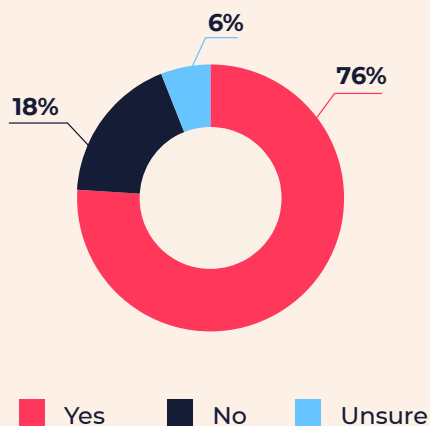
Professional Development

Professional development remains a cornerstone of organizational success. When employees have access to training that aligns with both personal and corporate goals, they can thrive, drive innovation, and remain productive.

On the other hand, organizations that fail to prioritize skill development may face stagnation or an increase in skill gaps that limit — or prevent — continued growth.

In this year's study, 76% of respondents report their organizations now provide formal training, up slightly from 74% last year. The slight increase is encouraging, but it still means 24% of companies are not offering the training their IT staff requires to be successful. In other words, nearly a quarter of organizations have a disconnect between what IT leaders need and what employees are receiving.

With technology changing so rapidly, this discrepancy leaves teams underprepared to meet IT and business objectives, especially in areas like cybersecurity, AI, and emerging technologies, in which talent shortages are particularly dramatic.

THE IMPACT OF CERTIFICATION

The value of a skilled and certified workforce is clear. In our study, 56% of tech leaders say that certification helps close organizational skill gaps, while 47% of respondents point to boosts in productivity, and improved employee morale and retention as additional benefits. For many companies the return on investment is substantial: reduced troubleshooting time (49%), faster project completion (41%), and even a competitive edge over rivals (38%).

These benefits go well beyond operational efficiencies. Certification has become a critical asset, especially in today's tech-driven business environment, where organizational success is increasingly reliant on skilled staff.

COMPANY PROVIDES FORMAL TRAINING

- 76% Yes
- 18% No
- 6% Unsure

BENEFITS OF CERTIFICATION TO ORGANIZATION

Benefit	Percentage
Closes organizational skill gaps	56%
Troubleshooting issues takes less time	49%
Boosts productivity	47%
Improve employee morale and retention	47%
Meets client requirements	42%
Projects are completed faster	41%
Makes it easier to evaluate prospective hires	40%
Products and services are deployed quicker	40%
Gives us an edge over competitors	38%
Reduces employee turnover	29%
Other	6%

WHY EMPLOYEES SEEK TRAINING

When we consider the motivations behind professional development, there's a shift toward personal and career-driven goals. Fifty-four percent of respondents say they seek training because of a personal choice or interest in learning new skills, while 48% see it as a way to remain competitive in the job market.

Additionally, 45% focus on preparing their organization for new technologies or initiatives. These reasons highlight the growing importance of aligning training opportunities with both personal ambitions and broader organizational goals.

Fewer respondents mention training as a way to qualify for new job roles (27%) and meet employer requirements (19%).

These may suggest that employees are becoming more proactive in their development, seeking out learning opportunities that not only meet the needs of their current job, but also prepare them for future challenges and opportunities.

MAIN REASON TO TRAIN

Reason	%
Personal choice or interest to learn new skills	54%
Become more competitive in the job market	48%
Prepare the organization for a new initiative, technology, etc.	45%
Maintain certification(s) or recertify	43%
Improve my job security	36%
Prepare for a career certification	33%
To earn a salary increase or bonus	31%
To qualify for a different job role	27%
To qualify for a leadership position	25%
Meet employer's requirement	19%
Career change	17%
Meet a client's requirement	16%
The economy	14%
AI impacted my job	9%
AI replaced my job	6%
Other	2%

EFFECTIVE METHODS OF TRAINING

This year's data shows that online, on-demand training continues to be the most common method offered by organizations, with 59% of respondents using this format. Instructor-led training — whether online or in-person — remains highly valued by IT leaders. Fifty-four percent of organizations offer online, instructor-led training, while 45% offer in-person, instructor-led sessions.

While on-demand training is commonly offered, there's still a notable preference for formal, instructor-led training. Slightly more than half (51%) of IT leaders rate in-person, instructor-led training as extremely efficient, followed by blended (36%), and online, instructor-led training (33%).

FORMAL TRAINING OFFERED BY COMPANY

Online, on-demand training (Videos, labs, etc.)	**59%**
Online, instructor-led training	**54%**
In-person, instructor-led training	**45%**
Blended, a mix of online and in-person training	**38%**

TRAINING EFFICACY

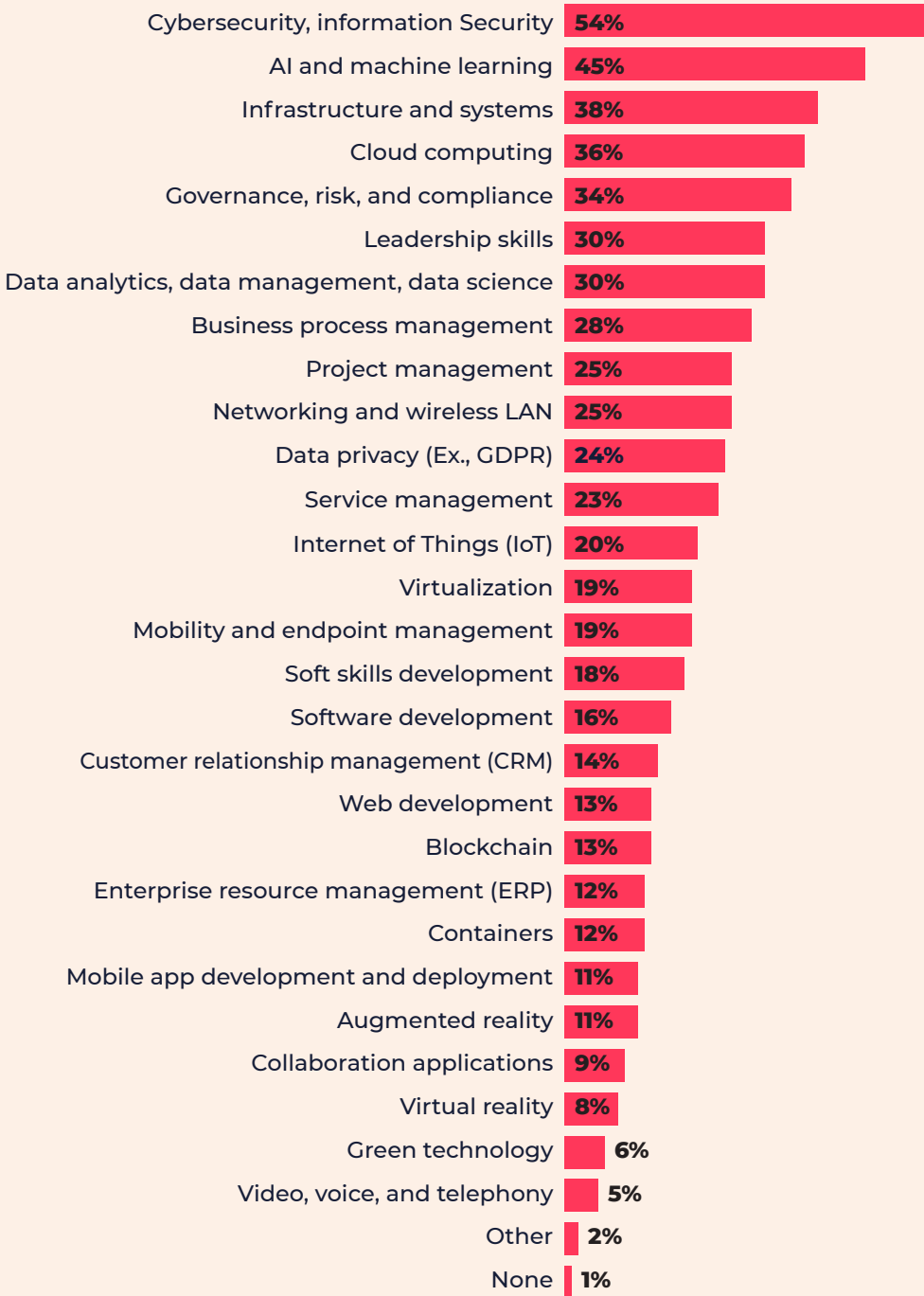|	Not effective at all	Slightly effective	Moderately effective	Very effective	Extremely effective
Blended, a mix of online and in-person training	0%	2%	18%	44%	36%
In-person, instructor-led training	2%	6%	16%	25%	51%
Online, instructor-led training	0%	5%	19%	43%	33%
Online, on-demand training (videos, labs, etc.)	0%	11%	24%	40%	25%

SKILLING FOR THE FUTURE

As organizations rush to deploy new technologies, including AI and cybersecurity solutions, it's critical they don't overlook the importance of skilling their workforce.

When asked which skill areas they will invest in next, 54% of executives listed cybersecurity, 45% listed AI and machine learning, and 38% said infrastructure and systems.

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TOP INVESTMENT AREAS

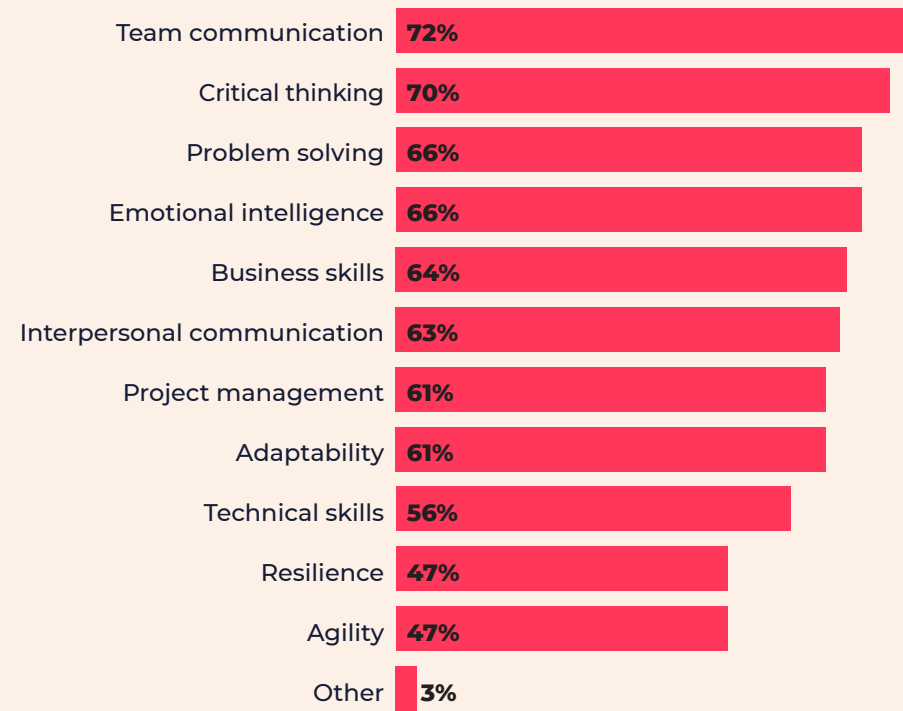| Area	%
Cybersecurity, information Security	54%
AI and machine learning	45%
Infrastructure and systems	38%
Cloud computing	36%
Governance, risk, and compliance	34%
Leadership skills	30%
Data analytics, data management, data science	30%
Business process management	28%
Project management	25%
Networking and wireless LAN	25%
Data privacy (Ex., GDPR)	24%
Service management	23%
Internet of Things (IoT)	20%
Virtualization	19%
Mobility and endpoint management	19%
Soft skills development	18%
Software development	16%
Customer relationship management (CRM)	14%
Web development	13%
Blockchain	13%
Enterprise resource management (ERP)	12%
Containers	12%
Mobile app development and deployment	11%
Augmented reality	11%
Collaboration applications	9%
Virtual reality	8%
Green technology	6%
Video, voice, and telephony	5%
Other	2%
None	1%

HUMAN SKILLS: A FOCUS FOR THE FUTURE

While tech skills are essential, the demand for "human skills," such as leadership, communication, time management, empathy, and critical thinking, is also rising. According to our executive respondents, nearly half of their organizations (48%) offer leadership training. There's growing recognition of the importance of developing well-rounded leaders, especially in hybrid and remote work environments.

Human skills are crucial not only for individual career growth, but also for effective team and project management. C-suite leaders recognize the greatest value in team communication (72%), critical thinking (70%), problem solving (66%), and emotional intelligence (66%).

WHICH SKILLS ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR IT LEADERS TO HAVE

Skill	Percentage
Team communication	72%
Critical thinking	70%
Problem solving	66%
Emotional intelligence	66%
Business skills	64%
Interpersonal communication	63%
Project management	61%
Adaptability	61%
Technical skills	56%
Resilience	47%
Agility	47%
Other	3%

INVESTING IN ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS

The results of this year's study emphasize the continuing importance of professional development for IT leaders and their teams. Organizations are increasingly aware of the need to invest in employee training, especially in areas such as leadership, certification, and emerging technologies. However, the data also highlights a few persistent challenges. Too many organizations still fall short where training is concerned, and while many companies do offer training, the alignment between employee preferences and available learning opportunities isn't always perfect.

For IT leaders, the challenge is clear: invest in both the hard and soft skills — tech and human skills — within your teams to ensure your organization remains competitive, adaptable, and positioned for success.

CGI's global AI learning strategy

Technology is at the heart of how CGI helps clients accelerate their digital transformation. As one of the world's largest IT services firms, the company employs over 90,000 professionals who help clients achieve the highest returns on their digital investments through systems integration, managed IT and business process services, and IP-based business solutions.

AI has long been a part of CGI's approach to client innovation. CGI has over 30 years of experience in advising and implementing AI solutions for clients, constantly learning from and adapting to technological advances. As generative AI came on the scene, CGI's leaders recognized the need to move from automation to creation.

In July 2023, CGI announced a $1 billion investment over three years to expand its AI capabilities to help clients design and deliver responsible, ROI-led strategies, according to a company announcement.

Knowing the fast-moving nature of generative AI, the CGI team acted quickly to launch a training program that would scale and resonate with its workforce.

In addition to its Responsible AI Framework, the CGI team used many of Skillsoft's curated AI modules and courses on topics like governance and everyday impact to business. The team also used Skillsoft's dashboards to track consumption and Skill Benchmarks to measure their workforce's skill gains over time. They mixed Skillsoft resources like these with their own to curate 60+ learning journeys, which saved them time and money.

The program was broken into three phases: **Build**, **Develop** and **Advance**. It took a blended learning approach, featuring:

ROLE-BASED JOURNEYS	DIGESTIBLE MODULES	PERSONALIZED TRAINING	AN INNOVATION SERIES

More than 70,000 employees participated in the first part of the program, amassing 140,000 completion badges in the first three months. As part of a post-training survey, 90% of those employees said they feel confident applying what they've learned daily.

70,000	**140,000**	**90%**
Employees Participated in 90 Days	Badges Issued to Employees who Completed Training	Employees Feel Confident Applying What They Learned

"As the increased accessibility to AI's transformative power advances our clients' organizations, we recognize that the opportunities enabled by AI, and GenAI in particular, must be met with great responsibility to deliver value and outcomes we can trust. It was clear that if we were going to talk to our clients about AI and our approach to AI, we needed to get our global team on the same page."

DAVE HENDERSON,
President of Intelligent Solutions and Innovation, CGI

CGI

"Our teams across the board take ownership and are eager to help clients solve problems and take advantage of new opportunities. Everyone had the desire to learn more – first as part of our general fluency and responsible use of AI courses, and then more deeply as part of specific journeys for different roles and industries. We created learning that was very digestible to feed the desire that was already there."

STEVEN STARACE,
Senior Vice President of Human Resources, CGI

Looking Forward

Today's IT executives continue to face the rapid evolution of technology and shifting business demands. This year's report illuminates critical skill gaps and an ongoing need for strategic action to prepare organizations for the future.

As reported last year, C-suite leaders recognize significant skill shortages, particularly in the areas of AI and cybersecurity. These challenges persist, although new data offers additional insights into where tech organizations are prioritizing their efforts to bridge these gaps.
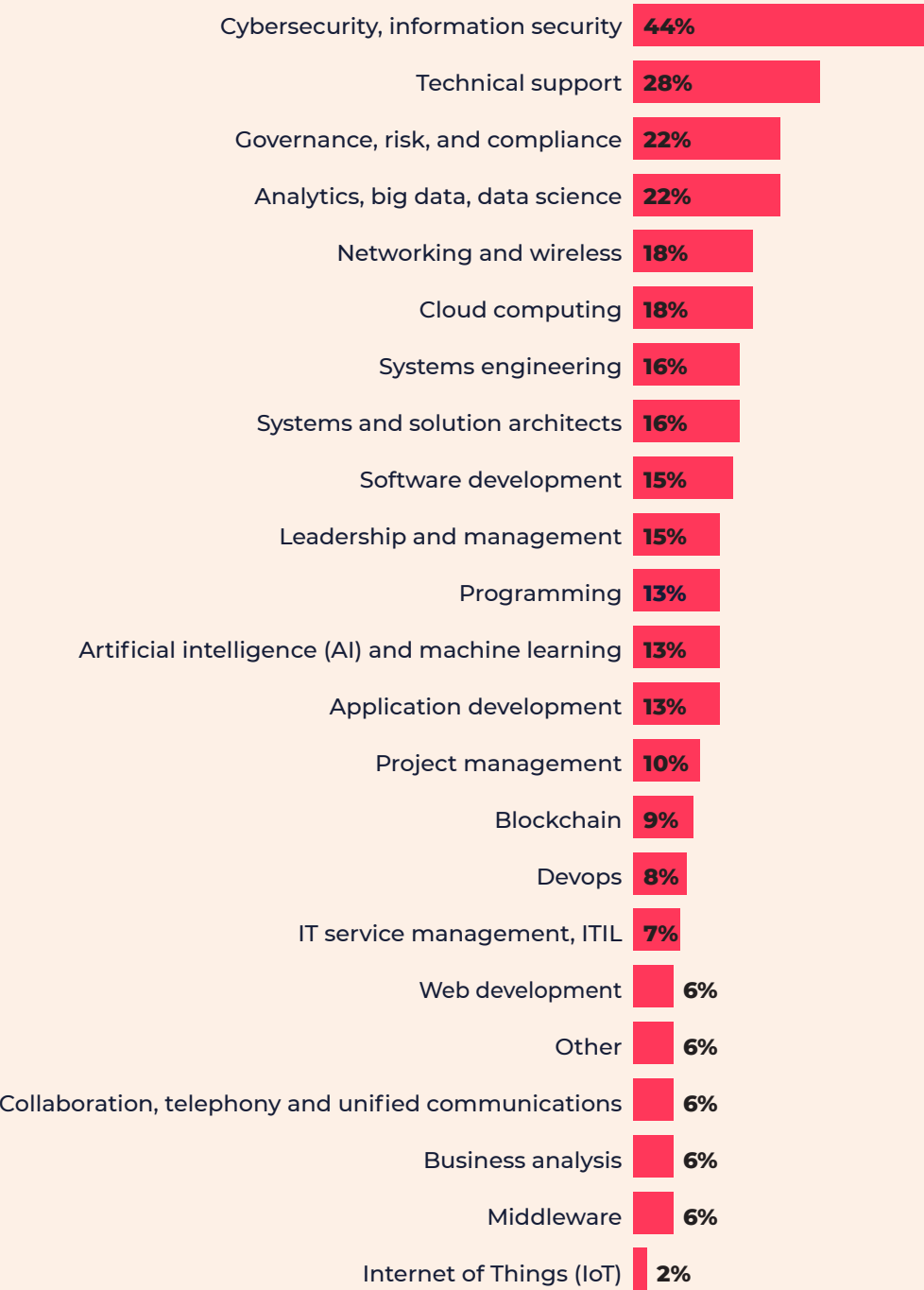
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The need to close skill gaps is as urgent as ever, but the focus areas are broadening. While cybersecurity and AI remain key challenges, other areas such as technical support, governance, risk, and compliance (GRC), and data management are rising to the forefront.

Forty-four percent of C-suite leaders struggle with cybersecurity and information security talent acquisition — a six-percentage-point increase from last year. This reflects the ever-increasing threats organizations face.

AREAS WITH THE GREATEST DIFFICULTY HIRING TALENT

Area	Percent
Cybersecurity, information security	44%
Technical support	28%
Governance, risk, and compliance	22%
Analytics, big data, data science	22%
Networking and wireless	18%
Cloud computing	18%
Systems engineering	16%
Systems and solution architects	16%
Software development	15%
Leadership and management	15%
Programming	13%
Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning	13%
Application development	13%
Project management	10%
Blockchain	9%
Devops	8%
IT service management, ITIL	7%
Web development	6%
Other	6%
Collaboration, telephony and unified communications	6%
Business analysis	6%
Middleware	6%
Internet of Things (IoT)	2%

Forty-five percent are investing in AI and machine learning, which aligns with last year's findings. However, the percentage of tech leaders citing difficulty in hiring for AI roles has decreased dramatically from 32% to just 13%.

This indicates a growing pipeline of talent and possibly a shift in how organizations are addressing AI needs, from recruitment to upskilling their existing teams.

Meanwhile, tech support roles have emerged as a significant pain point, with 28% of respondents citing hiring challenges. This shift may be tied to the evolving nature of support work, which increasingly requires not only problem-solving skills but also knowledge of cloud, security, and network technologies.

Similarly, areas like data analytics, data science, and cloud computing continue to experience hiring difficulties, though at slightly lower levels, reflecting the demand for professionals who can harness and manage vast amounts of data and maintain the underlying infrastructure.

HOW DO YOU MOVE THE NEEDLE?

C-suite leaders are increasingly aware of the critical need to build and retain a skilled workforce to meet future demands. This year's data underscores the importance of investing not just in new hires, but in upskilling existing employees.

There's a continued commitment to addressing the most pressing challenges, while also preparing for future innovations in automation, machine learning, and data-driven decision-making.

The data also suggests that the focus on human skills development is growing. While still a relatively small investment category (18%), leadership skills are now prioritized by 30% of tech executives, a shift toward developing well-rounded teams that are capable of guiding organizations through times of complex transition.

This may reflect a broader understanding that as technology becomes more advanced the ability to lead teams is equally critical.

THE ROAD AHEAD: ACTIONABLE STEPS

STRATEGIC FOCUS ON RESKILLING AND UPSKILLING

Given the continuing difficulties in hiring for specific skill sets, it's essential to prioritize internal skill development. This includes providing training in areas like AI, cybersecurity, data management, and tech support. Upskilling initiatives should be designed not just to address immediate gaps, but also to prepare teams for emerging technologies and evolving roles.

1

2

BROADEN TALENT POOLS

As tech roles become even more specialized, broadening talent acquisition strategies is critical. Organizations should consider partnerships with educational institutions, coding bootcamps, and online training platforms to support existing or incoming talent. In addition, leaders should explore ways to make their internal training programs more attractive to potential recruits by showcasing opportunities for professional growth and advancement.

FOSTER LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS

The demand for leadership skills is growing, and organizations must focus on developing human skills at all levels of the tech workforce. Encouraging mentorship, creating clear career paths, and offering leadership development programs will help train future leaders who can effectively manage both tech and organizational change.

3

4

INVEST IN A BLENDED LEARNING APPROACH

As the demand for continuous learning intensifies, C-suite leaders should consider a blended learning approach that combines formal training with informal, on-the-job learning. Tailored learning pathways that align with both business goals and individual career development plans will increase employee engagement and retention.

Conclusion

In the months to come, tech leaders must continue to balance the urgency of filling skill gaps with the need for long-term, strategic workforce development. While challenges persist, there are meaningful opportunities to address these issues through investments in both talent acquisition and upskilling.

The push for cybersecurity, AI, and leadership skills is clear, but organizations must not overlook the critical roles of tech support, governance, risk and compliance, and data management professionals.

By fostering a culture of continuous learning and development, tech leaders can build a more resilient and adaptable workforce that is better positioned to drive innovation and meet strategic objectives. IT executives who take proactive steps to address skill gaps now will find themselves ahead of the curve and able to capitalize on emerging technologies and future business needs.

2025 METHODOLOGY

Skillsoft's IT Skills and Salary Survey was conducted online from May to September 2024 using the Qualtrics XM Platform. Respondents encountered required and optional questions in the form of multiple choice, single select, open text fields, and Likert scales.

Skillsoft and the sponsors of this report distributed survey invitations to professionals around the world. The survey was made available in blogs, emails, social media, and Skillsoft's website. The survey yielded 5,191 responses from IT decision-makers and staff worldwide. The focus of this report is on 169 respondents who work as C-level executives.
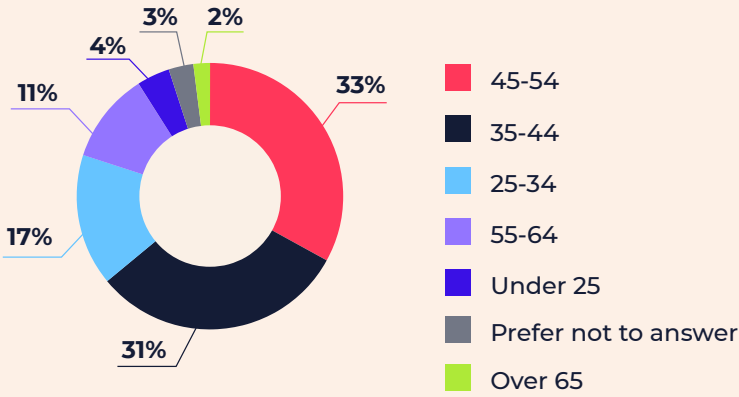
THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

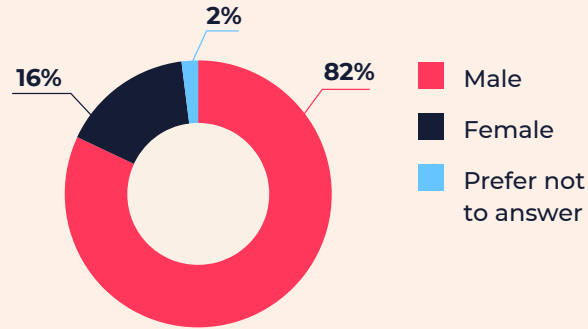Skillsoft extends a special thank you to our partners for helping make this year's survey possible:

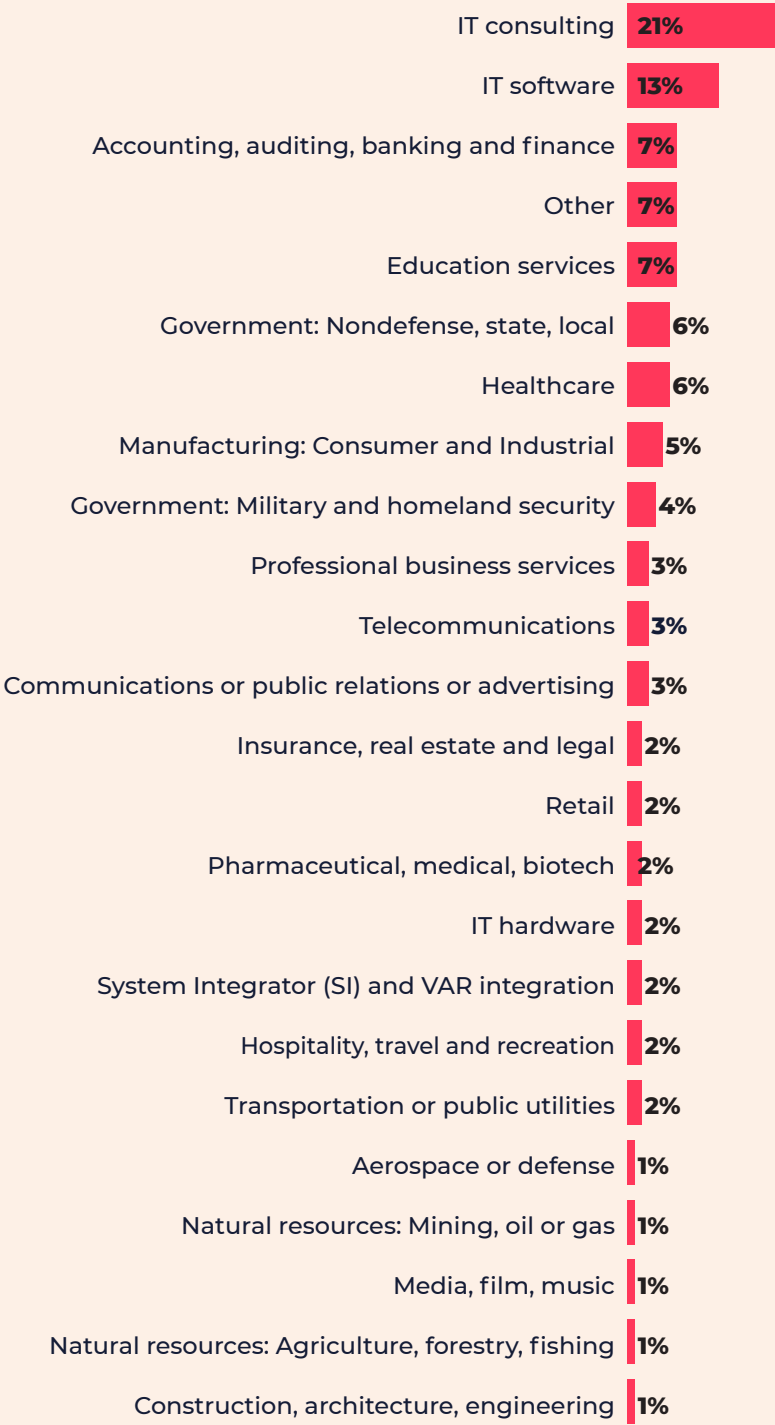CompTIA.   Google Cloud   CQURE ACADEMY

Microsoft   NUTANIX™   ISACA.

DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE

- 33% 45-54
- 31% 35-44
- 17% 25-34
- 11% 55-64
- 4% Under 25
- 3% Prefer not to answer
- 2% Over 65

Legend:
- 45-54
- 35-44
- 25-34
- 55-64
- Under 25
- Prefer not to answer
- Over 65

GENDER

- 82% Male
- 16% Female
- 2% Prefer not to answer

INDUSTRY

Industry	%
IT consulting	21%
IT software	13%
Accounting, auditing, banking and finance	7%
Other	7%
Education services	7%
Government: Nondefense, state, local	6%
Healthcare	6%
Manufacturing: Consumer and Industrial	5%
Government: Military and homeland security	4%
Professional business services	3%
Telecommunications	3%
Communications or public relations or advertising	3%
Insurance, real estate and legal	2%
Retail	2%
Pharmaceutical, medical, biotech	2%
IT hardware	2%
System Integrator (SI) and VAR integration	2%
Hospitality, travel and recreation	2%
Transportation or public utilities	2%
Aerospace or defense	1%
Natural resources: Mining, oil or gas	1%
Media, film, music	1%
Natural resources: Agriculture, forestry, fishing	1%
Construction, architecture, engineering	1%

DEMOGRAPHICS

EDUCATION

6% 4% 1% 47% 42%

- ■ Post-graduate degree (master's or doctorate)
- ■ Undergraduate degree (bachelor's or other)
- ■ Technical or vocational school degree
- ■ Completed high school or GED
- ■ No degree or diploma

ORGANIZATION SIZE

251-500	15%
5,000+	12%
101-250	12%
1-10	11%
501-1,000	10%
1,001-2,000	9%
51-100	9%
21-50	8%
11-20	8%
2,001-5,000	6%

EXECUTIVE JOB ROLE

CISO - Chief Information Security Officer	22%
CIO - Chief Information Officer	20%
CEO - Chief Executive Officer	19%
CTO - Chief Technology Officer	17%
Other	8%
CDO - Chief Data Officer	5%
COO - Chief Operating Officer	3%
CDO - Chief Development Officer	3%
CAIO - Chief AI Officer	3%
CCO - Chief Cloud Officer	3%

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.

Learn more at *www.skillsoft.com*.

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