

CompTIA®

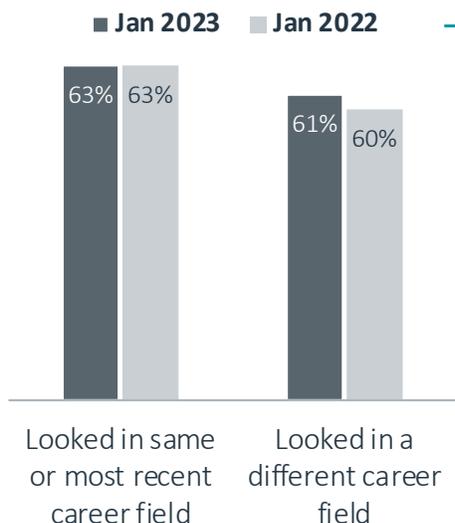
# Job Seeker Trends 2023

Insights into the desired career pathways of job seekers  
and the strategies they use to get there

# Job Seekers Continue Job Pursuits

Approximately **30%** of respondents reported pursuing a new job or career change during the past three months, a rate fairly consistent with prior readings. This encompasses those currently employed plus those actively looking (classified as part of the labor market by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics). Those classified as being outside of the labor force, such as retirees or those that cannot work, were excluded from the CompTIA study.

## Job seekers exploring same and different career fields

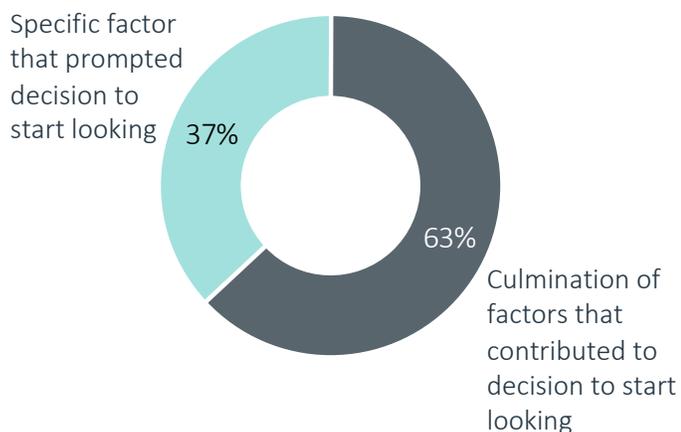


Among the subset of those categorized as a job seeker exploring opportunities in the same or new career field during the fourth quarter time period of 2022. Many job seekers consider opportunities in the same field where they currently work and in different fields that will entail a career change.

## Top factors contributing to job seekers pursuing a new employment opportunity

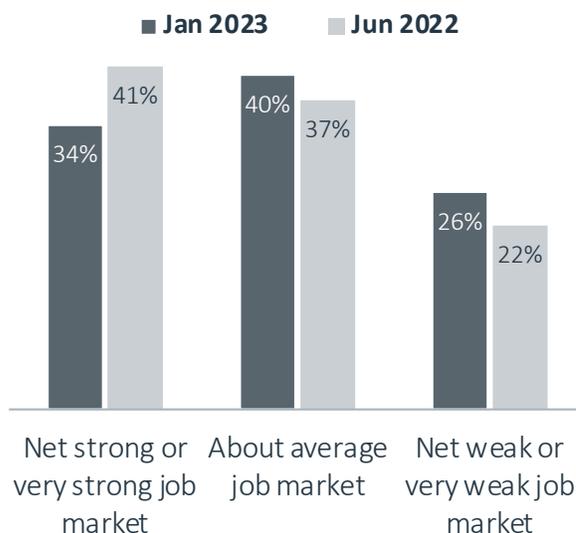
- 1 Financial situation changed
- 2 Values or life priorities changed
- 3 Stuck in a rut and wanting something new
- 4 Unhappy with current career trajectory
- 5 Burnout or stress

## Prompt that initiated job seeking



## Job seeker perceptions of the job market

Perceived availability of job opportunities and hiring

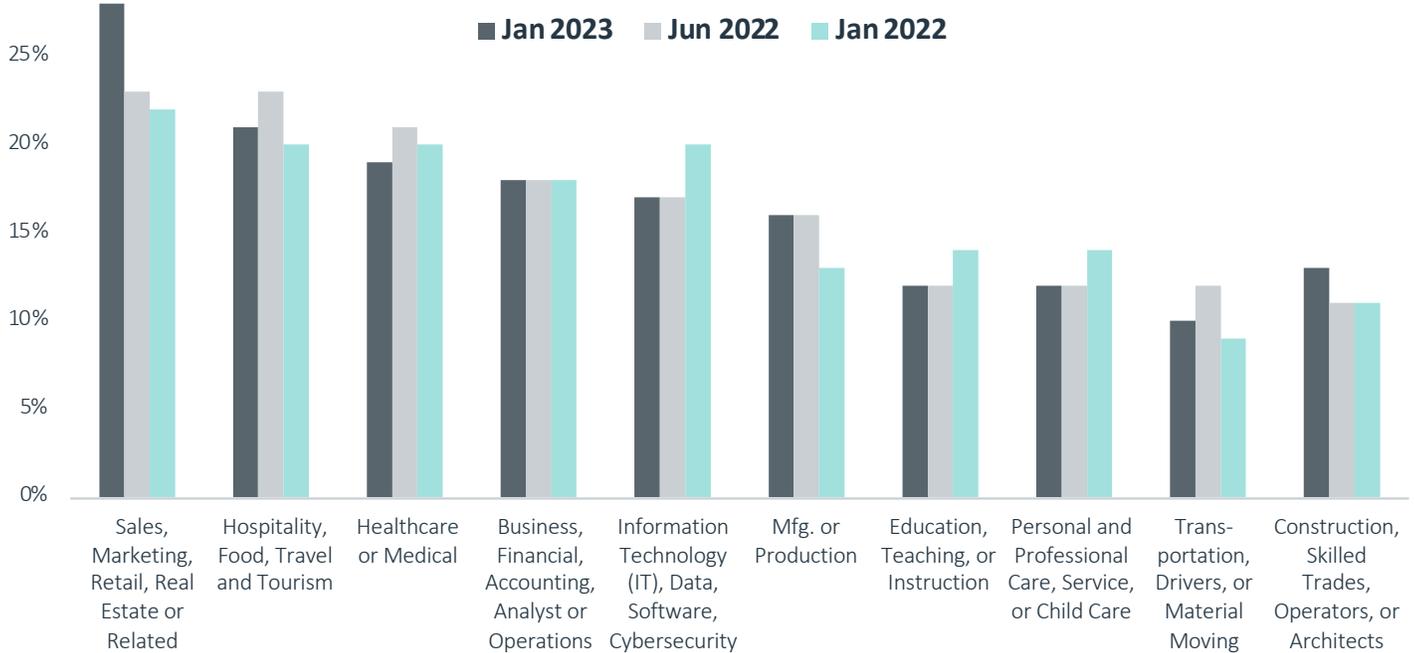


Despite the bumpy economic ride over the past six months, job seekers remain generally optimistic about employment prospects. There was a slight pullback in optimism, but all things considered, the data suggests job seekers believe the labor market remains on solid footing.

See Methodology for study details

# Job Seekers Consider Range of Career Fields

Career fields Job Seekers considered during the Q4 2022 time period

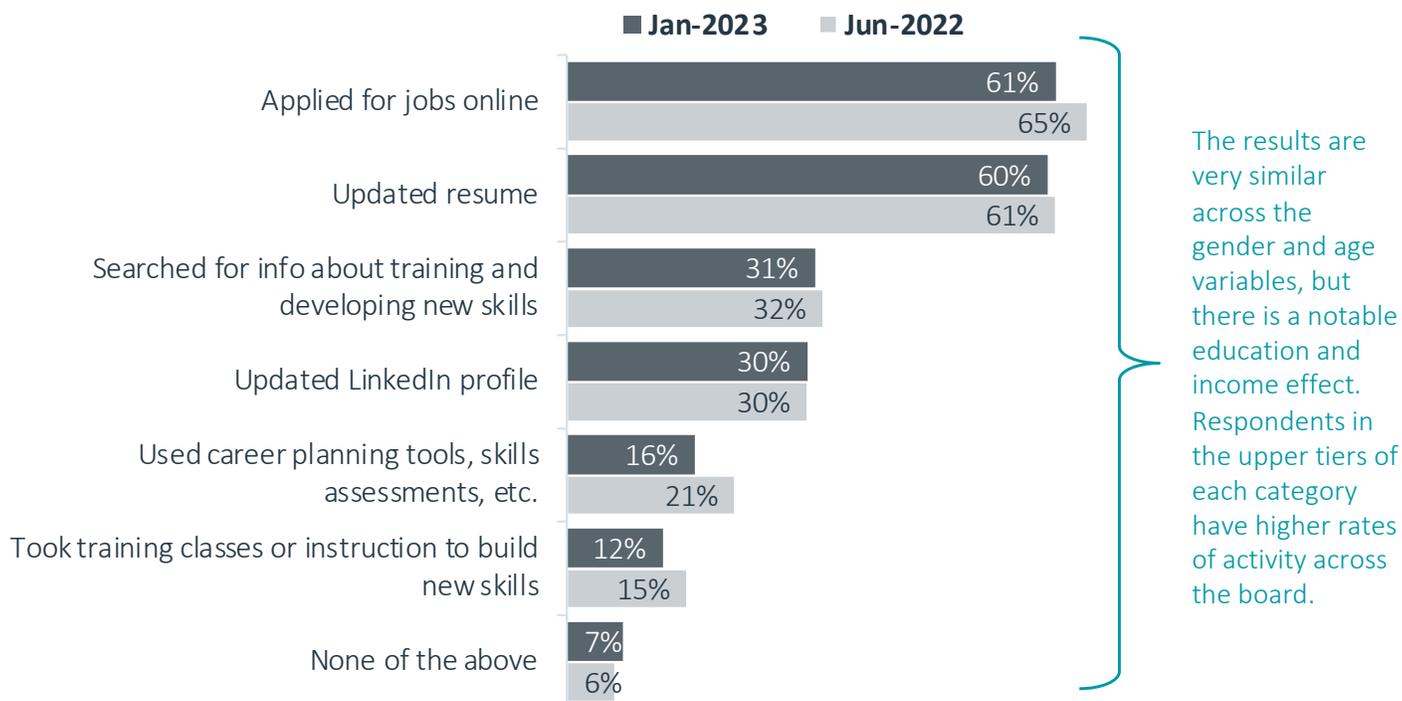


- Job seeker consideration across career fields was roughly in line with the previous iteration of this study (+/- 3 percentage points or less).
- The Sales, Marketing, Retail, Real Estate or Related career category experienced the largest jump in interest among job seekers.
- 1 in 3 job seekers report wanting to start a new job as soon as possible, while 59% report a degree of timing flexibility and 9% unsure.
- Technology career consideration was unchanged and remains a top 5 selection among job seekers.

	Jun 2021	Jan 2022	Jun 2022	Jan 2023
Sales, Marketing, Retail, Real Estate or Related	22%	22%	23%	28%
Hospitality, Food, Travel and Tourism	26%	20%	23%	21%
Healthcare or Medical	18%	20%	21%	19%
Business, Financial, Accounting, Analyst or Operations	14%	18%	18%	18%
Technology, IT Support, Cybersecurity, Data, Software or IT Project Mgt.	13%	20%	17%	17%
Manufacturing or Production	16%	13%	16%	16%
Construction, Skilled Trades, Operators, or Architects	13%	11%	11%	13%
Education, Teaching, or Instruction	11%	14%	12%	12%
Personal and Professional Care, Service, or Child Care	16%	14%	12%	12%
Comm., Multimedia, Journalism or Social Media	8%	11%	10%	11%
Arts, Design, Entertainment or Sports	13%	9%	10%	11%
Transportation, Drivers, or Material Moving	14%	9%	12%	10%
Community, Social Service, Psychology or Non-profit	11%	11%	10%	9%
Engineering or Technicians	7%	6%	8%	8%
Installation, Maintenance, Mechanics, or Repair	10%	6%	6%	8%
Life, Physical, or Social Science	5%	7%	7%	7%
Legal, Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement or Armed Forces	6%	5%	6%	6%
Farming, Fishing, or Forestry	6%	5%	5%	5%

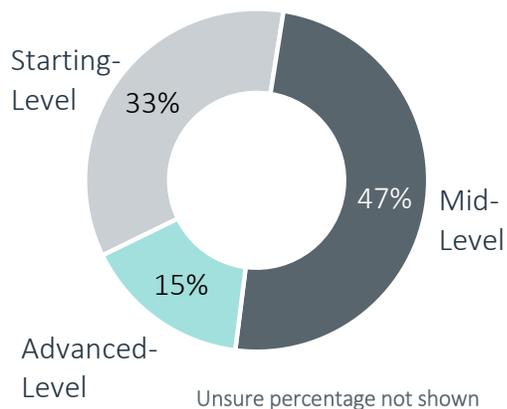
# The Work...Behind Finding Work

## Actions taken by job seekers in pursuing career opportunities



### Job seekers seem realistic in their approach to new positions

Level of job sought in employment pursuits



### Top reported challenges of pursuing a new job

- 1 Time to apply for jobs, fill out applications, interviews
- 2 Mental fatigue and stress of lengthy job searches
- 3 Automated application systems that screen out candidates
- 4 Balancing job searches with the demands of work or family
- 5 Information overload with job boards and career sites
- 6 Too many rounds of interviews
- 7 Figuring out where/how to start job search strategy

There are many similarities across demographic segments with reported challenges of pursuing a new job, and a few slight differences. Women cite the challenge of time and the challenge of balancing job searches with the demands of work or family at slightly higher rates than men. Gen Zers and Millennials rate the challenge of mental fatigue at a slightly higher rate than Baby Boomers.

As the use of automated hiring systems increases – especially those with AI-enabled capabilities, employers and job seekers will face new challenges as they weigh hiring strategies, effectiveness tradeoffs and ethics.

# The Expectations Balancing Act

—● The data confirms job seekers continue to place a high priority on pay increases. Work flexibility also rates as a top factor reflecting the likely permanent shift in expectations around remote work.

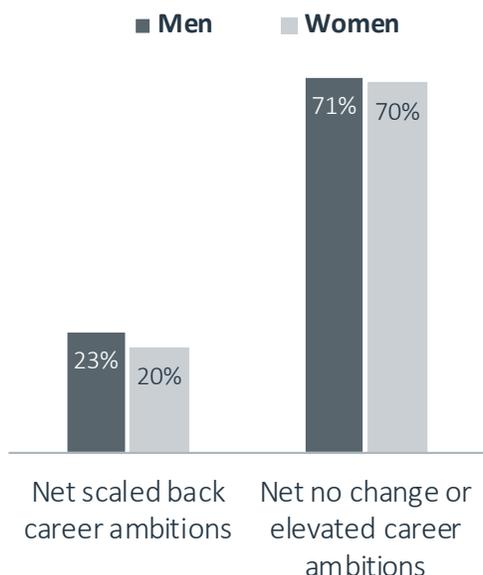
Employee experience (EX) factors such as work-life balance and personal wellbeing remain important considerations, especially for job seekers in the 18-34 age group. Conversely, red flags with hiring managers or poor work culture pose a significant risk to successfully recruiting job candidates for employers.

<b>Top reported factors among job seekers in considering a job opportunity</b>	<b>June 2022</b>	<b>January 2023</b>	<b>Gen Z</b>	<b>Baby Boomer</b>
Higher pay / benefits	67%	70%	65%	60%
Better work-life balance / personal wellbeing	36%	43%	43%	35%
Work from home / remote work option	39%	40%	32%	56%
Job security / stability	40%	41%	36%	32%
Career growth / advancement opportunities	32%	35%	40%	12%
More meaningful / fulfilling career	27%	30%	30%	19%

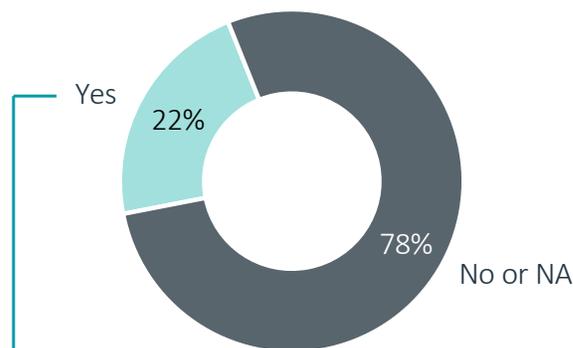
<b>Top reported barriers among job seekers in forgoing a job opportunity</b>	<b>June 2022</b>	<b>January 2023</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Work location / travel or commute time	46%	52%	48%	56%
Lack of pay / benefits transparency during hiring process	43%	48%	45%	51%
Red flags with hiring manager / team	43%	46%	40%	54%
Confusing or inadequate job position description	32%	36%	34%	38%
Employer not committed to supporting career growth	30%	31%	32%	30%
Employer reputation / cultural fit with your values	29%	33%	32%	35%

## Impact of jobs market news on job seeker career ambitions



## Incidence of current job seekers resigning from a previous position

Resigning during the 2022 time period

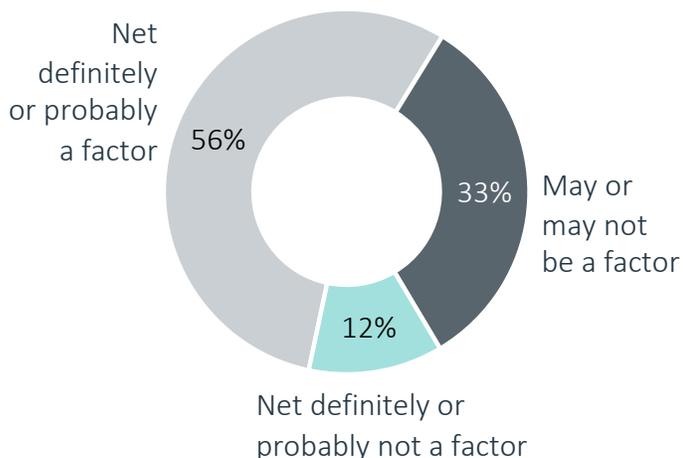


### Reasons for resigning

- 44% Take another job
- 21% Take personal time off / Recharge
- 18% Relocation
- 15% Medical reasons
- 22% Other (birth of child, childcare, eldercare, leaving workforce)

# Real and Perceived Barriers to Career Change

## Confidence gap<sup>1</sup> remains a significant issue for many job seekers



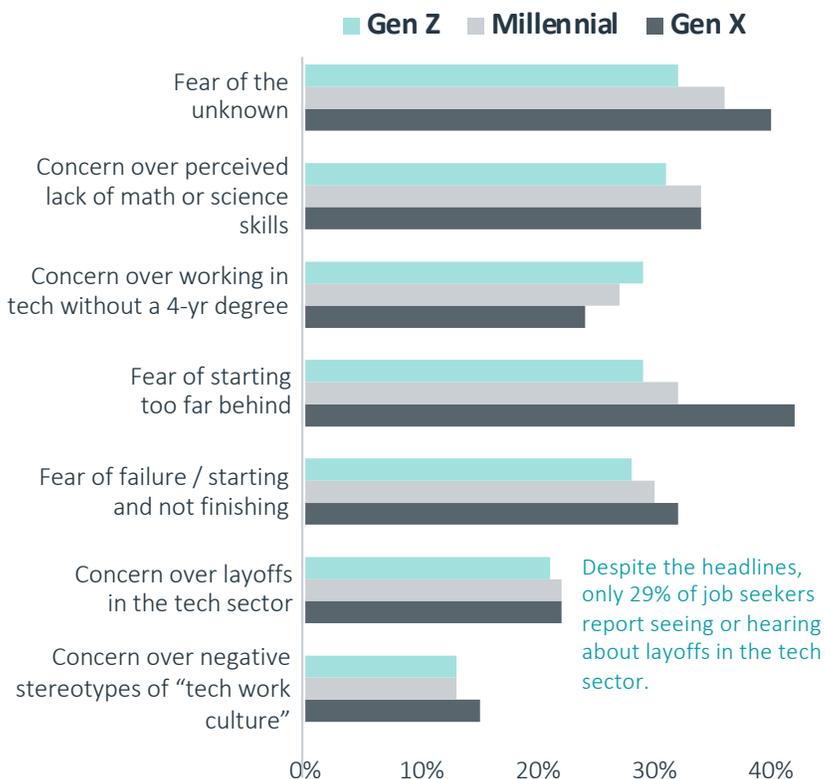
<sup>1</sup>For the purposes of this study, the confidence gap was described as the often mistaken belief that working in technology is not possible due to real or perceived barriers that discourage some candidates.

## Job seeker assessment of perceived difficulty of transitioning into new career fields



Reported confidence gap rates are similar across gender and mostly similar across age cohorts. Occupation categories obviously span many job levels and job types. Job seeker ratings of the difficulty of transitioning into new career fields should be interpreted as directional guidance to inform where additional support may be needed to ensure a healthy level of talent mobility.

## Confidence gap concerns across age cohorts



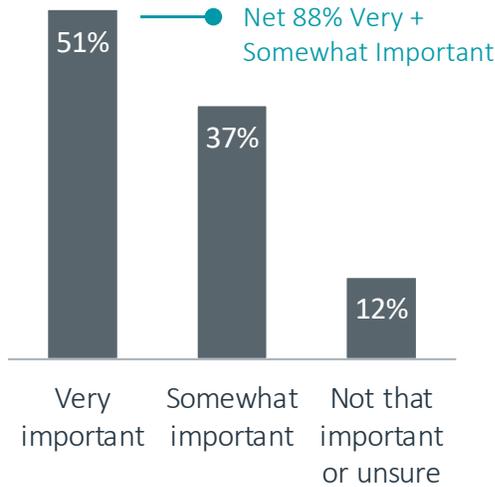
## Reported challenges and barriers to pursuing a tech job

- 27% Not interested in technology
- 25% Training takes too much time
- 23% Tech jobs don't pay enough
- 21% Too expensive to train for a tech job
- 19% Believe insufficient math/science skills are a barrier to working in a tech job
- 18% Not enough tech jobs in region

The data suggests slightly more confidence gap concerns among Gen Xers compared to the other two age cohorts. Gen Xers are especially concerned about starting too far behind and fear of the unknown in pursuing a career in a technology field. Interestingly, compared to the June 2022 wave there was a slight decrease in concerns related to "tech work culture," which was somewhat offset by greater concern related to layoffs in the tech sector.

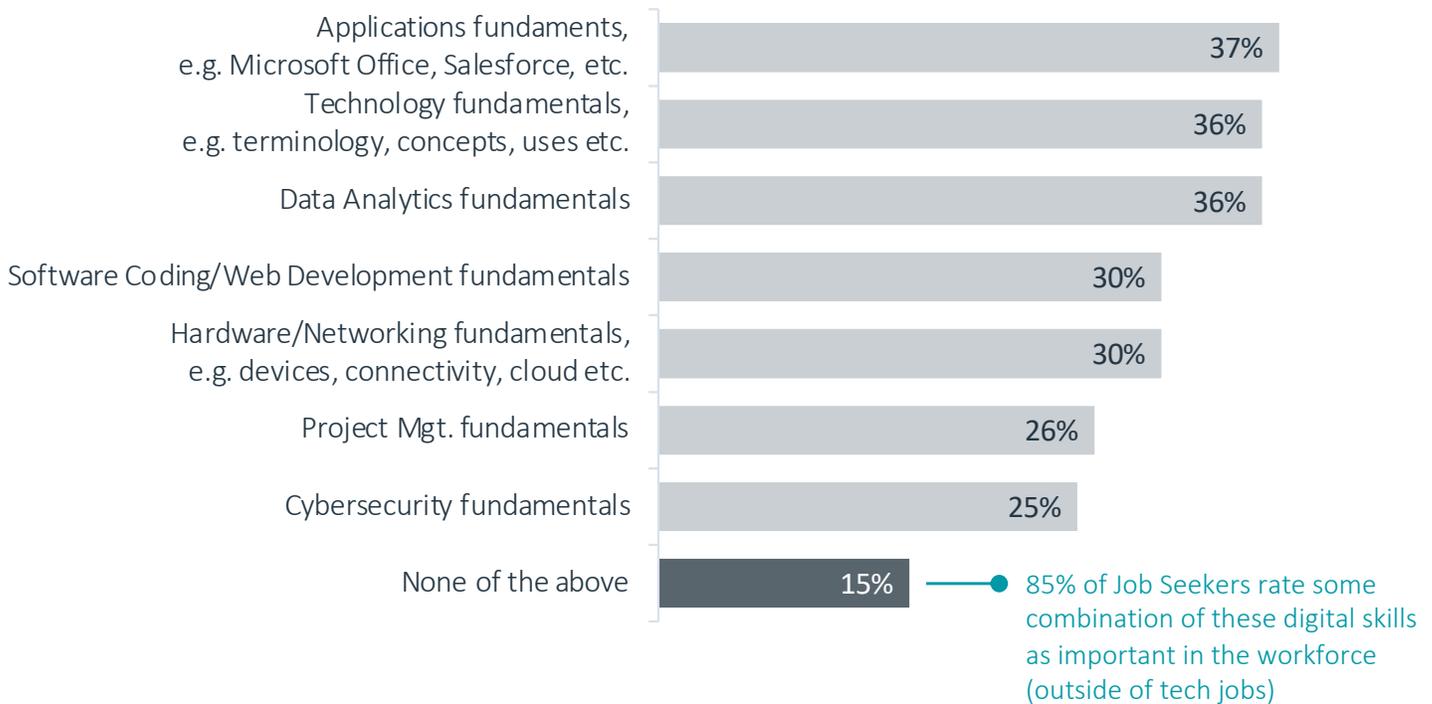
# Confirming the Importance of Digital Skills

Rating of importance of digital skill needs in workforce (outside of tech jobs)



Digital Skills Need	Net important ratings summary
Job Seekers Overall	88%
Male	88%
Female	89%
Gen Z	80%
Millennial	86%
Gen X	94%
Baby Boomer	97%
< 4-yr Degree	85%
4-yr Degree	91%
Post-Grad	97%

Top 5 perceived digital skill needs in workforce (outside of tech jobs)



Segmentation of top 5 perceived digital skill needs

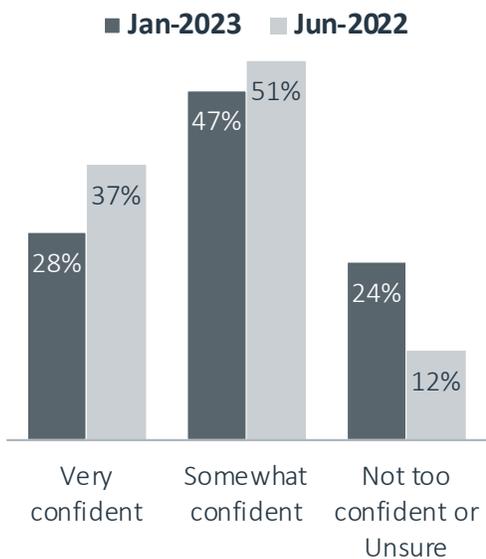
	Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Baby Boomer
1.	Business Applications	Data Analytics	Business Applications	Business Applications
2.	Technology	Technology	Technology	Technology
3.	Hardware/Networking	Business Applications	Data Analytics	Data Analytics
4.	Coding/Web Dev.	Coding/Web Dev.	Hardware/Networking	Hardware/Networking
5.	Data Analytics	Hardware/Networking	Cybersecurity	Project management

# The Role of Training and Certification

## Strategies job seekers believe will help their transition into a career in technology

- 1 Earning an industry-recognized technical certification [51%]
- 2 Training in an in-demand technical skill [50%]
- 3 Guidance from someone currently working in tech [45%]
- 4 Developing a career change plan [34%]
- 5 Training in a business or leadership skill [25%]
- 6 Positive encouragement or a nudge from a mentor or career coach [22%]
- 7 Unsure [7%]

### Confidence varies in navigating training and education options

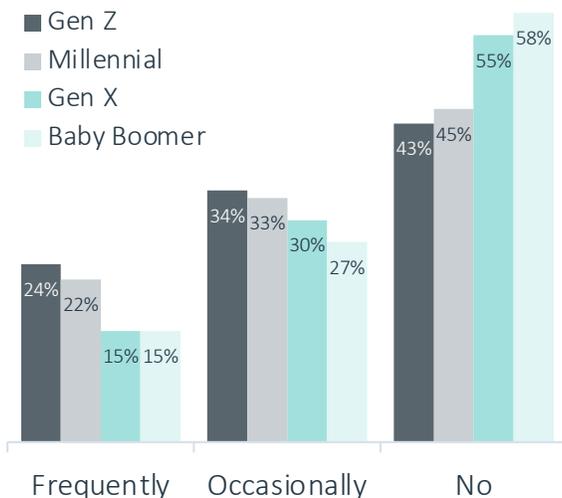


### Training preferences for job seekers considering a career in information technology (IT)

- 53% Online/virtual class with a teacher/instructor
- 53% Video on YouTube or related (typically free)
- 48% Interactive e-learning course/training
- 46% Video from a learning provider (typically paid)
- 29% Mentored learning with a tutor, career coach, etc.
- 28% Textbook or e-Book
- 26% In-person class with a teacher/instructor

### Incidence of freelance or gig work

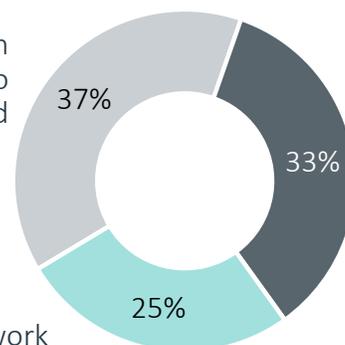
As supplementary or primary work



### Job seeker profiling

Among respondents pursuing a job in a technology field

New to tech – looking to get started



Prior tech work experience – looking to advance

Prior tech work experience – looking to transition into another field in tech

Unsure percentage not shown

# Methodology

CompTIA's *Job Seeker Trends* study was conducted via a quantitative survey fielded online during January 9-20, 2023. The data was weighted to approximate a target sample of U.S. adults based on gender, educational attainment, age, race, and region. Results from the full survey with n=1,000 have an approximate margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points.

The survey was administrated by the research firm Morning Consult.

Within the context of this study, job seekers are defined as adults who have looked for a new job within their current or most recent career field or explored new jobs in a different career field in the past 3 months. Note: the data suggests some respondents interpreted 'new career' pathway as a new job role within an existing field (e.g. transitioning from an IT support role to a cybersecurity role). Overall, this had little effect on the key themes of the findings.

## Caveats to Keep in Mind:

- The intent of this study was to capture a broad-based look at career exploration, allowing for comparisons across occupation categories. The trade-off with this approach is less detail in any one occupation category. Occupations were described at a high level without providing detailed definitions or an extensive list of jobs falling within the category.
- Past CompTIA research indicates certain segments new to the field of information technology (IT) have a number of preconceived notions of what the career field entails. In some cases, Job Seekers may have an interest in a job role with a significant technology or data or digital component without thinking of it in the context of a traditional "IT" role.
- The reported rates of engaging in training in this study pertain to active job seekers only. The large segment of workers that routinely train to improve their skills or prepare for a certification exam that are not actively looking (although could be planning for career advancement with their existing employer) are not included in the training figures.
- See prior waves of Job Seeker Trends for additional insight on topics such as gig work and the use of talent marketplaces.

CompTIA is a member of the market research industry's Insights Association and adheres to its internationally respected Code of Standards. Any questions regarding the study should be directed to CompTIA Research and Market Intelligence staff at [research@comptia.org](mailto:research@comptia.org).



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