Job Seeker Trends

Longitudinal trending of career pursuits among
the career intent, tech intent and skills intent
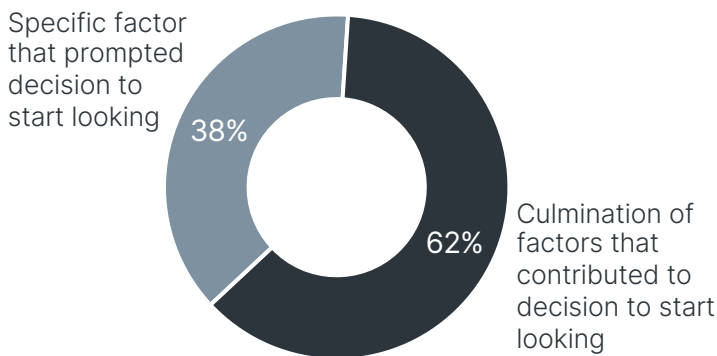
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Job Seekers Explore Opportunities

27%

Approximately 27% of the US labor market report pursuing a new job or career change during the past three months, a rate consistent with prior waves of research.

45m

Twenty-seven percent translates to approximately 45 million active job seekers. Two-thirds of job seekers report exploring opportunities in their current field, while 57% are considering a career change into a new field.

Prompt that initiated job seeking

Specific factor that prompted decision to start looking

38%

62%

Culmination of factors that contributed to decision to start looking

Top factors contributing to job seekers pursuing new employment opportunities

1 Financial situation changed

2 Stuck in a rut and wanting something new

3 Burnout or stress

4 Unhappy with current career trajectory
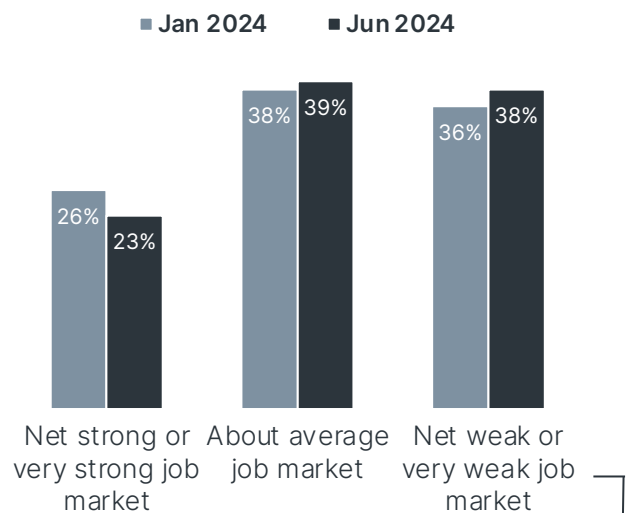
5 Values or life priorities changed

Top factors for not job seeking or exploring new career opportunities

1 Content/satisfied in current job

2 Waiting for the right opportunity

3 Timing/circumstances not right

4 Balancing demands of current job, family, etc.

5 Need more work experience, skills, etc.

Highest among Baby Boomers (64%); conversely lowest among Gen Z (41%). Gen Z and Millennials rate the need for additional work experience or skills at relatively higher rates.

Job seeker perceptions of the job market

Perceived availability of job opportunities and hiring

■ Jan 2024 ■ Jun 2024

	Jan 2024	Jun 2024
Net strong or very strong job market	26%	23%
About average job market	38%	39%
Net weak or very weak job market	36%	38%

The data indicates correlation with income: those with lower incomes report more pessimism with job prospects.

Consideration for Range of Career Fields

Career fields Job Seekers considered during the Q2 2024 time period

Jun 2023 ■ Jan 2024 ■ Jun 2024
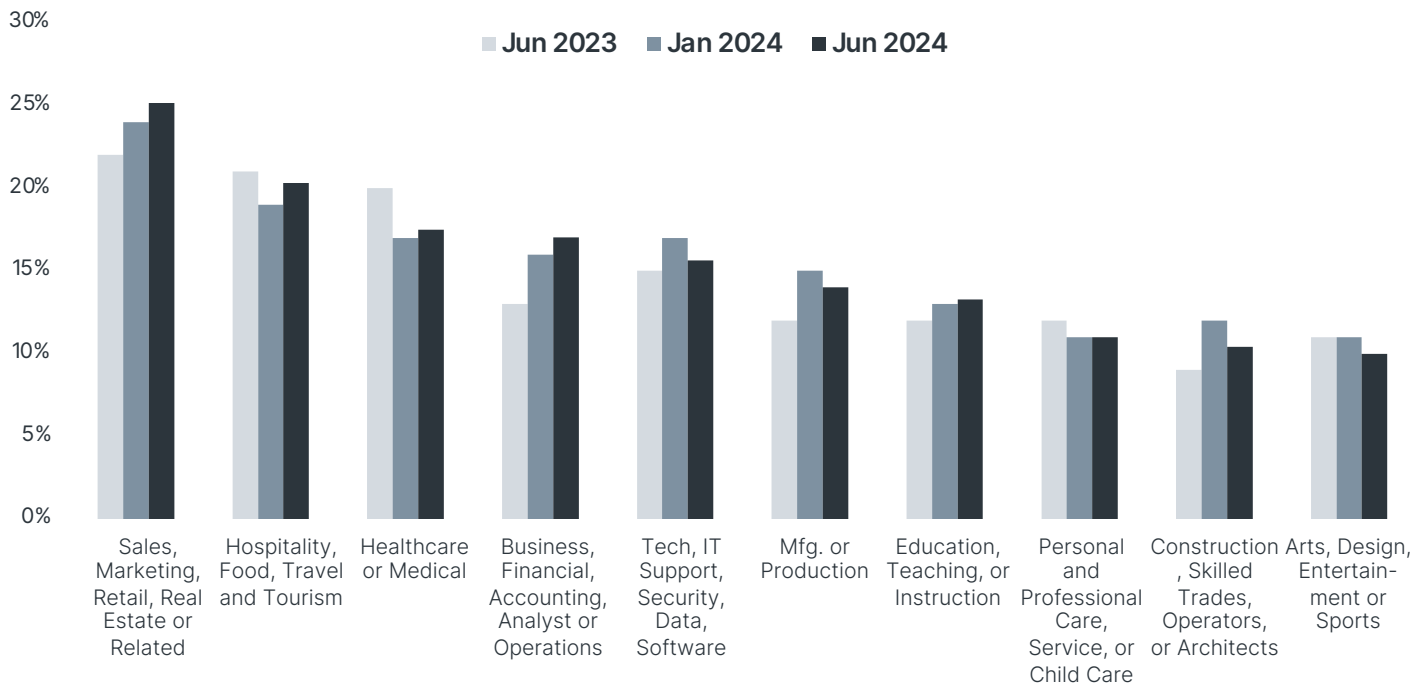
Job seeker consideration for career change options dipped slightly across many occupation categories, possibly a reflection of ongoing market uncertainty.

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

	June 2021	June 2022	June 2023	June 2024
Sales, Marketing, Retail, Real Estate or Related	22%	23%	22%	25%
Hospitality, Food, Travel and Tourism	26%	23%	21%	20%
Healthcare or Medical	18%	21%	20%	17%
Business, Financial, Accounting, Analyst or Operations	14%	18%	13%	17%
Technology, IT Support, Cybersecurity, Data, Software or IT Proj. Mgt.	13%	17%	15%	16%
Manufacturing or Production	16%	16%	12%	14%
Education, Teaching, or Instruction	11%	12%	12%	13%
Transportation, Drivers, or Material Moving	14%	12%	11%	11%
Personal and Professional Care, Service, or Child Care	16%	12%	12%	11%
Construction, Skilled Trades, Operators, or Architects	13%	11%	9%	10%
Arts, Design, Entertainment or Sports	13%	10%	11%	10%
Community, Social Service, Psychology or Non-profit	11%	10%	10%	10%
Comm., Multimedia, Journalism or Social Media	8%	10%	9%	10%
Engineering or Technicians	7%	8%	5%	7%
Installation, Maintenance, Mechanics, or Repair	10%	6%	6%	7%
Life, Physical, or Social Science	5%	7%	6%	6%
Legal, Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement or Armed Forces	6%	6%	5%	6%
Farming, Fishing, or Forestry	6%	5%	4%	4%

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Skills Intent Workers Plan for the Future

Among non-job seekers, about half fall into the Career Content category

Content/satisfied in current job

54%

46%

Some factor inhibiting job pursuits
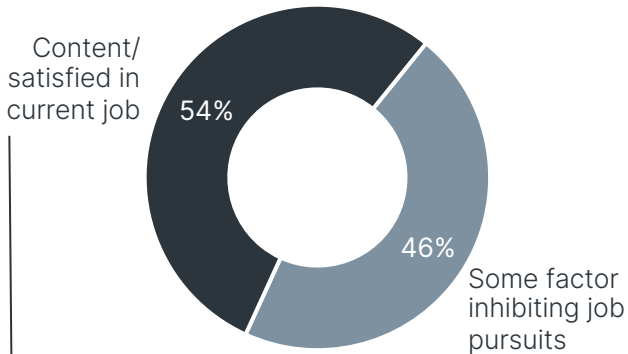
The data indicates Gen Z are most restless in their job with 41% content/satisfied (vs. 64% for Baby Boomers, 51% for Gen X and 52% for Millennial)
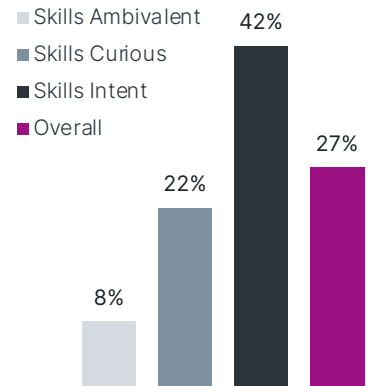
73% Non-job seekers represent 73% of the labor market. CompTIA further segments into the Career Content (39%) and the Career Curious (34%)

Top reported reasons for not pursuing new job opportunities

1 Waiting for the right opportunity

2 Timing/circumstances not right

3 Balancing current job or family responsibilities

4 Paused looking, plan to resume at a later time

5 Need more experience or training

Skills Intent 48%

Skills development rating of very important to career advancement and/or career maintenance

Adjusted rates as a % of the overall labor market:
35%   Skills Intent
15%   Skills Curious
23%   Skills Ambivalent

Skills Ambivalent 31%

Skills Curious 21%

Intent to train to develop skills over next 3 months

Among non-job seekers | training for skills development may entail formal paid learning or informal free learning content

- Skills Ambivalent
- Skills Curious
- Skills Intent
- Overall

8%   22%   42%   27%
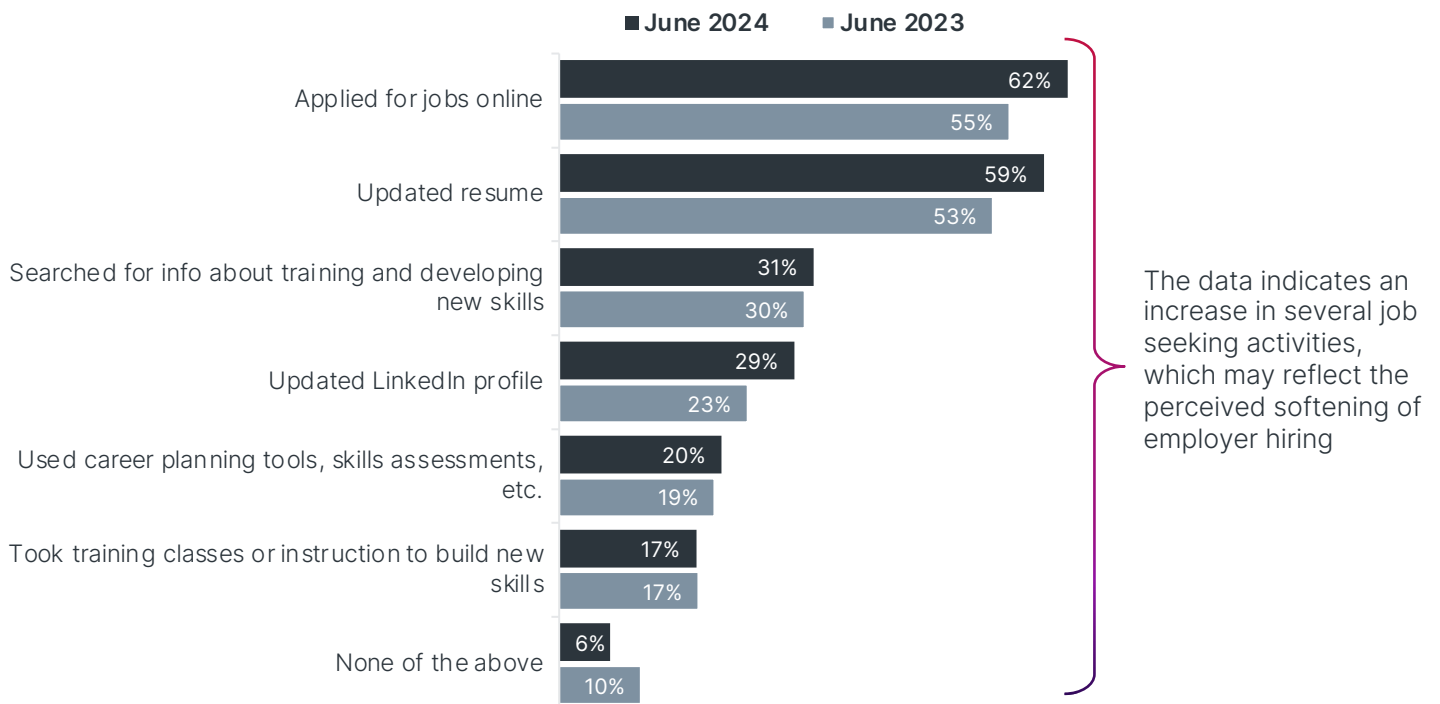
Intent over next 3 months

Expectation for who will drive skills development training

Mostly driven by self **[63%]**
Mostly driven by employer [13%]
About an even split [19%]
Unsure [4%]

The Skills Intent segment reports a slightly higher rate of proactive self-driven training vs. the Skills Ambivalent relying more on the employer to drive the decision.

Importance rating (net) of skills development focus areas	Skills Ambivalent	Skills Curious	Skills Intent
Leadership, communication or team skills	54%	76%	87%
Skills specific to job role	50%	77%	86%
Digital fluency skills	24%	47%	85%
Project management skills	43%	62%	76%
Data or analysis skills	37%	59%	72%
Technical skills, e.g. cybersecurity	34%	55%	70%
Creative skills	31%	51%	61%
Artificial intelligence (AI) skills	25%	45%	53%

The Work...Behind Finding Work

Actions taken by job seekers in pursuing career opportunities

■ June 2024　■ June 2023

Action	June 2024	June 2023
Applied for jobs online	62%	55%
Updated resume	59%	53%
Searched for info about training and developing new skills	31%	30%
Updated LinkedIn profile	29%	23%
Used career planning tools, skills assessments, etc.	20%	19%
Took training classes or instruction to build new skills	17%	17%
None of the above	6%	10%

The data indicates an increase in several job seeking activities, which may reflect the perceived softening of employer hiring

Approach to finding career exploration resources

- Rely on a few known trusted online sources — 36%
- Conduct search and decide from there — 29%
- About equal use of both approaches — 28%
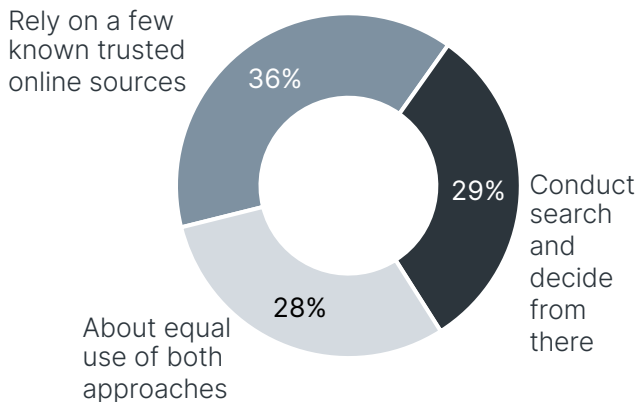
Unsure percentage not shown | January 2024 wave of Job Seeker data

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

Top reported challenges of pursuing a new job

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

• Time remains the top challenge in pursuing a new career opportunity. Forty-eight percent of job seekers cite this factor, an increase of 5 percentage points compared to the June 2023 rate.

• Figuring out where/how to get started with a job search also moved up the rankings to the #3 position vs. #7 in the June 2023 wave.

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Artificial Intelligence Enters the Picture

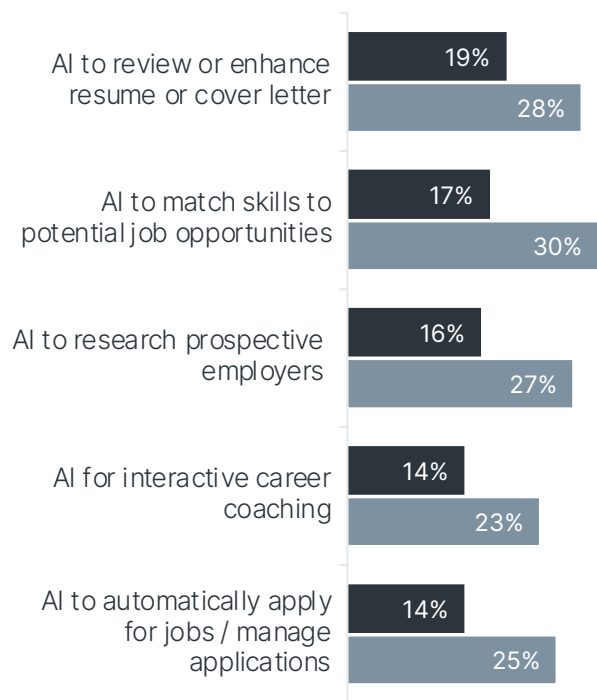## Aware of artificial intelligence (AI) and potential impact on workforce

January 2024 wave of Job Seeker data

Yes, aware **67%**

33% No, unaware
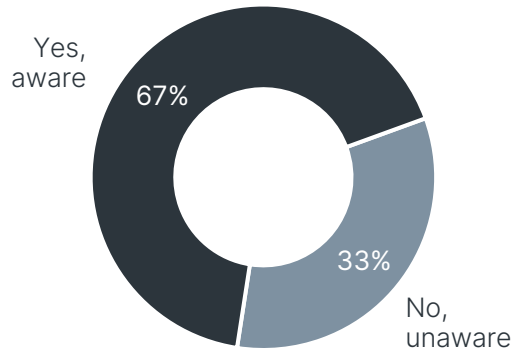
- Awareness of the discussion around AI and its potential impact on the workforce is mostly evenly known across demographic segments. The data indicates a slight education effect with those with a 4-year degree or higher more aware of the AI discussion than those without a degree (75% vs. 61%).

- As the use of automated hiring systems increases – especially those with AI-enabled capabilities, employers and job seekers will face new challenges as they weigh hiring strategies, effectiveness tradeoffs and ethics.
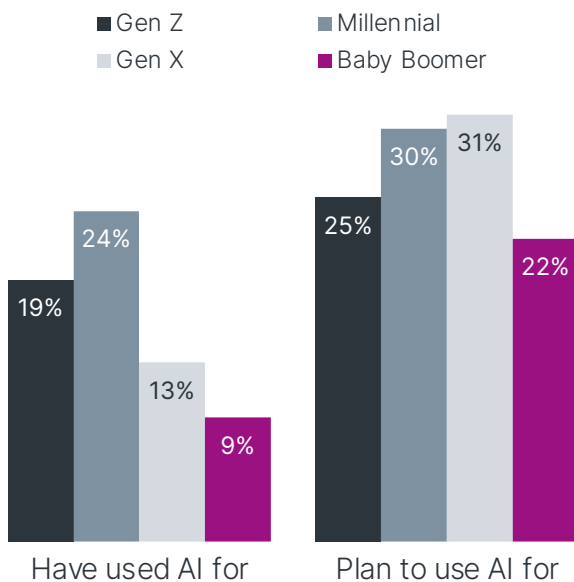
Use of AI-enabled career tools
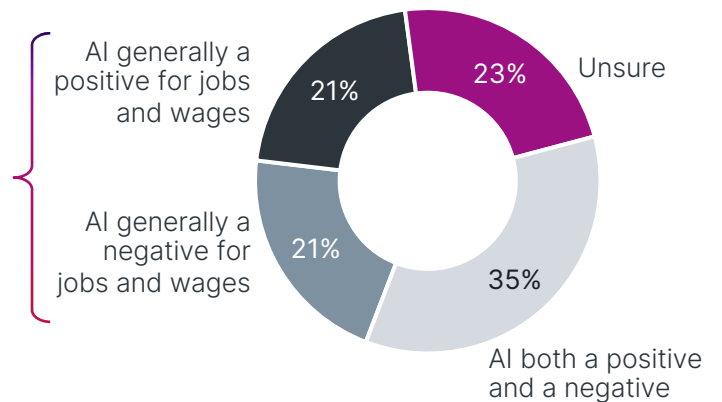
- **Have used AI for** - **Plan to use AI for**

AI to review or enhance resume or cover letter
- 19%
- 28%

AI to match skills to potential job opportunities
- 17%
- 30%

AI to research prospective employers
- 16%
- 27%

AI for interactive career coaching
- 14%
- 23%

AI to automatically apply for jobs / manage applications
- 14%
- 25%

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

January 2024 wave of Job Seeker data

- Gen Z
- Millennial
- Gen X
- Baby Boomer

Have used AI for
- 19%
- 24%
- 13%
- 9%

Plan to use AI for
- 25%
- 30%
- 31%
- 22%

Perceived impact of AI to jobs and wages

June 2024 wave of Job Seeker data

AI generally a positive for jobs and wages

AI generally a negative for jobs and wages

- 21%
- 23% Unsure
- 21%
- 35% AI both a positive and a negative

- There are still many unknown variables and assumptions in assessing AI's impact on jobs and wages. Arguably, Job Seekers have a more realistic take than many professional prognosticators in expecting upsides, downsides and unknowns.

The Expectations Balancing Act

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

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

Top reported factors among job seekers in considering a new job opportunity	Jun 2023	Jun 2024	Gen Z	Gen X
Higher pay / benefits	65%	68%	67%	67%
Job security / stability	36%	41%	34%	35%
Better work-life balance / personal wellbeing	39%	42%	25%	23%
Work from home / remote work option	35%	33%	25%	32%
Career growth / advancement opportunities	30%	33%	37%	30%
More meaningful / fulfilling career	27%	28%	32%	26%

Top reported barriers among job seekers in forgoing a job opportunity	Jun 2023	Jun 2024	Men	Women
New position not sufficiently better, e.g. work, salary, etc.	NA	45%	45%	44%
Red flags with hiring manager / team	42%	44%	40%	48%
Job posting unrealistic, e.g exp., skill, educ. requirements	NA	38%	36%	39%
Employer not committed to supporting career growth	29%	33%	34%	31%
Employer reputation / cultural fit with your values	29%	32%	35%	28%
Lack of WFH option / work location	28%	26%	23%	31%

Incidence of current job seekers resigning from a previous position

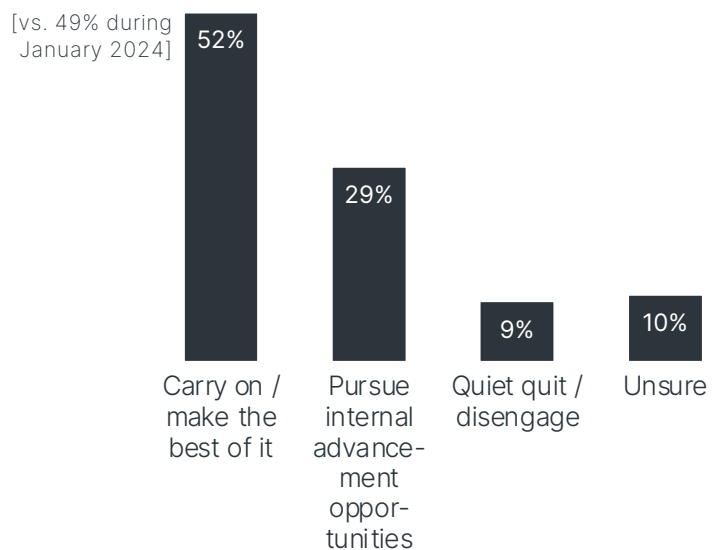Leaving job during past 12 months time period | rate unchanged vs. January 2024 data

Yes — 19%

No or NA — 81%
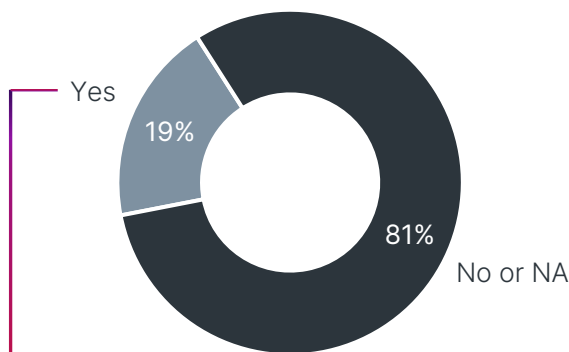
Reported reasons for resigning
40% Take another job
19% Take personal time off / Recharge
17% Medical reasons
16% Moving to new location
15% Leaving the workforce
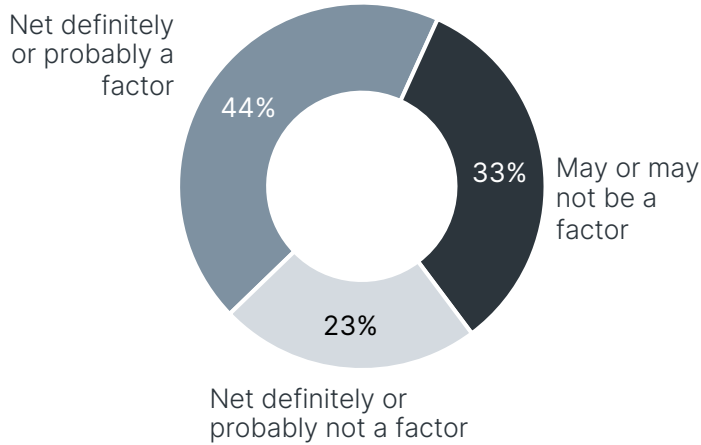23% Other (childcare, eldercare, retirement)

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

29% report redoubling their efforts to pursue internal advancement opportunities

[vs. 49% during January 2024]

- Carry on / make the best of it — 52%
- Pursue internal advance-ment oppor-tunities — 29%
- Quiet quit / disengage — 9%
- Unsure — 10%

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Overcoming Barriers to Career Change

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

- 44% — Net definitely or probably a factor
- 33% — May or may not be a factor
- 23% — Net definitely or probably not a factor

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

Confidence gap concerns across age cohorts

Gen Z ■ Millennial ■ Gen X

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

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%

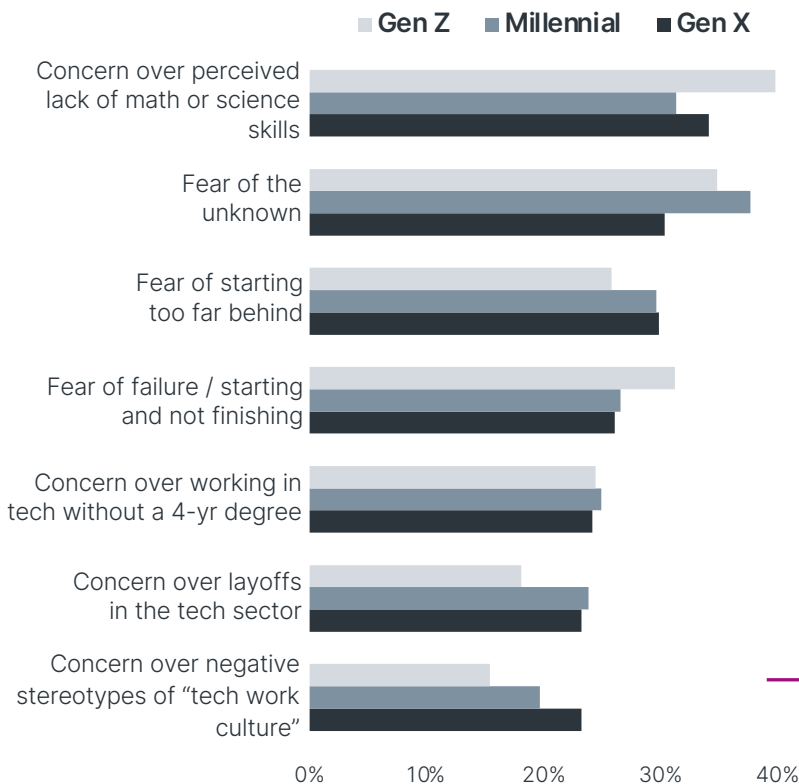## Job seeker assessment of perceived difficulty of transitioning into new career fields

Rank order of perceived difficulty (net of very and somewhat)

1. Healthcare or Medical
2. Technology, IT Support, Cybersecurity, Data, Software...
3. Communications, Multimedia, Journalism or Social Media
4. Business, Financial, Accounting, Analyst or Operations
5. Education, Teaching, or Instruction
6. Sales, Marketing, Retail, Real Estate or Related
7. Manufacturing or Production
8. Hospitality, Food, Travel and Tourism

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

Occupation categories obviously span many job levels and job types. Job seeker ratings of the difficulty of transitioning into new career fields should be interpreted as directional guidance to inform where additional support may be needed to ensure a healthy level of talent mobility.
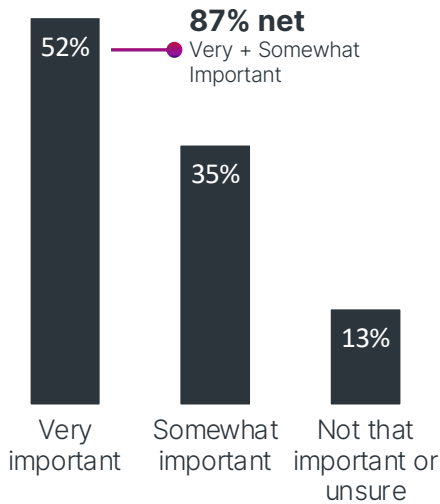
Reported challenges and perceived barriers to pursuing a tech job

- 28% Not interested in technology
- 25% Believe tech jobs don't pay enough
- 23% Believe training takes too long
- 22% Believe insufficient math/science skills a barrier to working in a tech job
- 22% Believe not enough tech jobs in region
- 22% Believe training too expensive

Reported challenges and perceived barriers to pursuing a career in technology remain consistent with earlier waves of research. The data tends to fluctuate within a couple of points, while maintaining the same approximate rank order.
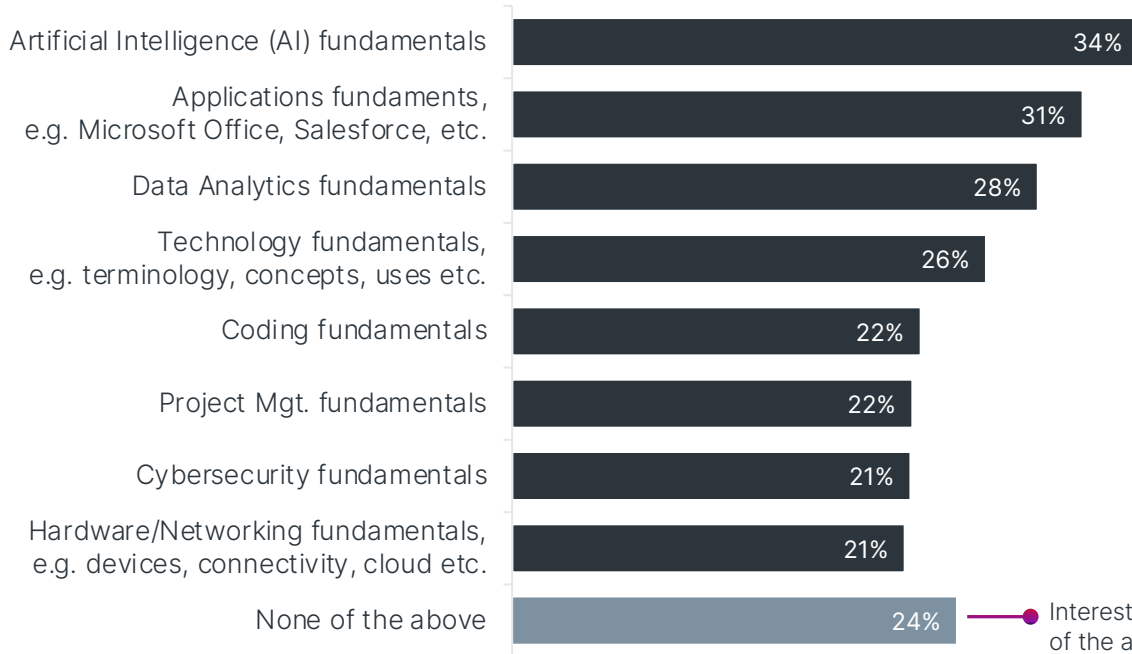
Confirming the Importance of Digital Skills and Career Readiness

Importance of digital skill needs in workforce (outside of tech jobs)

87% net
Very + Somewhat
Important

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not that important or unsure
	52%	35%	13%

Digital Skills Need	Net important ratings summary
Job Seekers Overall	87%
Women	88%
Men	86%
Gen Z	84%
Millennial	86%
Gen X	88%
Baby Boomer	91%
< 4-yr Degree	85%
4-yr Degree	92%
Post-Grad	93%

Rating of digital fluency skills development focus areas

Focus area	
Artificial Intelligence (AI) fundamentals	34%
Applications fundaments, e.g. Microsoft Office, Salesforce, etc.	31%
Data Analytics fundamentals	28%
Technology fundamentals, e.g. terminology, concepts, uses etc.	26%
Coding fundamentals	22%
Project Mgt. fundamentals	22%
Cybersecurity fundamentals	21%
Hardware/Networking fundamentals, e.g. devices, connectivity, cloud etc.	21%
None of the above	24%

The rating percentage for AI did not change at 34% (same as the prior research period), but AI did move up the rankings advancing to #1 (from #2 previously). This reflects savvy jobs seekers responding to real and perceived market demand for AI skills; combined with maturing AI business use cases providing companies with better insight into the mix of AI fluency skills needed across various job roles.

Interestingly, the 'none of the above' increased to 24% from a prior rate of 16%. The Baby Boomer segment and females reported higher rates of none of the above for digital skills.

Among age cohorts, Millennials report the highest digital fluency skills priority.

Methodology

CompTIA's Job Seeker Trends study was conducted via a quantitative survey fielded online during June 24 to July 4, 2024. The data was weighted to approximate a target sample of U.S. adults based on gender, educational attainment, age, race, and region. The full survey sample of n=2,002 was evenly segmented between active job seekers and non-seekers. The n=1,000 segmentations have an approximate margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points.

The survey was administrated by the research firm Morning Consult.

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

Caveats to Keep in Mind:

- The intent of this study was to capture a broad-based look at career exploration, allowing for comparisons across occupation categories. The trade-off with this approach is less detail in any one occupation category. Occupations were described at a high level without providing detailed definitions or an extensive list of jobs falling within the category.

- Past CompTIA research indicates certain segments new to the field of information technology (IT) have a number of preconceived notions of what the career field entails. In some cases, Job Seekers may have an interest in a job role with a significant technology or data or digital component without thinking of it in the context of a traditional "IT" role.

- The reported rates of engaging in training in this study pertain to active job seekers only. The large segment of workers that routinely train to improve their skills or prepare for a certification exam that are not actively looking (although could be planning for career advancement with their existing employer) are not included in the training figures.

- See prior waves of Job Seeker Trends for additional insight on topics such as gig work and the use of talent marketplaces.

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

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