

Significant Drop In Tech Skill Proficiency For 2021



While leadership and management skills proficiency in the U.S. are up, technology and data science skills proficiency dropped “significantly” in the past year, according to a Coursera report released June 14. Generally, learner focus shifted to “human skills” such as resilience, project management, decision-making, planning, storytelling and experiments as companies continued to face major change.

“The Great Resignation and automation are mandating stronger investments in human capital, as institutions must prioritize developing the high-demand digital and human skills required to build a competitive and equitable workforce,” said Jeff Maggioncalda, Coursera CEO.

A lack of hard skills and high demand have contributed to talent shortages, particularly in the tech space, since well before the pandemic. The pandemic only exacerbated that shortage; in October 2021, the tech unemployment rate was at 2.1%, according to CompTIA, which was less than half of the overall national unemployment rate at the time. One-third of new technology jobs were for emerging tech roles, as well.

But employees are also worried about their skills, especially in light of a changing economy, according to a Monster analysis published in August 2021. When asked which hard skills were most needed, workers cited the need for technology, computer and occupation-specific training in the form of credentials and licenses. Notably, 45% of workers surveyed said they would be more likely to remain with their current employer if it offered skills training.

As the Coursera report implies, the skills gap extends to soft skills, too, and the chasm only seems to be widening. An Association for Talent Development report from February noted a dearth of leadership skills, including a need for more problem solving, managerial skills and interpersonal communication training. These “human skills” may be even more important in the hybrid workplace, experts previously told HR Dive.

In good news for learning and development leaders, organizations have recognized the clear need for training in light of the new world of work; 67% of HR managers surveyed by TalentLMS and the Society for Human Resource Management said they expected Learning and Development budgets to continue to increase in 2022.

