

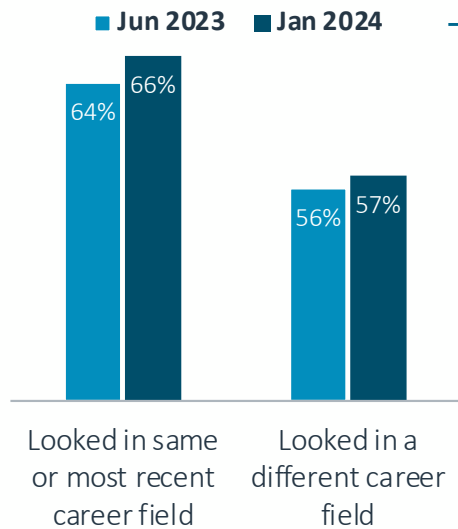
Job Seeker Trends

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

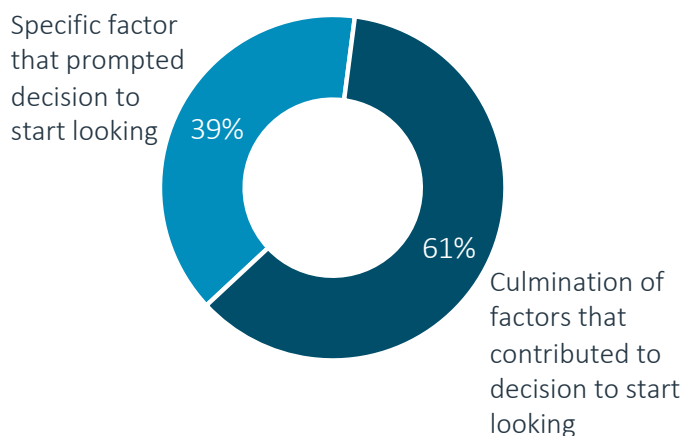


Among the subset of those categorized as a job seeker exploring opportunities in the same or new career field during the fourth quarter time period of 2024. Many job seekers consider opportunities in the same field where they currently work and in different fields that will entail a career change.

Top factors contributing to job seekers pursuing a new employment opportunity

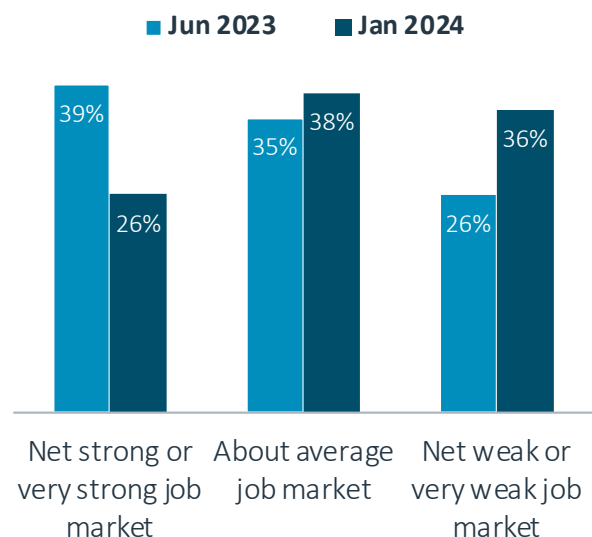
- 1 Financial situation changed
- 2 Stuck in a rut and wanting something new
- 3 Burnout or stress
- 4 Unhappy with current career trajectory
- 5 Values or life priorities changed

Prompt that initiated job seeking



Job seeker perceptions of the job market

Perceived availability of job opportunities and hiring

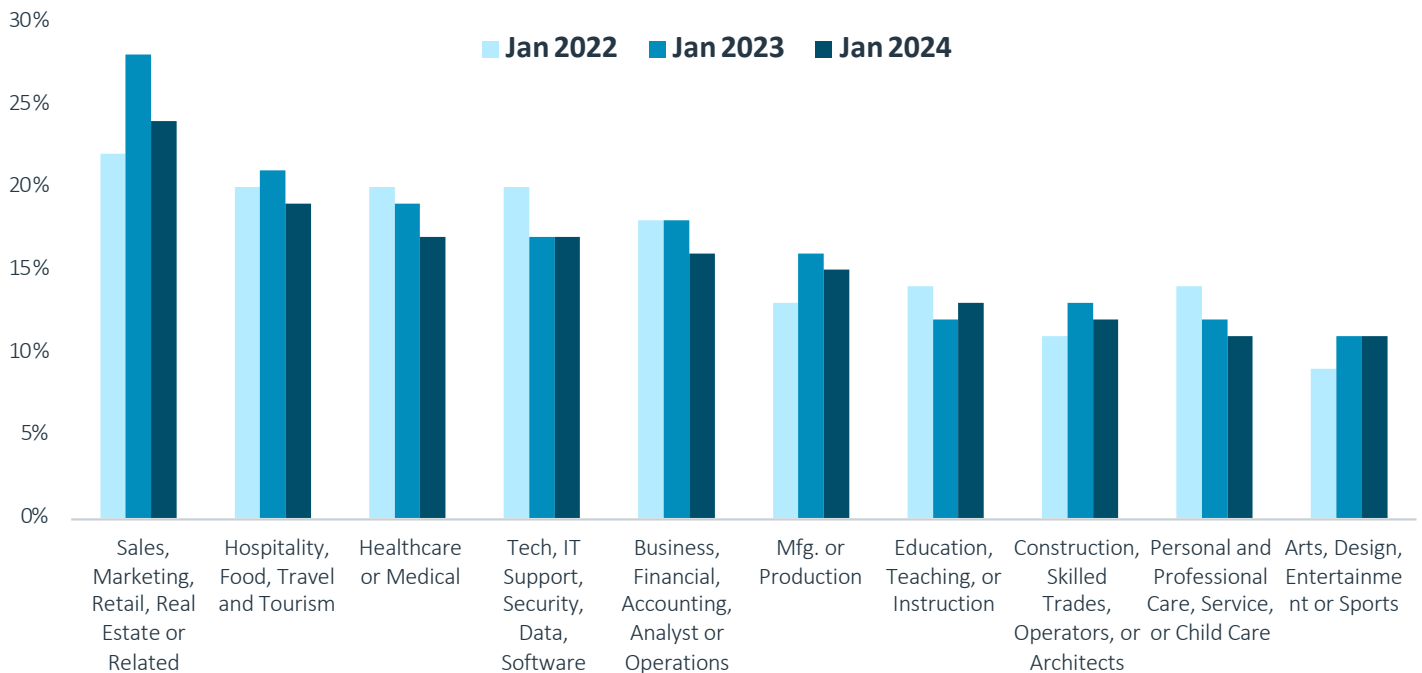


47% of current job seekers report a prior career change. Among this segment, about half report a positive experience with about half indicating there were both positives and negatives to the change.

See Methodology for study details

Job Seekers Consider Range of Career Fields

Career fields Job Seekers considered during the Q4 2023 time period



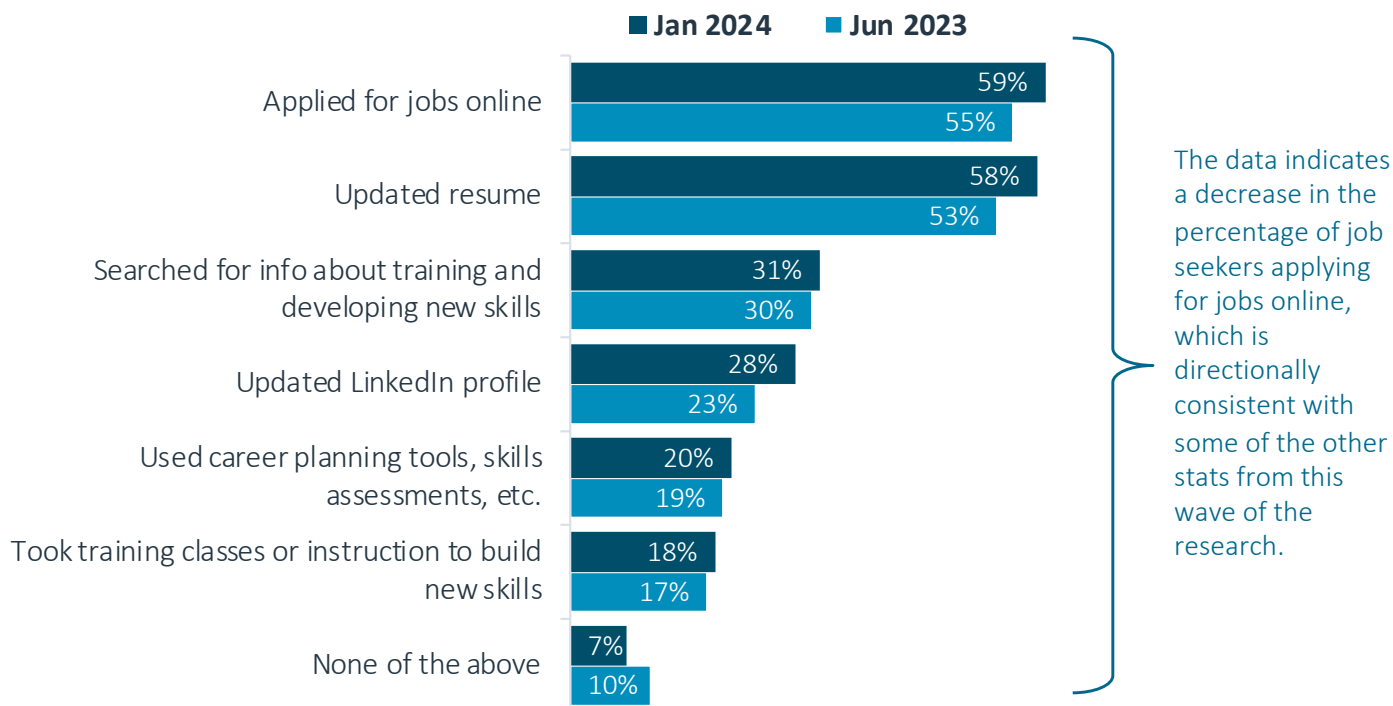
● Job seeker consideration for career change options dipped slightly across many occupation categories, possibly a reflection of ongoing market uncertainty.

● 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.

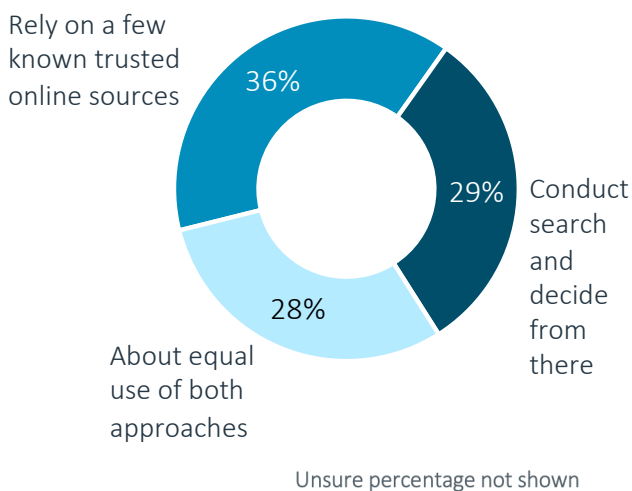
| | Jan 2022 | Jun 2022 | Jan 2023 | Jun 2023 | Jan 2024 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Sales, Marketing, Retail, Real Estate or Related | 22% | 23% | 28% | 22% | 24% |
| Hospitality, Food, Travel and Tourism | 20% | 23% | 21% | 21% | 19% |
| Healthcare or Medical | 20% | 21% | 19% | 20% | 17% |
| Tech, IT Support, Cybersecurity, Data, Software or IT Project Mgt. | 20% | 17% | 17% | 15% | 17% |
| Business, Financial, Accounting, Analyst or Operations | 18% | 18% | 18% | 13% | 16% |
| Manufacturing or Production | 13% | 16% | 16% | 12% | 15% |
| Education, Teaching, or Instruction | 14% | 12% | 12% | 12% | 13% |
| Construction, Skilled Trades, Operators, or Architects | 11% | 11% | 13% | 9% | 12% |
| Personal and Professional Care, Service, or Child Care | 14% | 12% | 12% | 12% | 11% |
| Arts, Design, Entertainment or Sports | 9% | 10% | 11% | 11% | 11% |
| Community, Social Service, Psychology or Non-profit | 11% | 10% | 9% | 10% | 11% |
| Transportation, Drivers, or Material Moving | 9% | 12% | 10% | 11% | 10% |
| Comm., Multimedia, Journalism or Social Media | 11% | 10% | 11% | 9% | 10% |
| Installation, Maintenance, Mechanics, or Repair | 6% | 6% | 8% | 6% | 7% |
| Life, Physical, or Social Science | 7% | 7% | 7% | 6% | 6% |
| Engineering or Technicians | 6% | 8% | 8% | 5% | 6% |
| Legal, Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement or Armed Forces | 5% | 6% | 6% | 5% | 6% |
| Farming, Fishing, or Forestry | 5% | 5% | 5% | 4% | 5% |

The Work...Behind Finding Work

Actions taken by job seekers in pursuing career opportunities



Approach to finding career exploration resources



Top reported challenges of pursuing a new job

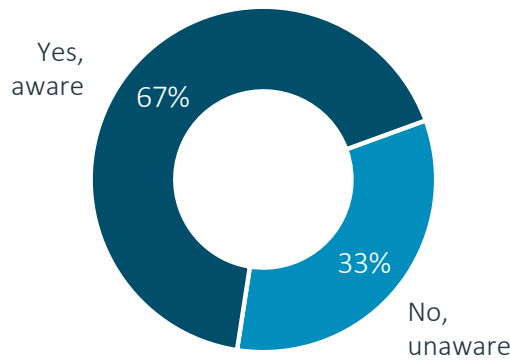
- 1 Time to apply for jobs, fill out applications, interviews
- 2 Mental fatigue and stress of lengthy job searches
- 3 Automated application systems that screen out candidates
- 4 Balancing job searches with the demands of work or family
- 5 Information overload with job boards and career sites
- 6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

● Women report seeking career exploration information and resources from known trusted sources at a higher rate than men (41% vs. 31%), whereas men report relying on search engines as the starting point at a slightly higher rate (32% vs. 25%).

● Time remains the top challenge in pursuing a new career opportunity. Forty-seven percent of job seekers cite this factor, an increase of 4 percentage points since June 2023.

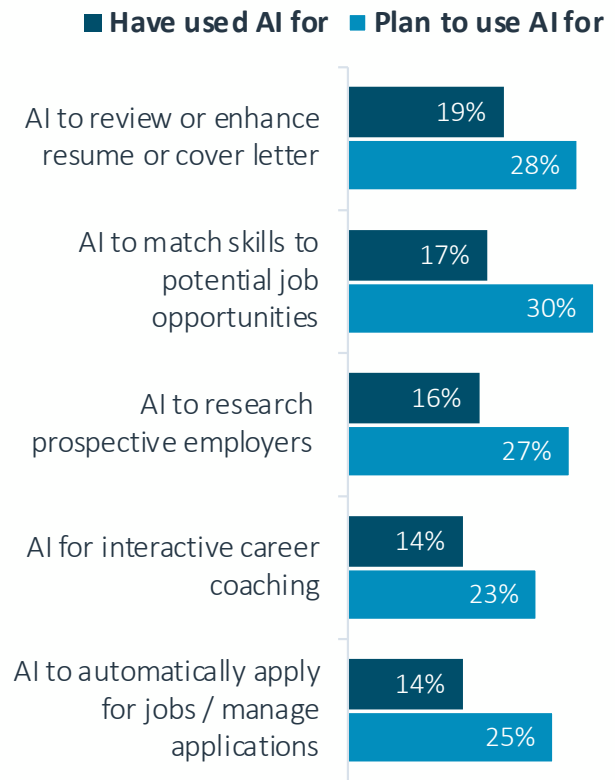
Artificial Intelligence (AI) Enters the Picture

Aware of artificial intelligence (AI) and potential impact on workforce

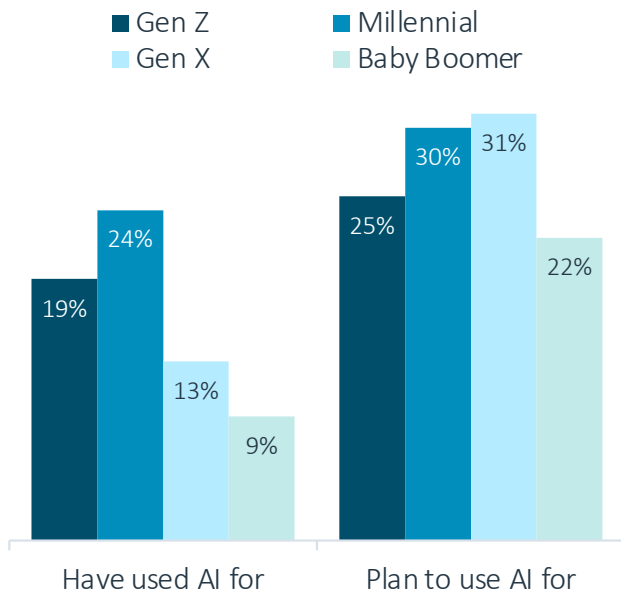


● Awareness of the discussion around AI and its potential impact on the workforce is mostly evenly known across demographic segments. The data indicates a slight education effect with those with a 4-year degree or higher more aware of the AI discussion than those without a degree (75% vs. 61%).

Use of AI-enabled career tools



Use of AI-enabled tools to review/enhance resume or cover letters



● 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 34% of job seekers reported a degree of frustration with automated systems, with higher rates reported by men than women (37% vs. 25%).

● CompTIA's 2024 Workforce and Learning Trends study provides insights from the perspective of HR executives. The research confirms HR departments see lots of potential in leveraging AI-enabled applications and platforms to streamline HR processes and enhance talent development.

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.

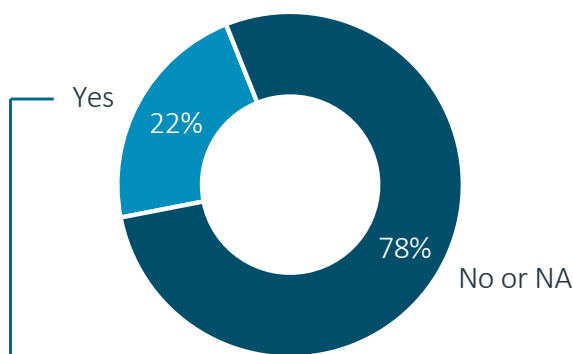
Employee experience (EX) factors such as work-life balance and personal wellbeing remain important considerations, especially for job seekers in the 18-34 age group. Conversely, red flags with hiring managers or poor work culture pose a significant risk to successfully recruiting job candidates for employers.

| Top reported factors among job seekers in considering a new job opportunity | Jun 2023 | Jan 2024 | Gen Z | Gen X |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Higher pay / benefits | 65% | 66% | 64% | 67% |
| Job security / stability | 36% | 41% | 39% | 40% |
| Better work-life balance / personal wellbeing | 39% | 40% | 48% + | 36% |
| Work from home / remote work option | 35% | 38% | 38% | 40% |
| Flexible work environment | 35% | 36% | 42% + | 30% |
| Career growth / advancement opportunities | 30% | 34% | 37% + | 31% |
| More meaningful / fulfilling career | 27% | 32% | 35% | 32% |

| Top reported barriers among job seekers in forgoing a job opportunity | Jun 2023 | Jan 2024 | Men | Women |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|------------|--------------|
| New position not sufficiently better, e.g. work, salary, etc. | NA | 47% | 46% | 49% |
| Red flags with hiring manager / team | 42% | 47% | 41% | 53% + |
| Job posting unrealistic, e.g exp., skill, educ. requirements | NA | 43% | 40% | 46% + |
| Employer not committed to supporting career growth | 29% | 34% | 36% | 32% |
| Employer reputation / cultural fit with your values | 29% | 33% | 34% | 32% |
| Lack of WFH option / work location | 28% | 27% | 26% | 28% |

Incidence of current job seekers resigning from a previous position

Leaving job during Q4 2023 time period

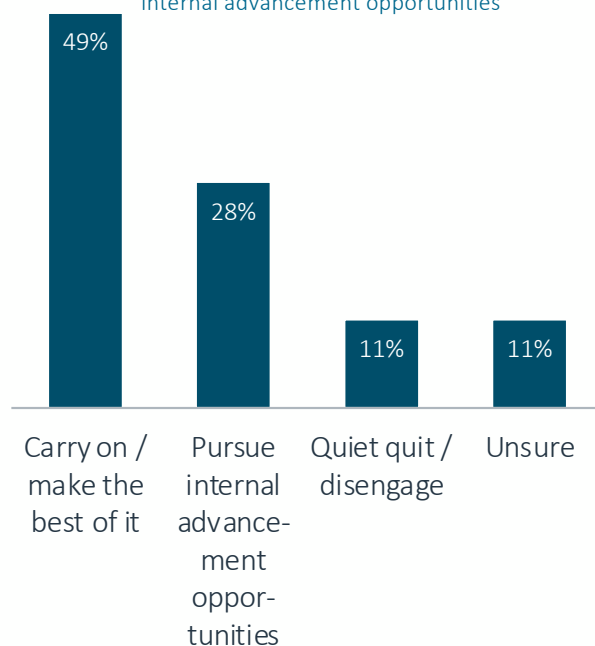


Reported reasons for resigning

- 45% Take another job
- 22% Relocating to another region
- 21% Take personal time off / Recharge
- 20% Medical reasons
- 11% Leaving the workforce
- 28% Other (childcare, eldercare, retirement)

Lack of success in career change can lead to dejection and disengagement

28% redouble their efforts to pursue internal advancement opportunities

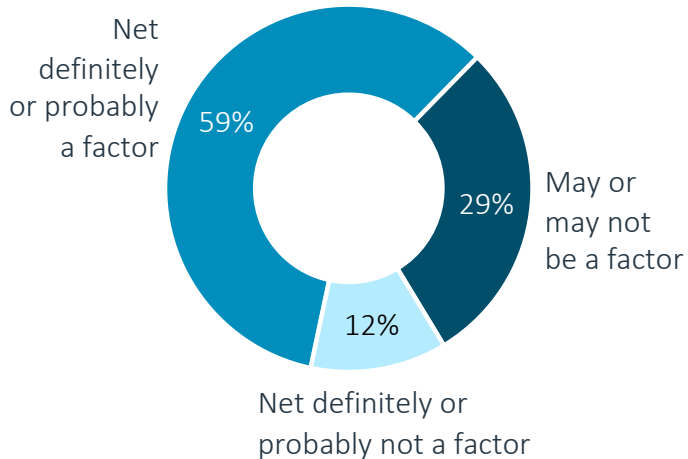


Real and Perceived Barriers to Career Change

Confidence gap¹ remains a significant issue for many job seekers

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

Note: NET of some degree of perceived difficulty



¹For 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.

Reported confidence gap rates are similar across gender and mostly similar across age cohorts.

Confidence gap concerns across age cohorts

Gen Z Millennial Gen X



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.

Reported challenges and barriers to pursuing a tech job

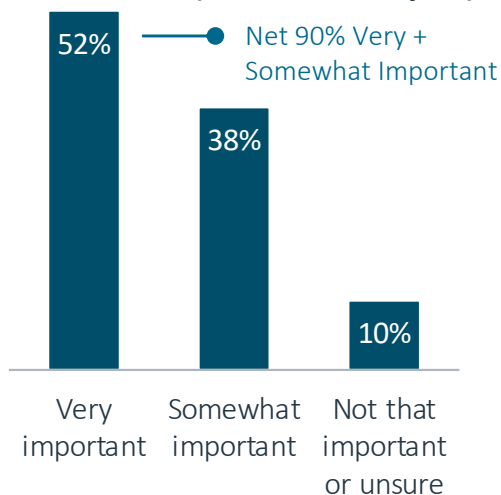
- 29% Not interested in technology
- 27% Believe training takes too long
- 24% Believe insufficient math/science skills a barrier to working in a tech job
- 23% Believe tech jobs don't pay enough
- 21% Believe training too expensive
- 18% Believe not enough tech jobs in region

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.

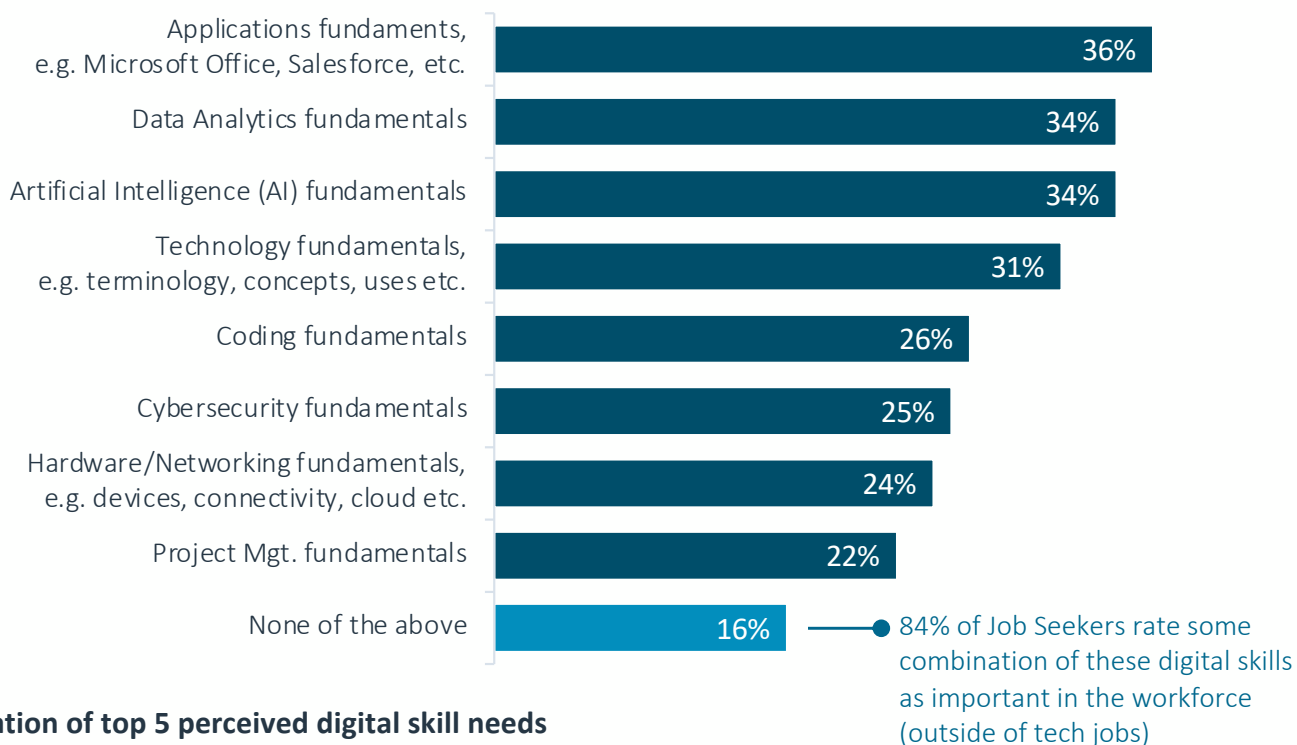
Confirming the Importance of Digital Skills and Career Readiness

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



| Digital Skills Need | Net important ratings summary |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Job Seekers Overall | 90% |
| Women | 89% |
| Men | 90% |
| Gen Z | 82% |
| Millennial | 91% |
| Gen X | 92% |
| Baby Boomer | 96% |
| < 4-yr Degree | 87% |
| 4-yr Degree | 95% |
| Post-Grad | 95% |

Top 5 perceived digital skill needs in 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

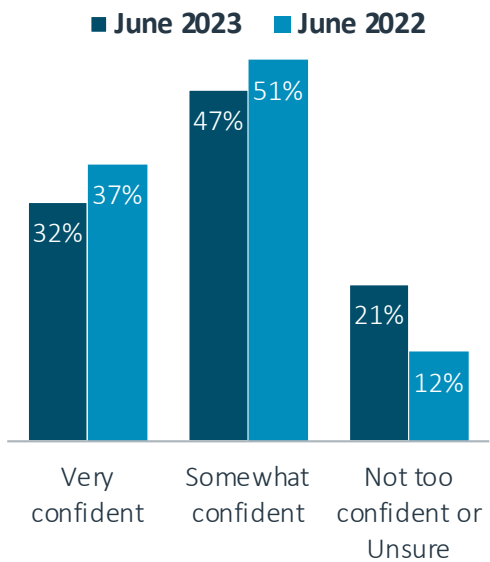
| | Gen Z | Millennial | Gen X | Baby Boomer |
|----|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. | Data Analytics | Data Analytics | Applications | Applications |
| 2. | Technology | Artificial Intelligence (AI) | Artificial Intelligence (AI) | Artificial Intelligence (AI) |
| 3. | Applications | Applications | Data Analytics | Data Analytics |
| 4. | Coding | Technology | Technology | Cybersecurity |
| 5. | Artificial Intelligence (AI) | Coding | Cybersecurity | Technology |

The Role of Training and Certification

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

- 1 Training in an in-demand technical skill [48%]
 - 2 Earning an industry-recognized technical certification [46%]
 - 3 Guidance from someone currently working in tech [43%]
 - 4 Training in a business or leadership skill [37%]
 - 5 Developing a career change plan [36%]
 - 6 Supportive nudge from a mentor or career coach [32%]
- Consistently rated as the top accelerators as technical training and certification go hand-in-hand

Confidence varies in navigating training and education options



Note: June 2023 is the most recently available data assessing training confidence

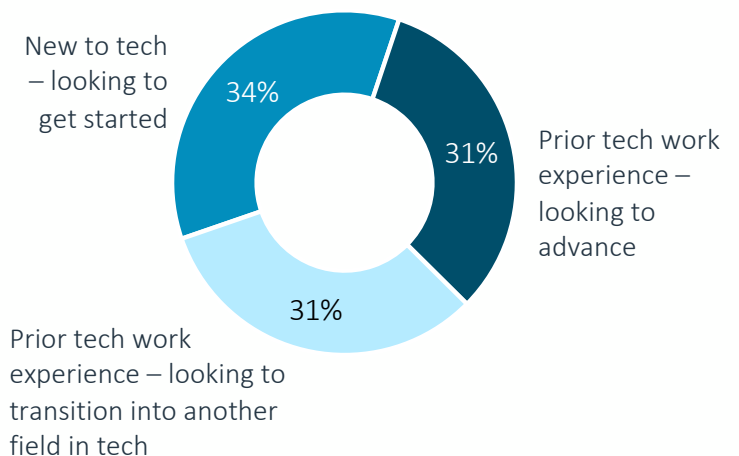
Training preferences for job seekers considering a career in information technology (IT)

- 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 side gig / side hustle

| | Occasionally | Frequently | Net |
|--------------|--------------|------------|-----|
| Gen Z | 32% | 28% | 60% |
| Millennials | 32% | 29% | 61% |
| Gen X | 32% | 24% | 56% |
| Baby Boomers | 24% | 16% | 40% |

Rung on tech workforce ladder



Methodology

CompTIA's *Job Seeker Trends* study was conducted via a quantitative survey fielded online during January 10-17, 2024. 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=1,001 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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