CompTIA.
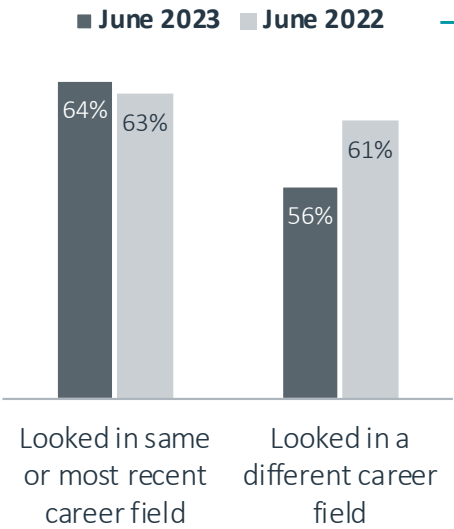
Job Seeker Trends

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

Job Seekers Continue Job Pursuits

Approximately **27%** of respondents reported pursuing a new job or career change during the past three months, a rate consistent with prior waves of this research. 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

■ June 2023　■ June 2022

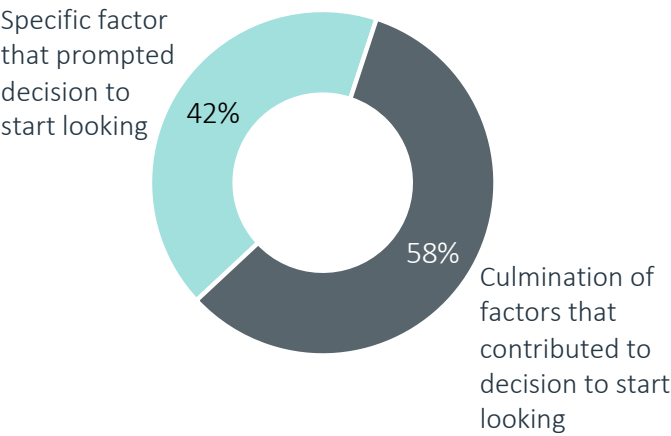|	Looked in same or most recent career field	Looked in a different career field
June 2023	64%	56%
June 2022	63%	61%

Among the subset of those categorized as a job seeker exploring opportunities in the same or new career field during the second quarter time period of 2023. Many job seekers consider opportunities in the same field where they currently work and in different fields that will entail a career change.

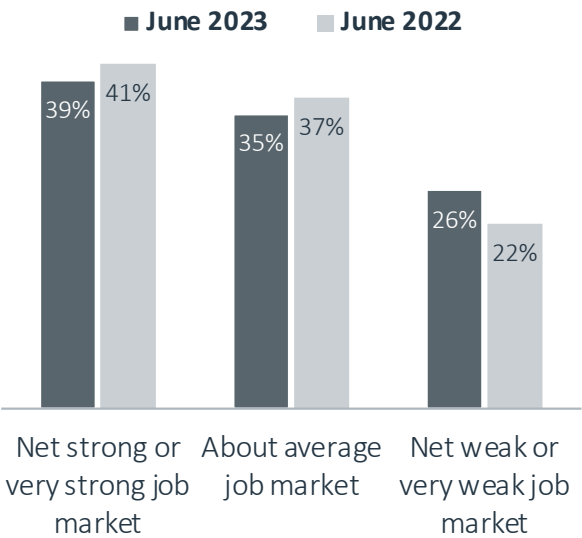## Top factors contributing to job seekers pursuing a new employment opportunity

1 Financial situation changed

2 Values or life priorities changed

3 Stuck in a rut and wanting something new

4 Burnout or stress

5 Unhappy with current career trajectory

Prompt that initiated job seeking

Specific factor that prompted decision to start looking — 42%

Culmination of factors that contributed to decision to start looking — 58%

Job seeker perceptions of the job market

Perceived availability of job opportunities and hiring

■ June 2023　■ June 2022

|	Net strong or very strong job market	About average job market	Net weak or very weak job market
June 2023	39%	35%	26%
June 2022	41%	37%	22%

Despite the bumpy economic ride over the past nine 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 Q2 2023 time period
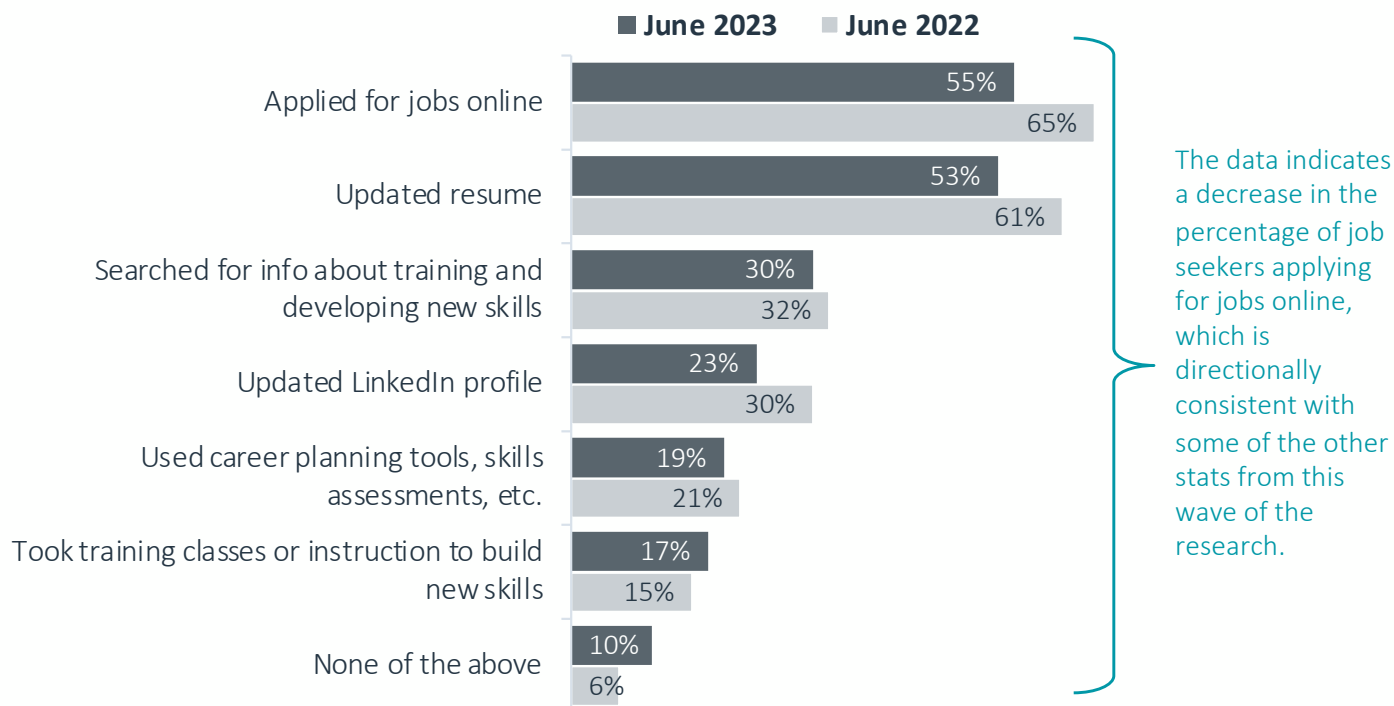

June 2021   **June 2022**   **June 2023**
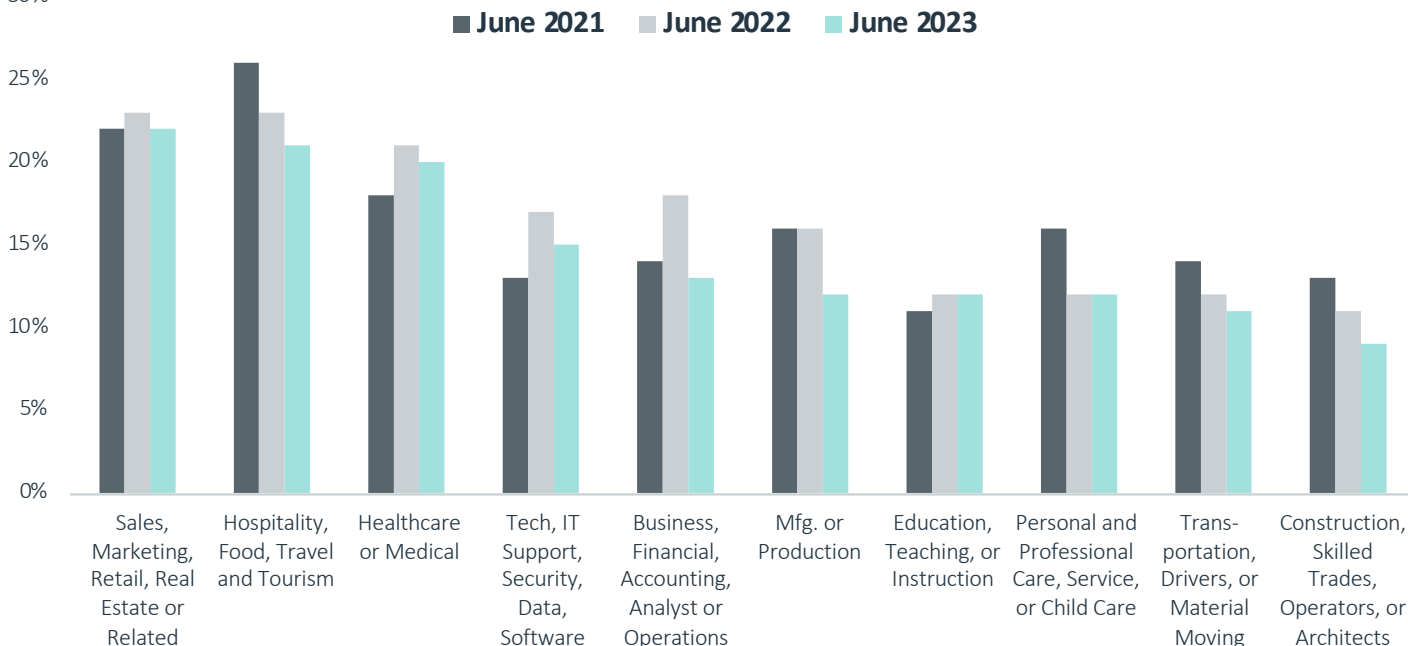
● Job seeker consideration for career change options dipped slightly across many occupation categories, possibly a reflection of ongoing market uncertainty.

● Technology career consideration followed the pattern of many occupation categories and fell slightly (although possibly within the margin of error), but remains a top 5 selection.

	Jun 2021	Jan 2022	Jun 2022	Jan 2023	Jun 2023
Sales, Marketing, Retail, Real Estate or Related	22%	22%	23%	28%	22%
Hospitality, Food, Travel and Tourism	26%	20%	23%	21%	21%
Healthcare or Medical	18%	20%	21%	19%	20%
Tech, IT Support, Cybersecurity, Data, Software or IT Proj. Mgt.	13%	20%	17%	17%	15%
Business, Financial, Accounting, Analyst or Operations	14%	18%	18%	18%	13%
Manufacturing or Production	16%	13%	16%	16%	12%
Education, Teaching, or Instruction	11%	14%	12%	12%	12%
Personal and Professional Care, Service, or Child Care	16%	14%	12%	12%	12%
Arts, Design, Entertainment or Sports	13%	9%	10%	11%	11%
Transportation, Drivers, or Material Moving	14%	9%	12%	10%	11%
Community, Social Service, Psychology or Non-profit	11%	11%	10%	9%	10%
Construction, Skilled Trades, Operators, or Architects	13%	11%	11%	13%	9%
Comm., Multimedia, Journalism or Social Media	8%	11%	10%	11%	9%
Installation, Maintenance, Mechanics, or Repair	10%	6%	6%	8%	6%
Life, Physical, or Social Science	5%	7%	7%	7%	6%
Engineering or Technicians	7%	6%	8%	8%	5%
Legal, Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement or Armed Forces	6%	5%	6%	6%	5%
Farming, Fishing, or Forestry	6%	5%	5%	5%	4%

The Work...Behind Finding Work

Actions taken by job seekers in pursuing career opportunities

■ June 2023 **■ June 2022**

Action	June 2023	June 2022
Applied for jobs online	55%	65%
Updated resume	53%	61%
Searched for info about training and developing new skills	30%	32%
Updated LinkedIn profile	23%	30%
Used career planning tools, skills assessments, etc.	19%	21%
Took training classes or instruction to build new skills	17%	15%
None of the above	10%	6%

The data indicates a decrease in the percentage of job seekers applying for jobs online, which is directionally consistent with some of the other stats from this wave of the research.

Job seekers seem realistic in their approach to new positions

Level of job sought in employment pursuits

- Starting-Level 28%
- Mid-Level 48%
- Advanced-Level 18%

Unsure percentage not shown
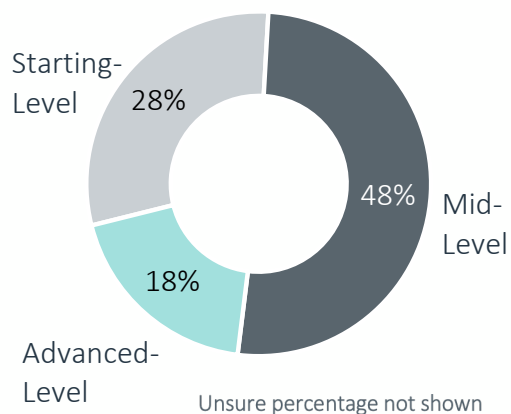
Top reported challenges of pursuing a new job

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. For example, Millennials rate the challenge of mental fatigue at a slightly higher rate than the other demographic cohorts.

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. Overall 30% of job seekers reported a degree of frustration with automated systems, with higher rates reported by men than women (37% vs. 25%).

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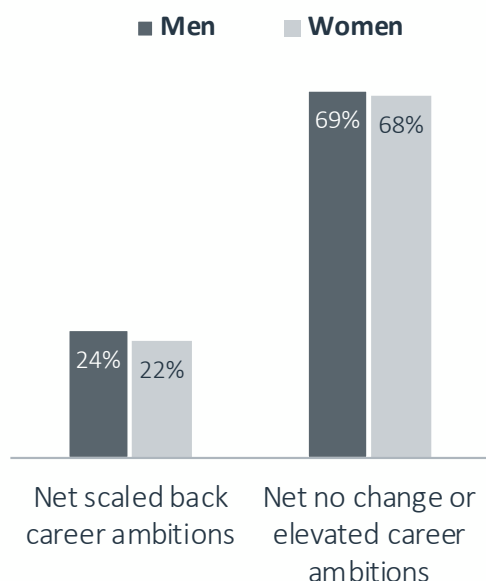
Employee experience (EX) factors such as work-life balance and personal wellbeing remain important considerations, especially for job seekers in the 18-34 age group. Conversely, red flags with hiring managers or poor work culture pose a significant risk to successfully recruiting job candidates for employers.

Top reported factors among job seekers in considering a job opportunity	June 2022	June 2023	Gen Z	Gen X
Higher pay / benefits	67%	65%	62%	64%
Better work-life balance / personal wellbeing	36%	39%	32%	36%
Job security / stability	40%	36%	35%	38%
Work from home / remote work option	39%	35%	29%	34%
Career growth / advancement opportunities	32%	30%	32%	26%
More meaningful / fulfilling career	na	27%	24%	25%

Top reported barriers among job seekers in forgoing a job opportunity	June 2022	June 2023	Men	Women
Work location / travel or commute time	46%	47%	46%	47%
Red flags with hiring manager / team	43%	42%	39%	44%
Lack of pay / benefits transparency during hiring process	43%	41%	42%	41%
Confusing or inadequate job position description	32%	29%	31%	28%
Employer not committed to supporting career growth	30%	29%	31%	27%
Employer reputation / cultural fit with your values	29%	29%	33%	25%

Impact of jobs market news on job seeker career ambitions

■ Men   ■ Women

- Net scaled back career ambitions: 24% (Men), 22% (Women)
- Net no change or elevated career ambitions: 69% (Men), 68% (Women)

Incidence of current job seekers resigning from a previous position

Resigning during the first half of 2023 time period

Yes — 25%

No or NA — 75%
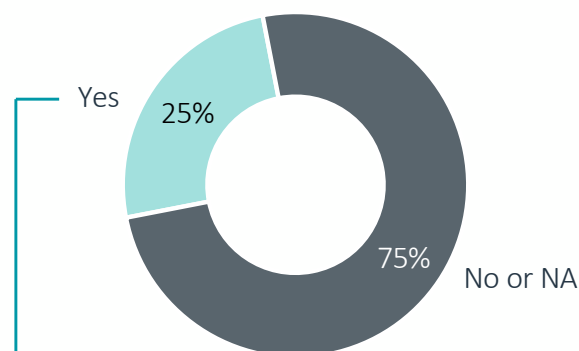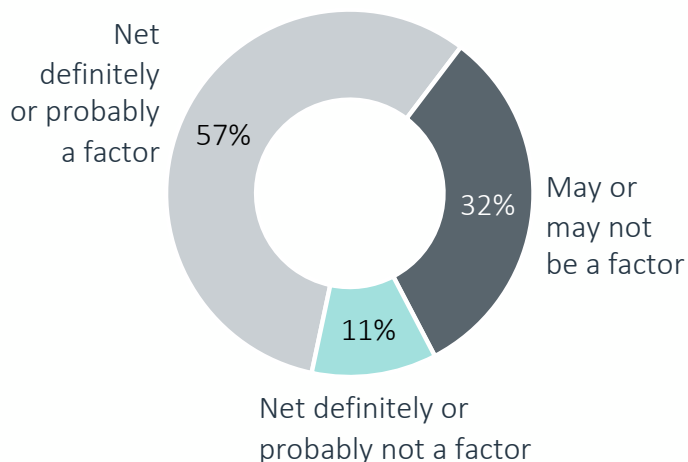
Reported reasons for resigning

42%	Take another job
25%	Take personal time off / Recharge
25%	Medical reasons
14%	Childcare or birth of child
11%	Relocating to another region
17%	Other (eldercare, leaving workforce, retirement)

Real and Perceived Barriers to Career Change

Confidence gap[1] remains a significant issue for many job seekers

Net definitely or probably a factor — 57%

May or may not be a factor — 32%

Net definitely or probably not a factor — 11%

[1]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
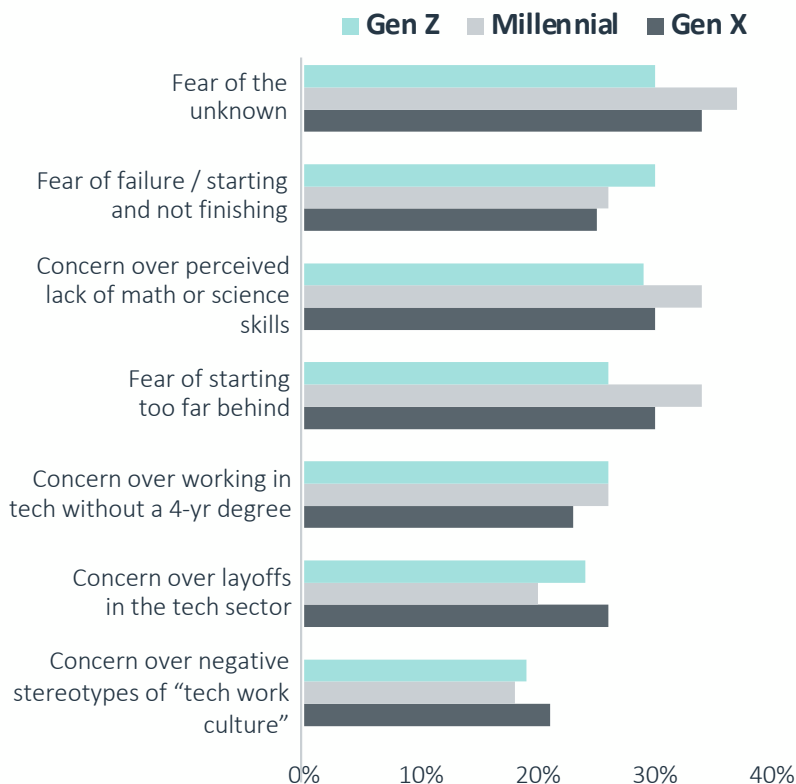
Note: NET of some degree of perceived difficulty

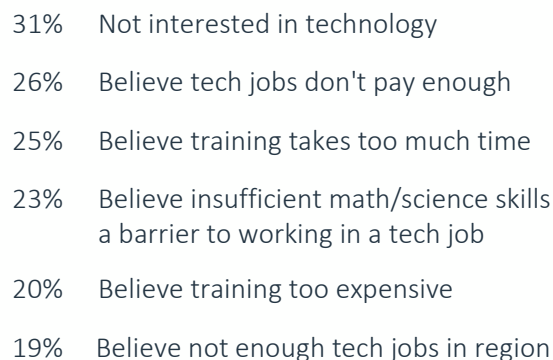|	
59%	Technology, IT Support, Cybersecurity, Data, Software…
58%	Communications, Multimedia, Journalism or Social Media
52%	Education, Teaching, or Instruction
50%	Healthcare or Medical
45%	Business, Financial, Accounting, Analyst or Operations
41%	Sales, Marketing, Retail, Real Estate or Related
39%	Manufacturing or Production
38%	Hospitality, Food, Travel and Tourism

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

Legend: Gen Z, Millennial, Gen X

- Fear of the unknown
- Fear of failure / starting and not finishing
- Concern over perceived lack of math or science skills
- Fear of starting too far behind
- Concern over working in tech without a 4-yr degree
- Concern over layoffs in the tech sector
- Concern over negative stereotypes of "tech work culture"

Reported challenges and barriers to pursuing a <u>tech job</u>

- 31% Not interested in technology
- 26% Believe tech jobs don't pay enough
- 25% Believe training takes too much time
- 23% Believe insufficient math/science skills a barrier to working in a tech job
- 20% Believe training too expensive
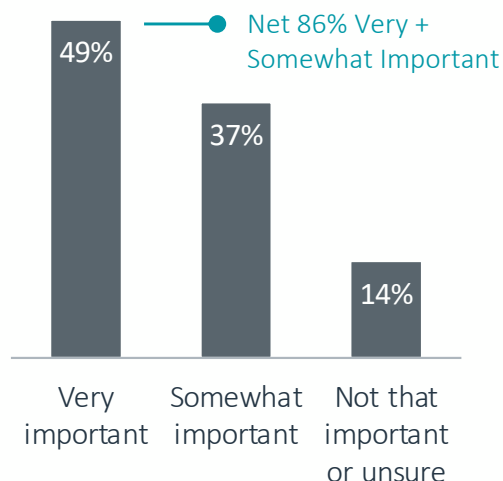- 19% Believe not enough tech jobs in region

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 and Career Readiness

Rating of importance of digital skill needs in workforce (outside of tech jobs)
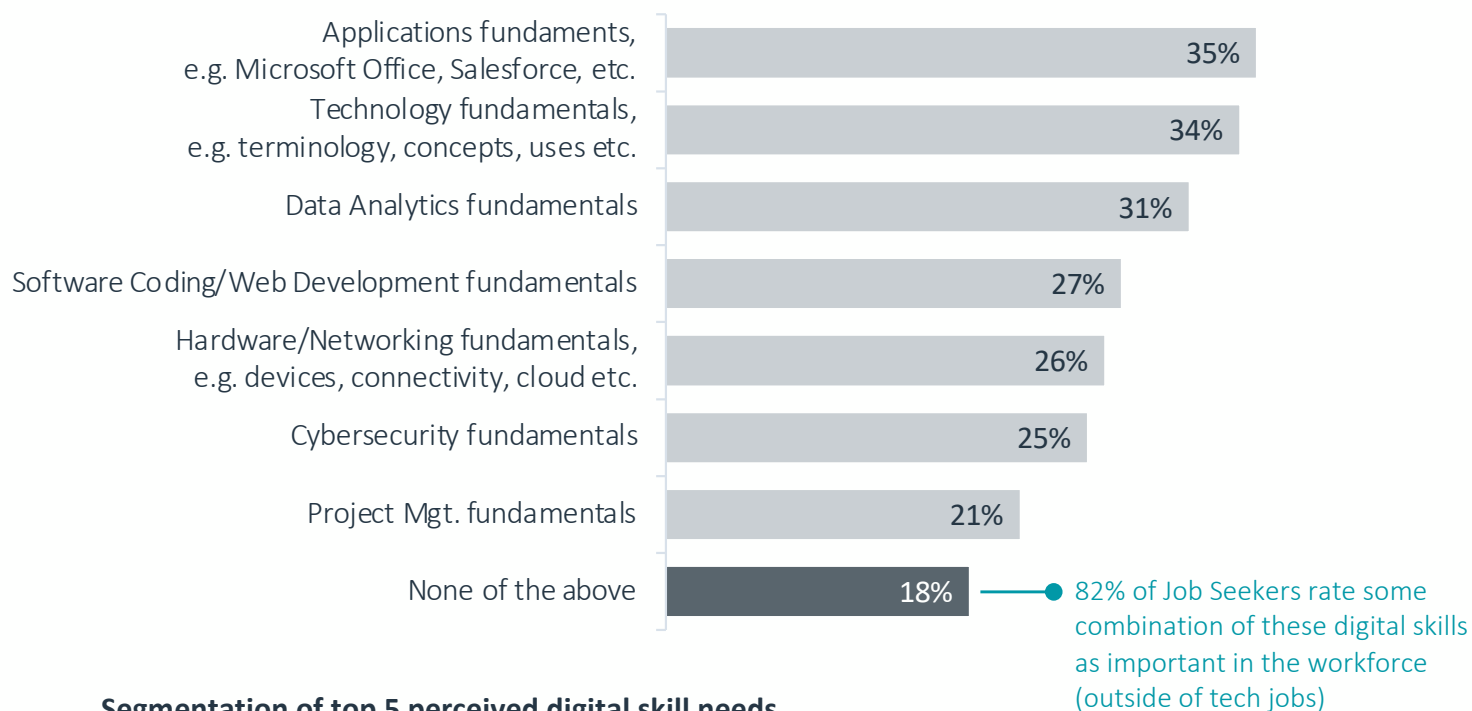
Very important: 49%
Somewhat important: 37%
Not that important or unsure: 14%

Net 86% Very + Somewhat Important

Digital Skills Need	Net important ratings summary
Job Seekers Overall	86%
Women	85%
Men	88%
Gen Z	79%
Millennial	85%
Gen X	88%
Baby Boomer	95%
< 4-yr Degree	82%
4-yr Degree	93%
Post-Grad	93%

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

Skill	%
Applications fundaments, e.g. Microsoft Office, Salesforce, etc.	35%
Technology fundamentals, e.g. terminology, concepts, uses etc.	34%
Data Analytics fundamentals	31%
Software Coding/Web Development fundamentals	27%
Hardware/Networking fundamentals, e.g. devices, connectivity, cloud etc.	26%
Cybersecurity fundamentals	25%
Project Mgt. fundamentals	21%
None of the above	18%

82% of Job Seekers rate some combination of these digital skills as important in the workforce (outside of tech jobs)

Segmentation of top 5 perceived digital skill needs

Note: in many cases the rank order differences in skill prioritization are small

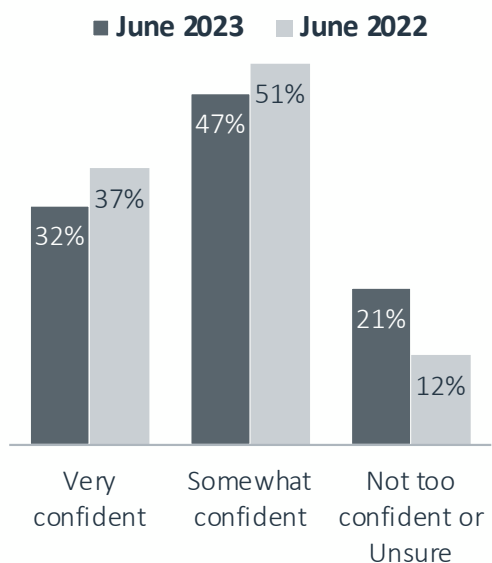|	Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Baby Boomer
1.	Technology	Applications	Applications	Data Analytics
2.	Applications	Technology	Technology	Applications
3.	Data Analytics	Data Analytics	Data Analytics	Cybersecurity
4.	Hardware/Networking	Software Coding/Web Dev.	Software Coding/Web Dev.	Technology
5.	Software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

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 [50%]
2	Training in an in-demand technical skill [46%]
3	Developing a career change plan [36%]
4	Guidance from someone currently working in tech [32%]
5	Positive encouragement or a nudge from a mentor or career coach [26%]
6	Training in a business or leadership skill [23%]
7	Unsure [9%]

Confidence varies in navigating training and education options

■ June 2023 ■ June 2022

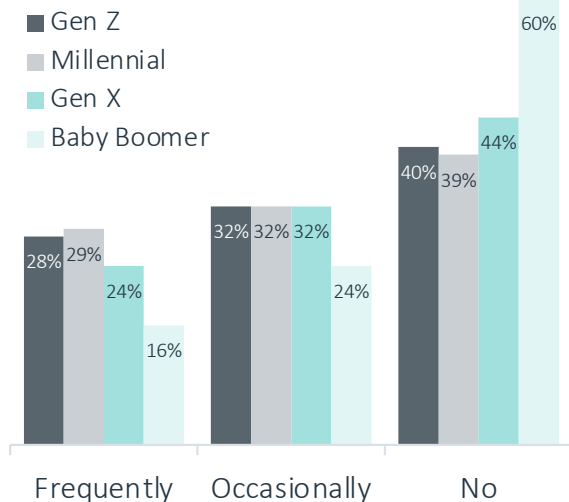|	Very confident	Somewhat confident	Not too confident or Unsure
June 2023	32%	47%	21%
June 2022	37%	51%	12%

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

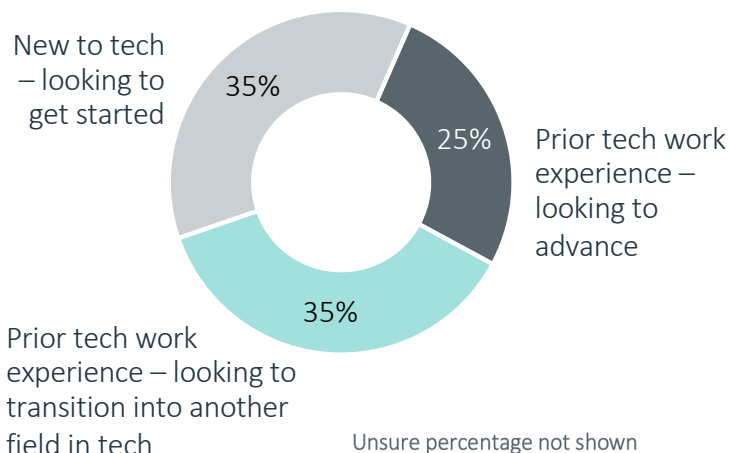| 48% | Video on YouTube or related (typically free) |
45%	Online/virtual class with a teacher/instructor
44%	Video from a learning provider (typically paid)
43%	Interactive e-learning course/training
37%	Mentored learning with a tutor, career coach, etc.
36%	Textbook or e-Book
28%	In-person class with a teacher/instructor

Incidence of freelance or gig work

As supplementary or primary work

■ Gen Z
■ Millennial
■ Gen X
■ Baby Boomer

	Frequently	Occasionally	No
Gen Z	28%	32%	40%
Millennial	29%	32%	39%
Gen X	24%	32%	44%
Baby Boomer	16%	24%	60%

Job seeker profiling

Among respondents pursuing a job in a technology field

- New to tech – looking to get started: 35%
- Prior tech work experience – looking to advance: 25%
- Prior tech work experience – looking to transition into another field in tech: 35%

Unsure percentage not shown

Methodology

CompTIA's *Job Seeker Trends* study was conducted via a quantitative survey fielded online during May 17 – June 4, 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=1,003 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.

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