

MINDSET KEY FOR DIGITAL CHANGE

What Workers Want Report 2019

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the third report in our What Workers Want series. This report looks at digital transformation and how the proliferation of automation is impacting on jobs, tasks and skills, both now and in the future.

Digital technology is having a huge impact on both society and the workplace, generating unprecedented and constant change. Increasing levels of automation and the growing adoption of artificial intelligence and robotics software across many industries are transforming the world of work - today. It's no longer something that we can talk about happening in the future, the time is now.

For instance, the accountancy profession is already starting to eradicate low-level, administrative document processing tasks, such as reconciling accounts, to focus on higher-value tasks. Sales and marketing professionals now have access to automated lead generation software that enables them to build on, and exploit, their existing skills more effectively. Lawyers use text-mining techniques to read through documents and in the construction industry, drones are rapidly changing civil engineering and surveying.

Based on our survey, which had over 14,500 respondents, this report reveals the reaction of employers and employees to such technological change, and what barriers organisations are likely to face in exploiting the many perceived benefits of automation to the full.

What is most evident from our findings is that building an open culture that supports the adoption of new technology in the workplace is vital for the successful implementation of automation.

While finding the right balance between technical and soft skills will always be essential, employers must go further to ensure digital transformation is a success – today it's about hiring for the right mindset towards technological change and having that mindset present across your business. Getting the balance right will enable both employers and employees to reap potential rewards more quickly, including improved productivity, efficiencies, cost savings and increased opportunities to add human value.

Our results also show that neither organisations or its employees are ready for digital transformation, nor are they investing enough in staff to help manage the change. Despite the goodwill towards transformation in the workplace, adoption of change is difficult, and employers are struggling with a lack of support from current staff. This is exacerbated by generation and gender divides, which further compound the situation.

Worryingly, employers lack access to the right skills to make the best use of automation technology. One in ten employers cite extreme skills shortages, not just in relation to technical expertise but on the increasingly important soft skills too. For example, employers point to a desire for critical thinkers, effective people managers and individuals with sound communication and interpersonal skills. This shift is largely driven by automation reducing administrative tasks from workers, enabling greater human value to shine through.



Simon Winfield, Managing Director, Hays UK & Ireland

Despite these challenges however, few employers seem to be adapting their recruitment strategy as part of their organisation's investment in automation, when in fact this should be the time to hire professionals who have the right soft skills and open mindset needed to make digital transformation a success. Failure to do so risks causing the implementation of automation to falter.

Employers will need to consider different recruitment channels and techniques they can utilise to engage with the right professionals, and ensure they are promoting their investment in automation.

For employers to overcome the challenges they face when implementing new technology and achieve business readiness, they need to understand where barriers lie within their own workforce. Understanding what your workers want during this time of change will not only help to attract the staff you need to succeed, but also bring your existing teams along on the journey too.

This report shines a light on some of the difficult issues faced by employers and employees in today's skills-short and technology-led world of work. It's clear that to ensure automation is a success, what's needed is a new balance of soft and technical skills – the art versus the science if you will – and a culture that is open to change. Building this culture will enable your workforce to feel confident in their ability to use new technology and be open to change, enabling them to continuously adapt in line with changing technology and making technology adoption in the workplace a success.

We hope you enjoy reading this report and look forward to discussing the findings with you.

Simon Winfield

ABOUT THE REPORT

Our What Workers Want Report 2019 explores the current and likely future impact of digital transformation and automation on the employers and employees we surveyed and the organisations for which they work. It assesses what the key barriers to success are perceived to be and what action needs to be taken if organisations are to survive and thrive in an increasingly automated world.

We surveyed attitudes towards technology in their personal and work lives, and how well employers and employees believe their organisation is currently equipped to deal with forthcoming change. We also examined the perceived benefits and challenges of investing in automation, not least in terms of tackling skills gaps. The impact of automation on tasks was likewise appraised – along with the action that both employers and employees are taking, or planning to take, to adapt to a changing world of work.

Finally, based on our findings we offer recommendations to help professionals – both employers and employees – understand the best way forward and offer pointers on how to get there.

Definitions

Digital transformation: The acceleration of activities and processes to fully leverage the changes and opportunities provided by digital technology.

Digital technology: The specific technology and tools, which are used to support digital transformation and automation programmes.

Automation: The alternative to manual processing. It is the creation of technology and its application in order to control or operate a process automatically. The specific automation technology, its application and tools available, such as Mya, DocuSign, Chatbots, Robotics Process Automation and CRM, varies across industries and professions.

Human value: The application of people's competencies, skills and experience to a job and individual tasks.

Methodology

The survey on which the report is based was carried out in spring 2019 and received over 14,500 responses. It was sent to the Hays database (not limited to current jobseekers) and offers the views of both employers and employees.

The survey was completed by professionals from across the UK, working across a range of industry sectors. It was undertaken by professionals employed in various types and sizes of organisation in both the private and public sector. The data was analysed based on gender, seniority, generation, organisation size and sector.



WHAT WORKERS WANT SUMMARY

In a changing world that is advancing at a rapid pace, it is vital that employers understand what workers want. It is this understanding, applied according to where the organisation is on its digital transformation journey, that will ensure organisations are equipped with the right skills to deliver change. The research identified some common areas where employee needs are strongest and warrant greater focus.

So, what do workers want in order to succeed in a technology-led and automated world of work?

A culture that embraces change and facilitates innovation

Our findings show that professionals are more enthusiastic to use digital technology at work than in their personal lives, and across the board they are of the opinion that automation within the workplace should be embraced.

Workers believe that automation will allow people to add greater human value to an organisation, especially in the future, and agree with employers that the key to getting digital transformation initiatives right is to have a positive attitude and an openness to change.

Promisingly, employers say that they prioritise the development of a culture that is open to change and they want to ensure that they have a 'test and learn' environment in place to facilitate innovation – but there is still more that can be done.

Better clarity on the digital transformation journey and benefits of automation

Despite this enthusiasm, differences arise between employers and employees when it comes to awareness of the technological implementation taking place and understanding the benefits that automation can bring, with workers being less aware than employers.

These gaps are further compounded between different generations and genders, with certain age groups in particular not feeling as confident as they could using new technology in the workplace. Workers should be made aware of the new technology their organisation is investing in and need to understand the benefits that are pertinent to them. Otherwise a truly open culture towards digital transformation cannot be achieved. Employers must therefore consider how they can improve awareness and understanding amongst their teams.

Adequate guidance and training

Both employers and employees alike believe that the responsibility for upskilling the workforce lies primarily with employers. However, there is also evidence that, although a large proportion of employers say they are investing in training for their staff to help them to prepare for digital transformation, employees do not believe they are receiving the support they need from their employer to effectively prepare for automation in their workplace.

Workers want to develop the confidence to use new technology and automation effectively, and so a large proportion are initiating and funding their own training to upskill themselves. However, because guidance and support from their employers is lacking, they may not be investing in the right areas.

To work for an organisation that is investing in technology

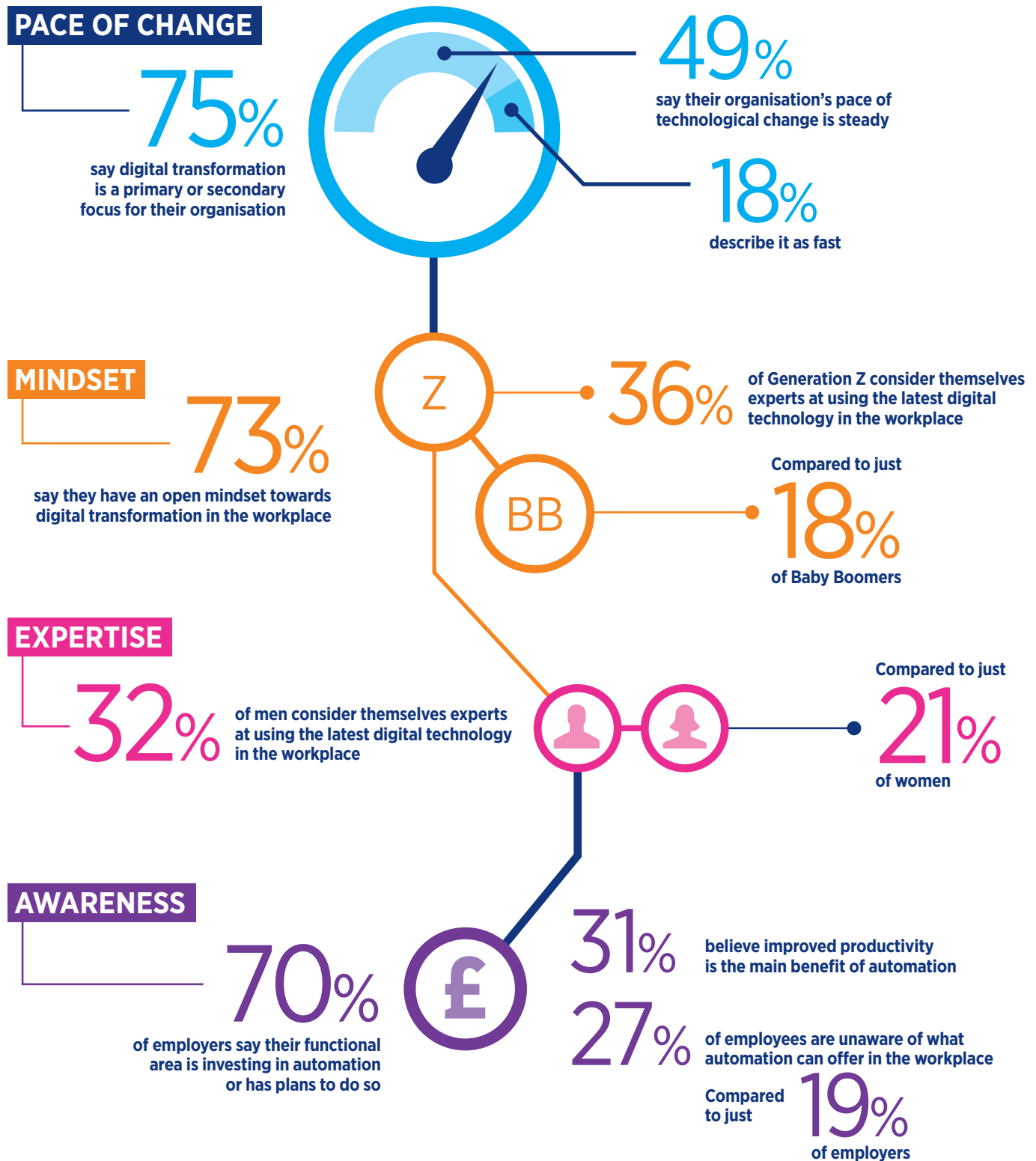
Given respondents' enthusiasm to use digital technology in the workplace it is of no surprise that workers want to work for an organisation that is investing in technology. It is of vital importance, therefore, that employers actively promote their digital transformation initiatives and investment in automation to prospective candidates, something which a quarter of employers say they do not currently do.

WHAT DO TODAY'S WORKERS WANT IN A WORLD OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION?

1. A culture that embraces change and facilitates innovation
2. Clarity on the digital transformation journey and benefits of automation
3. Adequate guidance and training
4. To work for an organisation that's investing in technology

WHAT WORKERS WANT ON THEIR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY

This diagram summarises the key findings from the research of over 14,500 professionals. It considers employee and employer understanding, awareness and application of digital transformation and automation, in key areas including mindset and training. This helps to identify where efforts should be focused to capitalise on the changes that are taking place now within the world of work.



TASKS

48%

think automation will allow people to add greater human value to organisations in the future



21%

of employers believe their team's analytical tasks have increased thanks to automation



36%

believe their team's administration tasks have decreased

SKILLS

58%

of employers expect a lack of skills from current staff to be their top barrier to automation implementation



37%

expect a lack of support from staff to be a barrier

TRAINING

41%

of employees say that providing support with training and upskilling is the most important way for organisations to prepare for automation

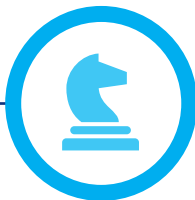


Compared to only

30%

of employers

RECRUITMENT



72%

of employers say they haven't made, and don't intend to make, any changes to their recruitment strategy as part of their investment in automation

39%

of employers say they lack the skills needed to make the best use of automation technology

48%

of employees would be attracted to work for an organisation investing in automation or with plans to do so



Only

37%

of employers promote their organisation's investment in digital transformation during interviews

RECOMMENDATIONS

Digital technology is having a significant impact on society and the workplace and increased levels of automation are expected to transform things still further. This means employers and professionals must waste no time in ensuring they are ready to take on the change. Hiring for the all-important ‘open mindset’ towards technological change is a must for employers and professionals must make sure their openness towards using new technology in the workplace shines through. This will allow both employers and employees to make the most of the benefits that digital transformation and automation can bring.

FOR EMPLOYERS



Build awareness of your organisation's technical journey

Don't be afraid to promote your investment in digital transformation and automation activity due to fears of a negative reaction. The evidence shows that, in fact, the opposite is true, and it will make you a more attractive employer.

It is sensible to promote investment at key points along the hiring process, ranging from job ads to the interview stage. It is also advisable to develop specific programmes for employees who are less confident around technology and less aware of the benefits. Women and older employees in particular would benefit from this approach.



Develop your organisation's culture for change

To successfully adopt new technology into your business consider hiring change experts, such as change managers or an agency, to help create a workplace environment that can facilitate, and cope with, change now and in the future.

In this context, both change managers and communications experts will prove invaluable to support the organisation through its transition. They can help to communicate change programmes effectively to the workforce and ensure there is high engagement with them.



Hire based on attitude, not just skill sets

Recruit new candidates based on their attitude and willingness to learn, rather than simply their qualifications, skills and experience. The idea is to create a new balance between technical and soft skills, which will put professionals in good stead to adapt to technological change – both now and in the future. Soft skills to look out for include critical thinking, communication and emotional intelligence.

Finding candidates with an open mindset towards change is also essential. To do so will likely involve a change in the way hiring is undertaken, looking to new talent pools and considering different recruitment channels and new techniques to find and engage with those professionals who have the right attitude towards change.



Support lifelong learning to ensure targeted skills development

Foster a culture of lifelong learning. In today's increasingly mobile society, this means investing in traditional training formats and more bite-sized resources that facilitate self-learning. Whatever your approach, it is crucial that employees' development is supported so they do not feel forced to upskill themselves in isolation and without proper guidance.

One useful option here to work with any generational divides is reverse-mentoring, an approach that enables digital skills transference. Here, older senior executives lacking technical knowledge are brought together with younger, digitally-literate employees to help them learn.

FOR EMPLOYEES



Adopt a software mindset

In today's changing world, it is inevitable that your role will change. Therefore, you should never be afraid to try something new or tackle something in a different way, and make sure you are displaying this at work. You may say you're open to change, but ensure your manager, or prospective employer, is aware of how flexible and adaptable you are to change.

Find out what automation initiatives are taking place within your team, department and organisation. Also understand what investment is taking place within the wider industry and evaluate the potential impact of such change on your individual role and that of your team.



Embrace lifelong learning and create a training action plan

In today's world of constant change, lifelong learning is increasingly becoming key to success. Although many employees are investing in their own training, it is vital to ensure such investment is carefully targeted to make certain it is worthwhile. Be proactive and speak to your manager to understand the direction your team is taking and together create a training plan. Keep the dialogue open and revisit regularly with your manager.

As well as formal training, don't forget about the benefits of using online courses, attending free events and reading appropriate articles. The amount of free-of-charge information that is readily available today means there is no excuse for failing to maximise your own self-development.



Polish your soft skills

The implementation of automation enables us to leave behind the more administrative side of our roles and instead spend more time adding human value and applying our soft skills to our work.

As technology is changing all the time, employers will no longer focus solely on technical skills, such as analytics or knowledge of a foreign language, but will instead seek soft skills in those they hire, such as critical thinking, creativity, analytical and leadership skills. Which soft skills are in demand will depend on your role and the functional area you work in. Identify what expertise is required within your organisation and be prepared to adapt your skill set to fit.

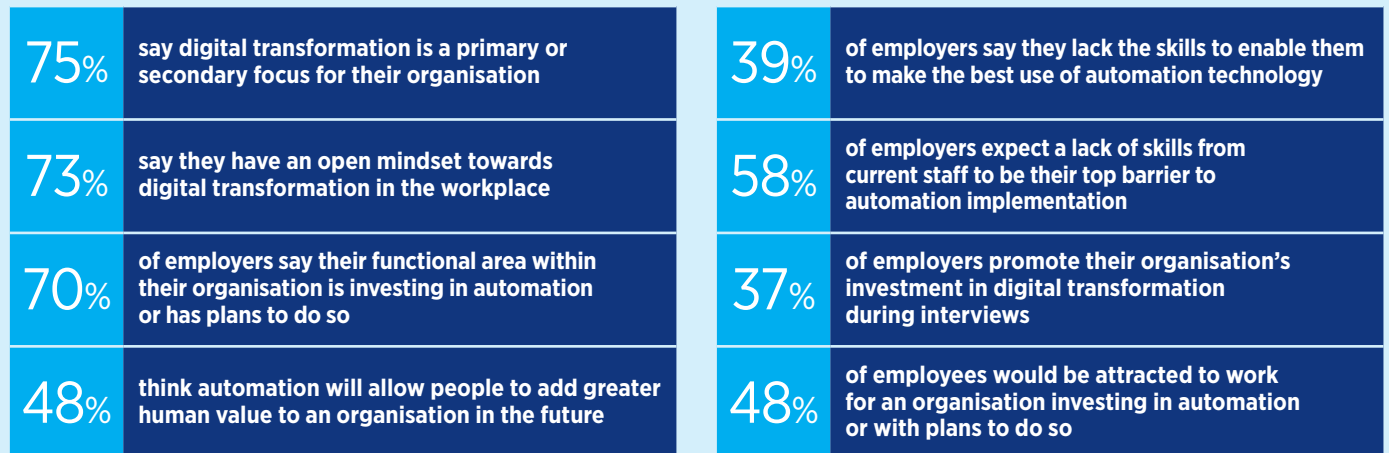
As for new job candidates, it is important to demonstrate your soft skills in action during the interview process and to explain why they matter – after all, employers are on a learning curve too.

To discuss any of these recommendations contact your local Hays consultant. To find your nearest, visit hays.co.uk/offices

“ Be proactive and speak to your manager to understand the direction your team is taking and together create a training plan. Keep the dialogue open and revisit regularly with your manager. ”

THE FUTURE WORLD OF WORK...IS NOW

Thanks to perceived productivity and efficiency benefits, most organisations are investing in automation. However, skills shortages and lack of support from staff present barriers to its successful implementation. Therefore, organisations need to take action now. They should capitalise on digitalisation to attract and retain the best talent, and foster an open culture that facilitates upskilling and embraces change.



Digital transformation is a top priority for organisations; three quarters (75%) of both employers and employees agree that investment in this area is top of their agenda. 30% describe it as a primary and 45% a secondary focus for their organisation.

Almost half of respondents (49%) would describe the pace of technological change within their organisation as 'steady' with a further 18% describing it as 'fast'. Pace of change is perceived to be quicker in very large organisations (21%) compared to small organisations (14%). Part of the focus on digital transformation includes investment in automation, which is also already underway. 70% of employers say their organisation is investing, or planning to invest, in automation.

Of these, 38% are securing investment and business buy-in for the implementation, 17% are currently in the process of implementing automation, and 15% have newly or fully implemented automation into their functional area.

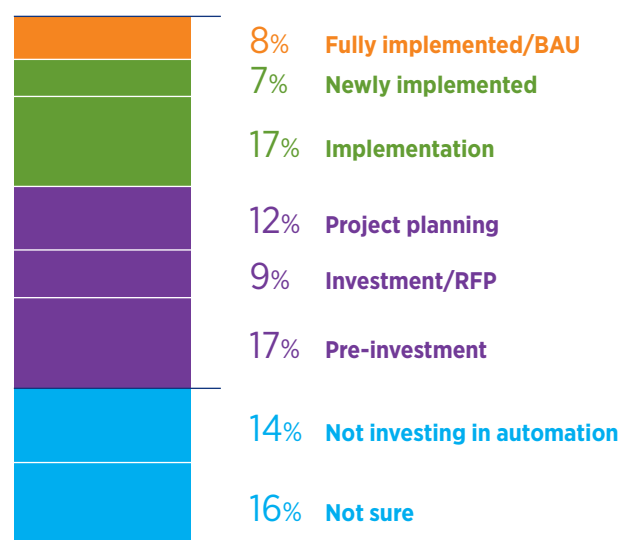
This investment in automation is occurring across organisations of all sizes. 74% of employers from large and very large organisations indicate they are currently financing automation initiatives or are in the process of securing investment to do so, as well as 66% of employers from SMEs.

Respondents' view of the pace of technological change within their organisation (%)

Fast Steady Slow Not sure



How employers describe their function's stage of investment in automation



70% of employers say they are investing in automation

Professionals are embracing technological change

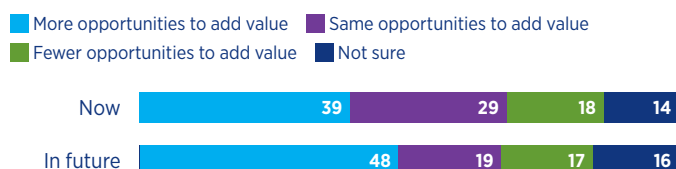
Most employers and employees say they regularly use digital technology both in the workplace (80%) and in everyday life (70%), which given its ubiquity today is perhaps expected. Indeed, most believe that such technology is changing their lives for the better, both at work (93%) and beyond (92%).

Unsurprisingly then, a resounding majority (86%) feel automation should be embraced in the workplace. In fact, one in ten (11%) of all respondents describe themselves as tech innovators and a third (32%) as early adopters of workplace technology compared with only 7% and 21% respectively in their personal lives, showing their enthusiasm for adopting with new technology at work.

Employers are more optimistic than employees that automation will enable greater human value

One of the key areas that many respondents believe automation can make a real difference is in enabling people to add human value. 29% of respondents say it offers the same opportunities to add human value now and 19% think the same for the future. However, 39% of both employers and employees indicate that automation offers more opportunities to add greater human value currently within their organisation, while nearly half (48%) believe it will be the case in future.

Respondents who believe automation offers more, less or equal opportunities to add greater human value, now and in the future (%)



Interestingly though, employers (43%) are more optimistic about such opportunities than their employees (36%) as things stand today – although the figures rise to a more positive 55% and 44% respectively when both sets of respondents look towards the future. Nonetheless, 20% of employees versus only 13% of employers also fear that, looking ahead, there will be fewer chances to add human value, indicating perhaps that workers are more anxious about the impact automation could have on them personally.

“As with any new technology, automation is inherently neither positive nor negative, but it is the intent and deployment that will define its positive or negative impact to the workforce and economy in general.”

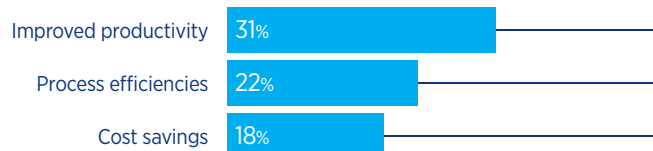
IT & Digital Technology professional, London

Lack of awareness about investment or understanding of the benefits

This situation is not being helped by the fact that most employees (70%) rate their understanding and ability to use the latest digital technology both in the workplace and at home as merely ‘average’, with only a quarter (26%) considering themselves to be experts.

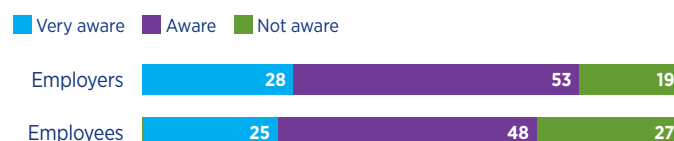
Both employers and employees from organisations of all sizes consider the three key benefits to be gained from automation to be improved productivity (31%), process efficiencies (22%) and cost savings (18%).

Top three main benefits respondents believe automation offers organisations



27% of employees say they are unable to identify any benefits that automation could bring to the workplace compared with just 19% of employers, implying there is a lack of clarity about the impact of automation on their roles. Furthermore, just over one in ten employees (12%) say they are unsure as to whether digital transformation is a focus for their organisation or not. Almost a third (30%) are likewise unaware if investment in automation is happening today in their organisation or if it has taken place in the past.

Respondents who are aware of the benefits that automation can offer in the workplace (%)



Knowledge gaps are compounded by generational divides

Different generations* have different views as to how valuable they consider technology to be and how confident their understanding and use is. For example, when asked if technology is changing their everyday world for the better, only a quarter (25%) of Baby Boomers agree with such a statement compared to 43% of digital-native Generation Z. When using digital technology in a personal context, only 12% of Baby Boomers consider themselves experts, which quadruples to just under half (48%) for Generation Z. Moreover, while only just over a quarter (27%) of Baby Boomers are keen to use the latest tech in a personal context, the figure jumps to almost half (46%) for Generation Z.

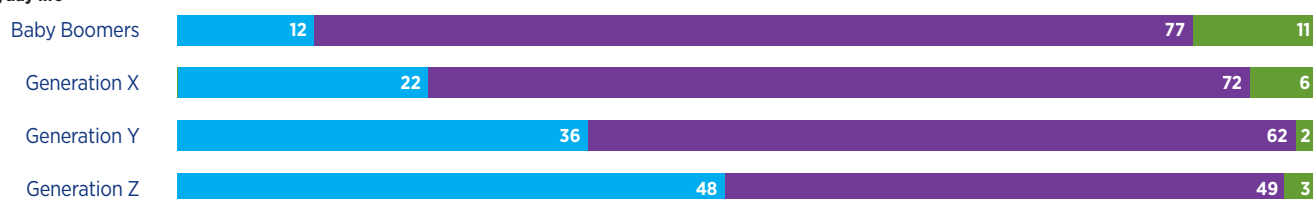
Intriguingly though, the gap closes in a workplace context. For example, while roughly the same percentage of Generation Z respondents describe themselves as very eager to use the latest tech at work as in their personal lives (47%), 39% of Baby Boomers also express high levels of interest in employing new technology at work.

As for rating their own competency levels in terms of exploiting such technology at work, members of Generation Z again have more confidence in their own abilities. Just over a third (37% and 36% respectively) define themselves as either early adopters or experts, and 16% believe themselves to be innovators. This compares with 28% of Baby Boomers who describe themselves as early adopters, 18% as experts and 7% as innovators.

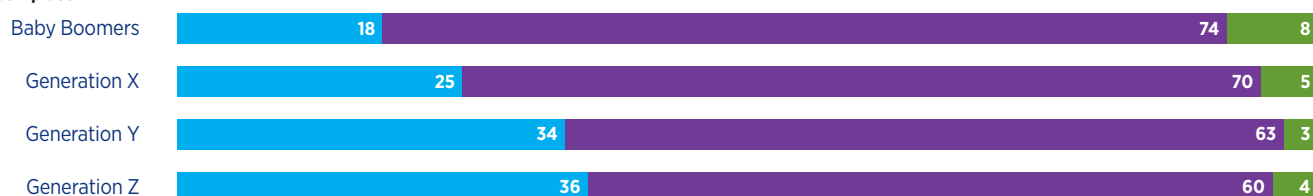
Respondents who rate their understanding and ability to use the latest technology as expert, average or novice (%)

Expert Average Novice

In everyday life



In the workplace



A gender divide exists too

Confidence levels do not just vary among the generations. There is also a clear gender divide here too. For instance, men (30%) are more likely than women (18%) to consider themselves experts in terms of their understanding of, and ability to use, technology in everyday life. Women (76%) also more readily describe themselves as being of 'average' ability than their male counterparts (64%).

The story is similar in the workplace as well, with almost a third (32%) of men believing themselves to be tech experts compared with only one in five women (21%). A third of men also claim to be aware of the benefits that workplace automation offers compared with one in five (19%) women.

Respondents who rate their understanding and ability to use the latest technology as expert, average or novice (%)

Expert Average Novice

In everyday life



In the workplace



* Baby Boomers born 1940-1960, Generation X born 1961-1982, Generation Y born 1983-1995, Generation Z born after 1995.

Open to change but not equipped to deal with it

Although both employers and employees proclaim themselves positive about, or at least open to, change, they also acknowledge that they aren't prepared for the technological changes taking place. Nearly three quarters of respondents (73%) indicate they have an open mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace – although more employers (78%) are upbeat about the situation than their staff (69%).

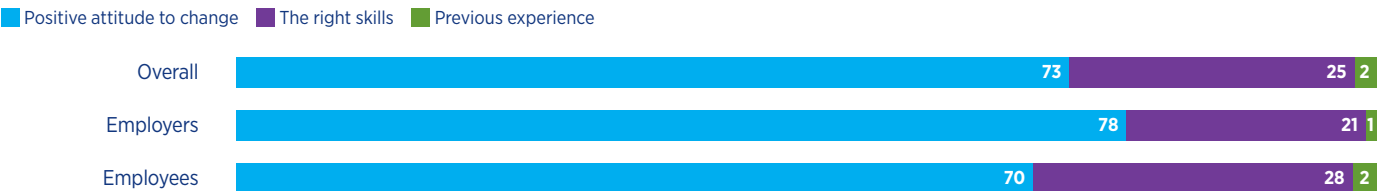
In fact, being able to demonstrate a positive attitude to change when trying to get a transformation project right is, according to both employers and their employees, even more important than having the right skill sets (25%) or previous experience (2%). However, once again employers consider possessing an open mindset to be more valuable here than their staff do (78% compared to 70%).

Despite this situation, almost a third of respondents (30%) say their organisation is not suitably well equipped to deal with the change.

How respondents consider their mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace (%)



Most important factor for workers to successfully deal with digital transformation in the workplace (%)

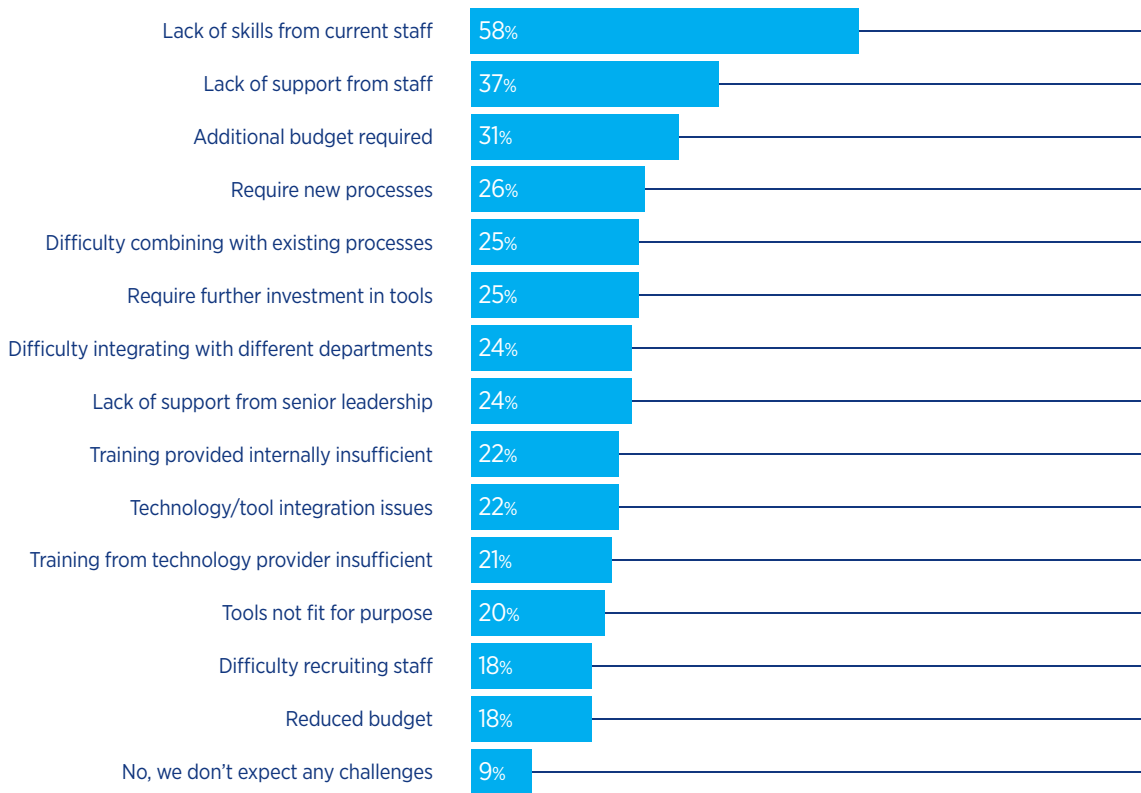


Lack of engagement from staff a barrier to change

A lack of engagement and support from employees is considered a major barrier (37%) to the implementation of automation for employers, particularly among large organisations (42%), although the issue is less marked among smaller ones (24%).

Other challenges employers expect to encounter when implementing automation include a lack of skills from current staff (58%), additional budget (31%) and new process requirements (26%).

The barriers, problems or challenges that employers expect to encounter when implementing automation



When considering where to focus resources to help ensure the successful implementation of transformation programmes, training is top of the list (37%). Almost a quarter (24%) believe enabling their organisational culture to support change is of prime importance, more so than having adequate resources (17%), good communication (12%) or even having a suitable strategy in place (10%).

Employers assign more importance to developing a culture that is open to change than their employees (30% compared to 21% respectively). Focus on having a strong culture that supports change is particularly important for those employers who say their functional area is at the investment/RFP stage of automation implementation (38%).

Most important areas respondents believe organisations should focus on to ensure that digital transformation is a success (%)



“ We need to embrace the change, as automation can enhance both the customer and employee experience. Companies need a strategy, and leaders need to own the change and drive the culture changes through the business in a positive way. ”

IT & Digital Technology professional, East of England

48%

of employees would be attracted to work for an organisation that was investing in automation or has plans to do so

An open culture key to successful adoption

When looking specifically at how organisations can prepare for automation, training (37%) is followed closely by facilitating a culture that is able to cope with change (17%) and ensuring a 'test and learn' environment (11%). A mere 7% of respondents believe that organisations should concentrate on improving their technological infrastructure in order to lay the groundwork. This indicates how much more important it is to get the culture right and a workforce that supports change to ensure the successful implementation of automation, compared to the technical side.

To try and address challenges when implementing automation, employers indicate they have already invested in adapting their business processes (56%), introducing internal staff training programmes and improving employee communications (55% respectively). But so far, only just over a quarter (28%) have taken any steps at all to hire a change manager, change team or agency to help, while a mere 35% have recruited a project manager, project team or agency.

Areas already invested in to help overcome barriers, problems or challenges to automation implementation



Job tasks are changing due to a greater focus on analytical skills

Automation is already having an impact on the tasks being performed by workers in some instances. According to just under a third of employers (29%), the type of tasks undertaken has now

changed, with just over a third (36%) pointing to a reduction in administrative duties and one in five (21%) indicating an increase in analytical activity.

The impact of automation investment on the type of tasks carried out (%)

Increased tasks No change in tasks Decreased tasks No investment in automation

Administration



Technical (such as coding, writing bids, reviewing legal documents)



Analytical (such as reviewing and analysing data for reports/optimisation)



Customer-facing (such as liaising with clients or internal staff/stakeholders)



Managerial (i.e. managing people)



Employees also agree with this assessment – although not to the same extent – with just under a quarter (23%) acknowledging that their role now consists of fewer administrative and more analytics-related tasks (18%). Into the future, many professionals anticipate the influence of automation will grow in relation to

the job they do. While about a third (34%) believe the type of activities they perform will change, only 18% feel that automation will not make any difference at all. Moreover, one in five (22%) reckon their workload will fall compared with 11% who expect it to increase.

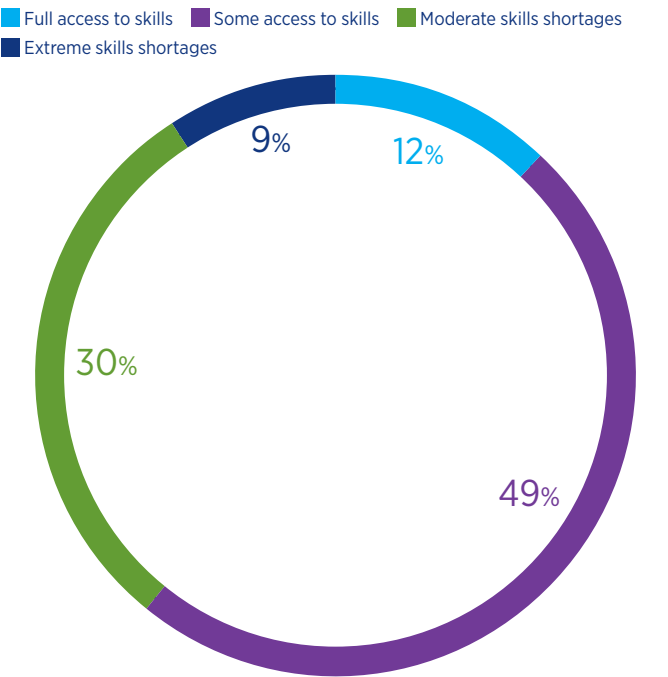
Skills shortages impacting ability to implement automation

The most common roadblock cited by employers when trying to implement automation is a lack of skills among existing staff (58%). Furthermore, 39% of employers believe that they do not have the right expertise in place to exploit automation to the full, with just under a third (30%) saying they are experiencing moderate skills gaps and 9% extreme shortages. Those operating in the private sector appear to be in a better position than their public sector colleagues, with just under two thirds (64%) indicating they have access to all, or at least some, of the skills they need compared with only just over half of public authorities (56%).

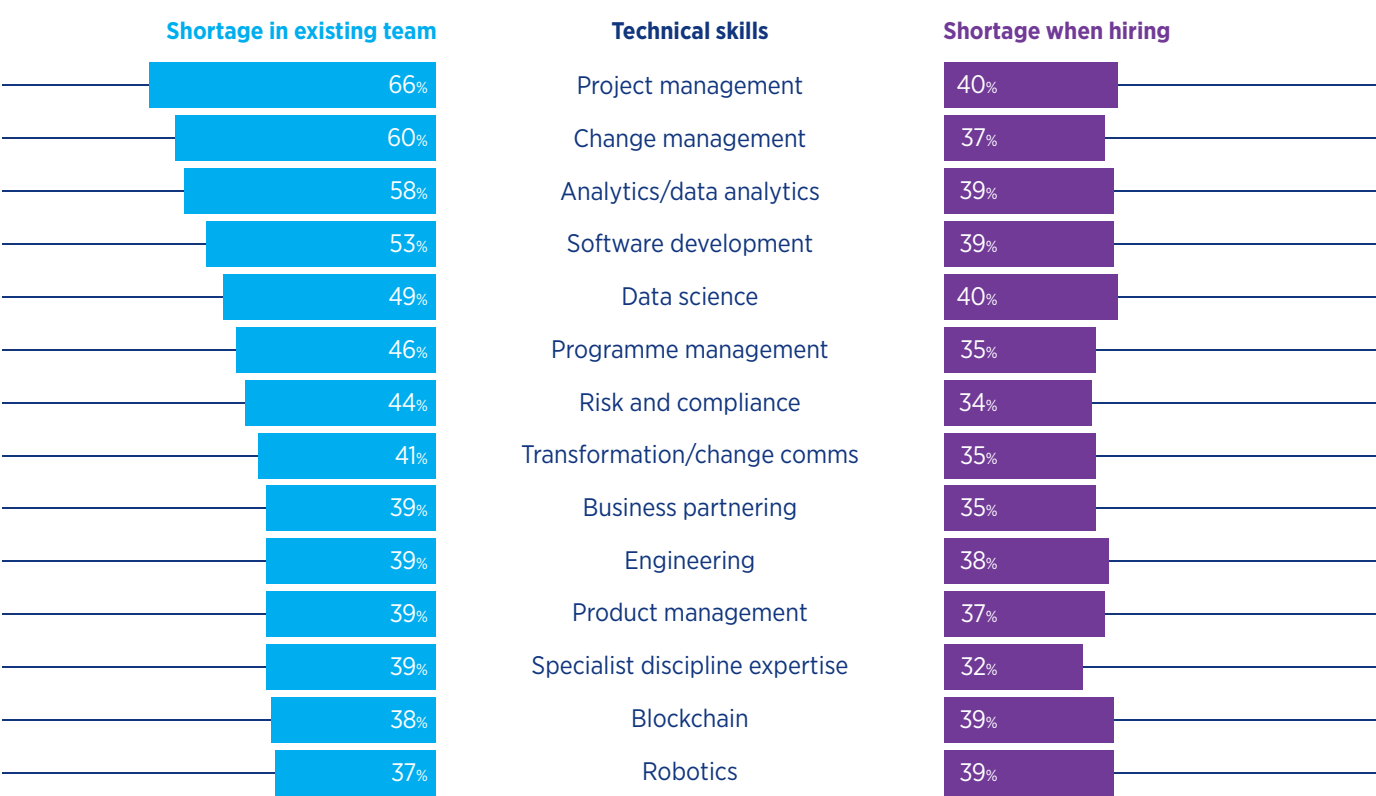
As for the areas in which skills gaps are most pronounced, these comprise both soft and technical expertise (47%). On the technical side of things, the biggest shortages among existing teams are found in project (66%) and change management (60%), followed by analytics (58%).

There is a strong correlation with the technical skills needed when hiring. Employers are focused on finding project managers and data scientists (40% respectively). Other top skills in demand include robotics skills (39%), analytics (39%) and change management experts (37%).

Employers who currently have access to the right skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology



Top technical skills employers are facing shortages of within their existing team or when hiring



Critical thinking in demand

When it comes to soft skills, the expertise perceived by employers to be in least supply within existing teams is critical thinking (64%). This particular shortage is followed closely by people management as well as communication and interpersonal abilities (63% respectively). As a result, when employers are hiring, the expertise in most demand consists of communication and interpersonal skills (45%) as well as emotional intelligence and critical thinking (44% respectively).

However, there is an apparent discrepancy between what employers want soft skills-wise and what employees think they require in a future role. The upshot is that staff believe the most highly sought-after soft skills of the future will be an ability to learn (50%), problem-solving (48%) and flexibility and adaptability and people management (46% respectively). None appear on employers' top three.

Top soft skills employers are facing a shortage of within their existing team or when hiring



Employers not adapting hiring strategies to find professionals with the right mindset for change

Despite identifying a lack of both technical and soft skills, nearly three quarters of employers (72%) say they have not made, nor do they intend to make, any changes to their recruitment strategy as part of their organisation's investment in automation. Of those that do intend to shift position, just over a third (34%) plan to hire more permanent staff, while 21% favour taking on gig workers, such as temps, contractors or freelancers.

With a number of organisations already well on their way to implementing automation, employers must consider the impact that widespread investment will have on the competition for talent. Given the lack of skills identified by employers, as well as the necessity for a positive mindset towards technological change, it is important to hire for fit rather than simply technical skills.

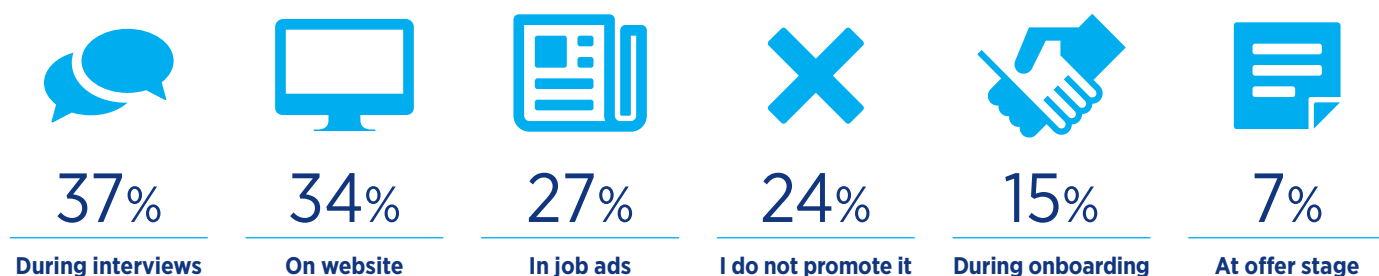
Another apparent missed opportunity when hiring is the frequent failure by organisations to promote their investment in automation to potential job candidates, despite the appeal of such initiatives. In fact, about half (48%) of workers say this kind of current, or planned, programme would definitely enhance the appeal of a prospective employer. The most effective time to mention such investment, according to employees, is during interviews (56%), in job ads (51%) or on an employer's website (48%).

Despite this, about a quarter (24%) of organisations do not currently promote their technological investment in any way when recruiting, and only just over a third (37%) opt to do so during the interview process.

The importance that employees place on working for an organisation that is investing in automation, or has plans to do so (%)



Where employers promote their organisation's investment in digital transformation during the recruitment process



Training is underutilised by employers to develop skills

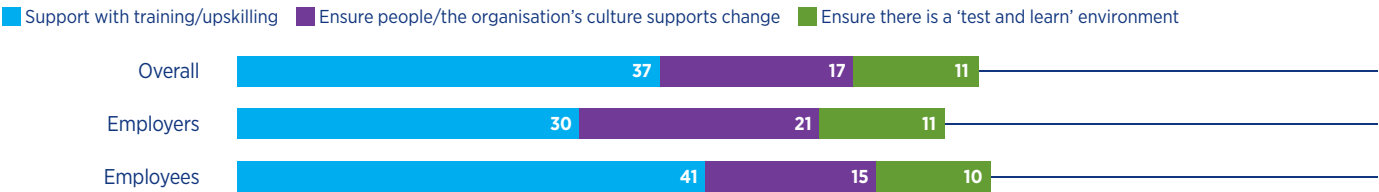
Recruitment is not the only area in which organisations could gain from self-reflection as they prepare for digital transformation and automation. When evaluating where internal investment should be focused, there is also a clear disparity in views between employers and employees.

When considering where to focus resources to guarantee the success of their digital transformation programmes, most respondents believe that staff training should be top priority (37%) – although more employees (43%) feel this way than their employers (27%).

Employers also support training when asked to look at the overall areas that will need future investment. Internal staff training programmes (48%), training from solution providers (45%) and a boost to implementation budgets (40%) were marked as the top three areas for investment.

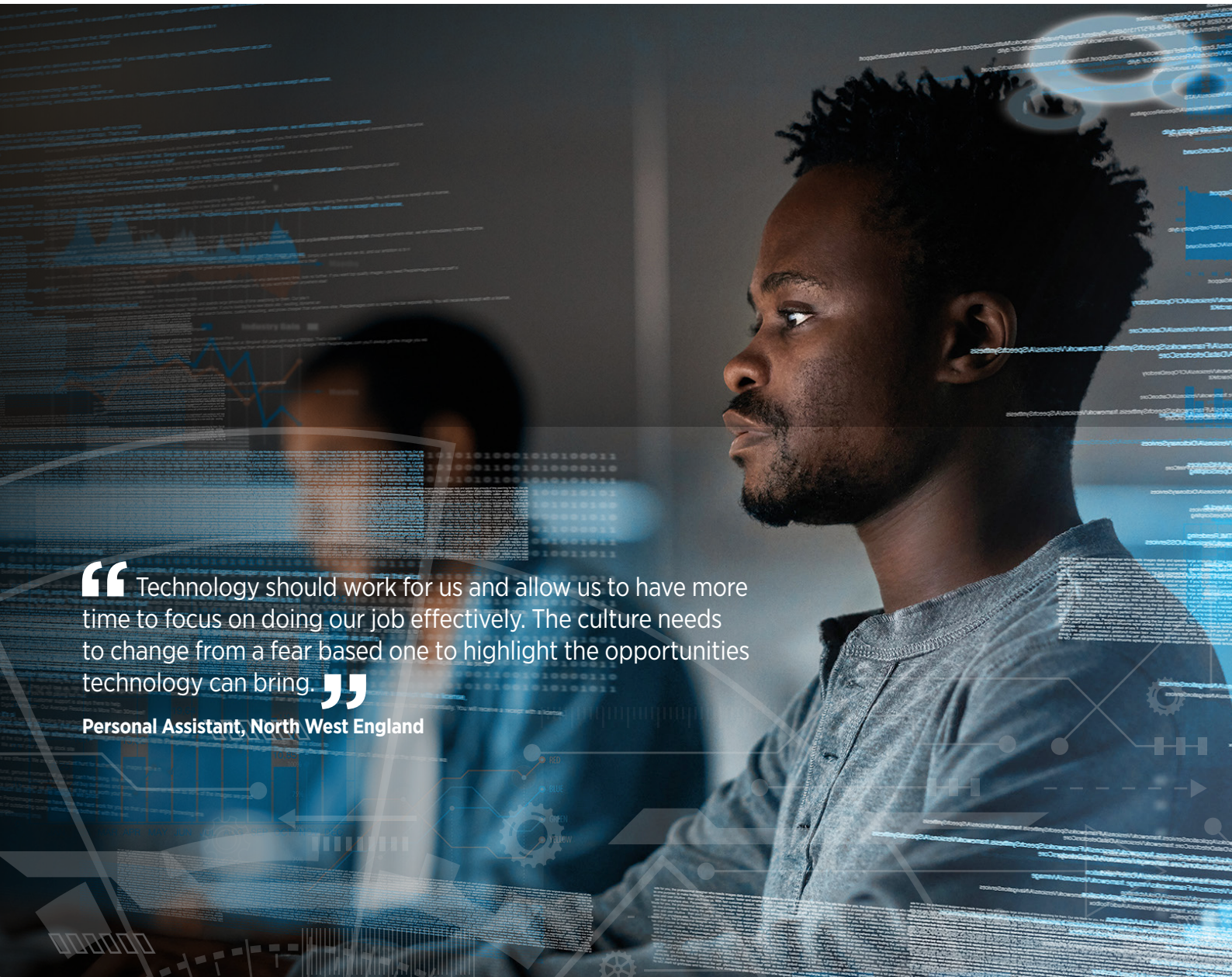
When drilling down to the factors that contribute specifically to automation’s success, training again comes out top. 37% of both employers and employees prioritised the provision of adequate support for training. 41% of employees stated that their organisation should focus on supporting them with upskilling, compared with only 30% of employers.

Top three areas respondents think their organisation should focus on to prepare for automation in the workplace (%)



“Technology should work for us and allow us to have more time to focus on doing our job effectively. The culture needs to change from a fear based one to highlight the opportunities technology can bring.”

Personal Assistant, North West England



Employees invest in their own training

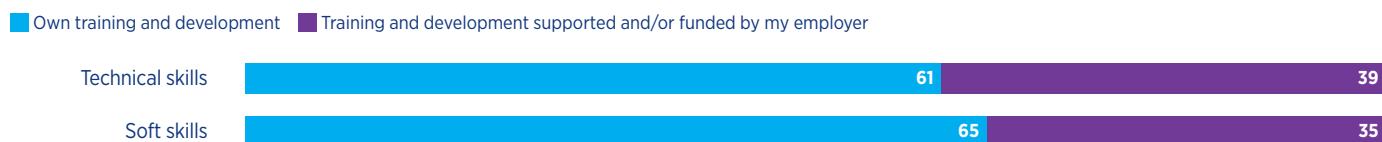
Just over half of workers (52%) say they are currently enhancing their technical skills and 62% say they are improving their soft skills. Of these workers, a significant two thirds (65%) are picking up the tab for doing so themselves, whilst the rest are being funded by their employer. This is despite employers placing a focus on training staff to make a success of automation.

Of those that are developing their technical skills, just over one third (39%) say they are undertaking training that is either supported or funded by their employer. In other words, almost

two thirds (61%) are taking matters into their own hands, with men (63%) more likely to do so than women (57%).

Baby Boomers are the most likely to say they are not upskilling in technical areas due to automation compared to Generation X and Generation Z (60% compared to 48% and 45% respectively). Generation Y respondents are the most likely to be honing their technical skills, with only 39% saying they are not currently upskilling.

How those workers who are developing their technical and soft skills in order to work with automation are doing so (%)

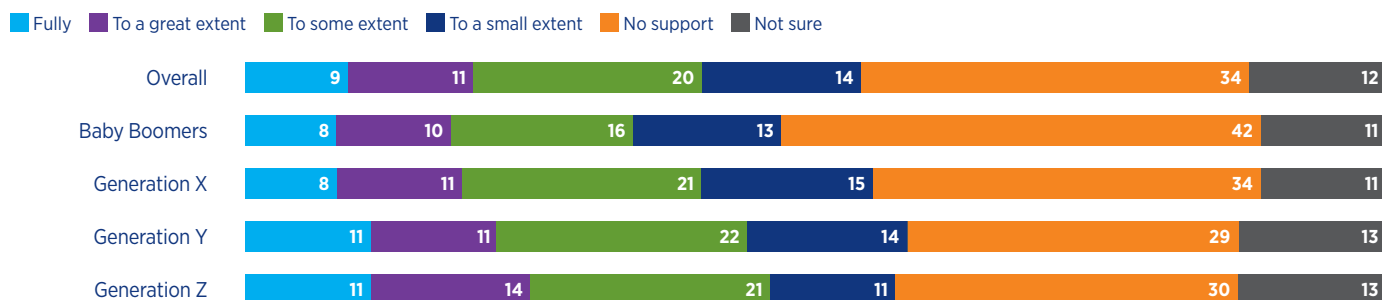


Staff need stronger support to facilitate change

A third of staff (34%) believe they are being failed by their employer in helping them prepare for digital transformation. While one in five (20%) say they have received some support, 14% feel such help is minimal – although Baby Boomers (42%) are more

likely to feel unsupported than Generation Z (30%). Only 9% of employees overall indicate they feel fully supported in dealing with current and future change.

The extent employers are helping prepare workers for digital transformation (%)



Even worse, this unfortunate situation has come about despite the fact that three out of five employers (60%) and employees (59%) believe that the responsibility for equipping staff with appropriate skills lies with the employer alone.

This disparity between employers and employees when it comes to training and upskilling for the future world of work implies that training programmes may not be advertised effectively enough

to the workforce, or the training in place is not enough to make employees feel confident enough to work with and make the most out of automation investments within their organisation.

The key lies with an overall better approach to change to support staff effectively and tap into their enthusiasm to work with automation in order to make the most of what automation offers.



Jackie Groves, RVP Sales from business communications company, Fuze, gives her insights on What Workers Want.

A few years ago, digital transformation was all about installing the latest tech. Today, it's about creating systems, processes and cultures that encourage and allow rapid change, and futureproofing your business for any technology to come.

The focus should first be on your workers and what they require to do their best work. For today's businesses, work is no longer bound by set hours, physical offices or company structures. Instead, we've moved towards a more modern, generationally diverse workforce that prefers alternative working practices.

As such, it's imperative for companies to give workers every opportunity to create a suitable work-life balance. This not only means allowing them to work around their personal commitments, but also to build their own work schedules based on the times when they feel most productive.

To do this, businesses need to provide technology that enables staff to collaborate with colleagues from anywhere in the world – whether that's an instant message, a video conference call, or the ability to share files and folders. The importance of these collaboration technologies is also expected to grow as a result of increasing automation and AI in the workplace.



“ A few years ago, digital transformation was all about installing the latest tech. Today, it's about creating systems, processes and cultures that encourage and allow rapid change, and futureproofing your business for any technology to come. ”

As ever more manual tasks are streamlined through automation, the focus of the new workplace will be collaboration, communication and creativity. To achieve this, workers will need more time to brainstorm and interact – regardless of when and where they choose to work. Effective communications technology will be essential to support this new working approach.

Furthermore, companies who keep pace with these technological advancements and adapt their working environments to suit the needs of their workforce will be better positioned to recruit and retain the best talent. By preparing for the future of work now, providing the right collaboration technologies, and embracing both automation and the human aspects of work, businesses can reap the rewards of a more engaged, motivated, and productive workforce.

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SECTOR OVERVIEWS

The following section highlights specific insights into What Workers Want according to the sector/profession they work in. We hope you find this information useful in understanding more about the impact it is having on the individual sector/profession and the skills that are needed.

- Accountancy & Finance
- Construction & Property
- Engineering & Manufacturing
- Financial Markets
- Human Resources
- Legal
- Marketing
- Office Support
- Personal & Executive Assistants
- Procurement
- Supply Chain & Logistics
- Technology





ACCOUNTANCY & FINANCE

Automation is being implemented across the accountancy and finance function to help reduce administrative tasks and enhance process efficiencies. Although professionals are optimistic about automation, organisations are not necessarily as prepared as they could be, with skills shortages and the need to build the right culture to adapt to change being key barriers to overcome.

Industry indicators

75%	say digital transformation is a primary or secondary focus for their organisation	39%	of employers say they lack the skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology
73%	say they have an open mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace	59%	of employers expect a lack of skills from current staff to be their top barrier to automation implementation
69%	of employers say their functional area within their organisation is investing in automation or has plans to do so	37%	of employers promote their organisation's investment in digital transformation during interviews
51%	think automation will allow people to add greater human value to an organisation in the future	52%	of employees would be attracted to work for an organisation investing in automation or with plans to do so

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR MARKET?

Widespread digital transformation within accountancy and finance

Investment in digital transformation is taking place across accountancy and finance functions. A quarter (25%) of respondents say such investment is a primary focus for their organisation, while a further 49% say it is a secondary focus.

When it comes to automation specifically, 69% of accountancy and finance employers say they are currently investing in automation in their functional area or are in the planning stages of doing so. Of these, 15% are in the implementation phase and 17% have already implemented automation technology into their functional area. The main reason for investing in automation is to achieve improved productivity (31%), and linked to this, a further 28% say they are implementing this new technology for more efficient processes, which is to a greater extent than the UK overall (22%).

“Automation allows organisations to reduce the workload of administrative tasks and free up people to add more human value, analysis and insight.”

**Karen Young, Director,
Hays Accountancy & Finance**

Automation assisting with administrative tasks allowing human value to shine

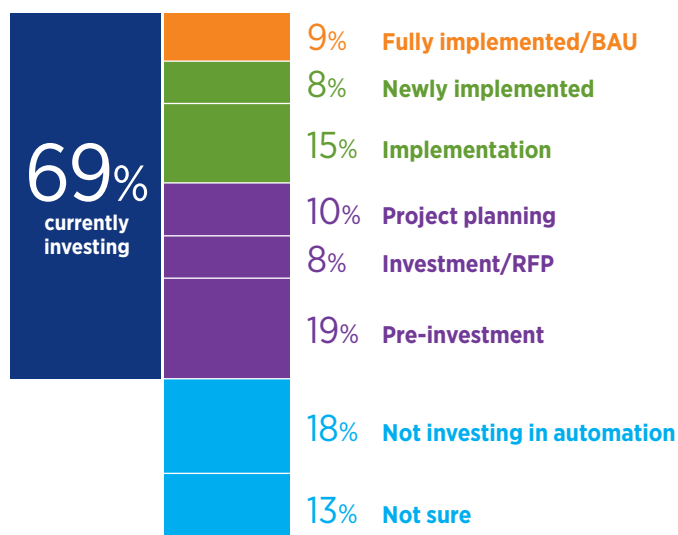
Among the top areas where organisations are already investing or plan to invest in automation are operational accounting functions, including accounts payable (37%), billing (35%) and accounts receivable (33%). Other areas of existing investment include financial reporting (32%) and data gathering for financial reporting (31%) as well as general accounting functions including journal entry processing (32%), allocations and adjustments (31%) and reconciliations (31%).

Accountancy and finance employers think more can be done to better achieve process efficiencies and greater productivity. When asked which areas they think would benefit from an investment in automation, top of the list were the more administrative tasks of data gathering for financial reporting (52%) and financial reporting itself (50%).

Furthermore, only 21% of employers say they are currently investing in automation within credit management, but almost half (49%) think it would benefit from greater investment. Similarly, only 27% of employers are already investing in automation within staff payroll, but 48% believe it would benefit from further investment.

Functions such as audit and internal audit were the areas least likely to already be investing in automation (14% and 12% respectively), although around two fifths of employers (41% and 40% respectively) identify these as areas that could benefit from investment.

How accountancy and finance employers describe their function's stage of investment in automation



“ I think automation scares some people, but consider what we could be doing if our time was freed up. We could have more time to be creative and better serve our customers. ”

**Qualified accountancy professional,
North West England**

Job areas where accountancy and finance employers are currently making an investment in automation, and areas they feel would benefit from an investment



Despite optimism around automation, organisations are not necessarily equipped to deal with the change

Most accountancy and finance respondents (73%) describe their mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace as 'open', with employers more likely to say so than employees (77% compared to 70% respectively). Engagement is also very positive with 78% of employees aware or very aware of what

automation can offer the workplace, alongside 83% of employers. Although positivity towards digital transformation exists, a third (33%) say their organisation is either not very or not at all well-equipped to deal with technological change.

Accountancy and finance respondents who consider their mindset as open towards digital transformation, by function



WHAT PROFESSIONALS ARE SAYING

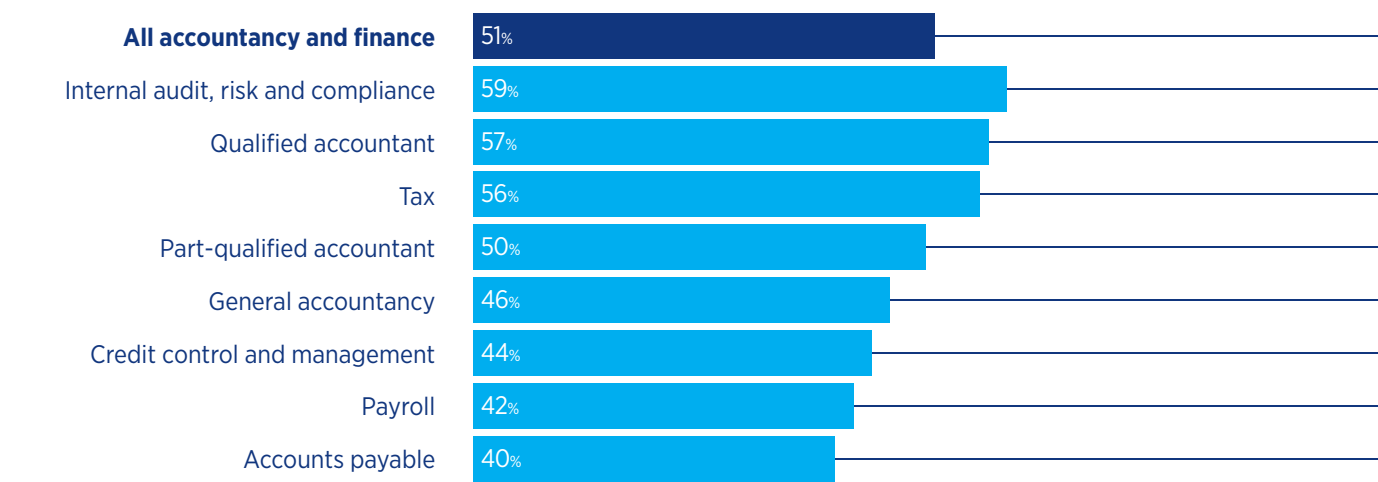
Opportunities to add human value in the future need to be better portrayed to employees

43% of all accountancy and finance respondents feel that automation currently offers more opportunities to add human value to an organisation. However, employer and employee sentiments do differ slightly. 45% of employers compared to 40% of employees feel that there are currently more opportunities to add human value. Tax professionals in particular are most likely to say that automation allows people to add greater human value in their current team (53%).

Just over half (51%) of all accountancy and finance respondents are optimistic about the opportunities automation can offer in the future.

Differences between employer and employee sentiment are more pronounced, with 57% of employers believing this to be true compared to 47% of employees. Despite being one of the areas least likely to be investing in automation currently, internal audit, risk and compliance professionals are most likely to think it will allow workers to add greater human value in the future (59%), followed by qualified accountants (57%) and tax professionals (56%). Those working in accounts payable are least likely to agree (40%). Employers must therefore ensure they effectively communicate to their teams how automation will allow for greater human value in the future.

Accountancy and finance professionals who agree that automation allows for greater human value in the future, by function



Building the right culture is key to successfully dealing with technological change

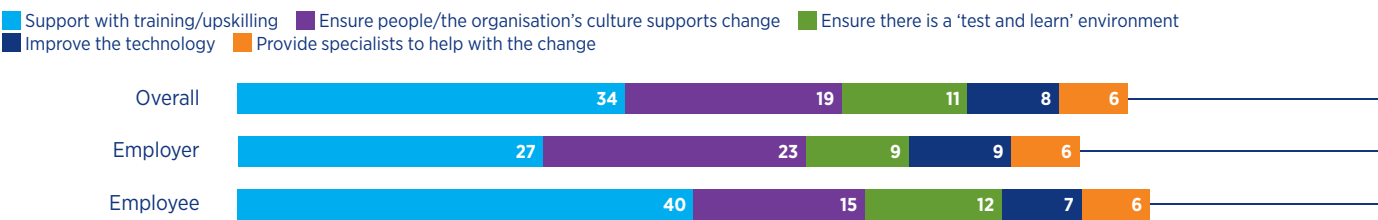
Most accountancy and finance respondents (78%) think that a positive attitude to change is the most important quality for workers to possess to successfully deal with digital transformation in the workplace, which is to a greater extent than the UK overall (73%).

When asked where their organisation should focus to ensure that digital transformation is a success, employers put culture at the top of their list (28%). A similar sentiment is felt when focusing specifically on automation. 23% of employers believe that it is important to focus on ensuring the organisation's culture supports change to prepare for automation compared to 15% of employees.

Despite this focus on culture, only 23% of employers have already hired a change manager, team or agency who would be able to support building the right culture, even lower than the UK average (28%).

Employees instead put greater value on training as the most important aspect for their organisation to focus on in order to prepare for automation in the workplace. 40% of accountancy and finance professionals identified support with training and upskilling as key, compared to 27% of employers.

Top areas accountancy and finance respondents think their organisation should focus on to prepare for automation in the workplace (%)

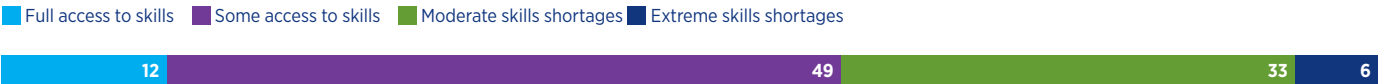


Lack of existing skills is top barrier to automation implementation

For accountancy and finance employers, the most commonly cited barrier to the implementation of automation is a lack of skills from their current staff (59%). Furthermore, 39% of employers state that they don't currently have access to the right skills to make the best use of automation technology, and that they either have moderate (33%) or extreme (6%) skills shortages. Almost half (48%) of those employers experiencing skills shortages say both technical and soft skills are missing.

Despite skills shortages, over three quarters (78%) of employers say they have not already made, nor do they intend to make, any changes to their recruitment strategy as part of their organisation's investment in automation, higher than the UK average of 72%. However, as more than half (52%) of employees say they would be attracted to work for an organisation that is investing in automation, employers should consider this when recruiting and promote their investment accordingly.

Accountancy and finance employers who currently have access to the right skills to enable them to make the best of automation technology (%)



Employees are taking training into their own hands

Although widespread investment in digital transformation and automation is planned or already taking place within the accountancy and finance profession, over a third of employees (35%) state that their employer is not helping them to prepare for digital transformation in the workplace, and only 8% say they are being fully supported. This is despite 61% of both employers and employees agreeing that it is the responsibility of their employer to equip workers with the skills to derive the most benefit from automation.

Just over half (53%) of employees say they are upskilling in technical areas, of whom 63% say they are developing through their own training and development, with only 37% stating that they are undertaking training that is supported or funded by their employer. In addition, nearly two thirds of employees (64%) say they are developing their soft skills through their own training and development. Only 35% say they are undertaking training that is supported or funded by their employer.

Turn to our recommendations on page 6 to discover what else you can do to ensure digital transformation is a success in your organisation.

“People fear change when they do not see the effect on their workload or the benefit of applying their skills & knowledge away from repetitive tasks and on to value-adding ones.”

Accountancy and finance professional, South East England

CONSTRUCTION & PROPERTY

Construction and property respondents are currently cautious about adopting technology to automate certain tasks, but looking to the future, employers believe areas such as project management would benefit from an investment in automation. However, to have the best chance of securing the talent they need in the future, employers need to be clear about the benefits of automation to attract and retain skilled professionals.

Industry indicators

68%	say digital transformation is a primary or secondary focus for their organisation	47%	of employers say they lack the skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology
63%	say they have an open mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace	59%	of employers expect a lack of skills from current staff to be their top barrier to automation implementation
61%	of employers say their functional area within their organisation is investing in automation or has plans to do so	31%	of employers promote their organisation's investment in digital transformation during interviews
40%	think automation will allow people to add greater human value to an organisation in the future	41%	of employees would be attracted to work for an organisation investing in automation or with plans to do so

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR MARKET?

Organisations prioritise digital transformation

Over two thirds (68%) of construction and property respondents say their organisation's investment in digital transformation is either a primary or secondary focus. Overall, 61% of construction and property employers also say that their functional area within their organisation is currently investing in automation or is at the pre-investment stage – and is therefore planning to do so.

Although this is well over half of all construction and property employers, this is still under the UK average of 70%. The main reason for this is likely cost, which was cited by construction and property respondents as the main reason to not invest in automation (28%).

Those investing in automation are still in the early stages

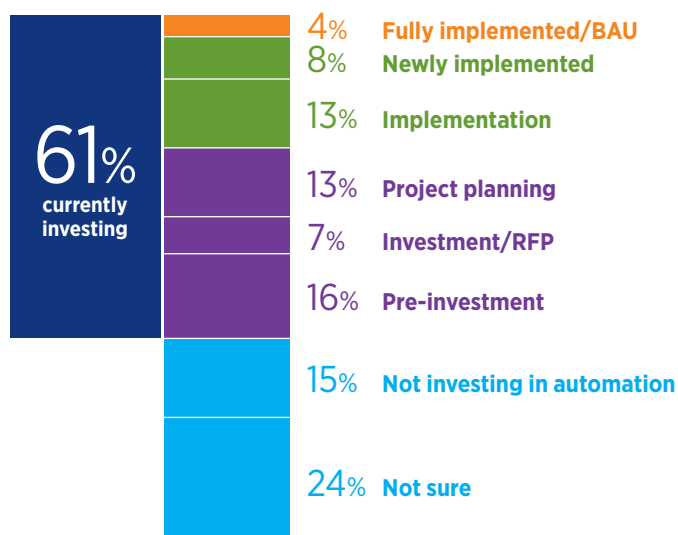
36% of construction and property employers say their organisation is in the early stages of automation implementation for their functional area, either pre-investment (16%), investment/RFP (7%) or project planning stage (13%). 21% are in the implementation or newly implemented phase and only 4% have fully implemented automation. 15% say their organisation is not investing in automation at all, on par with the UK average (14%).

The top job areas where construction and property employers are currently making an investment in automation include: design (24%), estimating (24%), construction (21%) and project management (21%). However, employers believe project management (46%), estimating (42%) and facilities management (38%) to be the top job areas that would benefit most from an investment in automation. This is significant in particular for project management, where more than twice as many employers say it is an area that would benefit from investment than say they are currently investing in.

“Automation might not seem like an obvious priority for construction and property, but as technological advances are made in areas like design and project management, employers will need to keep up with the competition and ensure their teams have the right skills.”

Richard Gelder, Director, Hays Construction & Property

How construction and property employers describe their function's stage of investment in automation



“ There is global demand for automation, it must be embraced but managed to ensure that creativity and value is not left behind. Automate the well understood tasks but keep plenty of space for fresh ideas, innovation and ‘blue sky’ thinking. ”

Civil engineering professional, South East England

Job areas where construction and property employers are currently making an investment in automation, and areas they feel would benefit from an investment



Sentiment towards automation less positive than the UK average

Although the majority of construction and property respondents (79%) say automation should be embraced within the workplace, 21% say they fear it, which is more than the UK average of 14%. 37% also say they have a neutral or negative mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace.

This higher than average caution around the adoption of new automation technology is also compounded by the fact that over a quarter (28%) of employees believe the pace of technological change at their organisation is slow.

Construction and property professionals' view of the pace of technological change within their organisation (%)



WHAT PROFESSIONALS ARE SAYING

Awareness of the benefits of automation is vital to its success

Construction and property respondents believe the three main benefits of automation to be: improved productivity (28%), cost savings (18%) and process efficiencies (16%). However, 31% of employees say they are unaware of what automation can offer the workplace, above the UK average of 24%.

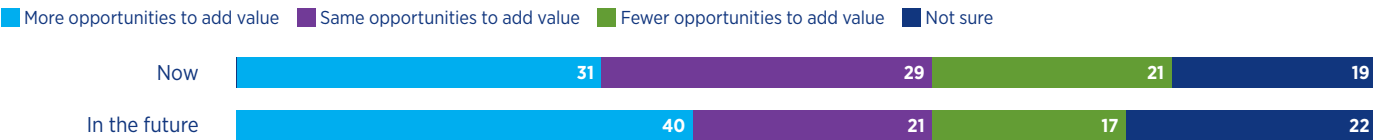
Additionally, only 31% of respondents overall feel that automation offers more opportunities to add greater human value to an organisation now (compared to the 39% UK average), and only 40% are optimistic about the opportunities in the future, lower than the 48% UK average.

Those working in facilities management (44%), health and safety (44%) and commercial construction (43%) are most optimistic about automation delivering more opportunities in the future, but all construction and property disciplines are below the UK average (48%).

When asked how automation might impact everyday tasks, 32% of employees believe automation will change the type of tasks they carry out in the future rather than decrease the volume (18%). 20% don't believe it will have any impact at all.

Employers must therefore build on any positive sentiments that workers have towards automation by increasing awareness amongst their teams of how investment will be of benefit to them. Employers need to be clear about how it will simplify tasks and allow more time for employees to add human value. Likewise, professionals should try to better understand how their organisations are approaching automation to capitalise on new opportunities.

Construction and property respondents who believe automation offers more, less or equal opportunities to add greater human value, now and in the future (%)



Workers want more support from their employers to improve their awareness and understanding

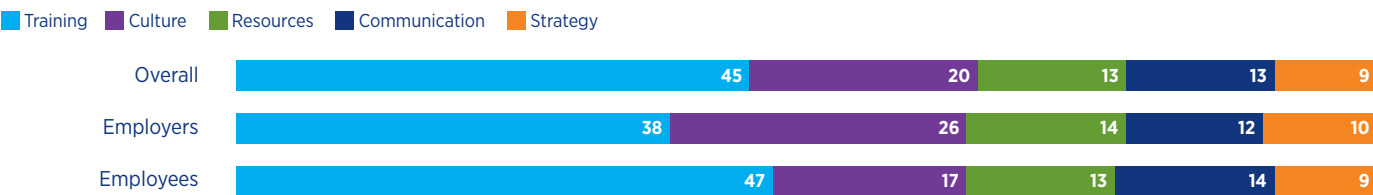
47% of construction and property employees say that training is the most important factor for their organisation to focus on to ensure digital transformation is a success. When asked specifically about automation, providing training is again cited by employees as the most important way organisations can prepare for automation (43%).

Positively, employers agree with employees that training should be prioritised as the most important factor (38%) to ensure that digital transformation is a success and again agree with employees when they say that training and upskilling is the most important way for organisations to prepare for automation (39%).

Despite a mutual appreciation of the benefits of training, however, employers do not seem to be offering the right support to help workers upskill. Over a third of construction and property employees (37%) state that their employer isn't helping them to prepare for digital transformation in the workplace, with only 8% saying they are being fully supported. Only 20% of construction and property employees say that they are undertaking training supported or funded by their employer.

Employers should ensure that training opportunities are appropriate both to the needs of the individual and the goals of the organisation as a whole. The importance of culture also cannot be understated, as having a working environment that is open to change will help cultivate open discussion around digital transformation.

Most important areas construction and property respondents believe organisations should focus on to ensure that digital transformation is a success (%)



Skilled workers would be drawn to employers who promote automation

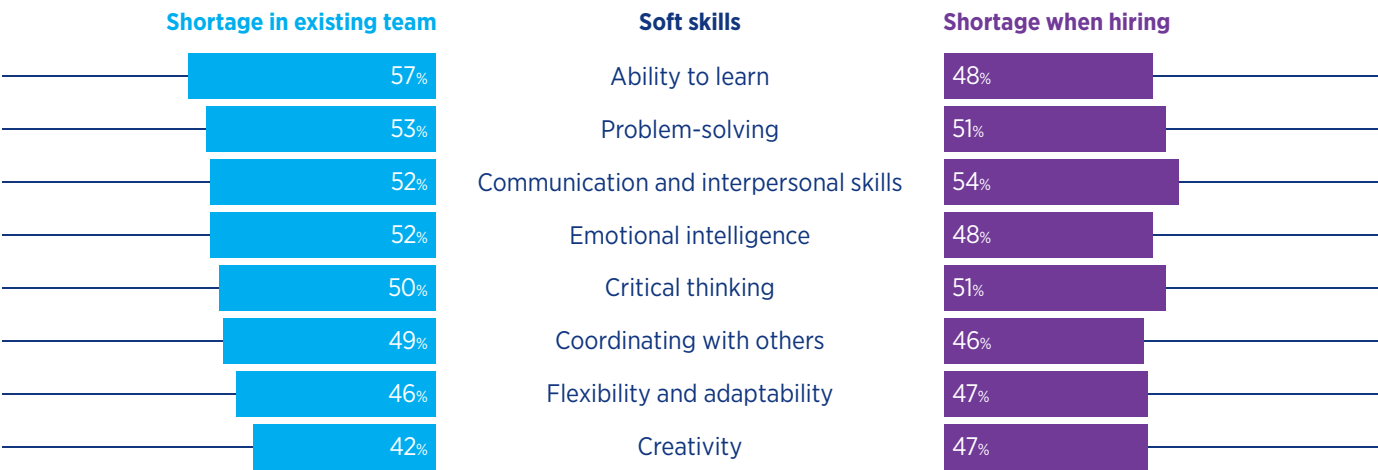
Just under half (47%) of construction and property employers say they do not currently have access to the skills to enable the best use of automation technology and just over half (51%) state that these shortages apply to both technical and soft skills.

Employers are faced with a shortage of the following soft skills when hiring: communication (54%), critical thinking (51%) and problem-solving (51%) and cite project management (50%), robotics (48%) and data science (45%) as the top technical skills that are lacking when hiring.

Considering these technical and soft skills shortages, it is worrying that the majority (80%) of construction and property employers say they have not already made, nor intend to make, any changes to their recruitment strategy as part of their organisation’s investment in automation, higher than the 72% UK average.

To rectify skills shortages in these key areas, employers need to more readily promote their plans for automation during the recruitment process. Less than a third (31%) of employers currently promote their organisation’s investment in digital transformation during interviews, which may well be a missed opportunity given that 41% of construction and property employees say they would be attracted to work for an organisation investing in automation.

Soft skills construction and property employers are facing a shortage of within their existing team and when hiring



Turn to our recommendations on page 6 to discover what else you can do to ensure digital transformation is a success in your organisation.

“ The work our team undertakes requires the human factor to develop solutions that technology cannot provide. ”
Director, Property, London

ENGINEERING & MANUFACTURING

Engineering and manufacturing are areas where automation has had a historical foothold. As technology becomes increasingly more central to the industry, the skillsets required from staff are becoming more technical. This presents a challenge for existing members of staff to consistently upskill and adapt. Positively, this has created a workforce more aware of the overall benefits of automation, but a lack of formal training opportunities has resulted in some significant knowledge gaps.

Industry indicators

71%	say digital transformation is a primary or secondary focus for their organisation	35%	of employers say they lack the skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology
70%	say they have an open mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace	65%	of employers expect a lack of skills from current staff to be their top barrier to automation implementation
73%	of employers say their functional area within their organisation is investing in automation or has plans to do so	34%	of employers promote their organisation's investment in digital transformation during interviews
48%	think automation will allow people to add greater human value to an organisation in the future	56%	of employees would be attracted to work for an organisation investing in automation or with plans to do so

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR MARKET?

Automation is ingrained in engineering and manufacturing

Digital transformation, and more specifically automation, is predicted to continue to play a big part in the engineering and manufacturing (E&M) industry. 71% of respondents say digital transformation is either a primary or secondary focus for their organisation, and 73% of E&M employers say their function is investing in automation or has plans to do so in the near future. Of these, the highest single proportion is in the pre-investment stage (22%), in the run-up to securing funding for automation projects, however, 32% have implemented automation already. Only 12% are not currently investing, and in 41% of cases, employers attribute this to cost.

Lack of skills concerning employers

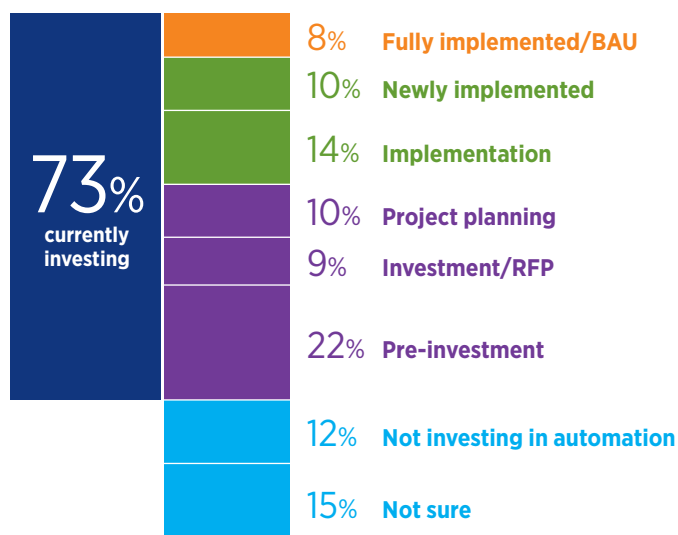
As automation becomes central to E&M, barriers to its implementation become more acute. 65% of employers believe that a lack of skills from their current staff is a challenge to the implementation of automation, higher than the UK average of 58%. 41% of E&M employers also think that the culture and lack of support from staff is a key barrier, even more so than the need for additional budget (36%).

The most common ways employers are overcoming these challenges are with new training programmes for staff, which 70% of employers have invested in, and by involving leadership more in implementation, undertaken by 60% of employers. However, despite employers saying that culture is a barrier to automation implementation, only 27% say they have hired a change manager, team or agency to help overcome this challenge.

“As automation continues to embed itself in manufacturing processes, the skills required by employers will become more technical, necessitating a greater focus on upskilling existing workforces.”

Scott Dance, Director, Hays Engineering

How engineering and manufacturing employers describe their function's stage of investment in automation



“Embracing automation, in my opinion, is the only way that British manufacturing companies can be competitive in the future. A business that doesn't invest in automation will regularly have a higher cost per man-hour to produce their product.”

Manufacturing professional, South East England

Job areas where engineering and manufacturing employers are currently making an investment in automation, and areas they feel would benefit from an investment



Employees are more aware of automation benefits than average and looking to add human value

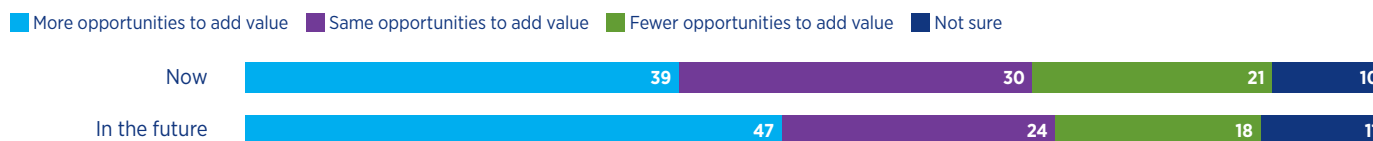
36% of E&M employees believe they are very aware of the benefits of automation, and while this is greater than the UK average of 26%, this figure is still relatively low. Employees are more likely to say they are unaware of the benefits of automation (19%) than their employers (11%). In addition, only around two thirds (68%) of employees consider themselves to have an open mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace, compared to 73% of employers.

38% of E&M respondents identify the main benefit of automation as improved productivity, while 17% say cost savings and process efficiencies. Production lines are receiving most focus in automation investment, with 41% of organisations preparing to invest or already doing so.

This is followed by product design (38%) and 3D/4D printing (22%). Interestingly, no more than a quarter of respondents identified any of these as areas which would benefit from investment in automation, highlighting a shortage of knowledge in regard to the benefits associated with automation in specific functions.

Positively, however, almost two fifths (39%) of employees say automation offers more opportunities to add greater human value now and they are even more optimistic about opportunities in the future (47%).

Engineering and manufacturing employees who believe automation offers more, less or equal opportunities to add greater human value, now and in the future (%)



WHAT PROFESSIONALS ARE SAYING

Employees need upskilling to make the best use of automation

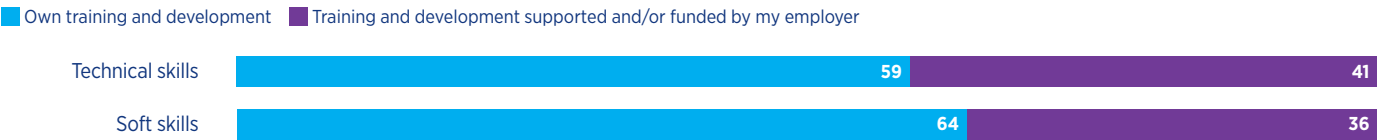
Over a third (35%) of employers say they have moderate to extreme skills gaps that are stopping them from making the best use of automation. Only 20% thought they had all the right skills to fully utilise automation technology.

However, employees are not necessarily being upskilled by their employers to help overcome skills shortages. Almost half (46%)

of E&M professionals say they are not developing their technical skills, and of those that are, 59% are doing so through their own development rather than being supported by their employer.

The story is similar for soft skills. Just over a third (34%) of employees say they are not developing their soft skills, and of those who are, 64% are upskilling through their own training.

How E&M workers who are developing their technical and soft skills in order to work with automation are doing so (%)



Automation can be a key draw – if potential candidates feel supported

More than half (56%) of E&M employees say that when looking for a role they would be attracted to work for an organisation that is investing in automation or has plans to do so. 21% say it is vital to attract them (ahead of the UK average of 14%), and that they would most like to hear about the organisation's investment in automation during interviews (51%), in job ads (48%) or on the employer's website (44%). Despite this, however, a quarter (25%) of E&M employers don't promote their organisation's investment at all during the recruitment or interview process.

As employers have expressed skills shortages as a barrier to automation implementation (65%), it's extremely important that digital transformation programmes and any related training are promoted during the recruitment process. This will help employers find the right talent to work with automation technology in the future and reap the benefits.

Stage during the recruitment process where candidates would prefer to hear about an organisation's investment in automation



A man with dark hair and a beard is focused on working on a robotic arm. He is using a pair of pliers to adjust a component. The background is dark and blue-tinted, with various technical overlays including gears, lines, and a grid pattern. The overall mood is professional and technological.

Turn to our recommendations on page 6 to discover what else you can do to ensure digital transformation is a success in your organisation.

“ For a company to stay current and take the lead within a specific industry, they need to be aware of new technologies and embrace change and automation. This will increase both productivity and profits. ”

Engineering professional, South West England

FINANCIAL MARKETS

The automation of processes is a high priority for financial markets employers, with increased productivity cited as a key benefit. However, a lack of skills is considered a major barrier to successful implementation, and most are not adapting their hiring plans. Employees are attuned to the benefits of automation, and its impact on their everyday tasks is already being felt. As such, employers must ensure that training is prioritised in order to get the most out of automation technology now and in the future.

Industry indicators

88%	say digital transformation is a primary or secondary focus for their organisation	42%	of employers say they lack the skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology
75%	say they have an open mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace	56%	of employers expect a lack of skills from current staff to be their top barrier to automation implementation
72%	of employers say their functional area within their organisation is investing in automation or has plans to do so	48%	of employers promote their organisation's investment in digital transformation during interviews
52%	think automation will allow people to add greater human value to an organisation in the future	61%	of employees would be attracted to work for an organisation investing in automation or with plans to do so

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR MARKET?

Digital transformation high on the agenda for financial markets employers

Digital transformation is a high priority for the majority of financial markets employers, with 88% saying that digital transformation is a primary or secondary focus for their organisation, considerably higher than the 75% UK average. Automation is also a focus, as 72% of financial markets employers say that their functional area within their organisation is currently investing in automation or is planning to do so in the future. 39% state that their organisation is in the early stages of implementation, either in the pre-investment (15%), investment/RFP (11%) or project planning stage (13%). 19% are in the implementation phase and 14% have already implemented automation. Only 10% say that their organisation is not investing in automation, which is lower than the 14% UK average.

The main reason for organisations to not invest in automation is deemed to be the overall cost of implementation, cited by 39% of financial markets respondents.

Increased productivity a key benefit of automation, but investment could be refocused

Respondents perceive the main benefit of automation as increased productivity (33%) followed by the improvement of process efficiencies (22%).

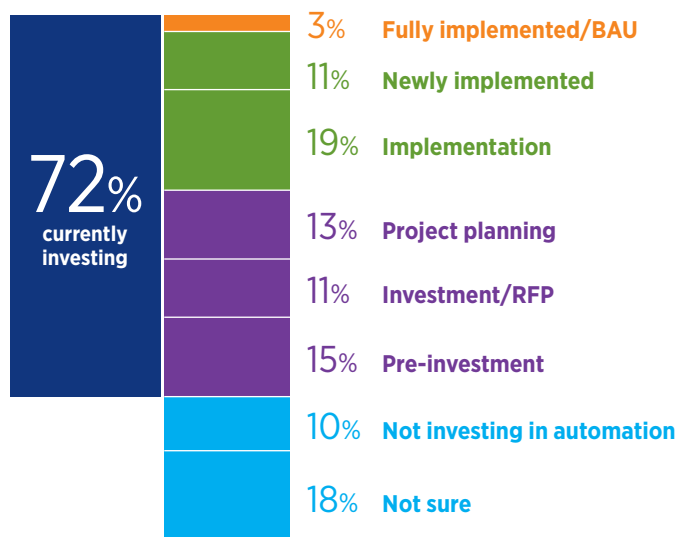
Cyber security (46%), finance (34%) and operations (also 34%) are the top three job areas currently receiving investment in automation. Areas seeing lower investment, but which financial markets employers believe would benefit from investment include internal audit, which 20% of organisations are investing in but 42% believe would benefit, and risk, which 23% are currently investing in but 46% believe would benefit.

Although cyber security is currently seeing the most significant level of automation investment (46%), this does not align with employers' perceptions of where it would be of most benefit, with only 35% of employers believing that cyber security would benefit from an investment in automation.

“Correctly applied, automation will improve efficiencies and increase productivity within the financial markets sector, but for integration to be successful, organisations must ensure clear communication of the benefits and upskill where needed.”

Tom Hawkins, Director, Hays Financial Markets

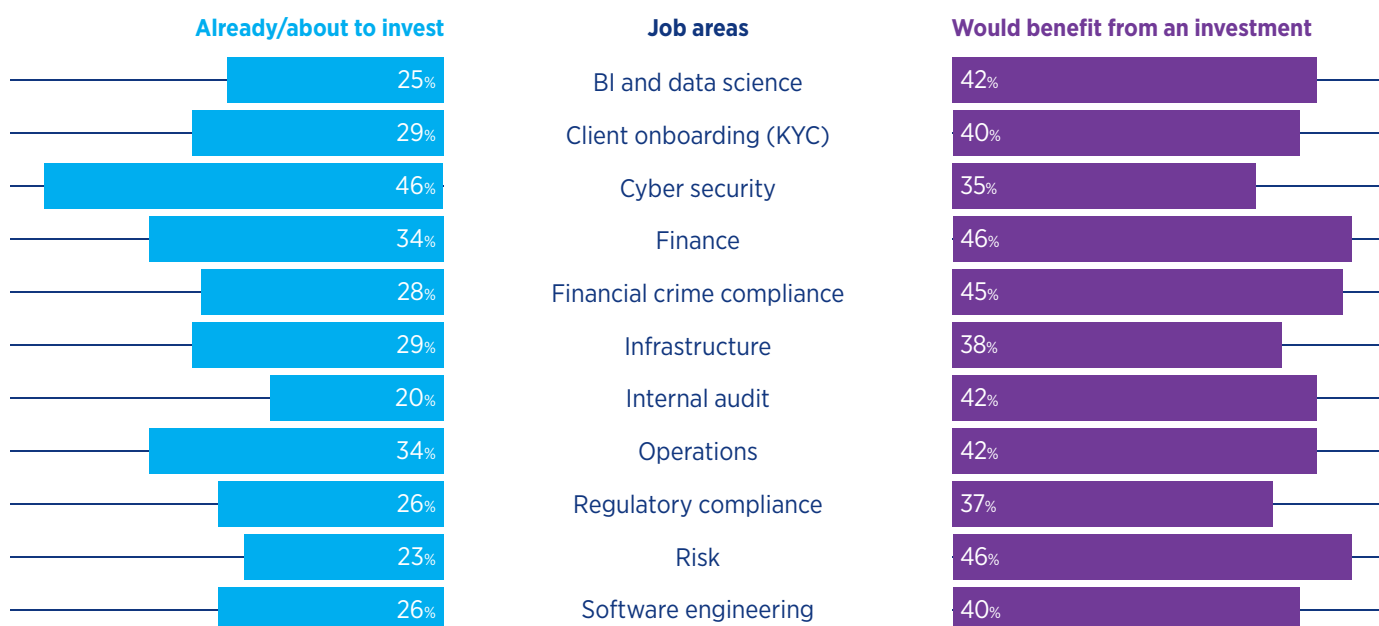
How financial markets employers describe their function's stage of investment in automation



“Financial services companies can benefit greatly from automation in the data processing environment, shortening the response time to clients at several levels.”

**Financial markets professional,
South West England**

Job areas where financial markets employers are currently making an investment in automation, and areas they feel would benefit from an investment



Skills shortages are keenly felt, but the majority do not plan to alter their recruitment strategy

Over two fifths (42%) of financial markets employers do not currently have the skills required to enable them to make the best use of automation technology, and over half (56%) say that a lack of skills from current staff is a main barrier to the implementation of automation. Over three quarters (76%) say that they have a shortage of both project management and change management skills in their existing teams, and 39% encounter shortages of both analytics and blockchain skills when hiring.

Despite this, 70% say they have not made, nor intend to make, any changes to their recruitment strategy as part of their organisation's investment in automation. Of those who do plan to make changes, however, 56% plan to hire more temporary, contract or freelance workers, considerably higher than 50% of the UK overall. Furthermore, 77% plan to hire more permanent staff, which is also greater than the UK average (64%).

WHAT PROFESSIONALS ARE SAYING

Employees want clarity on how they can add greater human value

Financial markets respondents demonstrate greater awareness of the benefits that automation can offer in the workplace (85%) than the UK average (76%).

In terms of whether automation can currently offer more opportunities to add greater human value in the workplace, financial markets respondents also demonstrated above average optimism, with 44% saying they feel it currently offers more opportunities to add value in comparison to the UK average of 39%.

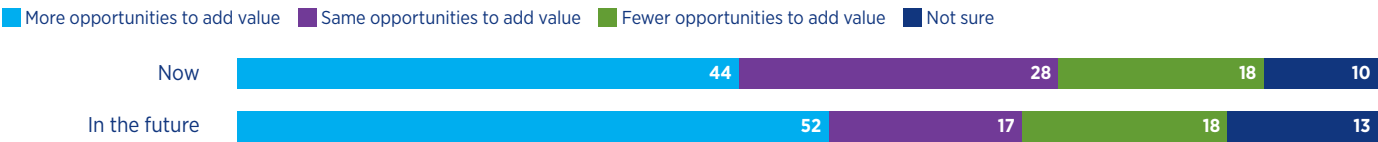
Looking to the future, over half (52%) of respondents believe automation will offer more opportunities to add greater human value. There is, however, a disparity between employers and employees regarding the opportunities automation will offer to add human value in the future.

59% of financial markets employers believe there will be more opportunities to add value in the future, whilst only 49% of financial markets employees agree.

Furthermore, over three fifths (61%) of employees would be attracted to work for an organisation that is investing in automation or plans to do so. This is considerably higher than the UK average of 48%, and as a result is clearly something that should be promoted by employers when recruiting.

However, almost a quarter (22%) of employers do not promote this information to prospective candidates. Employees would most like to hear about an organisation's automation investment during interviews (66%) or in job adverts (48%).

Financial markets respondents who believe automation offers more, less or equal opportunities to add greater human value, now and in the future (%)



Focus on training needed to prepare employees for change in tasks

Financial markets respondents are already seeing the effects of automation on their tasks, with 27% of financial markets employers claiming that their team's technical tasks have increased in number as a result of automation, higher than the 17% UK average.

This sentiment is shared by financial markets employees, 20% of whom say their technical tasks have increased in the wake of automation in comparison to only 14% of the UK overall.

When it comes to the future impact of automation on tasks, 42% of financial markets employees believe that the type of tasks they perform will change, higher than the 34% UK average, and only 10% don't believe automation will have any future impact on tasks.

In order to best prepare employees for the changes to their roles as a result of automation, employers must ensure that training is top of their agenda. Almost half (43%) of financial markets employees say that training should be the most important focus for their organisation to ensure the success of digital transformation, whilst only 21% of employers agreed, favouring culture instead (32%).

On a positive note, 27% of financial markets employees say that they are being supported fully or to a great extent by their employer on their organisation's digital transformation journey, higher than the 20% UK average. However, almost a quarter (23%) don't feel as though their employer is helping them to prepare, indicating there is still room for improvement.

Impact that financial markets employees expect automation to make on the tasks they carry out (%)





Turn to our recommendations on page 6 to discover what else you can do to ensure digital transformation is a success in your organisation.

“Automation is likely to be an inevitable occurrence for the majority of organisations, therefore it is sensible to be open to change and ensure that you remain flexible enough to cope with that change when it occurs. It’s important that this flexibility is instilled from early education. Organisations also have a responsibility to ethically implement the transition to automation by trying to redeploy workers wherever possible and thus mitigate redundancy.”

Financial markets professional, South East England

HUMAN RESOURCES

HR is keen to embrace automation, and implementation is in its early stages. Learning in particular is an area where automation investment is widespread, and the benefits to processes are already being felt by many with the use of efficiency-driving HRIS tools becoming commonplace. Employers need to prioritise training their current staff for more complex automation projects in the future.

Industry indicators

77%	say digital transformation is a primary or secondary focus for their organisation	40%	of employers say they lack the skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology
78%	say they have an open mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace	59%	of employers expect a lack of skills from current staff to be their top barrier to automation implementation
72%	of employers say their functional area within their organisation is investing in automation or has plans to do so	32%	of employers promote their organisation's investment in digital transformation during interviews
54%	think automation will allow people to add greater human value to an organisation in the future	51%	of employees would be attracted to work for an organisation investing in automation or with plans to do so

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR MARKET?

HR employers prioritising investment in automation but still in early stages of implementation

Roughly on par with the UK average, more than a quarter (27%) of HR respondents say that their organisation considers investment in digital transformation to be a primary focus, with 50% saying it's a secondary focus.

Overall, 72% of HR employers say their functional area within their organisation is investing in automation or has plans to do so in the future. 41% state they are currently in the early stages of automation implementation, either in the pre-investment (22%), investment/RFP (9%) or project planning stage (10%). 16% are in the implementation phase and 15% have already implemented automation. Only 11% say their organisation is not investing in automation, compared to the UK average of 14%. The main reason HR respondents believe organisations do not invest in automation is due to the cost (39%) followed by a lack of awareness or understanding of the benefits (17%).

Many areas of HR could benefit from an investment in automation, with process efficiencies deemed the main improvement

HR employers and employees indicate that the main perceived benefit of automation is to improve process efficiencies (31%), almost 10% higher than average for the UK (22%).

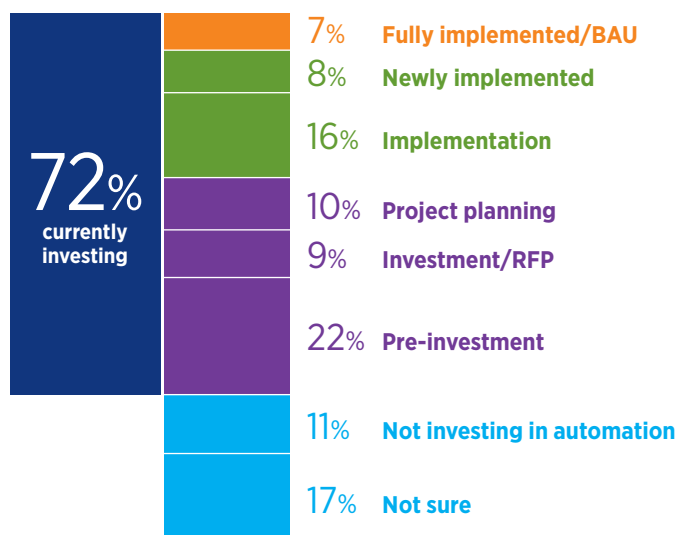
Specific areas HR employers say are currently or imminently expecting investment in automation include learning (45%), payroll (42%) and recruitment administration (timesheets and onboarding processes) (39%). However, many believe that other areas may benefit more from an investment in automation.

63% believe that job evaluation/benchmarking would benefit from an investment in automation, while only 13% say they are already investing or about to invest in this area. 62% say that compliance functions such as CV scanning and reference checking would benefit from investment but only 17% are ready to invest. Likewise, 58% believe that reward and recognition would benefit from investment in automation, and only a fifth (20%) say they are investing.

“Automation has the potential to revolutionise HR by taking over time-consuming tasks like CV scanning or administration. Allowing professionals to add more value where it matters – in building interpersonal relationships.”

Yvonne Smyth, Director, Hays Human Resources

How HR employers describe their function's stage of investment in automation



“By automating the processes that do not necessarily require the human element we can concentrate more on adding value through more human interaction.”

HR professional, Wales

Job areas where HR employers are currently making an investment in automation, and areas they feel would benefit from an investment

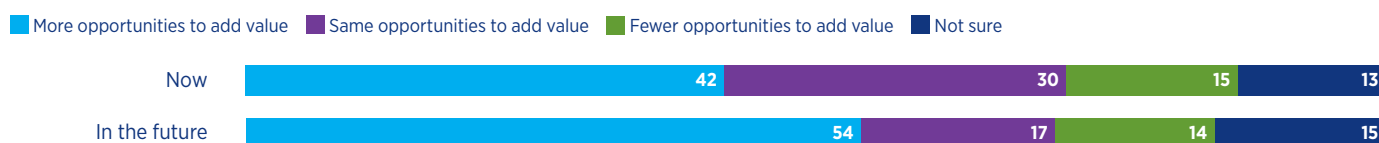


Optimism is high, but organisations are largely unprepared

HR professionals are overwhelmingly positive about the prospect of automation, with 92% embracing automation in the workplace (higher than the UK average of 86%) and 78% describe their mindset towards digital transformation as positive or open.

42% of HR respondents feel that automation offers more opportunities to add greater human value to an organisation today and 54% are optimistic about the new opportunities in the future, higher than the UK average of 48%. However, 35% say their organisation is not very or not at all well-equipped to deal with technological change, greater than the UK average of 30%.

HR respondents who believe automation offers more, less or equal opportunities to add greater human value, now and in the future (%)



WHAT PROFESSIONALS ARE SAYING

Reduction of admin tasks already being felt, but employers risk losing momentum

HR professionals are more likely to be experiencing the benefits of automation than the average UK professional. When employers were asked whether automation had any impact on the tasks carried out by their team, almost 49% of HR employers stated their team’s administration tasks have decreased, notably higher than the 36% UK average. This sentiment was confirmed by employees, 30% of whom stated that their administrative tasks had decreased, again, in advance of the UK average of 23%.

However, while automation is already having an impact on tasks, more than a third of HR respondents (34%) say the pace of technological change within their organisation is slow. The most commonly cited challenge to the implementation of automation was a lack of skills from current staff (59%) while the second highest was a lack of support from staff (41%), ahead even of budget concerns (35%).

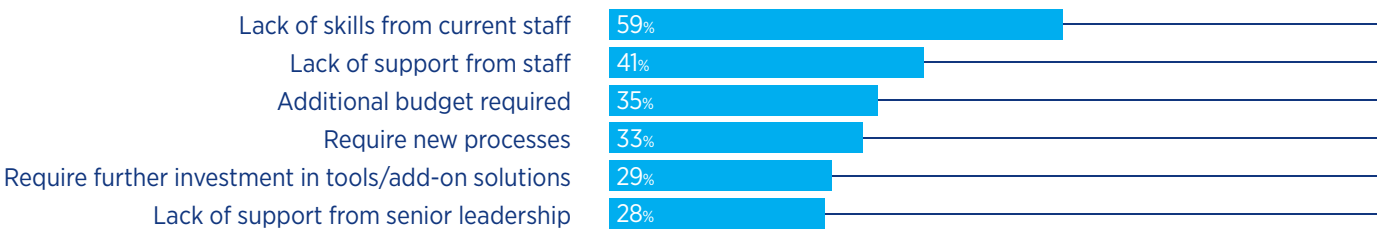
When employers were asked if they have invested in anything in an attempt to overcome automation implementation barriers, or will in the future, the three most commonly cited areas are the adaptation of processes (56%), improved staff communication (56%), and internal training programmes for staff (53%).

Despite acknowledging these barriers, only 28% of HR employers have hired a change manager, team or agency.

Furthermore, 65% of HR employers have not made, or intend to make, any changes to their recruitment strategy as part of their organisation’s investment in automation. While this is lower than the 72% UK average, it still implies a lack of readiness which may be contributing to the slow pace of technological change within the HR profession.

To make sure the momentum gained towards automation is continued, both HR employers and those working in HR roles need to be aware of the benefits of automation and the skills required to get the most out of digital technology, not just within their own function, but the wider business too. This will facilitate the most relevant training, improve engagement from existing staff and aid the recruitment of suitable professionals.

The barriers, problems or challenges that employers expect to encounter when implementing automation



Culture can help facilitate digital transformation and attract top talent

The majority (80%) of HR respondents believe that a positive attitude to change is the most important quality for workers to possess to make a success of digital transformation in the workplace. So, it’s no surprise that when respondents were asked about where their organisation should focus to ensure that digital transformation is a success, developing a culture which is open to change (28%) came out top, followed by training at 24%, which ranked above resources (23%), communication (16%) and strategy (9%).

Employers should seek to build an inclusive culture around automation and digital transformation by openly discussing benefits, supporting staff and encouraging training. This approach would also help to secure the best talent, as 51% of HR employees say they would be attracted to work for an organisation that is investing in automation or has plans to do so. 14% say it is vital to attract them and they would most like to hear about the organisation’s investment in automation during interviews (65%), the employer’s website (56%) and in job ads (48%).

Most important areas respondents believe organisations should focus on to ensure that digital transformation is a success (%)



Employees want support to upskill and make the most of automation

40% of HR employers say they don't currently have the right skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology and that they're experiencing either moderate (31%) or extreme (9%) skills shortages. When asked where their skills gaps are greatest, most (54%) say that both technical and soft skills are missing.

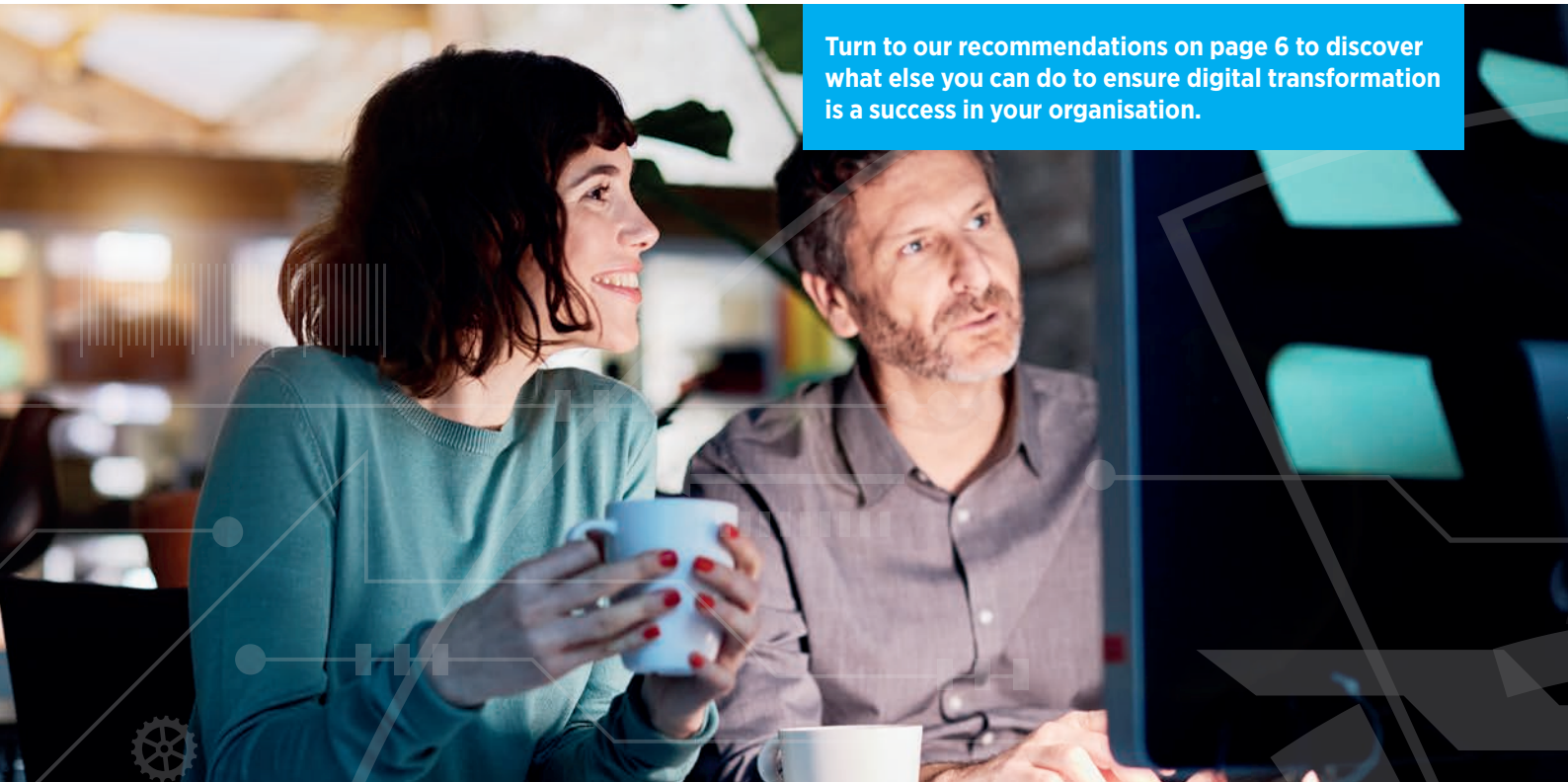
In regard to technical skills, 63% of HR employers say they need change management expertise to make automation a success. However, only 28% say they have hired a change manager, team or agency. A further 66% say software development and 62% say analytics skills are missing from existing teams.

Skills shortages are also acutely felt with soft skills, with high demand for emotional intelligence (68%), people management (65%), critical thinking (64%) and communications and interpersonal skills (57%). Employees are not aligned with their employers, however, with many believing different soft skills, like the ability to learn (88%), problem-solving (86%), and flexibility and creativity (81%) are the most important to develop.

Of those HR employees developing their technical skills (61%), almost two thirds (63%) are doing so through their own training and development. Only 37% state that they are undertaking training supported or funded by their employer. Furthermore, 60% say they are developing soft skills in their own time. Despite greater determination to develop their soft skills, less than a third (30%) of HR professionals say their training is supported by their employer – even less than the UK average of 34%. This is a potential source of contention, as 53% of employees say that responsibility for developing skills to make automation a success should lie with their employer.

Employees are eager to develop their skills to make digital transformation a success but feel they are not being supported by their employers. The skills that matter most to employers have not been effectively communicated to employees, making it more difficult for them to develop the correct skills without support. To alleviate this problem, employers need to offer more formal training to prepare staff for automation, and employees must ensure that they are developing the right soft and technical skills for their specific role in an automated future.

Soft skills HR employers are facing a shortage of within their existing team and when hiring



Turn to our recommendations on page 6 to discover what else you can do to ensure digital transformation is a success in your organisation.

LEGAL

The legal profession is less likely to be investing in automation than the UK overall, although many professionals are aware of the advantages it could bring. The emergence of legal tech as an industry will prompt greater adoption of technology to manage repetitive tasks like billing, e-disclosure, document assembly and legal research, but employers need to be more aware of how automating these tasks can add more human value before investing.

Industry indicators

72%	say digital transformation is a primary or secondary focus for their organisation	30%	of employers say they lack the skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology
73%	say they have an open mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace	54%	of employers expect a lack of skills from current staff to be their top barrier to automation implementation
58%	of employers say their functional area within their organisation is investing in automation or has plans to do so	39%	of employers promote their organisation's investment in digital transformation during interviews
43%	think automation will allow people to add greater human value to an organisation in the future	37%	of employees would be attracted to work for an organisation investing in automation or with plans to do so

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR MARKET?

Legal employers are in the early stages of automation investment

Digital transformation is said to be the primary focus at their organisation by 28% of legal respondents. A further 44% say it is a secondary focus, with only 18% saying it is not a focus. Overall, 58% of legal employers say their industry is investing in automation or has plans to do so in the future, although this is far below the 70% UK average. This disparity may be due to the recent emergence and low awareness of legal tech as an industry, which automates repetitive or routine tasks usually assigned to junior lawyers, allowing them to focus more on delivering expert advice. Of the legal respondents from organisations that are currently investing in automation, most (64%) feel that their organisation is quite or very well equipped to deal with technological change.

Almost a third of legal employers say their organisation is in the early stages of automation implementation (29%), either pre-investment (16%), investment (3%) or project planning stage (10%). A further 29% have already fully or newly implemented automation, while 42% say they are not sure or that their organisation is not investing in automation at all.

Access to tools and technology is a barrier to adoption of automation

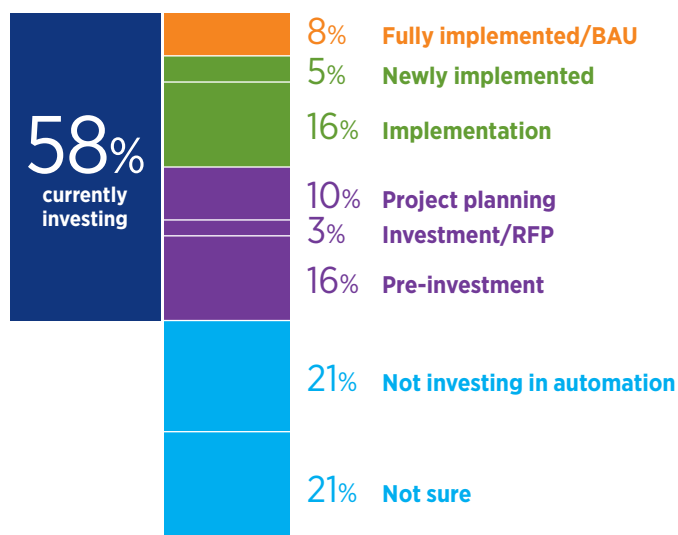
The most commonly cited challenge to the implementation of automation is a lack of skills from current staff (54%), followed by the need for greater investment in tools and add-on solutions (38%), integration issues (32%) and technology and tools not being fit for purpose (30%). All of these could potentially be addressed by investing in the resources offered by a legal tech ecosystem, either by outsourcing or working in collaboration with third parties to improve efficiency and, in many cases, accuracy.

When employers were asked whether they have invested in anything in an attempt to overcome implementation barriers, or will in the future, the three most common areas where employers had already invested are: improved staff communication (65%), hiring new permanent staff (54%) and hiring project managers, teams or agencies (54%). The greatest investments employers are expecting to make in order to futureproof their organisation and overcome barriers to automation include internal training programmes for staff (62%), adapting processes (54%) and investment in additional technology (54%).

“Investing in automation to secure efficiencies in routine, repetitive tasks will allow legal professionals to deliver more expert advice to clients.”

Yvonne Smyth, Director, Hays Legal

How legal employers describe their function's stage of investment in automation



“Communicating the benefits of automation is key to its success. The challenge is the initial buy-in from stakeholders.”

Legal professional, Northern Ireland

Job areas where legal employers are currently making an investment in automation, and areas they feel would benefit from an investment

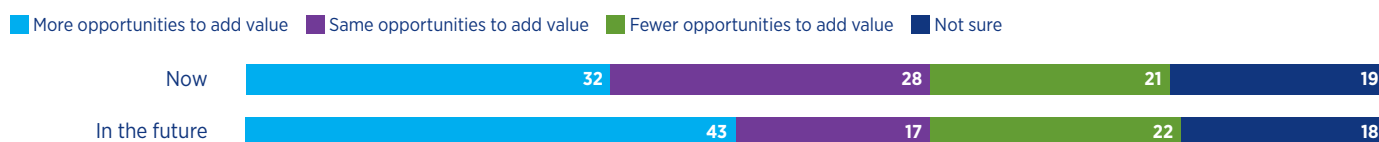


Professionals are aware of benefits, but further investment required

67% of legal respondents are aware or very aware of what automation can offer the workplace, with 26% saying it would lead to cost savings, 23% saying improved productivity and 21% process efficiencies. While they are less likely than the UK average to feel automation offers more opportunities to add greater human value (32% compared to the UK average of 39%), they are more optimistic about it creating opportunities in the future (43%).

The areas employers believe are seeing the most investment in automation include data entry (30%) and administration (27%). This largely aligns with employers' perceptions of where the most benefit from automation would be felt, particularly administration (59%) and data entry (49%). More than half (51%), however, believe that the process of document review/management would benefit from an investment in automation, but only 19% of employers said their organisation was ready to invest in this area.

Respondents who believe automation offers more, less or equal opportunities to add greater human value, now and in the future (%)



WHAT PROFESSIONALS ARE SAYING

Lack of employer support holding employees back from making the most of automation

73% of legal respondents are positive about the impact of digital transformation, but nearly a third (30%) of employees say they don't currently have the right skills to make the best use of automation technology.

Data analytics (65%), risk and compliance (65%) and project management skills (62%) were the technical skills most likely to be missing in employers' current teams. In the future, shortages are expected to be most acute in areas of specialist discipline expertise, including litigation, M&A and employment tax (54%), data science (54%) and advisory (50%). As legal firms engage more with automation technology, human-centric soft skills become more important, which is why employers are noting acute shortages of soft skills, such as people management (62%), creativity (54%) and communication skills (54%).

To prepare for these demands, 40% of professionals are upskilling in technical areas, although less than half (41%) of these are being actively supported by their employer. 51% of employees are developing soft skills, predominantly their ability to learn (32%), communication and interpersonal skills (30%) and problem-solving (27%). A similar volume (43%) are receiving soft skills training or support from their employer.

The general lack of support for developing skills is a potential threat to staff retention, particularly as 61% of respondents say that responsibility for developing a professional's skills to make automation a success should lie with their employer. Only 50% of legal employees feel their employer is adequately preparing them for digital transformation in the workplace.

Soft skills legal employers are facing a shortage of within their existing team and when hiring

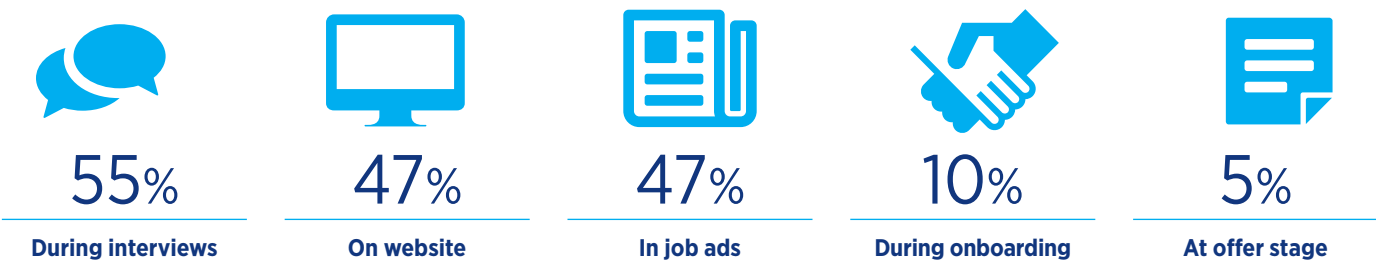


Employees want to know about an organisation's investment in automation

29% of legal employees expect automation to change the nature of their tasks in the future, and 26% of employers have noticed that their team's administration tasks have decreased due to automation. Employers should make a commitment to investing in new technologies that will reduce the time their employees spend on automatable tasks.

Promoting this investment could also benefit talent attraction, as over a third (37%) of legal respondents say that when looking for a role, they would be attracted to work for an organisation that invests in automation. Of these, 11% say it is vital to attract them and that they would most like to hear about it during interviews (55%), on the employer's website and in job ads (both 47%). However, almost a third (30%) of legal employers don't promote their organisation's investment during the recruitment process.

Stage during the recruitment process where candidates would prefer to hear about an organisation's investment in automation






Turn to our recommendations on page 6 to discover what else you can do to ensure digital transformation is a success in your organisation.

“ More automation in transactional work will improve efficiencies, but we still need to focus on human contact with our clients. ”

Legal professional, West Midlands



MARKETING

Marketing professionals are very optimistic about automation and the benefits it can bring to the workplace. They are often further ahead in their automation journey than other professions, however, employers are highlighting a shortage of technical marketing skills particularly around digital project management and data analysis. Marketing professionals are generally well informed about the benefits of automation, although many feel unsupported in their efforts to upskill.

Industry indicators

79%	say digital transformation is a primary or secondary focus for their organisation	40%	of employers say they lack the skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology
80%	say they have an open mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace	53%	of employers expect a lack of skills from current staff to be their top barrier to automation implementation
71%	of employers say their functional area within their organisation is investing in automation or has plans to do so	39%	of employers promote their organisation's investment in digital transformation during interviews
55%	think automation will allow people to add greater human value to an organisation in the future	51%	of employees would be attracted to work for an organisation investing in automation or with plans to do so

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR MARKET?

Automation is a key focus for marketing

35% of marketers say digital transformation is a primary focus for their organisation, higher than the UK average of 30%. 44% say it's a secondary focus, with only 17% saying it is not a focus at their organisation. Furthermore, 71% of marketing employers say their functional area is investing in automation or has plans to do so.

Around a third (30%) of marketing employers state they are currently in the early stages of automation implementation, either in the pre-investment (13%), investment/RFP (4%) or project planning stage (13%). However, a relatively large proportion (23%) say that their organisation is already in the implementation stage, ahead of the UK average (17%). 18% have already fully or newly implemented automation and only 12% say their organisation is not investing in automation at all. Of these, the main reason marketing employers believe organisations do not invest in automation is due to the cost (27%).

“To ensure customers and clients are always contacted with personalised and relevant offers, you need marketing automation technology – and more importantly, people with the skills and passion to use it.”

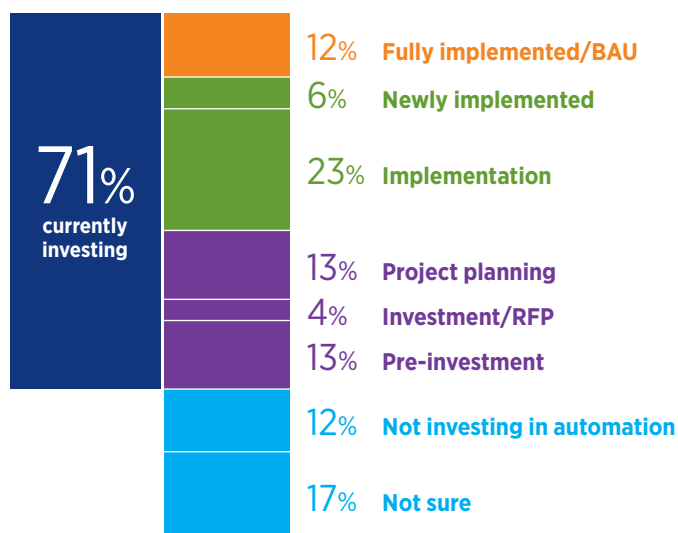
Clare Kemsley, Director, Hays Marketing

Marketers preparing today for hiring tomorrow

The most commonly cited barrier, problem or challenge to the implementation of automation was a lack of skills from current staff (53%), followed by lack of support from existing staff (36%). When employers were asked whether they have invested in anything in an attempt to overcome challenges to automation implementation, the three most common areas were adaptation of processes (55%), improved staff communication (52%), and investing in additional technology/tools (37%). These investments are setting the scene for a headcount expansion in the near future as 69% say they are planning to invest in additional permanent or temporary staff (75%) as part of an investment in automation.

Currently only 15% of marketing employers have hired a change manager, team or agency, beneath the UK average of 28%. However, almost half (41%) are planning to, showing a considerable swing in the future towards preparing teams for the changes automation will bring. The top areas employers anticipate investing in to overcome barriers to automation implementation in the future are internal training programmes (48%), training from solution providers (47%), hiring new permanent staff (47%), hiring a project manager, team or agency (44%) and hiring temporary staff (43%).

How marketing employers describe their function's stage of investment in automation



“As a marketer, automation provides me with the opportunity to deliver more targeted messaging to prospective customers, allowing my team to focus on creating content rather than administrative tasks and processes.”

Marketing professional, South East England

Job areas where marketing employers are currently making an investment in automation, and areas they feel would benefit from an investment

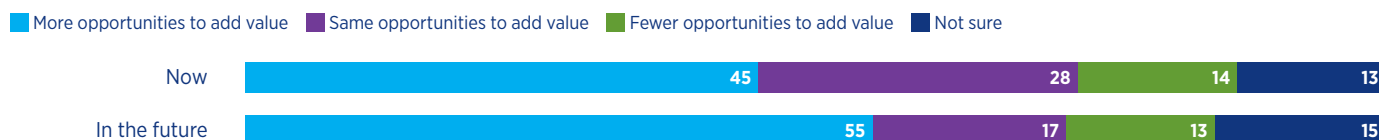


Benefits of automation clear for most marketing professionals

79% of marketing respondents say they are aware or very aware of what automation can offer the workplace, and 33% of employers think their teams' administrative tasks have decreased because of automation. Improved productivity is deemed to be the top benefit at 31%, followed by increased process efficiencies (28%) and cost savings (14%). Marketing respondents are more likely (45%) to feel that automation offers more opportunities to add greater human value now, compared to the average UK professional (39%). They are also more likely to be optimistic about the opportunities automation presents in the future (55% compared to the 48% UK average).

The areas within marketing already seeing the most investment in automation include scheduling communications (59%), social media and community management (51%) and content personalisation (37%). This suggests that the most important function of automation at this stage is to schedule and deliver personalised content to existing and potential customers. Key job areas which marketing employers believe will benefit most from automation include customer satisfaction insights (51%), market reporting (51%) and market research (51%).

Marketing respondents who believe automation offers more, less or equal opportunities to add greater human value, now and in the future (%)



WHAT PROFESSIONALS ARE SAYING

Employees want to develop their technical and soft skills

40% of marketing employers say they don't currently have the right skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology, and that they have either moderate (32%) or extreme (8%) skills shortages. Of those who say they are experiencing skills gaps, half (50%) say that both technical and soft skills are missing.

When it comes to the technical skills most lacking, 46% of marketing employers say they mostly require digital project management skills to make automation a success. However, 57% also cite strategic marketing skills and a further 70% say data analytics skills are important. For future roles, employer need is expected to be greatest for project management skills (40%), change management skills (40%) and data analytics skills (38%). There are also some specialist skills, like those involving blockchain, that are in low demand now (12%) which marketing employers believe will see an increase in demand in the future (38%).

In addition, many soft skills including critical thinking (58%), communication and interpersonal skills (50%) and flexibility and adaptability (46%) are needed in current teams, according to marketing employers.

Marketing professionals appear to understand that these skills gaps exist, and 63% are developing technical skills themselves. Of these, only 34% are being actively supported by their employer. Likewise, 65% are developing their soft skills, but only 27% are receiving any kind of formal training or support, far below the UK average of 35%. This is a potential source of contention, as 62% of respondents say that responsibility for developing a professional's skills to make automation a success should lie with their employer.

Marketers are prepared to develop their own skills wherever necessary to prepare for more automation in the workplace, but employers need to offer greater support and communicate to their workers exactly which skills will be most applicable to their roles in the future.

Soft skills marketing employers are facing a shortage of within their existing team and when hiring



Professionals rate their workplace culture as vital to successful digital transformation

Marketing professionals have an overwhelmingly open mindset towards digital transformation in their workplace (80%), and the most important area that respondents believe their organisation should focus on to make it a success is developing a culture which is open and encourages change (30%).

77% of respondents believe that possessing a positive attitude to change is the most important thing for workers to possess to successfully deal with digital transformation in the workplace. Discussing the details and benefits of automation projects is a key way to encourage this attitude, which is why 43% of employers say they are planning to improve staff communication in the future.

Most important areas respondents believe organisations should focus on to ensure digital transformation is a success (%)



Jobseekers want to know about your automation projects

More than half (51%) of marketing respondents say that when looking for a role, they would be attracted to work for an organisation that is investing in automation or has plans to do so. 14% say it is vital to attract them and they would most like to hear about the organisation's investment in automation during interviews (60%), in job ads (56%) and on the employer's website (53%). Despite this, almost a third (30%) of marketing employers don't promote their organisation's investment at all during the recruitment process.

Marketing employers need to actively discuss plans for automation and the benefits it can bring, not only in terms of process efficiencies and the reduction of administrative tasks, but also in terms of the human value it can add, particularly around increased opportunities for creativity and innovation.

Stage during the recruitment process where candidates would prefer to hear about an organisation's investment in automation



Turn to our recommendations on page 6 to discover what else you can do to ensure digital transformation is a success in your organisation.

“Automation in the workplace should be embraced if it makes a process easier and more efficient, saves time for other areas to be focussed on and improves the services offered by the business. However, at the same time, the correct training and upskilling should be provided to staff by the employer well in advance of taking on their job that may involve working with such technology.”

Marketing professional, North East England

OFFICE SUPPORT

Digital transformation is high on the agenda for most office support employers. Administrative task areas are currently a key focus for automation investment but there is a lack of awareness amongst employees around the benefits and opportunities to add human value. To retain top talent, employers need to be clear about the benefits of automation and provide appropriate training to equip teams with the skills required.

Industry indicators

70%	say digital transformation is a primary or secondary focus for their organisation	36%	of employers say they lack the skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology
70%	say they have an open mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace	59%	of employers expect a lack of skills from current staff to be their top barrier to automation implementation
60%	of employers say their functional area within their organisation is investing in automation or has plans to do so	32%	of employers promote their organisation's investment in digital transformation during interviews
39%	think automation will allow people to add greater human value to an organisation in the future	36%	of employees would be attracted to work for an organisation investing in automation or with plans to do so

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR MARKET?

Digital transformation high on the agenda but automation implementation in early stages

Digital transformation is deemed a high priority across the office support function, with 70% of office support respondents perceiving investment in digital transformation to be a primary or secondary focus for their organisation.

In terms of automation specifically, 60% of office support employers say that their functional area is currently investing in automation or is at the pre-investment stage.

Although this is considerably over half of all organisations, it is nevertheless lower than the 70% UK average, suggesting that the office support function is slightly slower to implement than the UK overall. When it comes to the reasons for organisations not investing in automation, concerns about costs are highlighted as the most important reason by office support respondents (37%).

Administrative tasks key areas for automation investment

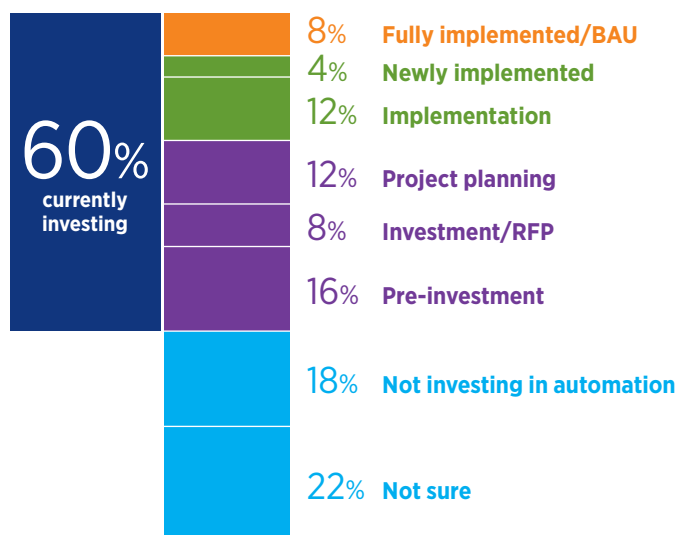
The three top task areas where office support employers are currently investing in automation are predominantly administrative, with data entry (34%) the most commonly cited, alongside expense claims and paying invoices (both 31%). The areas seen to most benefit from a future investment in automation also include data entry, as well as diary management and email management (all 46%).

Areas which are currently seeing low investment but which office support employers believe would benefit from investment include bid writing, which 11% of organisations are investing in but 44% think would benefit, and virtual assistance, in which 15% are investing but 38% believe would benefit. The more complex nature of these task areas could be a reason for employers' hesitation to invest in automating them in the here and now.

“Change management must be handled sensitively and communication throughout organisations must be clear in order to make employees aware of the benefits automation can bring both to their wider function and their role.”

Roddy Adair, Director, Hays Office Support

How office support employers describe their function's stage of investment in automation



“ I think automation should be used to alleviate employees from menial tasks in order to turn their focus to the more complex and strategic elements of their roles. ”

Office support professional, East of England

Job areas where office support employers are currently making an investment in automation, and areas they feel would benefit from an investment



Employers hiring for change management skills

Over a third (36%) of office support employers say that they don't currently have the right skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology, and 15% claim to have extreme skills shortages. Of those employers who say they have a shortage of technical skills when hiring, the most frequently cited are change management skills, with 60% claiming they have experienced a shortage of these, considerably higher than the 37% UK average.

In terms of the soft skills most needed by office support employers when hiring, people management (53%) ranks most highly on the list, followed by communication, emotional intelligence and service orientation (all 49%).

Employers who currently have access to the right skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology (%)



WHAT PROFESSIONALS ARE SAYING

Employees lack awareness around automation investment and benefits

Almost half (44%) of office support employees state that they are unsure whether their organisation is currently investing in automation or has done so in the past, markedly higher than the 30% UK average. This disparity is also present amongst employers, with 24% of office support employers stating that they are unaware of their organisation's automation investment in comparison to just 14% of UK employers overall.

There is also an overall lack of awareness around the benefits of automation. 39% of office support employees state that they aren't aware of the benefits automation can offer in the workplace, which is higher than the lack of awareness amongst office support employers (26%).

Further to this, there is a disparity between office support employees and employers with regards to the future opportunities for adding human value that automation provides. Nearly half (46%) of employers believe that automation will bring more opportunities, in comparison to just 37% of employees.

This disparity needs addressing, and employers must ensure clear and honest communication both regarding the changes to tasks that may come about as a result of automation, as well as the benefits it will offer to employees.

Office support employers and employees who are aware of the benefits that automation can offer in the workplace (%)



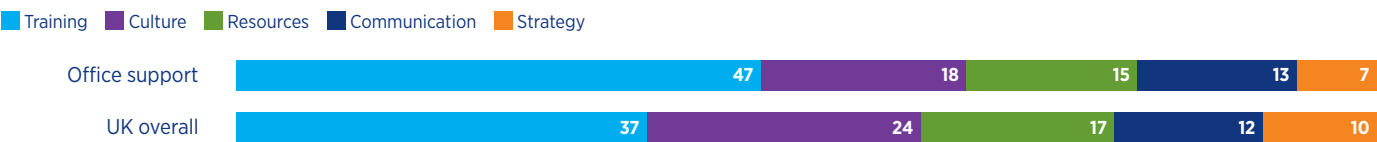
Training is the most important area of focus

Training is regarded as by far the most important area for organisations to focus on by office support respondents in order to ensure the success of digital transformation, with 47% saying that they think training is the most important area, considerably higher than the 37% UK average.

The most commonly cited barrier, problem or challenge to the implementation of automation is a lack of skills from current staff (59%). This is an area of focus that needs addressing in order to ensure the smooth implementation of new automated technologies. Employers need to provide tailored and appropriate training to ensure that their teams are equipped with the skills required, while employees must have a receptive and 'willing to learn' attitude to make the most of new learning opportunities.

This cannot be achieved without a strong and open company culture, but it is interesting to note that only 18% of office support respondents deem culture to be the most important area of focus for organisations to ensure digital transformation is a success. Both training and company culture need a certain degree of mutual focus in order to cultivate a learning environment where employees feel confident performing tasks and change objectives can be delivered successfully.

Most important areas office support respondents believe organisations should focus on to ensure that digital transformation is a success (%)





Turn to our recommendations on page 6 to discover what else you can do to ensure digital transformation is a success in your organisation.

“ In my experience embracing automation and upskilling the workforce to also do so allows for progression. However, you have to monitor the automated processes to ensure that they keep working – none of this comes without a huge investment that a large amount of public workforces just don’t have. ”

Office support professional, North West England

PERSONAL & EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS

Personal and executive assistants are enthusiastic about using the latest technology in the workplace. However, there is a lack of awareness as to the specific benefits offered by automation, and the current deployment of automation technology has not been in line with the areas that would most benefit their day-to-day roles.

Industry indicators

74%	say digital transformation is a primary or secondary focus for their organisation	14%	of employers say they lack the skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology
78%	say they have an open mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace	49%	of employers expect a lack of skills from current staff to be their top barrier to automation implementation
66%	of employers say their functional area within their organisation is investing in automation or has plans to do so	34%	of employers promote their organisation's investment in digital transformation during interviews
34%	think automation will allow people to add greater human value to an organisation in the future	47%	of employees would be attracted to work for an organisation investing in automation or with plans to do so

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR MARKET?

Majority of employers investing in automation

Over a third (35%) of PA and EA respondents say that digital transformation is a primary focus for their organisation, and 40% say it is a secondary focus. 66% of EA and PA employers state that they are currently, or will be, investing in automation.

Despite this, over a quarter (26%) of PA and EA employers are not sure if they are investing in automation. This lack of awareness is amongst the highest across all the industries and functions we surveyed, and 10% higher than the UK average of 16%.

Productivity and process efficiencies driving automation investment

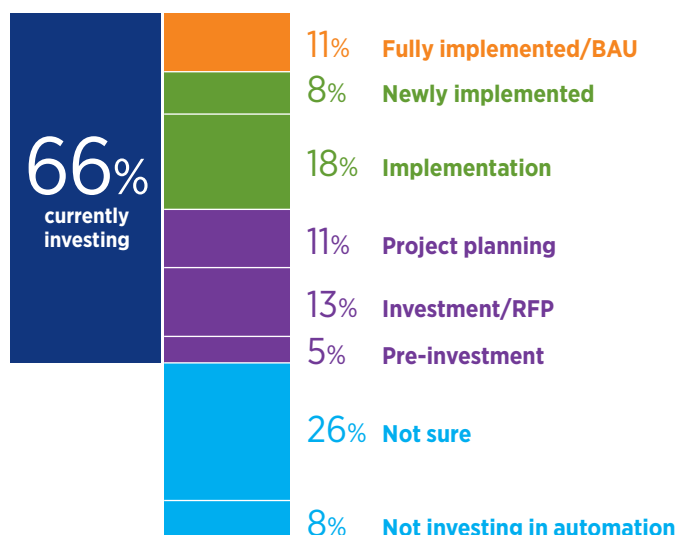
PA and EA respondents deem the main benefits of automation in the workplace to be improved productivity (34%), process efficiencies (24%) and cost savings (16%).

In terms of specific job areas or tasks, 42% of employers say that paying invoices has already benefited from an investment in automation, or will soon. 39% say the same for expense claims, 37% for word processing and document design and 34% for data entry. According to employers, the job areas or tasks with the lowest investment in automation are virtual assistance and proposal/bid writing, with only 16% and 21% of employers investing in these areas respectively.

“When deployed effectively, automation can relieve PAs and EAs of time-consuming administrative tasks, allowing them to offer more strategic support to executives – whose own evolving roles as leaders necessitate that their assistants operate as true business partners. However, this hinges upon PAs and EAs being well supported via training and communication throughout the implementation of any new automation technology.”

Roddy Adair, Director, Hays Personal & Executive Assistants

How PA and EA employers describe their function's stage of investment in automation



“More training must be made available around automation – without all staff being open to and able to use automation technology, the process for everyone else is slower.”

Personal Assistant, South West England

Job areas where PA and EA employers are currently making an investment in automation, and areas they feel would benefit from an investment



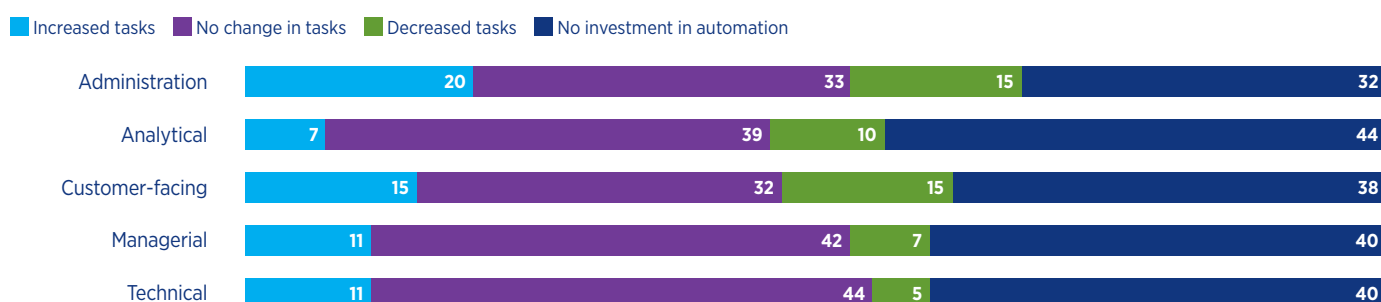
Automation resulting in an increase of administrative tasks for PAs and EAs

A fifth (20%) of PA and EA employees say that automation has increased the administrative tasks that they carry out, and only 15% have seen a decrease in their administrative tasks. This is at odds with the UK average, where more respondents agree that administrative tasks have decreased (23%) than increased (17%).

As more areas and tasks become automated, it may be the case that employers are expecting their PAs and EAs to perform more administrative tasks in the same timeframe.

Employers must ensure they are being strategic with their deployment of automation technology, so not to inadvertently increase the administrative workload of their PAs and EAs, distracting them from more analytical tasks.

The impact of automation investment on the types of tasks that EA and PA employees carry out (%)



WHAT PROFESSIONALS ARE SAYING

Employees see more areas that could benefit from automation than employers are investing in

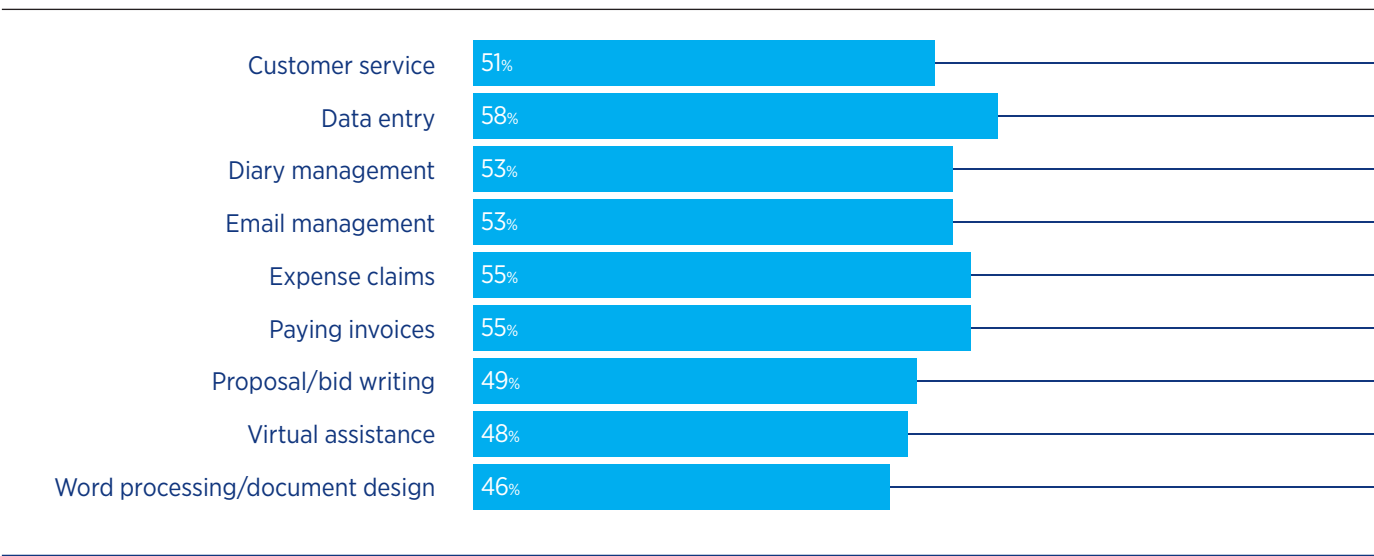
There is a notable discrepancy between those job areas or tasks which PA and EA employees believe would benefit from automation, and those areas that employers are investing or believe should be invested in. For example, 58% of PA and EA employees think that data entry could benefit from an investment in automation technology, yet only 34% of employers say their organisation already has or plans to. Furthermore, only 37% of employers believe this area would benefit from an investment in automation.

Similarly, 53% of employees believe that diary management could benefit from increased automation, but only 32% of PA and EA employers state that their organisation is investing or will

invest in this area. In fact, expense claims and paying invoices are the only two tasks that are currently or will be automated according to 39% or more of PA and EA employers.

PA and EA employees should ensure they are highlighting to their employers which areas and tasks they believe should be increasingly automated, using a compelling business case of how any investment in automation technology will allow them not only to be more efficient, but enable them to be more strategic in their day-to-day roles. For their part, employers should ensure they are listening to their employees and investing in automation where it is most needed to allow EAs and PAs, and by proxy their executives, to be better supported.

Job areas and tasks that PA and EA employees believe would benefit from investment in automation



Capitalise on enthusiasm for technology by better communicating the benefits of automation

PAs and EAs have an overwhelmingly open mindset towards new technology. 95% believe technology is changing our lives in the workplace for the better, 86% believe we should embrace automation in the workplace, and 83% are interested in using the latest technology at work.

However, despite this enthusiasm for increased digitalisation in the workplace, over a third (36%) of all PA and EA respondents say they are unaware of what benefits automation can offer in the workplace, significantly higher than the UK average of 24%. Fewer than a fifth (16%) say they are 'very aware' of the benefits of automation in the workplace.

Furthermore, only 26% of all PA and EA respondents believe automation allows people to add greater human value now, and only 34% believe it offers people to add great human value in the future, lower than the UK average of 39% and 48% respectively.

PA and EA employers must be sure to capitalise on the enthusiasm that PAs and EAs have with regards to embracing the latest technology in the workplace, and channel this into a deeper understanding of the benefits of automation. By effectively communicating how automation can support them in their roles and allow them to focus upon greater business partnerships, employers will secure crucial buy-in from their PA and EA workforce.

PA and EA respondents who are aware of the benefits that automation can offer in the workplace (%)



More training and development support is required to close skills gaps

Nearly half (49%) of PA and EA employers state that a lack of skills will be a barrier, problem or challenge to the successful implementation of automation. A third (33%) say that difficulties aligning or integrating with different departments will be a barrier.

PA and EA employees are clear with regards to what they think their organisation should focus on to prepare for automation in the workplace, with 46% saying support with training and upskilling is the single most important area, followed by 15% who believe organisations should ensure their people and culture supports change.

These solutions are especially critical considering the range of tasks today's PAs and EAs undertake, and the multitude of departments and functions they work with. 77% of PAs and EAs believe IT skills are currently important to their success, whilst 60% say operations and technical skills, 59% think projects and change management skills, and 53% consider both HR skills and data analytics important.

Similarly, when it comes to soft skills 83% say communication and interpersonal skills are currently important to their role due to the increase of automation, and 82% believe coordinating with others and the ability to learn is important.

However, despite the wide range of skills that are deemed important, only 20% of PAs and EAs state that they are upskilling in technical areas through training and development supported by their employer. Of those who are upskilling their soft skills, only 30% say they are upskilling their soft skills with support from their employer. Overall, a third (33%) say their employer is not helping them prepare for digital transformation in the workplace at all.

It is crucial that PA and EA employers are not just investing in training but ensuring that training is regularly offered and encompasses both the technical and soft skills needed for PAs and EAs to effectively utilise automation technology and add human value across all the tasks they complete and departments they work with. They should also be looking to support their employees who wish to upskill on their own. Employees must take advantage of any training on offer to futureproof their skillsets. They should also understand that alignment with other departments and their wider business will continue to be a core focus area when automation technology is implemented.

The extent employers are helping prepare PAs and EAs for digital transformation (%)



Turn to our recommendations on page 6 to discover what else you can do to ensure digital transformation is a success in your organisation.

“ I would like my employer to involve us more when choosing automation technology for the company, introducing it and during training sessions. One-to-one meetings with the automation companies would be useful, as would more communication around the product itself. ”

Executive Assistant, Yorkshire and the Humber

PROCUREMENT

Investment in automation is high on the agenda of procurement employers, especially within contract management, and culture is prioritised as a key determinant of successful digital transformation by both employers and employees. Employers say they lack the right skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology, causing them to invest in temporary workers to overcome skills gaps.

Industry indicators

77%	say digital transformation is a primary or secondary focus for their organisation	41%	of employers say they lack the skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology
76%	say they have an open mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace	59%	of employers expect a lack of skills from current staff to be their top barrier to automation implementation
75%	of employers say their functional area within their organisation is investing in automation or has plans to do so	42%	of employers promote their organisation's investment in digital transformation during interviews
54%	think automation will allow people to add greater human value to an organisation in the future	54%	of employees would be attracted to work for an organisation investing in automation or with plans to do so

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR MARKET?

Digital transformation a priority for organisations

Digital transformation is high on the agenda, with 77% of procurement respondents saying that it is a primary or secondary focus for their organisation.

Automation investment is also higher priority for procurement employers than the UK average, with three quarters (75%) saying that their organisation is investing in automation to some degree in comparison to 70% of UK employers overall. Moreover, only 10% of procurement employers say that their organisation is not investing in automation.

The two key reasons cited by all procurement respondents for not investing are the costs involved (33%) and a lack of understanding of the benefits (21%), which is higher than the UK average of 16%.

Implementation still in early stages

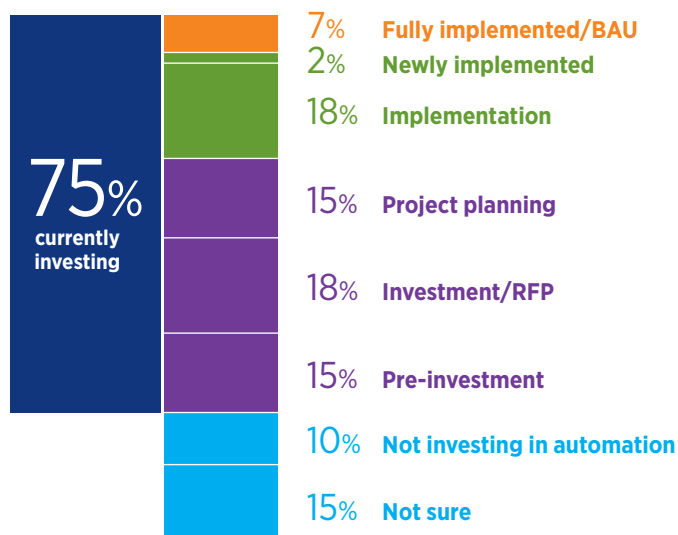
Procurement employers are slightly behind the UK overall when it comes to implementing their automation strategies, with 48% still in the early stages of automation implementation (pre-investment, investment/RFP or project planning) as opposed to 38% of UK employers. Furthermore, only 9% of procurement employers have already implemented automation in their organisations, lower than the 15% UK average.

More employers (22%) identify contract management as the top area where they are currently investing in automation but 68% cite supplier analytics as the top job area which would benefit from an investment.

“Getting key internal stakeholders on board is essential for procurement professionals as they try to enact strategic innovation within their organisation. The automation of certain functions should allow them to spend less time extracting data and more time on interpreting it to better support their case for change.”

Scott Dance, Director, Hays Procurement & Supply Chain

How procurement employers describe their function's stage of investment in automation



“ There is a balance to be struck with culture, pace and positivity towards digital transformation, but this can only be achieved through education and awareness programmes with clear benefits. ”

Procurement professional, Northern Ireland

Job areas where procurement employers are currently making an investment in automation, and areas they feel would benefit from an investment



Optimism about regarding workplace automation

Procurement respondents demonstrate greater levels of optimism than the UK overall regarding the positive impact automation can have on their working lives. 92% of respondents believe we should embrace automation in the workplace, higher than the 86% UK average. As automation technology streamlines admin tasks such as the actual extraction of data, procurement professionals will be able to focus more of their time and expertise on interpreting it.

Temporary and permanent hiring on the agenda

Despite over two fifths (41%) of procurement employers stating that they do not have access to the right skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology, and of these 50% say they lack both technical and soft skills, the majority (75%) say that they have not made, nor intend to make, any changes to their recruitment strategy as part of their organisation's investment in automation.

Of those employers who are making changes to their recruitment strategy, 77% plan to hire more permanent staff. Furthermore, as the integration of new procurement services or software tends to be project-led and therefore the use of contract or interim staff is crucial for successful delivery, it is unsurprising that 71% plan to hire more temporary, contract or freelance workers as part of their investment in automation.

Employers who currently have access to the right skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology (%)



WHAT PROFESSIONALS ARE SAYING

Employees need to be made more aware of the opportunities to add greater human value

A high proportion of procurement employees show awareness of their organisation's investment in automation, with 61% saying that their organisation is investing or has done so in the past, in comparison to the 50% UK average.

Furthermore, only a fifth (20%) of procurement employees state that they are unsure whether their organisation is currently investing in automation or has done so in the past, in comparison to almost a third (30%) of UK employees overall. This discrepancy with the UK average is also present amongst employers.

However, there are differences between employers and employees within procurement regarding awareness of the benefits

automation can offer in the workplace. 75% of procurement employees state that they are aware of these benefits in comparison to 86% of procurement employers, and positively this awareness is higher than the UK overall (averages of 73% and 81% respectively). Furthermore, while 61% of employers feel that there will be more opportunities to add greater human value in the future, less than half (49%) of employees agree.

To further increase awareness of the benefits and the opportunities to add greater human value, employers need to prioritise the clear and timely communication of the advantages of new automated technology, such as the reduction of administrative tasks and the opportunities to add greater human value.

Procurement respondents who are aware of the benefits that automation can offer in the workplace (%)



Creating the right culture and promoting investment in automation most important

Procurement respondents perceive the development of a culture that is open to change as the most important area on which to focus to ensure that digital transformation is a success (29%), which is higher than the UK average of 24%.

It is deemed a more important area of focus than training, with only 25% of procurement respondents naming training as the most important focus area to ensure the success of digital transformation, much lower than the UK average of 37%.

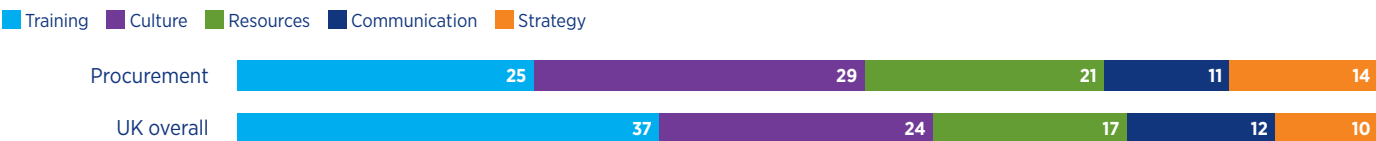
The prioritisation of culture over training makes the sensitive handling of change management of paramount importance, in order to cultivate a culture where employees feel able to talk openly and raise queries and concerns about digital transformation in the workplace. Furthermore, gaining the support of internal stakeholders is key for procurement professionals when going through any kind of strategic change, as they look to add value with new services and avoid being perceived as solely focused on cost cutting.

Positively, 40% of procurement employers indicate that they have already taken steps to hire a change manager, change team or agency to help, much higher than the UK average of 28%.

As well as focusing on building a culture that facilitates innovation and change it is also of vital importance for employers to promote their investment in new digital technology at all stages of the recruitment process. Less than half (42%) of procurement employers promote their organisation's investment in digital transformation during interviews, and only 36% promote it in job adverts.

This is despite over half (54%) of procurement professionals saying that they would be attracted to work for an organisation that is investing in automation or has plans to do so. This indicates a clear opportunity for employers when hiring.

Most important areas procurement respondents believe organisations should focus on to ensure that digital transformation is a success (%)





Turn to our recommendations on page 6 to discover what else you can do to ensure digital transformation is a success in your organisation.

“Automation for the right reasons can offer benefits. However, the idea that automation applies to all aspects of work and personal life is wrong. Improvements should be made in areas where it truly benefits the bulk of society and not just to create things to increase shareholder value and reduce costs. Macroeconomic factors must be considered, such as gainful and rewarding employment for people.”

Procurement professional, London

SUPPLY CHAIN & LOGISTICS

Digital transformation is a key focus for most supply chain and logistics employers, and in turn, employees are optimistic about the positive effect it will have on their working lives. Despite this optimism there is a significant lack of awareness around automation technology investment. Impact is already being felt on tasks performed by teams in the wake of automation, but there is a disparity between employers and employees around how best to equip workers with the tools needed to successfully embrace change.

Industry indicators

77%	say digital transformation is a primary or secondary focus for their organisation	26%	of employers say they lack the skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology
69%	say they have an open mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace	44%	of employers expect a lack of skills from current staff to be their top barrier to automation implementation
71%	of employers say their functional area within their organisation is investing in automation or has plans to do so	45%	of employers promote their organisation's investment in digital transformation during interviews
50%	think automation will allow people to add greater human value to an organisation in the future	47%	of employees would be attracted to work for an organisation investing in automation or with plans to do so

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR MARKET?

Automation investment a focus for most supply chain and logistics employers

Over three quarters (77%) of supply chain and logistics employers say that digital transformation is a focus for their organisation, with 29% deeming it a primary focus and 48% a secondary focus.

71% of supply chain and logistics employers say their organisation is currently investing in automation or is at the pre-investment stage for their functional area, with 39% of employers saying that their organisation is in the early stages of automation implementation, (either pre-investment, investment/RFP or project planning stage). 15% are in the implementation phase and 17% have already implemented automation.

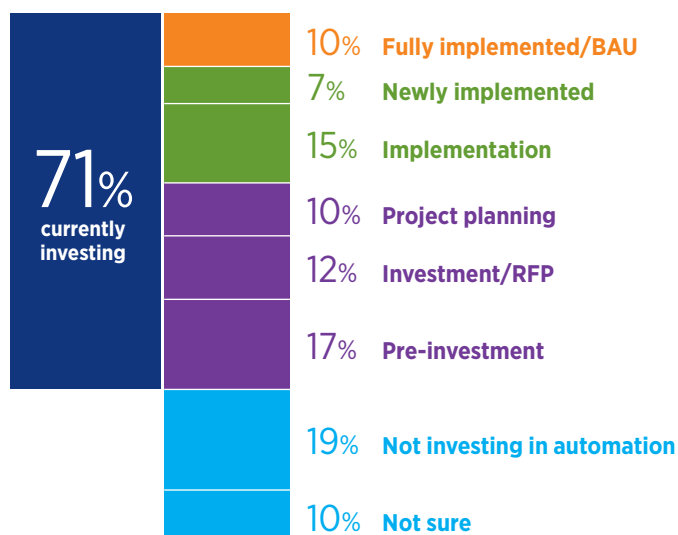
Driving/fleet is the area currently seeing the most investment from employers from an automation perspective (39%), but 34% cite picking as the top job area that would benefit from an investment in automation.

The cost of implementing automation is cited by supply chain and logistics respondents as a key reason for organisations not investing in it, with 41% deeming it the main reason in comparison to 34% of UK respondents overall. A lack of awareness or understanding of the benefits (11%) is also named as a reason, though to a lesser extent than the UK average (16%).

“Supply chain and logistics is an industry that's seeing widespread automation of processes, but to give employees full confidence in its benefits an open culture must be established and appropriate, relevant training implemented throughout.”

Scott Dance, Director, Hays Procurement & Supply Chain

How supply chain and logistics employers describe their function's stage of investment in automation



“ I feel that some people believe automation will take jobs away, but automation exists so that busy people don't need to waste time matching things up manually when a computer can do it using an algorithm. This then gives employees more time to spend on other duties, which leads to fewer mistakes, higher productivity with a smaller human error margin and lower stress levels, all ultimately leading to happier employees. ”

Supply chain and logistics professional, London

Job areas where supply chain and logistics employers are currently making an investment in automation, and areas they feel would benefit from an investment



Professionals are optimistic but there is a lack of awareness around investment

Most (76%) supply chain and logistics respondents are interested in using the latest digital technology in the workplace, and the majority (82%) also believe we should embrace automation in the workplace.

Despite the high levels of interest from respondents, there's also considerable uncertainty. Nearly a third (30%) of supply chain and logistics employees state that they are unsure whether their organisation is investing in automation or have done so in the past, in comparison to just 9% of supply chain and logistics employers. This wide disparity in awareness between employers and employees is clearly an area that needs addressing in order to maximise understanding and positivity around automation.

Employers believe impact of automation already being felt on tasks

When supply chain and logistics employers were asked whether automation has had any impact on their teams' tasks, 15% say the number of tasks have increased and 22% say the number of tasks have decreased, higher than the 15% UK average.

Analytical tasks are felt to have been particularly affected, with 43% of supply chain and logistics employers saying that their teams' analytical tasks, such as reviewing and analysing data for reports, have decreased in the wake of automation, considerably higher than the 26% UK average.

Over a quarter (27%), however, say that their teams' technical tasks have increased in the wake of automation, higher than the UK average of 17%. This reduction in tasks for some areas and an increase in others from an employer's perspective demonstrates a redistribution of focus for teams.

Employers will need to audit where skills gaps exist in light of this imbalance and upskill accordingly to ensure that objectives can be met and employees feel equipped to adapt as their roles evolve.

WHAT PROFESSIONALS ARE SAYING

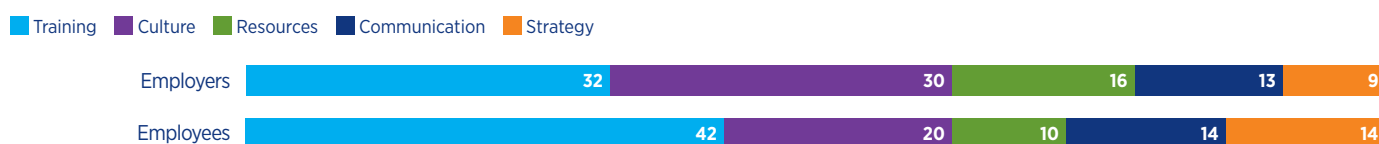
Employers and employees prioritise different areas to enable success

The majority of supply chain and logistics respondents (69%) describe their mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace as open, and supply chain and logistics employers are more likely (77%) to say they have a positive mindset than employees (65%).

There is also a disparity amongst employees and employers as to the approach towards equipping a workforce with the tools to successfully deal with digital transformation in the workplace. 30% of employers say culture is the most important area of focus, whereas only 20% of employees agree.

Fostering an open culture is clearly needed to enable the success of digital transformation, and employers should ensure they openly discuss their focus on this element when communicating plans to staff. Provided it is promoted during the recruitment process, this approach would also help secure the talent they need, as almost half (47%) of supply chain and logistics respondents say they would be attracted to work for an organisation that is investing in automation or has plans to do so.

Most important areas supply chain and logistics employers and employees believe organisations should focus on to ensure that digital transformation is a success (%)



Employees want help upskilling, especially in technical areas

Although investment in digital transformation is a high priority for supply chain and logistics employers, almost a third (32%) of employees say their employer is not helping them to prepare for digital transformation in the workplace, and only 9% say they are being fully supported. This is despite 59% of supply chain and logistics respondents saying that it is the responsibility of the employer to equip employees with the skills needed to derive the most benefit from automation.

In addition, 42% of supply chain and logistics employees say that it is most important for their organisation to focus on training to ensure that digital transformation is a success within their organisation, whilst only 32% of employers deem this the most important area.

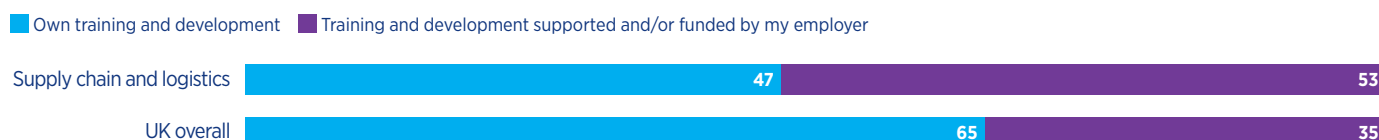
In terms of technical skills, employees perceive project management and data science (both 53%) as most important for them to possess for future roles as a result of increased automation, followed by change management (52%).

For soft skills, employees cite people management as the most important skill for them to possess for future roles (51%), followed by problem-solving (49%) and decision-making (49%).

Those employees who are working on developing their soft skills are more likely to seek help from their employers than upskill independently, with 47% undertaking their own training and development, and 53% undertaking training that is supported or funded by their employer. For those employees who are developing their technical skills, however, less than half (40%) are undertaking training that is funded by their employer, and a further 60% say they are doing so through their own training.

By taking training into their own hands, it is clear employees do not feel they are being adequately supported by their employers, making the provision of more formal training both in technical and soft skill areas of paramount importance to ensure the success of automation. In addition to this, employees must ensure to focus closely on their own independent personal development, in order to equip themselves with the skills they need to perform their tasks effectively.

How supply chain and logistics workers who are developing their technical and soft skills in order to work with automation are doing so (%)



A man with a beard and short hair is looking thoughtfully at the camera, with his hand resting on his chin. The background is a dark blue world map with glowing green digital lines and nodes overlaid on it. In the top right corner, there is a blue rectangular box containing white text. At the bottom of the image, there are various digital icons and patterns, including a gear, a bar chart, and a line graph.

Turn to our recommendations on page 6 to discover what else you can do to ensure digital transformation is a success in your organisation.

“ In many instances in my industry, automation enhances the safety of staff whilst producing a consistently high-quality product. Where people can enjoy a safer workplace and see enhanced quality of product, automation can thrive as can the people involved. This will unearth new skills and knowledge to continue to drive business forward, and may even help people to improve control of their work-life balance. ”

Supply chain and logistics professional, London

TECHNOLOGY

Although the media landscape is increasingly dominated by headlines highlighting the perceived risk that automation poses to jobs, technology professionals are in the enviable position of being in high demand, required to build and integrate automation technology. In fact, 44% of technology employers have hired more permanent staff, and 27% have engaged more contractors as a result of their organisation's investment in automation. It is therefore no surprise that technology professionals are aware of the many benefits automation can offer organisations, and are optimistic about the opportunities for added human value it can bring.

Industry indicators

87%	say digital transformation is a primary or secondary focus for their organisation	40%	of employers say they lack the skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology
83%	say they have an open mindset towards digital transformation in the workplace	58%	of employers expect a lack of skills from current staff to be their top barrier to automation implementation
82%	of employers say their functional area within their organisation is investing in automation or has plans to do so	44%	of employers promote their organisation's investment in digital transformation during interviews
59%	think automation will allow people to add greater human value to an organisation in the future	60%	of employees would be attracted to work for an organisation investing in automation or with plans to do so

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR MARKET?

Finance is the main area of focus for technology professionals working with automation

Almost half (46%) of technology respondents say they are currently involved in automation projects. Of these, technology respondents who primarily deliver and customise technology integrations are most likely to be delivering automation projects (either for their own organisation or for external clients) for accountancy and finance (39%), financial services (33%) and HR/recruitment/training (26%).

Similarly, respondents who primarily build bespoke technology solutions are most likely to be delivering automation projects for accountancy and finance (36%), financial services (35%) and engineering and manufacturing (22%).

Awareness of automation's benefits make technology professionals optimistic about the future

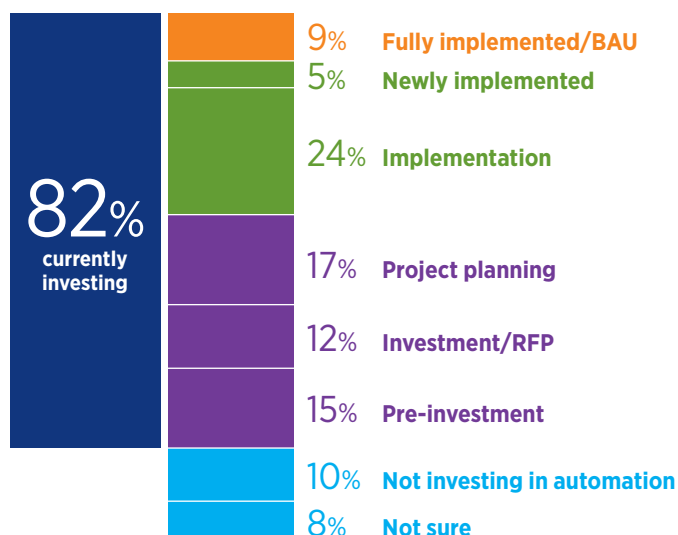
With so many technology professionals involved in automation, it should come as no surprise that their overall sentiment towards it is overwhelmingly positive. 90% of technology professionals think we should embrace automation in the workplace.

In tandem with this, most technology respondents are also aware of the benefits automation can bring, with only 8% saying they aren't aware of the benefits of automation. The main benefits they cite include productivity (34%), process efficiencies (20%) and cost savings (17%). Furthermore, they are also very optimistic about the role of people alongside workplace automation. 50% state that automation allows people the opportunity to add greater human value now and 59% say it will offer opportunities for greater human value in the future, significantly higher than the UK averages of 39% and 48% respectively.

“Technology professionals are on the front line of the automation revolution, whether they are building technology solutions or integrating and customising them for their own organisations or for external clients. However, employers need to ensure that the productivity benefits being realised by many industries and functions thanks to automation are also being realised by technology professionals themselves.”

James Milligan, Director, Hays Technology

How technology employers describe their function's stage of investment in automation



“To help our automation journey, my employer should upskill employees by bringing training systems in-house to grow knowledge and ensure more strategic planning with real intent to implement.”

Projects and Change Manager, Technology, London

Job areas where technology professionals who are involved in delivering automation projects are either customising technology integrations or building bespoke technology solutions



Technology professionals believe cost and lack of awareness remain the main barriers to implementation of automation

Over a quarter (29%) of technology respondents believe that the main reason organisations do not invest in automation is cost. Just under a quarter (23%) of technology respondents believe the main reason is a wider lack of awareness or understanding of the benefits of automation. Technology professionals are well-placed to understand the benefits of automation, including the many ways that investment in this technology can help improve a business' bottom line. They should clearly communicate these benefits to key stakeholders – who may be less aware of these benefits – in their organisation or in customers', thereby securing buy-in for automation tools and technology and attaining a seat at the table during the decision-making and implementation processes.

Main reasons technology respondents believe organisations are not investing in automation

Cost – implementation or overall investment

29%

Knowledge – lack of awareness or understanding of the benefits of automation

23%

Skills gaps – lack of skills to implement and/or utilise automation

14%

WHAT PROFESSIONALS ARE SAYING

Technology candidates want to hear about technology investments

70% of technology employers have not already nor intend to make any changes to their recruitment strategy as part of their organisation's investment in automation. Of those who plan to make changes to their recruitment strategy, 73% plan to hire more permanent staff, and 63% plan to engage more contractors.

Further to this, only 48% of technology employers promote their organisation's investment in digital transformation on their website, only 44% promote it in interviews and only 41% promote it in job adverts.

This highlights a missed opportunity as 60% of technology employees say they would be attracted to work for an organisation that is investing in automation or had plans to do so. In fact, 22% state that it is a 'vital' component when deciding to work for an organisation or not.

More specifically, 62% of technology employees would like to be updated about an organisation's investment in automation during the interview stage, 59% would like to hear about it in job ads and 57% would like to learn about it on an organisation's website.

Due to the benefits that automation technology offers and their integral role in its creation and integration, technology candidates would be well-advised to consider those organisations investing in this area. Technology employers should ensure that they promote any investment in automation throughout all stages of the candidate journey – from their website, to job adverts, through to the interview and onboarding stage – and emphasise what this investment might mean for individual employees and their professional growth.

The importance that technology employees place on working for an organisation that is investing in automation, or plans to do so (%)



Overall changes to tasks as a result of automation may require new talent management strategies

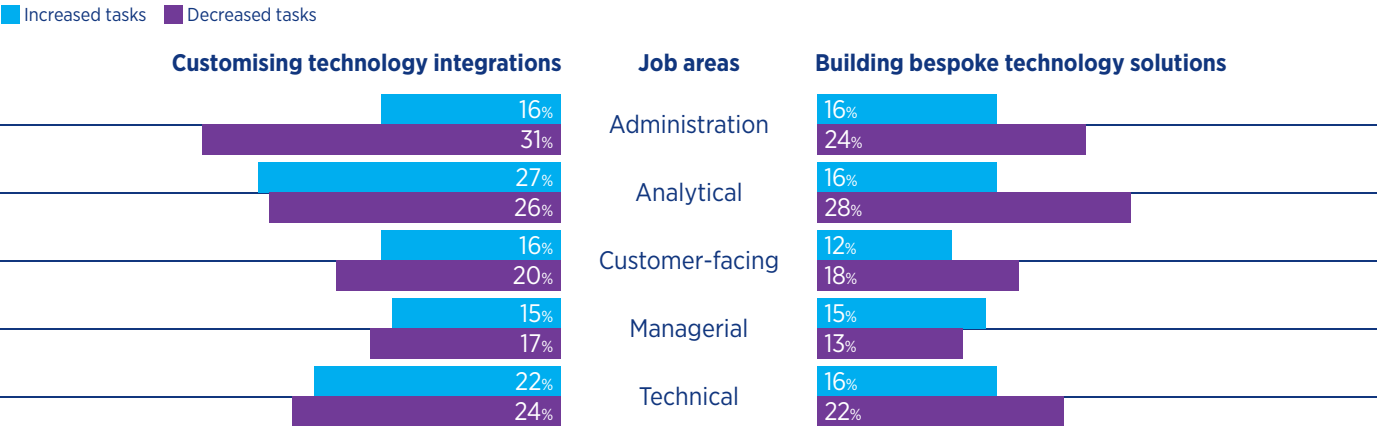
Automation is having a different impact on the types of tasks technology professionals are undertaking dependent upon whether they are primarily delivering and customising technology integrations or building bespoke solutions. 31% of those who are delivering and customising technology integrations have seen a decrease in their administrative tasks, higher than the 24% of professionals who build bespoke solutions who say their administrative tasks have decreased.

However, of those delivering and customising technology integrations, 22% have seen an increase in their technical tasks, and 25% have seen an increase in their analytical tasks as a result of automation. Only 16% of the professionals building bespoke solutions have seen an increase in these respective types of tasks.

It is important that technology employers are aware of how automation is impacting their teams' tasks. If it is increasing tasks, then these should be in areas which can benefit from increased strategic attention and added human value.

They should also consider whether there has been an overall shift towards increased tasks and workloads. With the proliferation of automation technology, technology professionals may find their workloads increasing, although this will be to drive greater efficiencies across their business or their customers'. Employers should therefore assess whether this requires additional permanent or contract resources which can help alleviate pressure on current employees, and build a talent pipeline in line with this.

How automation has impacted the tasks of technology professionals



Technology professionals show high interest in upskilling but want more support

40% of technology employers don't currently have the right skills to enable them to make the best use of automation technology. 31% cite moderate skills shortages, and 9% label their skills shortages as extreme.

Drilling down into the specific technical skills technology employers say are in shortest supply within their existing teams, 73% indicate project management skills including agile methodologies, 71% say software management and 69% cite change management. In regards to soft skills, 70% of technology employers say communication and interpersonal skills are in shortest supply within their existing teams, 65% say critical thinking and 64% problem-solving.

It will come as welcome news to employers that, in keeping with their reputation, technology professionals show high levels of personal proactivity when it comes to professional development and upskilling. 74% of technology employees say that they are upskilling in technical areas through their own training and development, notably higher than the overall UK average of 61%. 70% also say they are developing their soft skills to be able to work with automation, higher than the overall UK average of 65%. Of these, 76% are doing so through their own training and development.

However, 59% of all technology respondents state that employers – businesses and organisations – bear the primary responsibility for equipping professionals with the skills needed in the future to benefit from automation, and only 18% say it is an individual's primary responsibility.

Whilst it is commendable for technology professionals and candidates to prioritise their continuous professional development, they should also look to work for companies who support these ambitions and invest in their growth – especially those employed on a permanent basis. For their part, employers need to examine their current training offers, and consider whether this is an area that needs greater investment. Not only does it make sense to continually and consistently ensure your team has the skills needed to succeed in a space as fast-paced and ever-evolving as technology, but those employers who offer and promote training opportunities and support will be best placed to attract and retain the top technology talent they require to make automation a success for their own organisation or for external customers.

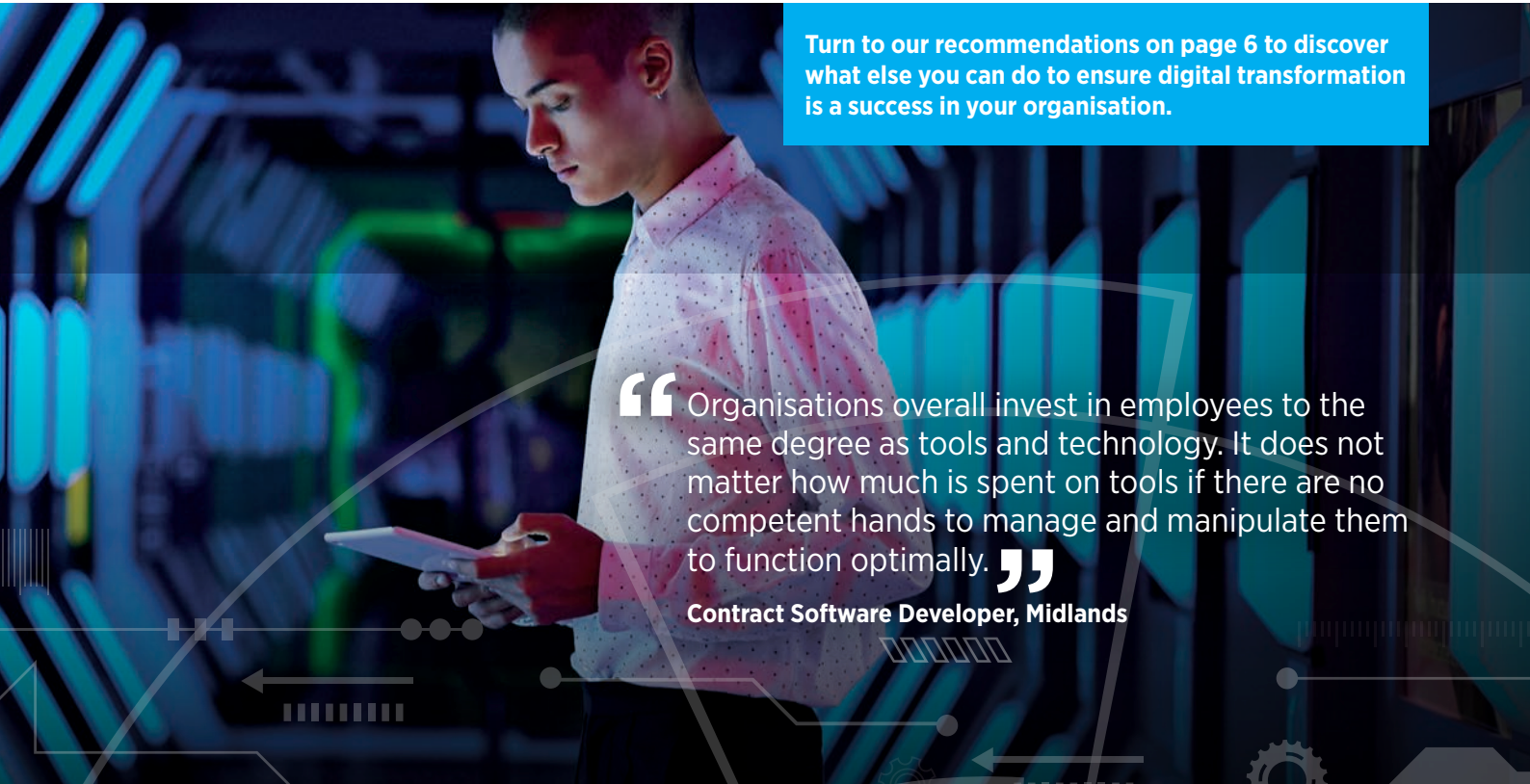
% of technology employers faced with soft and technical skills shortages within their existing teams

Soft skills

70%	Communication and interpersonal skills
65%	Critical thinking
64%	Problem-solving
63%	Coordinating with others
62%	People management
61%	Creativity

Technical skills

73%	Project management
71%	Software development
69%	Change management
65%	Analytics/data analytics
59%	Data science
56%	Programme management



Turn to our recommendations on page 6 to discover what else you can do to ensure digital transformation is a success in your organisation.

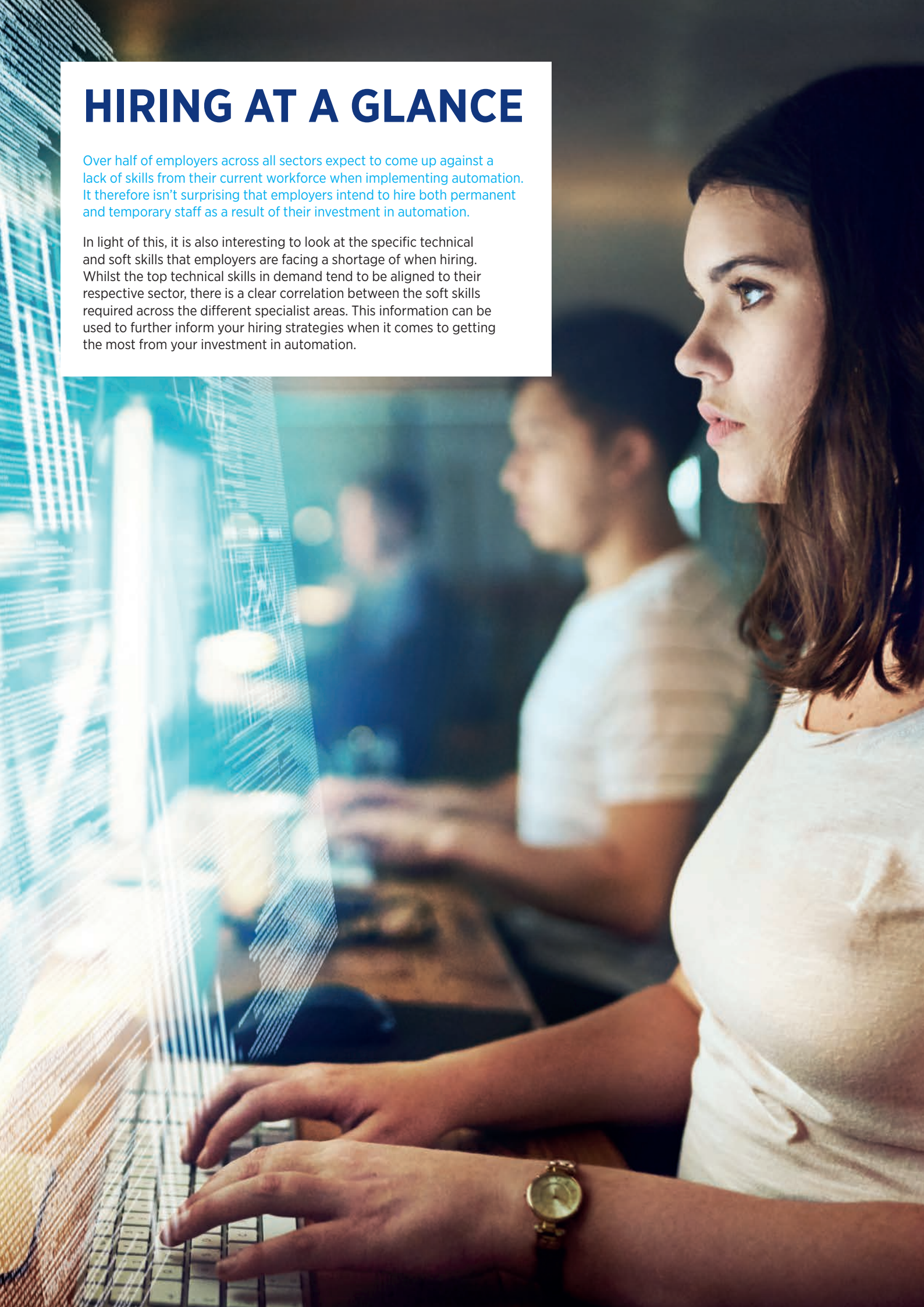
“Organisations overall invest in employees to the same degree as tools and technology. It does not matter how much is spent on tools if there are no competent hands to manage and manipulate them to function optimally.”

Contract Software Developer, Midlands

HIRING AT A GLANCE

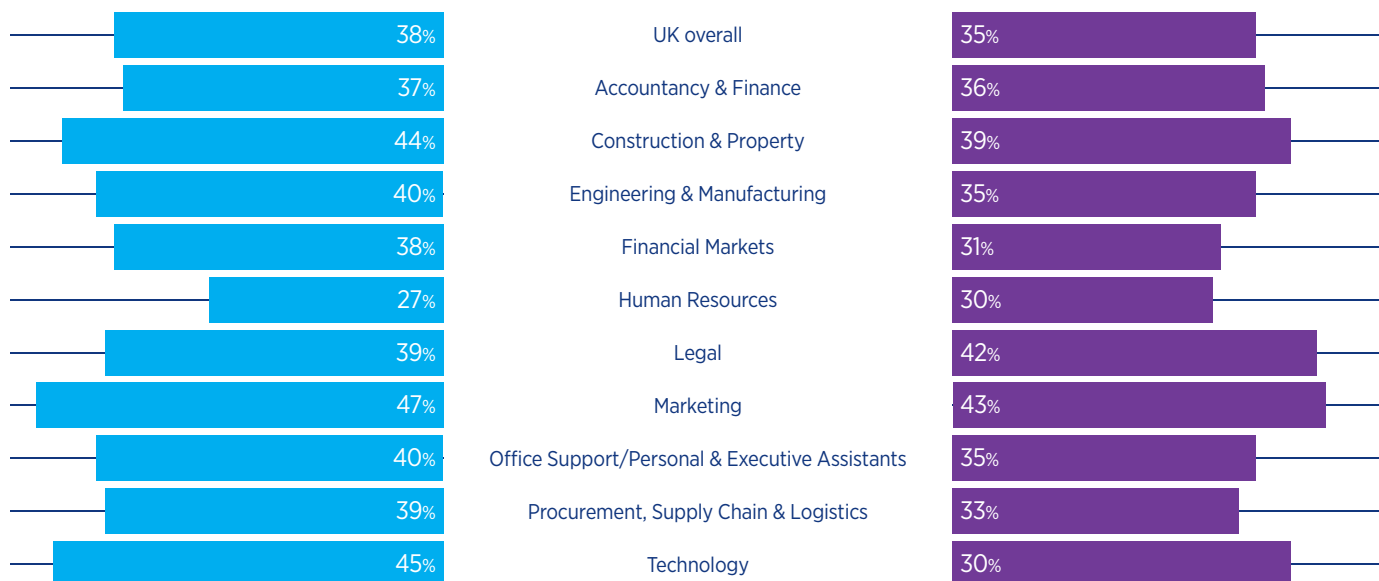
Over half of employers across all sectors expect to come up against a lack of skills from their current workforce when implementing automation. It therefore isn't surprising that employers intend to hire both permanent and temporary staff as a result of their investment in automation.

In light of this, it is also interesting to look at the specific technical and soft skills that employers are facing a shortage of when hiring. Whilst the top technical skills in demand tend to be aligned to their respective sector, there is a clear correlation between the soft skills required across the different specialist areas. This information can be used to further inform your hiring strategies when it comes to getting the most from your investment in automation.

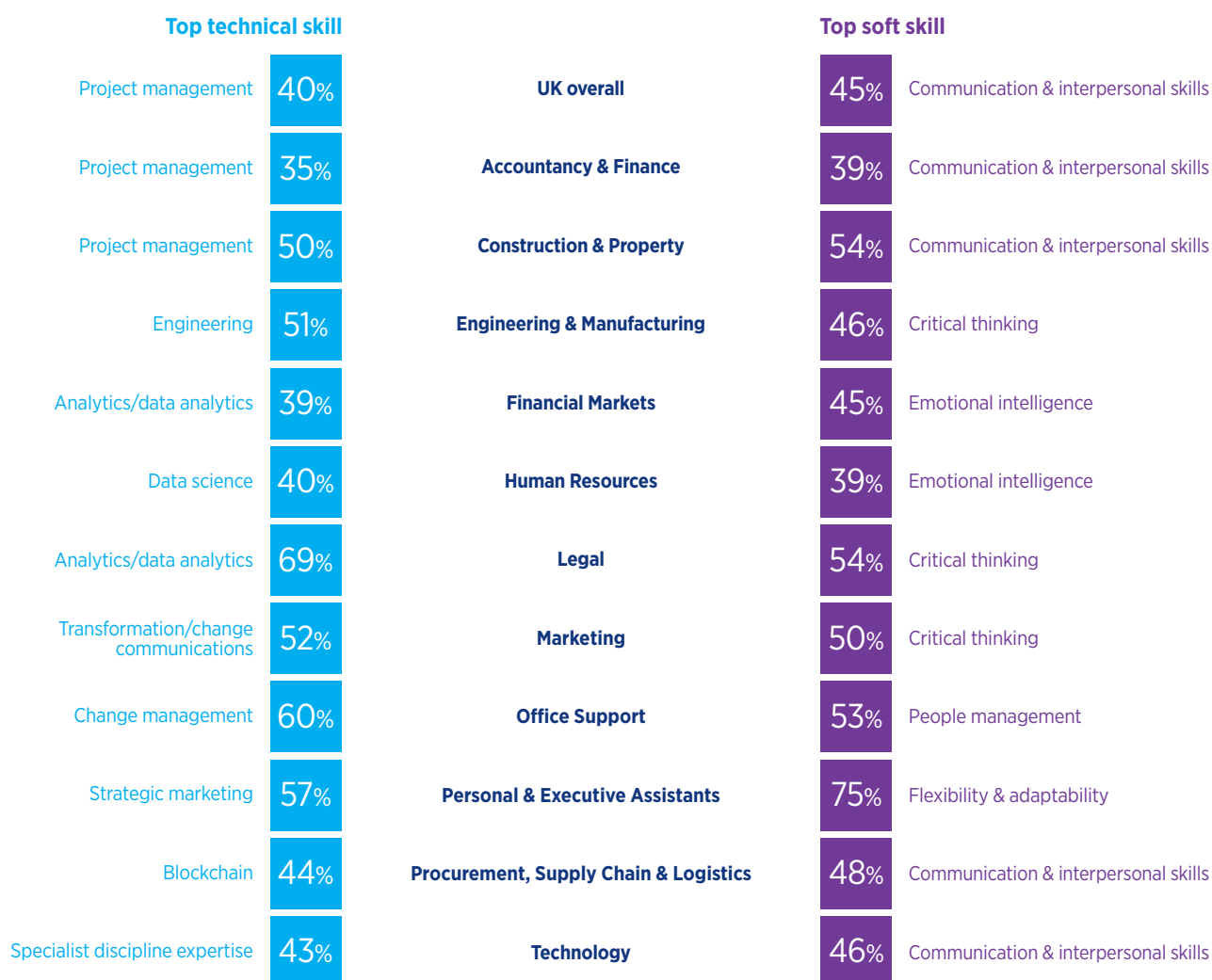


Employers who intend to hire permanent or temporary staff due to their investment in automation

■ Plan to hire new permanent staff ■ Plan to hire temporary/contract/freelance staff



The top technical and soft skills employers are faced with a shortage of when hiring



ABOUT US

As market leader, if the best people aren't already talking to us, we know how to find them, engage with them and match them better than any other recruiter. In the complicated world of recruitment, Hays makes finding the best talent easier and quicker, and reduces the risks involved in hiring.

Our expertise

Beginning life in 1968 with just a handful of employees, Hays now has over 6,800 recruiting specialists, including 1,800 in the UK. We work across 250 offices worldwide, of which 93 are in the UK, to help organisations and professionals to develop and grow.

Our expertise lies in being able to source skilled and qualified professionals, our unparalleled ability to engage with an extensive network of talent, and our capability to match this to our clients' specific requirements. Working across over 22 different industries and professions, we recruit for permanent and temporary roles for organisations of all sizes in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors.

At Hays, we have developed and are deploying a new and improved recruitment model, one which we call Find & Engage. This takes the best recruitment practices and candidate relationships our consultants have developed over many years, and combines them with new technology and data science techniques available today to ensure we find the best candidates for any given role.

This approach puts the relationship back at the heart of recruitment, but uses digital technology, machine learning and data science to operate at scale.

Our services

We provide a suite of employer services, these include:

- assessment and development
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- executive support
- fully managed temporary recruitment
- outsourced permanent recruitment
- permanent hiring
- salary benchmarking
- temporary recruitment

For further information, visit hays.co.uk/employer-services

Our awards and accreditations

Hays was named the winner of the National Undergraduate Employability Awards 2019, showing our commitment to fostering a culture that gives undergraduates the freedom to succeed and enables them to fulfil their full potential. We have now been placed in the Top 50 Undergraduate Employers for five years running and we are the only recruiter to be listed in the Top 100.

We have also been named as the Best Large Company for Graduates to Work for in the UK as part of TheJobCrowd's Top 100 Graduate Employers 2019/20. We were awarded the Number 1 Best Support Services (including Recruitment) Company to Work for in the UK and came 11th overall.



Hays is honoured to have achieved the National Equality Standard (NES), one of the UK's most rigorous and prestigious accreditations for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I). We were one of the first 20 organisations nationwide to be accredited.

Since signing up to the NES, we have developed a deeper understanding of ED&I, and the accreditation recognises our long-term commitment to building a culture of meritocracy and diversity.

For further information, visit hays.co.uk/diversity

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